

XVIII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

The Elect in the Exile

“A Sojourner’s Journey”

I Peter 2:11–12

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I Peter 2:11–12 says [11] *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

The Apostle Peter is writing to some people who are dear to his heart but likely he has never seen them. He does know something about them. The people he is writing to in Turkey are of the dispersion and he writes specifically to those in the six districts of Asia Minor. These people are living as Christians in a pre-Christian world dominated by paganism and the pagan world and life view. The reason I say pre-Christian is because within a century the influence of Christianity is going to drastically change the landscape of culture but that’s not where they are at this time. They are in the opening decades in the work of the Gospel spreading from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world but live in an unfriendly pagan world and life view. Christianity has not yet influenced to change the landscape of the culture.

This is one of the reasons God led me to this book in our study this year. We are asking God to help us fulfill the Great Commission and live the great commandment by having a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship (L.E.A.D). Unlike these people who lived in a pre-Christian world dominated by a pagan world and life view, we live in a post-Christian world, where the Christian mind and life view no longer dominates the culture. Therefore we have something very much in common. We live in a neo-pagan culture. So how should we live?

Therefore I find what Peter writes to those living in a pre-Christian world highly applicable to those of us who live in a post-Christian world. Peter is also relentlessly and consistently keeping his pattern of pastorally discipleship in place. He doesn’t tell Christians how to live before he tells them what it means that Christ is your life. He doesn’t tell them the Gospel commands and exhortations until he gives them the Gospel blessings and foundation. Peter gives us the Gospel blessings and foundation of our great salvation in I Peter 1:3–12 and then he gives us commands of how to live for Christ in I Peter 1:13 through I Peter 2:3. Then he cycles back and does it again where he gives foundational statements as to who they are in Christ and gives 13 identity points which we learned in the last study.

Now he is taking on new commands for we are now in a new lengthy section of Gospel commands, exhortations to believers who begin from the foundation of Gospel blessings. Our obedience to Christ is not for our salvation for Christ did that for us on the cross but it is how we show our love for Christ. The Gospel blessings have been given to us with Gospel commands as to how we ought to live for Christ in this world to fulfill the Great Commission and live the great commandment. So let’s start by looking at I Peter 2:11.

The first word is beloved and it’s a term of endearment. The Apostles do like to use this word. In fact, they use this word more than 200 times to refer to other believers but where did it come from? It came from the Gospels where it is used 9 times as the Father’s declaration of His

relationship with His Son. “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Now you who have been saved by His Son and if you are in Christ and Christ is in you then you are beloved as the Son. Peter declares we are beloved by the Father through the Son and that’s who I am.

Peter gives us this wonderful foundation and then distills it for us by telling us we are the elect of God, loved by the Father from all eternity sovereignly to bring us from death to life in Jesus Christ. What do you do for this God? You are exiles. You are ambassadors for Christ in countries as an exile of Christ to fulfill a mission of the Great Commission and great commandment. You are an elect which is who you are in Christ and exiles are what you do for Christ as you serve Him in this world.

Now Peter distills it one more time by saying you are beloved. You are loved by God through His Son Jesus by His Spirit with His Word. It’s a term of affection, affirmation and endearment. It’s a term that finds its origination in the Son and now God’s relationship to Jesus to all who are in Christ and Christ is in you. You are loved by the Father. That’s who I am. Now he moves from a term of endearment, a pastoral word of affection to a pastoral word of appeal in his discipling of these people living for Christ in a pagan world.

Peter says ‘I urge you.’ And Paul is going to do the same thing in Romans 12:1 when he says “Therefore I urge you brethren by the mercies of God to present yourself as a living sacrifice and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Here is a term of appeal. Now he doesn’t say ‘I urge you’ to do something so that you will be loved because he has already told you who you are but here is what you do. You don’t do what you do to get loved but because you’ve been loved, are begin loved and will be loved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

He urges us to a particular perspective on life. What is your perspective in life? We see in I Peter 2:11 that we are a sojourner and exile. We don’t have dual citizenship. We either have citizenship in the kingdom of this world or in the Kingdom of God. I Peter 2:9 says [9] *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* He called you out of the kingdom of darkness into His marvelous light, into the Kingdom of light and you can’t have dual citizenship.

