

XIV. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“Elect Exile Lifestyle Axiom #2, Part 2–Two Precepts”
I Peter 1:22–25
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June 3, 2018 • Morning Sermon

This is our 14th study and we’ll finish this first chapter in I Peter in this study. I’d like to start by reading I Peter 1:1-2 which says *[1] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I thought as we talk about the elect exiles who are on a pilgrimage, a journey and we come to the summer months I’d start by talking about vacations like the one I had growing up. I had a dad, a mom and three sisters and our very first family vacation was when I was 16 years old. We were the family that when you didn’t have enough money to take a family vacation like the one I’m getting ready to tell you about then you would go visit relatives. When relatives came to visit on the Andy Griffith Show, Opie would say ‘Oh boy daddy that means we get to do adventure sleeping.’ Where you basically get to sleep wherever they put you.

However when I was 16 we had a real life family vacation. My dad was in charge of having fun. He would make sure we had Uno cards, golf dates, Monopoly etc. He was the director of fun time. My mom made sure everything was in place. A week before she would make a list for everyone for us to know what we needed to bring. Once my dad decided where we were going my mom would figure out down to the stops what route we’d take to get there and how long it would take. She also told us where everyone was going to sit in the car. If you look up OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) in the dictionary you will probably see my mom’s picture there. Disorder? This was a way of life, the order of life for me growing up. My mom had everything laid out. By the time we left everyone knew what was going to happen when for we had a complete travel log of our trip.

In a sense that is what Peter is giving us. He is talking to the elect exile. Elect is who you are in Christ. Exiles is how you are living for Christ in this world. You are on the dispersion. Remember, God’s covenant people were delivered out of Egypt and then went through a wilderness on a journey to the Promised Land. You have been delivered from the power and penalty of sin and you’re on a journey to the Celestial city. In I Peter 1:1-12 Peter very carefully tells you who you are in Christ before he tells you what to do for Christ, because we either with a lack of clarity, ignorance, or arrogance we can easily think that what we we’re doing is what makes us who we are in Christ. No, it’s what Jesus did that makes you who you are in Christ. Now how do you make this elect journey as the elect exile for Christ?

Peter will give us a series of framing, governing commandments as to how for your Savior not how to live for salvation. If you could live for salvation Jesus wouldn’t have come to die on the cross for our sins. He would have just said ‘start living.’ So now that we are in Christ how then do we live for Christ? The rest of I Peter is going to be laying out what I call axioms, framing commandments for us.

We have already covered two and in the next study we'll get to number three. Before we get to that there are two precepts we need to embrace all of these commands and particularly these first two axioms. Peter first tells us where we're going. This is important. I Peter 1:3-5 says [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is **imperishable**, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

You are on a journey to an imperishable destination and you are imperishable. You can't be lost. You are being kept for the inheritance that is being kept. You are an imperishable elect of God. Jesus said 'Father, all whom You have given Me I lost not one' (John 18:9). Philippians 1:6 says [6] *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* Jesus is keeping the inheritance and He is keeping them.

Peter has given us two commands and I'll just review the two we've already studied. Axiom (command) number one is a Divine summons to the personal pursuit of pervasive holiness. We find this command in I Peter 1:13-21 which 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.*

Here we have a command to be holy as the Lord is holy. This is not you seeking to be holy to be saved for that holiness has already been given to you. Jesus took away your sin when He died and paid the penalty for it. Then He gave us His righteousness so I have a positional holiness that is pure but this is calling me to live a life of holiness. I use the word pervasive because it says to be holy in all of your conduct. All of my hobbies don't become gods for I only use them to the glory of God. The same goes for my appetites. I Corinthians 10:31 says [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Nothing gets in front of God or above God.

This word holy is to be unique. We are uniquely owned by God and I'm on a journey seeking to present all that I am, have and doing as an offering of praise to Him. This is what God is calling me to do. In order to pursue this holiness I need to deal with my mind. Peter tells us to prepare our minds, be sober minded and fix your mind. Paul says it this way in Romans 12:1-2, [1] *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* This is God's call to me to have a mind that's prepared.

Don't be so open minded that your brains fall out. Select your teachers well. Select what you hear well. When all is said and done pupils become like their teachers. What is the opposite

of sober? It's intoxication. Don't get intoxicated with this world, what it offers and with your former passions. Whatever intoxicates you begins to control you. So have mind that is in hand, in control, in the control of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says *[18] And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.* Don't let anything of this world addict us. We are to be sober minded.

