

Sermon 7: Seeing Above – Living Beyond

This is the final week of the Periscope experience. You will want to conclude by focusing on our purpose on this earth from an eternal perspective. Seeing above the lies of this world by looking through God’s eternal periscope. Living beyond the daily cares of this world by living as an ambassador for Christ. We know that it will be far better for us to depart and be with Christ, but God has a purpose for us remaining on earth for a brief period of time.

Fast Facts

Consider several statistical results reported in our book, *Cultural Captives*. These statistics are from the survey the Barna Group took for Probe Ministries examining, among other things, the perceived purpose in life for born-again, young adults in America.

Looking only at born-again young adults, we find that of those who profess a biblical worldview almost 90% of them place God as an important part of their purpose of life on earth. However, for those born-again who do not profess a biblical worldview (2/3’s of born-again young adults), that number drops to slightly more than one half of those young adult believers. The vast majority of those selecting an answer with God, selected “to serve God and live out His will for my life.” Unfortunately, the survey did not ask them to explain what they thought his will might be. So, we cannot really tell if they were taking an eternal perspective or not.

In answering the question discussed above, only 4% of born-again young adults choose to answer with “to lead others to salvation in Jesus Christ.” In addition, less than 1% of them answered that they had witnessed to the gospel in the previous month. So, it is clear that most of them do not consider proclaiming Christ as an important part of the purpose for their life.



We are part of the church and the body of Christ. We are to proclaim Him through excellent behavior, right relationships, and our verbal testimonies to our hope in Christ



Sermon Video:

Periscope Sketch vimeo.com/probe/sketch

Suggested Sermon Ideas:

Seeing Above – Living Beyond

I. Introduction

A. Opening questions

1. How does God see us?
2. What does He want to accomplish in our lives?
3. Peter answers these questions in his epistle.
4. We are a holy people with a vital testimony to the world.

B. Ambassadors

1. One way we can look at our identity and purpose is to remember that Paul refers to us as “ambassadors.”
2. “We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).
3. An ambassador is someone who represents his or her own country by living in a foreign country.
4. They represent their country while living in a different country.
5. Likewise, we are to represent Christ while living in this world.
6. An ambassador who blends into the culture of the foreign country is no longer distinct and no longer truly represents his or her own country.
7. An ambassador is able to live in a temporary residence in a foreign country but never forgets he or she is representing another country.

II. A Holy People (2:9-10)

A. A chosen race

1. Chosen race - he begins the sentence with the word “but.”
2. He is contrasting Christians from unbelievers he was talking about in the previous verse.
3. We are different and should act differently from non-Christians.
4. The phrase “chosen race” is the same descriptive title found in the OT used to describe “elect servants.”
5. God has chosen us for ministry!
6. We have been brought into a divine family through the new birth and therefore share in the privileges of being a child of God.

B. A royal priesthood

1. Royal priesthood - we are “living stones” that are “built up as a spiritual house” that is also a royal house.
2. Just as Israel was called to bring to the world the knowledge of the true God, we now as the church and body of believers are called to proclaim God’s message to the world.

C. A holy nation

1. Holy nation - earlier in his letter, Peter explains what God desires in terms of holiness.
2. "Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1:16).
3. Similar to Paul's warning that we should not "be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:1).
4. An ambassador should not be conformed to the foreign culture.
5. Neither should a Christian be conformed the culture (Colossians 2:8).

D. A people for his possession

1. A people for his possession - some translations say we are a "peculiar people."
2. That doesn't mean we are to be peculiar in the sense of being weird.
3. It means that we are "set apart" from the world, different from the world.
4. The word for "possession" means "to purchase" or "to acquire for a price."
5. It reminds us that we "were bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20).
6. Christ paid that price on the cross.
7. We are His prize and His possession.

