

XII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“Elect Exile Lifestyle Axiom #1, Part 2”
I Peter 1:13–21
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May 13, 2018 • Morning Sermon

This is our 13th study in I Peter and Lord willing we’ll finish up verses 13 through 21 in this study. This is the Word of God. God’s Word is the truth. I Peter 1:13–21 says *[13] Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” [17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. [20] He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you [21] who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

That first word in I Peter 1:13, ‘therefore’ means that section cannot be understood without understanding the previous section. The ‘therefore’ is also to tell you there is a new section but the new section is inseparable from the previous section. So what do we know from the previous section besides the fact that Peter is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God as the author of this epistle? We know three things.

The first thing we know is how God sees you and how Peter wants you to see yourself. You are, as a saved person, a person who has been brought from sin to Christ, an elect exile. That statement will govern everything that comes from I Peter. He will point out how we are pilgrims, sojourners and exiled. Elect tells us who we are in Christ. Before the foundation of the world the saving love of God the Father, through God the Son, in the eternal covenant in the sending of God the Spirit, declared God’s determined purpose to bring you from death unto life, from your sin to Christ. You became a seeker of Christ because God from eternity determined to seek you to bring you from death unto like in Him. We are the elect of God before the foundation of the world and that’s who we are in Christ.

Secondly, you are exiles. We are to see ourselves as sojourners, pilgrims, aliens, exiles. I like to say that I’m on a green card. God has worked it out that in this world I am a citizen of a nation and that nation is America. While we may have different citizenships in different countries all Christians have their primary, their governing, their supreme citizenship in the Kingdom of God. God transferred you from the kingdom of darkness and sin into the Kingdom of Light, heaven, and His Son Jesus Christ for all eternity. There is your supreme allegiance.

I’d like to communicate to all the world that you can’t have a better citizen than a Christian where God’s work of grace is working in their life, but the reason the nations of this world tend to target Christians is they know intuitively, ultimately and from us confessionally that we have a supreme allegiance beyond the nations of this world. That is King Jesus. Our

citizenship is in heaven and if the nations of this world and their rulers ever bring us a command that would transgress the commands of our King then we must obey God rather than man. We supremely belong to Him.

One of the ways Peter wants us to see ourselves is as an exile. Very clearly, Peter is calling up the imagery of the Old Covenant, when God delivered His people out of the bondage of slavery and brought them to a Passover meal. Here He told them to gird up their loins, grab their staff and follow Him to the wilderness where they will be a sojourner/pilgrim until He delivers them into the Promised Land. That becomes a glorious Old Testament picture of what God has promised to do not in Moses but in One greater than Moses who is Jesus, who delivers us not from slavery but from the slavery of sin. He tells us to gird up the loins of our mind so that we set our hope on that city that is yet to come and until you get there you are a pilgrim, a sojourner.

There is a song we used to sing growing up titled 'This World is Not My Home' and the words say;

*This world is not my home
I'm just a-passing through
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.*

*The angels beckon me
From heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.*

So I'm living here under a mission with a message as an ambassador of Christ but I also see myself as an exile. I'm a pilgrim on a journey whereby my citizenship to King Jesus is manifested by me being on a mission to make disciples from all the nations with a message called the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in ministry of worship, evangelism, loving one another and disciple making.

There's a second thing that this 'therefore' is telling us and that is you have a great salvation. It is so great that Peter took almost 200 words and jammed them into one sentence. He very clearly laid it out as a Trinitarian phrase to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit from I Peter 1:3–12 to tell us how great a salvation and great a Savior we have. Our King is glorious and we have a great salvation because it's faithful to God's Word, it overcomes our sin and the angels look on it with bewilderment because we now know it in its fullness in our relationship with Christ. What they knew in types, shadows, prophecies and precepts we now know in the fullness of Christ by the grace of God to follow Him. But we also have a salvation that takes us through adversity as well.

Thirdly, you know you're going to be under adversity. There aren't parades for Christians and we have a hard time grasping that because we live in a nation where God in His providence has visited us with numerous revivals and two extraordinary awakenings from 1735 to 1765 and from 1785 to 1880 and then revivals even in the past century that we have known. Therefore the culture has been effected by that but that's not the majority report for the last 2,000 years for most of the nations of this world. Christians are targeted and persecuted and Peter knows that.