Then he tells us to fix our mind on the hope that is to be revealed in Jesus at His coming and the grace of God that is right now coming to you. Is the blessing of God's grace to be forgiven of all of your sins? Absolutely! Does it thrill your soul to now walk in the liberty of Christ? That is nothing compared to what's coming. You won't believe what's coming at the grace that is being brought to you in Christ and the One whom you love and haven't seen you will see. The One who has loved you whom you have not spoken to directly face to face you will see Him. The sins you're killing you will have to kill no longer because not only will you not sin but you will not be able to sin. You will have a new body, and be in a new heavens and a new earth forever. People say he is so heavenly minded that he is no earthly good. That's hogwash. You will never be earthly good until you get heavenly minded. Fix your hope on the grace that is to be revealed.

The second axiom Peter gives is a Divine summons to sincerely and earnestly love one another from the heart. I have some travelling companions. One my family vacations that was a challenge because I had three sisters I had to share the car with and that was always interesting to be in that environment. You have God as your Father and you have brothers and sisters in the Lord and we're on this journey together. We see this command in I Peter 1:22 which says *[22] Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.*

The Greek word for brotherly love is *phileo* which is a brotherly sister love and then the next word for love in this verse is a different word in the Greek and it is the Greek word *agape*. *Agape* is a sacrificial love. So we have brothers and sisters in the Lord we are to love and on the journey we are to have a sacrificial love for our brothers and sisters. He wants this love to have three marks – sincere, earnest and heartfelt. We don't do random acts of love. We are to do intentional, sincere, earnest, from the heart acts of love into one another's life to help each other on the journey as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

To do that there are two precepts Peter gives us but before I give the two precepts I have three questions for you. The first question is how do you know what your destination is on this journey? It's an imperishable inheritance. How do I know this? How do you know you are headed to a new heavens and a new earth with Christ, numbered with the elect of God? You know that because the Bible tells you so. I wouldn't have known who my Savior is and what He has done for me without the Word of God.

The second question is are you holy in all of your conduct? I fall short of this every day. Just give me three stoplights on highway 280. I'm not where I ought to be but I praise God I'm not where I was. I'm not even where I want to be. I am falling short of this first axiom to pursue a personal pervasive holiness in my life and I get discouraged with it. A person asked me recently 'Pastor, are we saints or sinners?' The answer is 'yes.' Positionally you are a saint and no one has to canonize you or vote on it. You are a saint because of the blood and righteousness of Jesus and the Spirit of God that is within you, set apart to belong to Christ. Your condition is you are a sinner. You have an old man within you. The Bible says that if we say we haven't sinned then we're liars and the truth is not in us (I John 1:10). Conditionally I'm a sinner.

The third question is, is there anyone you sincerely and earnestly don't love? Then we see the second axiom where we are to sincerely and earnestly love our brothers and sisters. Are you satisfied with the way you love your brothers and sisters? You know you're not satisfied in this area. There are some that you would like to strangle, so Lord please forgive me. I am familiar with the love chapter of I Corinthians 13. I don't know who wrote this poem but I like it;

To live above, with the saints we love;

Oh, that will be glory!

But to live below, with the saints we know;

Well, that's another story.

There's a challenge for you!

As we see the answers to these three questions, is God kind of like Pharaoh? Pharaoh told the people of Israel to make the bricks and they had to make just as much with less straw. Is God telling us to do something but not giving us enough to do it? Can I pursue holiness and increasingly, pervasively have more and more of my life given to Christ? Can I really grow in my ability to love God's people? That is why these two precepts are important that I'm about to give you. We can do all this and stay on the journey with these two precepts.

Precept number one is our justification is imperishable. You are right with God and it is imperishable because of the imperishable blood of Christ. I Peter 1:17-19 says [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.*

Yes, I fall short in my pursuit of holiness, I'm convicted of it and I want to keep growing. Yes, I fall short in my love for others but my hope is in Jesus Christ and the imperishable blood of Christ. Therefore even though I fall short my hope in Christ is a sure Hope and it is the anchor of my soul. It is well with my soul because the blood of Christ cannot be broken. He has paid for all the sins of all of His people. The blood will never lose its power. I may manifest my impotence but the blood of Christ shall never lose its power. I love that old hymn *There's Power in the Blood* that says;

Would you be free from the burden of sin?

There's power in the blood, power in the blood;

Would you o'er evil a victory win?

There's wonderful power in the blood.

Chorus:

There is power, power, wonder-working power

In the blood of the Lamb;

There is power, power, wonder-working power

In the precious blood of the Lamb.

Our music director in the church I grew up in, when we got to the chorus would throw in as many 'powers' as he could get in musically in that hymn. I loved it. Every time I heard that song I remember walking away thinking there is power in the blood.