E. Our purpose

1. Peter concludes by showing us how our identity fits into God's purpose for our lives.
2. The purpose of our identity is to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."
3. The word "proclaim" here means to advertise or to promote.
4. His "excellencies" illustrates the majestic and powerful work of God.
5. The purpose of God's people as ambassadors is to witness to the greatness of God.
6. We are chosen and empowered to proclaim the gospel as we live lives that testify to the power of God in our life.
7. Peter also reminds us that God called us out of darkness and into the light.
8. Once we were trapped in sin and rebellion, and are now free, and are called to proclaim this good news.
9. Peter emphasizes this further by saying that we "once were not a people, but now you are the people of God."
10. This is a quote from the Old Testament book of Hosea.
11. God has not only given us a new identity. He has also given us a divine purpose based upon this identity.

III. Living our Testimony (2:11-12)

A. Aliens and strangers

1. Peter begins by referring to Christians as "aliens and strangers."
2. Foreigners and aliens have no legal status or rights.

3. They are not citizens of the country here they are living. Their citizenship is elsewhere.
 4. Peter goes on to admonish them to “abstain from fleshly lusts.”
 5. Other translations say we are to “abstain from sinful desires.”
 6. Christians are holy people belonging to a holy God and should abstain.
 7. We should also note that not all fleshly desires are sexual.
 8. Many translations use the word “lusts,” while others avoid that word because it may imply to some that Peter is only talking about sexual sin.
 9. We should also note that not all fleshly desires are sinful.
- B. Excellent behavior
1. Peter instructs us to live a life where our behavior is excellent.
 2. Other translations say we are to “live an exemplary life.”
 3. Peter wants us to live a life that is not only pleasing to God, but is pleasing to other people. Sadly, that is not always the case.
 4. Perhaps you have heard people say, “I will never do business again with another Christian.”
 5. We should be the most trustworthy, gracious, caring people on earth. We should live lives of honesty and integrity.
 6. Peter also warns them that they will often be unfairly attacked.
 7. They should not be surprised that critics would “slander them as evildoers.”
 8. At this time, Christians were slandered and persecuted for false reasons:
 9. Cannibalism - they said during the Lord’s Supper that “this is my body” and “this is my blood.”
 10. Atheism - they did not worship the pagan idols of that day.
 11. Treason - because they would not say: “Caesar is Lord.”
- C. Silence Slander
1. He concludes by pointing to “the day of visitation” when these critics will “see your good works and glorify God.”
 2. In the Old Testament, the “day of visitation” was anytime God visited earth (either in blessing or judgment). He is pointing to the Second Coming of Christ.

IV. Submission to Authority (2:13-17)

- A. Submit to government
1. Peter admonishes them to submit to earthly authority.
 2. This may have been a difficult command for persecuted Christians to hear: they had been slandered and persecuted.
 3. They would have been more willing to resist or rebel rather than submit.
 4. Peter recognized that civil authority had the power to punish evildoers and “praise those who do right.”
 5. Romans 13:2 - “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”

6. Peter goes on to argue that by their good behavior, they will be able to silence the slander and “ignorance of foolish men.”
7. He talks about “doing right” three times in his letter and believes that it will win others to Jesus Christ.

B. Honor everyone

1. Peter concludes with a summary statement that Christians are to “honor everyone and love the brotherhood.”
2. We are to show honor and respect to all people, starting first with those in authority over us but continuing on to each person.
3. While this may seem obvious, it was a radical statement in that day when there were various classes of people and a mass of humanity in slavery.
4. Peter expected Christians to respect others and treat slaves and those in a lower class with respect and equality.

V. Defense of the Gospel (3:13-16)

A. Suffering

1. Peter acknowledges that suffering may continue.
2. Paul teaches that we should not be surprised if suffering comes (Philippians 1:29).
3. James explains that suffering will come and it will provide a test for our faith (James 1:2-4).