Peter probably had never been to these churches at Galatia but he writes so pointedly, intimately and assuredly, why? It's because he knows God's Word and who the Savior is.

Secondly, he knows who they are. He knows what it means to be saved by grace and have a heart prone to wander. He knows that grace in the Christian life that is always dealing with that indwelling sin in our life. He is fully aware of the truth of God's Word as to who God is, what He has done and what is happening in them. So he doesn't have to be there with them to tell them this. He knows that wherever a Christian is the evil empire always strikes back and that this world is hostile. It does not seek God, love God or long for Him for we are born with a Christ-killing heart, a God-hating heart. You might be saying 'I don't have one of those and I wasn't as bad as some others' and that's because He gave you a new one and restrained you.

When you read of people doing horrific and despicable acts of evil it ought to pain us, grieve us, cause lament and all of those things but it shouldn't amaze us. We ought to be amazed that we didn't do it and the only reason you didn't do it was because God's grace got a hold of your heart before it could go where it would have gone. That's what we know from the Word of God. So we know that there is going to be adversity. Peter is going to hear they some will be burned to death as he talks about fiery trials and he is going to get them ready for that. Christians will get targeted and persecuted.

So how is it as an elect exile that I can be faithful for Christ my great Savior on my journey to the celestial city? Secondly, how can I be effective for Christ on mission on message and in ministry? Thirdly, how can I finish strong? Howard Hendricks said there are 367 biographical sketches in the Bible of believers and only 49 of them finishes strong. How can my last mile be my best mile? This is what Peter is now going to tell us. He is moving from who you are in Christ and what He has called you to be to now giving you commands. If he had told you commands in the beginning as to what you do and then who you are, we would arrogantly begin to think we are what we are because of what we do. But in reality he is telling you what you are because of what Jesus did first and once we get that settled now he can give us commands. He gives commands starting at I Peter 1:13 all the way to Peter 5.

What is the first command that he gives and what is it that solves my dilemma of how to be faithful, effective and finish strong? The first command is found in I Peter 1:15–16 which says [15] *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."* We are to be holy in all of our conduct. The word holy means unique, one of a kind. So he tells us to be holy as He is holy and then he gives us the pattern to follow.

The pattern is not that we are to be more holy than the person sitting next to me or the pastor. No, it's not more than anything. You are to put your eyes on your God, know who your God is, you belong to Him and you now increasingly want to be like Him. The Divine summons to elect exiles in light of our great salvation is the pursuit of a personal and pervasive lifestyle of holiness by the grace of God and for the glory of God. Nobody can do this for you. There are a lot of people who can help us and we'll see this when we get to the second axiom that has to do with our love for one another. Nobody can make those lifestyle choices for it's the personal pervasive pursuit of a lifestyle of holiness.

Be holy in all your conduct. It is not part of it. There is nothing in my life that I'm not supposed to turn over to the Lord – my voice, appetites, knowledge, relationships. Christ is the modifying adjective in all my life. I'm not a man who is a Christian I want to be a Christian man, Christian husband, Christian father, a Christian citizen. I want every area of my life to be turned over to Him. Jesus teach me to live all of my conduct to You on this journey. This is not what you do to be the elect (saved) but this is what the elect (saved) do.

I already have a positional holiness that is perfect. That is why even though we're sinners we are called saints. The blood of Jesus has already sprinkled us clean, removed our sins and the righteousness Jesus has clothed us up so that every time He sees us He sees the perfection of His Son. This is what it means to be an elect exile, to be holy. My pattern is my God – to be holy as I am holy. There is none like Him. Oh the majesty of our God. It is not just holy in the normative or in the comparative but holy all the way to the superlative. You shall call My name holy.

If we were asked to give only one attribute of God almost all of us would give the word love and certainly that's crucial because God is love. God is light and God is righteous. But when we look into heaven and they are only declaring one word they are not saying love, they are saying 'holy, holy, holy.' Don't think that diminishes love that just told you something about God's love for God's love is holy. God's grace is holy. God's righteousness is holy. God's patience is holy. That one attribute modifies all of the other attributes of God. Holy, holy, holy is His Name.