We have a young man in this church that went through all the riggers of becoming a naturalized citizen in the United States and he also works at our church. We celebrated and rejoiced with him when this went through and it was a great milestone for him. There is an oath that a person has to take who leaves one country to become a citizen in another country and it’s a rather lengthy oath. I would like to share with you just the opening paragraph of this oath.

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.

When taking this oath you renounce all allegiance and power to the country you came from to give to the country you are becoming a part of and as I read that I realize that’s exactly what we do if you’re a Christian.

I once was in the kingdom of this world and listened to the prince and principalities of darkness. I once lived unto myself and for myself and when God’s grace lays hold of us we renounce that kingdom for the Kingdom of God, and the rule and reign of Christ, His cross and His crown. We now renounce to be His. An exile is someone who is living in a country but their citizenship is in another country. Another word we use for exile is alien. This is the

believer for we are exiles in this world because we have left the kingdom of this world for the Kingdom of God so we live in the world as exiles to be His ambassadors and we are no longer of the world.

Peter is kind of doing this Hebrew parallelism where in their writings they tell you something but then say it again using a little different word to enhance which is more specifically known as synthetic parallelism. This is what he is doing when he says ‘I urge you as exiles and sojourners.’ An old translation would use pilgrims in place of sojourner but I’m glad the ESV went to sojourners because as soon as I think Pilgrim I think black hat, white shirt, a turkey and then let’s invite someone to eat. Sojourning means they are temporary exiles and temporarily they are living in a foreign country which is the kingdom of this world.

How do they live in the kingdom of this world? I am so excited to dig down into this because Peter will tell us how we are to marry, do our family, love one another, relate to the government and laws where we find ourselves over the next two chapters. Right now he is setting up our perspective as exiles who are sojourning temporarily in a family and in a country with my citizenship being in the Kingdom of heaven where I renounce the kingdom of this world and I am now an ambassador of the King on mission, with a message in ministry. I am temporarily in this call headed Home.

I decided to title this study the “The Sojourner’s Journey” but I started to title this “The Pilgrim’s Progress” but I know that is taken. In this sojourner’s journey you are no longer under the rule and reign of this world but under the rule and reign of the Kingdom of life and light in King Jesus who died for you, rose again so that His cross and His crown are your life. With that perspective Peter gives us two principles.

I’d also like to point out that this exile sojourner is not new language. We see this in Genesis 23 when Abraham’s wife Sarah, dies and as the people Hittites try to comfort him, he says in Genesis 23:4, [4] *“I am a sojourner and foreigner (alien) among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”* The Lord also says to the patriarchs that He is going to send His people as strangers and exiles into a nation that is not theirs.

Jeremiah 29:4–9 says [4] *“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: (here is what you do as exiles in Babylon) [5] Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. [6] Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. [7] But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. [8] For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, (don’t let them define what you do) [9] for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.”*

We don’t let the nation define its welfare but the Gospel defines its welfare. We are to bring the welfare of Gospel blessings of words and deeds to that city but you never change citizenship, you are still Mine. God says ‘I have you there as a sojourner. I am yours and you are Mine.’ We are strangers, pilgrims, aliens as you live in that world but you are not of that world. So let’s see how we are to live in this world by God’s grace and not of this world by the two principles Peter gives us.

Peter first gives a negative principle by saying we are to abstain from fleshly lusts or fleshly appetites (desires). Deny them. Get rid of the fleshly appetites. God has given you

appetites – for knowledge, food, drink, relationships, work, stewardship, sex, etc. These appetites are not evil for they are good but what is evil is when they become *fleshly* desires. The word *fleshly* has a Biblical, direct meaning and it starts in Genesis 6:5 which says [5] *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* To live in the flesh is to live independent of God and for the exaltation of self.