B. Defense

1. Peter then says we should always be ready to defend our faith.
2. We should constantly be prepared.
3. This comes from reading God’s Word but also from our study of others who have been equipped and able to defend biblical truth.
4. The word for defense is the Greek word *apologia* from which we get the word apologetics.
5. We also have a responsibility “to give an account for the hope” that is in us.
6. We are also to do this with “gentleness and reverence.”
7. When we respond with grace and respect, Peter explains that “those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”

Periscope Material Guide for Churches

We are excited to be partnering with you in offering the Periscope Experience to your congregation. The information below will provide all the information you need to implement this experience. We recommend using all the material provided. However, it is up to you to determine what is best for your congregation.

The material has five different major components: 1) Church-wide Assessment Tool, 2) Worship Music, 3) Sermon Material, 4) Small Group Material and 5) Daily Contact with Participants. The process and materials associated with each component are described below.

1. Church-wide Assessment Tool

This assessment tool asks your attenders to answer a series of questions about their beliefs. The purpose of this tool is to assess the level of cultural captivity of the participants. It is primarily intended to provide you with unique insights and a baseline for your discipleship goals. This survey is completely confidential. We would like your attenders to take the assessment prior to the first sermon, if possible. Use your bulletin, newsletter, or other appropriate communication venue to ask them to go to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/yourchurchidentifier and take the assessment at their convenience. We will send you an email with the url for your specific church. We will provide you with the results after several weeks.

If you have members that would like to provide their inputs and are not comfortable online, let us know and we will provide a version you can make copies of. You will then need to enter their inputs in the survey monkey site.

2. Worship Music

Your worship leader can access mp3s of our 12 song *Now I'm Bound* collection prepared for us by Jennie Lee Riddle (winner of 3 Dove Awards). We also can provide orchestration for each song for use by your worship team. We will send you CDs of this album (1 for pastor, 1 for worship leader, 1 for each small group leader). Your worship leader may select either PSAT (Piano Soprano Alto Tenor) or full orchestration (every instrument imaginable) versions for each song. We don't expect you to use all 12 songs during the experience. We suggest the following songs with each session.

Session	Topic	Recommended Song
All weeks	Theme for Experience	Now I'm Bound
1	Eternal Perspective	One True God
2	Deceived by Satan	Let Our Worship Rise
3	False Views	This Little Light of Mine
4	False Living	In This House
5	True Reality	Love Like This
6	Renewing Your Mind	Hope of the Broken World
7	True Purpose	Now I'm Bound

When you purchased the church experience, you selected the sheet music type you desired. If you or your members, want to purchase more copies of the music, 1) we will send you a few extra CDs

which you can sell for \$10, or 2) they can be sent to upPeriscope.com to purchase a CD. The music is available by going to www.upPersicope.com and clicking on the Resources tab followed by selecting the Now I'm Bound CD item.

3. Sermon Material

We provide sermon outlines and introductory videos for each of the seven sermons. As long as you preach on the topic, you are free to use as much or as little of the outline as you desire. Please use the associated video with each sermon. The videos can be accessed in the locations indicated in the table below. Your audio-visual team can use them online or download them as they desire.

Periscope Sermon Videos

Week	Sermon Topic	Video Title	URL
0	Promo for Series	Periscope Promo	vimeo.com/probe/promo
1	Eternal Perspective	Now I'm Bound Trust the Almighty	vimeo.com/probe/bound
2	Deceived by Satan	Cultural Captivity Defined	vimeo.com/probe/captive
3	False Views	Spiritual Growth Hormone	vimeo.com/probe/sgH
4	False Living	Siri-ous	
5	True Reality	A Million Little Choices	
6	Renewing Your Mind	The Power of the Gospel	Vimeo.com/probe/dontletmego
7	True Purpose	Periscope Sketch	vimeo.com/probe/sketch

Note: The *Now I'm Bound* video is a music video using the title song of our album. You certainly want to use it the first week. You may want to use it every week or several times during the experience.