How do we know this? It is because it is written (I Peter 1:16). It is written all over the Bible. Recently I was asked to look over a commentary on Leviticus and I asked Phil what the title of the commentary was going to be. He said it was going to be 'Be Ye Holy.' I can't be holy enough to be saved for only Jesus could do that for me but I can be holy for my Savior. God, make us unique for we have to learn something. We are in the world but what draws us in the world is not that we're like the world but God is doing something in us and the humility to know that He is doing it by grace attracts people to the One who is doing it in them. So the call is for us to be holy as He is holy and the Bible affirms that.

So how do I get started? Peter then gives three more commands. Think of a three legged stool. It cannot hold the weight of one sitting on it unless it has all three legs. Peter gives you three legs as you are pursuing this pervasive holiness in all of your life. I Peter 1:13 says *[13] Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* To be faithful, effective and persistent in present grace look to future grace – grace being brought to you.

Jesus who came for you in past grace saved you is the same Jesus who is coming again for you and when the pressure, adversity, and trials from the world outside as you deal with the old man on the inside becomes intense lift up your eyes to the celestial city. Lift up your ears to the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the angel. Your Savior is coming for you. Your best days are never this day or a past day but they are always in front of you until the Day of the revelation of Jesus Christ and the consummation of the work of His grace that will be brought to you. On that day we will no longer trace the rainbow through the rain for on that day there will only be the majesty, glory and sight of our Savior. On that day it will no longer be by faith but now by sight. In other words, you don't keep step by looking down but you keep step by looking ahead. He is coming. You begin from the end.

If I was calling someone to holiness the first thing I would go to is the law of God because that's the best definition of holiness. How do you love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind? How do you love your neighbor as yourself? There is a place for the law of God and Peter gets to it but that's not where he starts. The One that came for you He is coming again for you. Always keep looking to Him. That means you need to do three things with your mind. One you need to gird up your mind. Roll up your sleeves. Get a mind ready to work. Don't be mindless. Have it ready in hand. Have it prepared.

Two have a sober mind. Don't let the world intoxicate you with power, possessions, your appetites, the precious gift of sex to be celebrated in the context of a covenant of marriage, the acclaim, applause of this world and its false advertisements about what is life. Don't even get intoxicated with those good things and put them ahead of the Lord. Whatever intoxicates you will control you and you will lose control. Have your mind under control of the Word of God. Thirdly, fix your mind fully on the hope that is to be revealed.

The second leg of the stool is in I Peter 1:14 which says [14] *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.* When you become a Christian you get a new heart, a new life, a new home and a new family. You still have an old man in you though. You don't have two hearts for you only have one heart and the old heart has been cut out but you do have an old man that keeps wanting to get into that new heart. That old man is more powerful than your resolve. How do I get rid of that old man? You put your eyes on Jesus and everyday kill the old man.

Galatians 2:20 says [20] *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Before you get out of bed everyday kill the old man. Today is not about me. Before we were Christians we had an old way of thinking and everything was all about me. The entitlement mentality is not new. We're born with it. That's the stinkin' thinkin' that has to get removed. We have to think differently in our life. It's not about me but it's about Him. The call is not to my happiness but to holiness and in that becomes my true happiness. There is where I can glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Those former ways of living keep trying to come back in our lives. Don't make peace with them. Kill them. Don't try to walk with them. Flee them. Don't try to get as close to the edge as you can. Walk in the path of righteousness with Christ. Surrender to the Spirit. Don't resolve in the flesh. Put to death the former ways that keep trying to come back in your life. How do you do this? You do this as obedient children.

Here is where I have a slight difference with this ESV translation. In I Peter 1:14 it says 'as obedient children, do not be conformed...' I humbly suggest to you that the better translation of this is 'as children of obedience...' If you say the child of something then you are saying the parents of that child. When you look at the marks of a child they bear the marks of the parent. This phrase isn't necessarily speaking that believers (children) are obedient but I think it's saying more than that for when you see the children who are saved by the grace of God you almost assume their parents must be Mr. and Mrs. Obedience. What were we before?