The blood of Christ is imperishable and therefore my standing with God is sure in Christ. It is not sure because of my performance. It is sure because of the blood. As another old hymn says (Nothing But the Blood);

*What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

Chorus:

*Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

The second precept is found in I Peter 1:23-25 which says [23] *since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;* [24] *for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, [25] but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

The second precept is our regeneration is imperishable. You have been born again and that is imperishable because you have been born again by the imperishable Word of God and the Spirit. You have been brought from death unto life. Why does he have to say *And this word is the good news that was preached to you?* It is because there is no way for you to get on the journey to heaven in the perfect righteousness of Jesus and resting in the forgiveness of the blood of Jesus unless you have been born again.

In your first birth there was a seed and an egg and both are perishable. In your new birth there is a Seed and the receptor is the Spirit of God. The Seed is the imperishable Word of God and the Spirit of God brought you from death unto life. Even though you falter the blood always cries out for your forgiveness. You also know that the Spirit of God has broken the power of sin. You still have sin living in you but you no longer live in the power of sin. It no longer has dominion over you because you have been born again.

If you haven't been born again you have only been born one time. I always quote I Peter 1:24-25 after I read the Scripture for each study because I'm really reminding myself that God called me to preach and I am opening up the one thing in this room that is imperishable. It is the Word of God and everything else is perishable except for those who have been born again. All flesh withers and so does all of our achievements. It doesn't mean they are not important but they all perish.

I think of all those incredible athletes and the abilities they have. It brings me back to my athletic days and I used to do the same thing at 2am when I was dreaming. I do know that if those athletes live long enough there will come a day where they won't even be able to put a spoon in a cup of coffee. We'll run out of replacement surgeries and cosmetic surgeries because all flesh withers. It reminds me of a member of our church who had been out due to illness for a while and she came back to church and I saw her at the end of the service and said 'It's so good to see you. You look great!' I said that in all honesty and she said 'You know a little paint will make you what you ain't.' I told her that was going to go in a book someday. There is coming a day that the paint won't do it either. I know some think they are imperishable but we're not.

All flesh fades but the Word of the Lord remains forever. The Word preached is essential for it is the Good News where helpless and hopeless sinners can be saved through Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God took that Word and opened your heart and you believed. That Word is infallible. God will not send a note to say He is going to make an edit in that part of the text. His Word is inerrant, infallible, reliable and unbreakable. John 17:17 says [17] *Sanctify them in*

the truth; your word is truth. It doesn't contain truth for it is the truth. It doesn't become the truth for it is the truth.

The biggest decision you'll ever make in your life is what you do with it when it says in John 14:6, [6] *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* All eternity awaits. If God works in your heart and you believe it is unbreakable. It won't fade away. It is imperishable. It is the living, abiding Word of God. This is the Word that was preached to you when you heard the Good News. So where does that leave us?

Here is the takeaway. The elect exiles are headed for an imperishable inheritance and are imperishable because they are cleansed by the imperishable blood of the Son of God. The blood of Christ will never fail. It's not the blood of bulls and goats. It is the blood of the Lamb of God and it takes away all the sins of all of His people. The second part to this takeaway is the elect exiles are imperishable because they have been born again by the Spirit of God with the imperishable Word of God through the preaching of the Gospel of God. That's why we have a Hope.

I have an angst in my soul to get through to you. All that stuff right now that is taking your attention from this message is perishing and it is of no consequence unless it is wrapped up in the love of God in Christ in your life. Then it becomes an offering of praise to God, all that you do. But if you leave here thinking you won't perish Hebrews 9:27 says [27] *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.* Your stuff won't last forever. What lasts forever is the glory of God by the grace of God anchored in your soul and it is well with my soul.

I have a pastoral request to fellow pilgrims to pray for me. Nobody gets on this journey without being born again and nobody gets born again without the Word of God. And the Word of God is to be preached. As a pastor there are so many things I'm grateful to be a part of but I ask you to pray for me that even through all my inadequacies and all that is fading in my life that I will stay the course and preach the Word, the Gospel of saving grace in Christ and pray also for all who are called that they stay the course.

I also have a pastoral exhortation to my fellow pilgrims. Do you value what is perishable or imperishable? Right now, what is it that sets the schedule of your life? Where is the Word of God in your life? Where is the blood of the Lamb? Where is the imperishable or is our lives ordered by the perishable? A good place to start would be to ask your children. Ask your son or daughter, what do you think your mom values the most in her life or what do you think your dad values most in his life? There is no greater joy than to see our children walking in the truth. They can't walk in it until they get born again by it. We have to bring it into their life and bring them to it.