Like the Small Group Facilitator's, we also want you to have a copy of *Cultural Captives*. Be sure and include the pastoral staff in the number of Small Group Facilitator's you provide to us so we will send you enough materials for the pastoral staff.

4. Small Group Material

The small group material consists of a *Periscope Facilitator's Guide* covering the seven sessions and a 2 DVD set with videos for each session. In addition, each small group leader will receive a copy of *Cultural Captives*, a copy of *Periscope*, and a *Now I'm Bound* CD. *Cultural Captives* is our recent book presenting the results of our in-depth analysis of the current state of emerging adult, born again Americans. *Periscope* is the book of daily readings for this entire experience.

Special Item: There are three video segments for each small group session. First, there is a thought tickler video for each session. These short videos should be used if your small group sessions are longer than an hour. The second video segment is a short introductory segment (i.e. ~ 3 minutes) which we recommend be used for all sessions. Finally, the third video segment is a longer teaching segment (i.e. ~ 12 minutes). Each small group leader will receive two DVDs with all the video material including discussion questions interspersed throughout the video material. Note: the small groups normally start after the first worship/sermon experience but you could start them the week before if you desire.

Periscope Small Group Videos

Week	Small Group Topic	Video Titles Thought Tickler/ Intro / Teaching Video
1	Looking Through God's Periscope	Now I'm Bound / How Big is An Elephant / Grasping Eternity
2	Seeing the Source of Deception	NA / Our Online Profile Page / Deceived by the Father of Lies
3	The Danger of False Views	Cultural Captives / Picking a Custom Faith / The Danger of False Views
4	The Danger of False Living	Spiritual Growth Hormone / Looking for Answers / The Façade of False Living
5	Embracing a True Vision	NA / Paddling to the Big Prize / Embracing True Reality
6	Renewing in the Truth	NA / Connected to the Power / Renewing in the Truth
7	Seeing Above – Living Beyond	Once Captive Sketch / Work Out Your Salvation / Our True Purpose in Life

5. Daily Reinforcement of Periscope Experience

One of the key elements of this experience is that participants are encouraged to interact with the material on a daily basis. This interaction occurs through several mechanisms.

Daily Devotional: each participant should have a copy of Kerby Anderson's book, *Periscope*. We recommend that each participant receive a hard copy of *Periscope*. Additional hard copies may be purchased from upPeriscope.com.

Daily Contact: Each participant will receive a voicemail and/or an email each day with a short thought related to that day's message in *Periscope*. We use a service which will schedule and

deliver these contacts. The easiest way to enter their information is to send us a file with the following information:

Name / Email address / Phone number / Chose email or voicemail or both/

We can then enter the information into the system. We will not use this information for any other purpose. You can delegate this responsibility to your Small Group Facilitators. They can send the information to scable@probe.org. As you have new people join during the series, just send us the same information. If you want to take responsibility for entering this information directly into the system, contact us and we will work with you.

Note: We found that young adults tend to like the voice mail option. This preference is counterintuitive since many of them seldom listen to their voice mails (“just text me”). What we discovered was that this was a different category of information and many preferred listening to a < 2 minute call rather than reading an email.

Summary

Yes, there is a lot of material that makes up this church-wide experience. However, if you look at each area, it is very manageable for the leaders of that area. Let’s summarize the key things we need from you:

1. Encourage your people to take the Church Assessment (if you decide to offer it)
2. Send us the quantity of pastoral staff and small group facilitators you expect to have so that we can send you the hard copy materials you need.
3. Get your worship leader working with the *Now I’m Bound* songs; selecting the ones to use in the worship time.
4. Start reviewing *Cultural Captives* and *Periscope* and the sermon outline for week one.
5. Send us an estimate of the number of hard copies of *Periscope* you will need.
6. Send us the information needed for the daily email/voice mail contact with the participants.

The Periscope Experience is designed to focus the attention of a church on these important issues. We pray that this experience will have a lasting spiritual impact on your church and community.