Fleshly appetites are to take God-given appetites and make it all about me. So instead of eating to live for God and His glory, it's living to eat, to drink, to have sexual experiences, to dominate with power where my life is power, possessions, sex, food, drink etc. When God saves you, you still have the appetites but they are not driven *fleshly* for they are now driven by the Spirit of God. Now as it says in I Corinthians 10:31, [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* The appetites are embraced for God's glory. Those sinful (*fleshly*) passions are not syndromes to manage for they are sins to kill. We are to abstain from them. There is the world, Satan and the old man and you don't just put off the old man, kill the old man, and flee temptation from the world but now you put on the new man.

In the second principle Peter goes to the positive. Keep, intentionally pursue a behavior that is honorable, excellent and gives glory to God in the use of everything in this world, including your appetites. Realize you don't kill sin and pursue behavior to be loved. You have already been told you have been loved. You do this because you are loved. Don't manage the old man but kill him and flee temptation. You now fill your life with that which is good and pure so there is no room for the old man anymore.

I'm a simple person and I have just discovered if I can keep my obsessions focused on Christ and those things that Christ has given me for Him then there is no room for the other stuff to come back in. You can cast out the seven demons but if you leave it empty they come back worse. So you want to fill your life up with behavior that is good and excellent, not to be saved or loved but because you have been saved and are loved. That is what you are to do as a stranger and alien in and for the Lord.

I see on the TV a man say 'if you give our ministry this then we'll send you this from Jesus that will bless your life and if you do this with it then all your problems are solved.' I hear preachers telling people 'come to Jesus and all your problems will be solved.' That is not what He says. Come to Jesus for He delivers you from the penalty and power of sin and then He gives you a new life and your problems begin. Before I became a Christian I didn't have any problems. I had a very empty life. My life was all about me. My decisions weren't hard because life was all about me.

When I became a Christian, my default is that it is all about me so I have to kill that default. The hymn All For Jesus, All For Jesus says;

*All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed pow'rs;
All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours.
All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours.
All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours.*

How do I do all that when I have this old man that keeps wanting to pull me down? This became a challenge in my life and it's still a challenge in my life. It requires a daily surrender to

the power of the Holy Spirit, the daily trusting in the grace of God and a daily intentionality of living out what He is putting in.

This is what Peter is calling us to do and he is going to give us a place to fix it. Here is the purpose for us. I Peter 2:12 says *[12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.* Until I get to heaven when I do something that is right, they are going to call it evil for in a pagan world and life view evil is good and good is evil. You can see this is you sign a petition that says marriage is between one man and one woman or don't support abortion today in our culture and you are now considered a bigot. You will be mocked and marginalized to silence you. If this culture is where your roots and allegiance are then you will compromise. If you have another Kingdom and great allegiance then you'll seek the power of God to speak the truth in love. Don't be surprised that the world will be the world unless the grace of God through God's people changes it as salt and light.

What is the day of visitation? The shortened report of this is visitation is when God shows up. When God shows up He will do one of two things. He will either deliver and save or judge and bring condemnation. If you are saved today then you have had a day of visitation. When Jesus came into this world the Bible says 'the Lord has visited His people' (Luke 1:68, Luke 7:16). Jesus also said 'You didn't know the day of your visitation' (Luke 19:44).

In Acts 15 the people came to Peter and said they had heard the Spirit of God was upon them and then here is his response in Acts 15:7–14, *[7] And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. [8] So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, [9] and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. [10] Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? [11] But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."*

*[12] Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. [13] And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: [14] Simon has declared how **God at the first visited the Gentiles** to take out of them a people for His name.*

So the day of visitation is when God shows up to bring salvation and deliverance. The day of visitation is also the second coming when God shows up to bring judgment. So which is Peter referring to in this verse? I think he is referring to both days. When God's people are being mocked and marginalized due to someone sharing His Word with them through love and deeds of mercy how many times do they come back and thank those people? I did it with my grandparents. I made fun of my grandparents before I was a Christian but went back to thank them for what they did when I became a Christian. I dismissed, marginalized and shamed what they would do.