Ephesians 2:1-5 says [1] *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work **in the sons of disobedience**— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

Before I was a Christian you would have thought my parents were Mr. and Mrs. Disobedience. Now that you're a believer it looks like, not with perfection, it looks like their parents are Mr. and Mrs. Obedience. They had a default in their unsaved life to disobey God but they now have a default where they want to obey God so when the old man comes up to fashion your life you say 'no, I'm going to kill you because I am a child of obedience.' Again, this is not to be saved but because I am saved that I am a child of obedience.

The third leg is to conduct yourself with fear throughout the time of your exile. If you call the One who is the Judge of all humanity your Father then conduct yourself with fear. Some of you are thinking 'I thought love motivated us.' It does but fear sobers us. Proverbs 9:10 says *[10] The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.* You are not declaring that your God is gracious by belittling your God from His transcendent glory. Sometimes we think if we talk about the fear of the Lord people aren't going to want to come to Him. You tell them, 'see this God who is worthy of our respect and awe and there is none like Him, holy is His Name, that God came to save you.' That's the God who lives in you.

It is not a watered down tame God. I love it when C.S. Lewis is talking about Aslan the lion who is point to Christ in the Chronicles of Narnia and a character asks 'Is he a tame lion?' 'Oh no he is not a tame lion.' Many times to try to invite people to God we tame Him down. No! This is the God to whom we will all give an account. This is the God who will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. This is the God who says the wage of sin is death. That God made a way for you and that's the God who lives in you. The reason we don't live big lives for God is because most of us don't have a big God. You have to get a big God to get a big life for God. The big God defined by the Word of God is the God who comes to you to save you, for you to redeem you and in you.

How did He do that? He didn't do it with the blood of bulls and goats. He didn't even do it with gold and silver. People lived die and do everything for gold and silver. He redeemed you with something that is beyond any comprehension. He redeemed you with His Son who like a lamb, went to the cross, shed His blood for you have been sprinkled clean with the blood of the lamb. You have been redeemed, not with that which is perishable, but that which is imperishable and never fades away. That is the precious, redeeming, atoning work of Jesus Christ for you. Yes it is possible by the Spirit of God to be motivated by the love of God and sobered by the fear of God in a Christian life. Both can be at work in your life.

The love of God compels me and the fear of the Lord directs me and sobers me. That is why He says this in Philippians 2:12, *[12] Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Fear of what? It is not the fear of death for as a Christian I'm just going to go through the shadow of that because Jesus has already won the victory. I don't fear the Judgment Seat any longer because Jesus has written me in the Book of Life. I don't fear hell any longer because Jesus has already been there, grabbed the keys and set me free.

All fear is gone but in its place is this glorious, directing, reverencing, sobering reality that God who spoke and everything was created. The God who spoke again His Word who came in flesh to the cross has saved me and the God who spoke my name will never leave me nor forsake me. That God is my God and I am His because He is mine. That is where our God brings us to effective, faithful, persistent, pervasive, personal holiness because we love Him.

Here are the takeaways. The first one is our hope in Christ is essential to our holiness for Christ. It is inseparable. Peter tells us to set our hope fully on Jesus Christ's coming. If you want to be holy for Christ have your hope fully in Christ.

Secondly, doctrine is essential to worship and witness. I know most want this 15 minute pick-me-up, inspirational story every week but you have to have weight in the balance. I Peter 1:3-12 is a statement of worship and nothing in it would you know if it hadn't been given to you doctrinally from the Word of God. You wouldn't know that God loved you, sent His Son to save you, the atoning death of Christ, the fact of the resurrection of Christ and what it means, that this

God is with you, that He is using trials or any of those things to worship and praise Him without doctrine.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 says [16] *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching (doctrine), for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* You don't live lives for Jesus by contemplating your navel on a Tuesday afternoon or by gazing in the skies on a Saturday morning. You go to the Word of God and then when you gaze in the sky now you know the God who made all of that. Now when you look at yourself you say 'Look at what I was, look at what I am, look at what He is making of me and where I'm headed!' This is all because the Bible tells me so. You have to have doctrine in order to have God-centered worship and in order to be a God-centered witness.