The Sunday before I was resigning at a church in Charlotte, North Carolina a man stopped me to talk and it was a guy I grew up with playing baseball, basketball and football with since we were 7 years old all the way through college. Back then we were together all the time. After that he left and moved away. Kenny came to my office to tell me he was moving back to Charlotte and he said "Do you have room for another sinner?" I said "That's all we have here, sinners who can be saved by grace so come on in Kenny." He said "I can't wait to come home and I want to come to Jesus. Do you know what's hanging in my office? It is that little sign that said 'Forward in Christ' that we made at the VBS you invited me to and I've kept it ever since I was 8. Thank you for taking me there. I'm ready to go forward with Christ."

Don't discount moments like this. Our children see what we value. What's on your calendar? Is there time in your life for the Word of God? Fill them with the Word of God because it's unbreakable, inerrant, infallible, and you can't know the God of the Word without the Word of God. You can know the Word of God and not know the God of the Word but you can't know Him without His Word.

Thirdly, I have a pastoral reminder to my fellow pilgrims. You are on your way to the Celestial city pilgrim so let's go and guess what? There is room for more. Go out and invite them. Bring them in. You have the most important message they will ever hear. Talk to them about Jesus. The great thing is we are going as the family of God but there is always room for more. So go tell them.

When I became a Christian I made a list of all the people I had affected for I was a very immoral, ungodly person with a dissipated lifestyle to say the least. I had asked my wife to pray with me about all these people I had impacted on this list so that I could tell them what had happened in my life and what Jesus could do in their life. The very next day I saw a person on that list out and about and as he saw me he turned around to come over to see me. I was in my car going one way and he was in his car going the other way. We started talking with each other out our windows and he began by giving me a greeting in the basic vocabulary that I would have been using three months earlier. Now I wasn't responding the same way and then he saw a Bible on my car's dashboard.

There are signal lights in Charlotte that are so long that I can get a full chapter read in my Bible sitting at that light. So when I became a new Christian I would start bringing it with me. Another reason I would put it on my dashboard is because it would open up conversation and so it did with this friend from my past. When Larry saw it he said with interesting vocabulary 'What are you doing with that Bible in your car?' I had been praying for God to open a door and here it was. I said to him, "Larry I'm so glad you asked because I have recently become a Christian" and I tried to get out all this stuff I wanted to tell him but I noticed I was rolling backwards in my car but I really wasn't rolling backwards for he was rolling away. He was trying to get away from me as I am hanging out the door still trying to tell him. He then yelled back at me 'Hey that's great, I'm glad to hear you got some religion. I'll see you later.' So he pulled off.

There is this famous fish camp in Gastonia, North Carolina that my wife and I were eating at and we hadn't been married very long. As we were eating this lady came up behind me, put her arms around me and said 'Harry, I love you.' I'm thinking 'Oh no! this is a blast from the not too distant past.' My wife is there next to me and I turned around only to find out that it was Larry's mother. She said to me 'Larry, became a Christian.' I said 'He what?' I had told my wife, Cindy what had happened recently between me and Larry and wondered what kind of impression I made on him. My wife didn't think I did too well and I said to his mother 'I have recently become a Christian and I just talked with him to tell him not too long ago.'

Larry's mom said to me 'Yes, Larry came home telling all of us that you had become a Christian. I said 'So he came home to tell you this and now he's a Christian?' She said 'Yes!' I looked at Cindy and said 'Was it something I said?' Larry's mom said 'No, he said that you didn't make a whole lot of sense but anything that would change someone like you and that you are carrying a Bible in your car, he wanted to go find out about it. So he and his wife went to church the next Sunday and somebody made it clear for him and the Holy Spirit led him to saving faith in Christ.'

There's room for you. I'd love to pray with you. Call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Would You allow us to rejoice that we are being kept imperishable for an imperishable inheritance through the imperishable blood of Christ, making us right with You, and the imperishable Word of God that brings You right within us as we're born again. Thank You Father that we can value that which is imperishable – the blood and the Word – in our life and the way we schedule and arrange our life. Thank You Father that we can bring others with us by bringing You to them with a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Two Axioms – Two Precepts
For Elect Exiles on the Journey

AXIOM #1 — A Divine summons to the personal pursuit of pervasive holiness

AXIOM #2 — A Divine summons to sincerely and earnestly love one another from the heart

PRECEPT #1 — Our Justification is Imperishable

PRECEPT #2 — Our Regeneration is Imperishable

Life Takeaway

Elect Exiles are imperishable because...

- Cleansed by imperishable blood of the Son of God
- Born again by the Spirit of God with the imperishable Word of God through the preaching of the Gospel of God

I. A Pastor's Request to fellow Pilgrims

II. A Pastor's Exhortation to fellow Pilgrims

III. A Pastor's Reminder to fellow Pilgrims