Bobby Richardson played for the Yankees and during his time there was the great player, Mickey Mantle. Mantle had this profligacy of this lifestyle. Bobby kept sharing the Gospel with Mantle and Mantle would make fun of him by calling him all kinds of names. Bobby stayed with it as he continued to befriend and love Mickey. Mickey ends up with this debilitation, this disease that was the result of his sin and would end in his death, God brought him to a conviction and he came to Christ. He then called Bobby and wanted him to come see him. When Bobby got their Mickey said to him 'I know you prayed for me and talked with me and I want you to

know I'm sorry for the way I treated you for I have become a Christian.' Bobby asked him a few questions to make sure it was a credible profession of faith but then Bobby said 'Praise the Lord, but Mickey you didn't have to call me here to tell me this.' Mantle said 'Yes I did. I wanted to thank you for what you did especially since I made fun of you because God used you.'

Glorify God in the day of visitation when He was converted you and then glorify God in the day of visitation of judgment for on that day every knee will bow, every tongue will confess and God will vindicate His people who have suffered in this world for Him. On that day He will be glorified by the imperfect, but intentional lives of His people. So I'd like to close by giving you some takeaways.

There are some expectations as a believer and the first takeaway is the Christian life is one of warfare. Jesus has defeated all of your enemies but He has not destroyed them and they have not surrendered for they still war against your soul. The world, the flesh and the Devil are the three enemies. There is one inside of you and two outside of you. Resist Satan and he will flee from you. Flee temptations in this world and kill the old man daily. People tend to say 'I think I'm in spiritual warfare' but if you're living for Jesus you're always in spiritual warfare. Remember that your Savior has won the war but you still have to fight the battles.

The third expectation is be ready to be maligned for what you do for Christ with Gospel words and deeds in the lives of others. Don't be angry at the person, love them. Rage against the captor, Satan, not the captive. When they do according to the sin nature, love them deeper and harder. Expect them to do it. If they give Christians a parade that is unusual. This is how Peter tells us to live in a pagan world and what to expect.

There are always two anticipations. One is you are anticipating the day of visitation for people are going to get converted. I love to see this! Just today three people told me about relatives they had shared the Gospel with and all of them have come to Christ. That is a visitation for God visited them by His grace. Those relatives that had maligned them had come back and thanked them. So we want to do a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship.

The other anticipation is that Jesus is coming soon! I don't know when but it will be soon and I am on a temporary pilgrimage for when He comes it's done and I'll be Home. So will you if you know Christ. So what is your motivation? Your motivation is the glory of God. It is that God will be glorified. What kingdom are you in? I know you live in the world but does the world live in you? I know you have sin living in you but does sin have dominion over you?

I want to tell you of the King who died for you and He will take you from the kingdom of this world to another Kingdom with His dear beloved Son and He will give you everlasting life. The emptiness of the kingdom of this world will be displaced by the joy of salvation with Jesus as your Lord and Savior. You can't have two citizenships. You must renounce sin, self and Satan. Flee to Jesus and He will receive you just like you are but He will never leave you just like you are. He has the journey of a sojourner for you on the way to the Celestial City and He will be with you every step of the way. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You for the privilege to live by the grace of God for the glory of God, even to see behavior that we do imperfectly and intentionally for Jesus to know one day You will authenticate it not for us, but for Your glory. Thank You for giving us lives that are not only saved but lives that matter, and not the emptiness of self-exaltation and self-gratification in the appetites of this world but the joy of taking everything captive unto Jesus that we might live for the King. God it is so glorious to be on this journey. King Jesus come for us soon but until then

help us to abstain from the fleshly lusts that wage war. Don't manage them but kill them and help us embrace imperfectly but intentionally the behavior that gives glory to our God even though its maligned in this world. We will uphold that which You call sacred and we will uphold You. We will tell those who would malign it that Jesus loves you more than you will ever know for He loves sinners and He will save all those who will turn and put their trust in Him. Thank You for that Day where everything will be for Your glory – to God be the glory – as sin, death, hell and the grave are thrown into the lake of fire and we hear the shout, 'Glory be to God!' Amen.

Power Point

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Sojourners on the Journey have...

- Three Expectations
- Two Anticipations
- One Motivation