The third takeaway is that there is no peace treaties with sin and no closed doors in your life. Be holy in all of your conduct. If you have a peace treaty with some sin in your life like with a computer or a back room, I know it's tough because I battle sins with you but don't make peace treaties or bargains with sin. If you do you might as well get the most poisonous snake in the world and put it in your bed and go to sleep. That's about how much sense it makes to try to live with sin. Hate it. Kill it or it can kill your marriage or your ministry or your witness. You are saved and forgiven. Everything has to be given over to God so don't say 'God you can have everything else but not that.'

The fourth takeaway is the best defense is a vigorous offense. If I could just fill my life up with what I'm doing in following and pursuing the Lord then I don't have as much room for sin to have a foothold and a beachhead. It is just that simple. God, will give you a love for my wife that there is just not room for another one – what are you doing thinking that you idiot? Look at your wife. God has given you that wife. Fill me up with a love for You that transcends everything so that everything I see is through You not through me.

God fill me up so that I have an effulgence obedience. What do I mean by that? Spring is here and the leaves are coming out. How did those beautiful leaves get there? It was because the sap was rising and brought the new leaves which forces out the old ones. Some you just need to cut off at the limb. Pluck out an eye or cut off a right hand for that's how intense we ought to be about sin but most of the time, the way you get rid of sin is to grow your obedience and love to Jesus that will push sin out and there is no room for it. Fill up so that you push out and you push away.

The fifth takeaway is that only a Christian can live a Christian life. You're probably thinking 'what?' But that is why He said to be holy for I am holy and if you call Him Father, the One who called you, then you are to be holy for you are a called one. Romans 8:28 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* I Thessalonians 5:24 says [24] *He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.* You are called ones.

Whenever I do sermons that call people to a purposeful, pervasive, pursuit to holiness I'm always concerned that that people will think 'this is what I need to go do to be a Christian' and that's not it. You need to come to Jesus to be a Christian. This is what we do for Jesus because we're saved, not to allow Jesus to save us. So your first step on this journey is home. As the hymn *Softly and Tenderly* says;

*Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;*

*See, on the portals He's waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.*

*Come home, come home,
You who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!*

Get on the journey with us. The flip side of this is if you are Christian then something that has been said in this study ought to be showing up in your life. This ought to resonate with you. It ought to be there and what you do is fix your hope for He's coming for you. Hear His footsteps. Hear the warming up of the trumpet. He's coming. Kill that old man every day and then as you walk as children of obedience. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and then we'll be home. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for these three directives as to how we can pursue holiness. Thank You that we can do so with prepared minds fixed fully on the coming of Christ. Thank You that because we can call you as Father we can be children of obedience who kill that call to disobedience. Thank You Father that we can have the blessing of the fear of the Lord even as we are motivated by the love of the Lord. Father, be at work in our lives that we might know the joy of personally pursuing holiness as well as the challenge. I only ask that You would work in the hearts that are reading this today that no one would leave to go do holiness to be saved but all would come to Jesus who is alone their Savior and then Father, bind us together as we personally pursue holiness together with our eyes fixed on Jesus and during the time of our exile may people see, hear and feel the love of our God, glorious and awesome is He. I pray this in Jesus' Name, O God of our vision and life, Amen.

Power Point

AXIOM #1 FOR ELECT EXILES

"Be Ye Holy for I Am Holy"

The Divine Summons to Elect Exiles in light of our Great Salvation is the Pursuit of a Personal and Pervasive lifestyle of Holiness by the Grace of God and for the Glory of God.

- I. Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Prepared mind – sober mind – fixed mind

Our Christ-secured future destination by God's grace is foundational to our Christ-exalting present occupation by God's grace.

II. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

III. Conduct yourself with fear throughout the time of your exile.

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Pursuit of a pervasive holiness by Elect Exiles...

I. Our Hope in Christ is essential to our Holiness for Christ

II. Doctrine is essential to worship and witness

III. No peace treaties with sin—closed doors

IV. Best defense is a vigorous offense

V. Only a Christian can live a Christian life