

Serving a Heavenly King

I Peter 2:11-12

INTRODUCTION:

Last week Peter told us Who We Are. We God's chosen people living in a sinful world. But even though we live in this world we are not of this world. "THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME!"

So, the question arises then, if this world is not my home, then **why are we here and how do we fit in?** That is what Peter is going to answer for us today.

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 2:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Prayer

Peter is reminding us once again that we are aliens and strangers in this world.

BODY:

I. This World is not My Home

1 Peter 2:11a (NASB)

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers...

Peter tells us that we are as foreigners in this world. Notice Peter is not telling us something new here. He is stating what they should already have learned earlier from his letter.

He used the word "aliens" in the first verse of his book.

The word "Alien" (or a pilgrim as some translations use) is a foreigner who lives in a place without the rights of citizenship.

A "stranger" (or "sojourner" as some translations use) is a foreigner who comes to a city to live side by side with the natives.

We are foreigners. We do not belong. We are outsiders. All of the kingdoms of this world are part of the kingdom of darkness.

1 John 5:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one*.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

We, as Christians, have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ. This is the one eternal distinction that matters. The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of Christ. Peter is trying to drive home this point: "**You do not belong here!** **You are an outsider and a foreigner here.** If we do not understand this basic truth, then we will not understand what he is teaching us in the rest of his letter. He is going to tell us **how to live as foreigners.**

John 17:14-16 (NASB)

¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

We are a people owned by God. We have been purchased by the blood of God's own Son.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NASB)

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*.

We, who have been called out from the darkness of this world, are His prized possession

We belong to God for we have been bought with a price, the very blood of Jesus.

Redemption by the life of Jesus is a purchase price beyond our ability to calculate. You have amazing worth to God. No higher price could have been paid, than the price paid at the Cross.

Because of God's great love for us and His free gift of salvation, we are recipients of His mercy. We are still living in the same environment as we were before we accepted Christ. The change did not occur in the **environment around us**, the change was **inside** us.

II. The War Against the Soul.

1 Peter 2:11b (NASB)

¹¹ ...abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

We are presently one people, the people of God. We are living in enemy territory, and our enemy is constantly watching us, looking for opportunities to move in and take over.

Peter tells these "**aliens and strangers**" to "**abstain from fleshly lusts**". He says that these desires "**war against the soul**". We are to avoid the desires of the flesh at all cost.

What are these desires? Paul gives us a comprehensive list of them in Galatians 5: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy,

outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties and other sins like these.

These "lusts" are "of the flesh". They are things that the natural man wants! Peter says that these lusts "war against the soul". "War" means to carry on a military campaign. The weapon used here is the weapon of "temptation".

The counteraction to temptation is found in Galatians 5:16.

Galatians 5:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

We must actively fight the desires of the flesh!

Romans 8:12-14 (NASB)

¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

When we walk in the Spirit we are keeping our minds and our actions on heavenly things. We will display the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

Galatians 5:22-24 (NASB)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

III. Living A Holy Life.

Our new life with God is not simply for our own enjoyment. All of these privileges carry with them a divine responsibility. Everyone who has been selected by God has been bought by Christ's blood. We are no longer our own. If we are His sheep, we will hear His voice, and obey His will.

1 Peter 2:12 (NASB)

¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

How can I live a holy life in this world?

Paul says:

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Colossians 3:3 (NASB)

³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Ephesians 2:4-6(NASB)

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Passages like these convey the mysterious, yet utterly real fact that, by virtue of our union with Jesus, we participate in the life of God. He dwells in us, and we dwell in him. As such, we can say that in Christ, God's holiness is our holiness. In Christ, we are already holy.

We must proclaim and live the Gospel. Our lives must backup what we say. People should look at us and think that there must be something to what you say because they can see something different in you.

The people Peter was writing to were suffering severe persecution. So he gives some instructions as to how to live in a hostile world. We can benefit greatly from these instructions as well. The reason the world hates us is because we do not belong in this world. Jesus has called us to be different. If we follow Jesus and live according to His Word, the world WILL HATE US!

Jesus told us that this would happen!

John 15:18-19 (NASB)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

When we are fully committed to live in the way the Lord has commanded us to, then we will make the people of this world very uncomfortable. If you profess to be a Christ follower but you live like the world, you may not face this hostility that Peter speaks of. But when you fully surrender to Jesus and live according to His Word, you will not be popular! You will face persecution, aggression and hostility! When this happens you can rejoice because THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME!

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever encountered someone from another country? It doesn't take long to realize that they talk, think and act much different than we do. They are from an entirely different culture. They have different customs and beliefs.

We are citizens of Heaven and we should have a heavenly mindset. We have different beliefs and customs. As Christians we should think and act differently than the people of this world. Whether we realize it or not the people of this world are watching us. They are looking to see if our faith is real. Many are watching and hoping to see us fail so they can criticize us. This may be frustrating on the surface but it is actually a great opportunity.

When we live consistent Christian lives...

- We prove that our faith is genuine.
- We prove that we are different.
- We show what a difference Jesus can make in a life.

Though they may criticize us for our standards...

Though they may mock, scorn and ridicule us for what we oppose....

Though they are "hostile" towards us...

Some may be lead to Christ as a result of the witness we have for Christ. May we live each day in such a way that the lost world will see the glorious change that Jesus has wrought in our lives!

We will face temptations and we battle daily with the "fleshly desires that war against our soul" but...

- We must walk in the Spirit,
- We must pursue Holiness
- We must be witnesses to this lost and dying world.

1 Peter 2:12b (NASB)

¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter ends this passage by saying that unbelievers may glorify God in the "day of visitation" as they observe your good deeds.

Many commentators vary on the exact meaning of this verse.

The day of visitation could be the day that God calls that unbeliever to Himself. Because of his observation of our life, he may accept Christ as His Savior and therefore glorify God.

We have some other scriptures that would support this understanding.

Matthew 5:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 9:6-8 (NASB)

⁶ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He *said* to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." ⁷ And he got up and went home. ⁸ But when the crowds saw *this*, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Even Peter touches on it again in his letter.

1 Peter 3:1-2 (NASB)

3 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

CONCLUSION:

As we mature in Christ, we understand more and more how unworthy we are for Christ's saving grace. We are thankful that we are not judged based upon our futile attempts to serve Christ. We feel we are not doing enough for the Lord, while at the same time, we may be doing more for Him than ever before. Let me suggest to you that this feeling of inadequacy is the presence of the Holy Spirit working within you. It is a **great feeling** when one finally realizes that all the things that they have read in the scripture has become more than just theory. It becomes second nature to their mindset. You reach the point where you realize that you ARE unworthy of righteousness on your own and that there IS a Holy Spirit working within you and prodding you to serve. You are thankful everyday for all the blessings that God provides for you and you continuously keep your mind on heavenly things.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

So we offer His invitation, realizing that there may be someone here who has never accepted Christ as their Savior. We plead with you. We appeal to you not to let this moment escape nor to let this window of opportunity pass you by.

If you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, then come now, confess that you believe in Him, be faithful to Him in Christian baptism, arise to walk in the newness of life. God's invitation is offered to you. Will you come as we stand and as we sing?

He is Lord.

He is Lord. He is Lord.
He has risen from the grave and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord.