

## **EXILES AT HOME IN JESUS**

1 Peter 2:11-25 Sermon Transcript, by Keegan Kalideen (March 13th, 2022)

Can you think of a time when you left your sense of “home” to venture out into an *unfamiliar* place?

Maybe it was the country you grew up in, as you left your family, friends and everything you knew to come to Canada. Do you remember how strange it felt as you saw your new “home” for the first time through the windows of the airplane? Stepping off the plane into a foreign world of language, culture, geography, architecture, music, marketing and trying to make sense of it all while at the same time feeling like you really didn’t belong here. I remember the winter of 1998, when this skinny little Trinidadian boy, 6 years old, fresh off the plane with a thick trini accent, looking around at all these strange white things falling from the sky, wondering why it was so cold. But one of the most distinct memories from that time that has never left my mind, was when our uncles came to pick us up at the arrivals area, and as they greeted us...they gave us our first winter jackets. Now that might not seem like a big deal to you, but remember, growing up in Trinidad, in the Caribbean, I’ve never experienced winter before, I never saw snow before, and I never had a winter jacket. This seemingly normal and small gesture to us who have grown up in Canada, and pull out our winter coats every year, was actually a pivotal moment in my childhood that I’ve never forgotten since...because in my little mind, the moment I received my first winter jacket, I was officially Canadian, and my life would never be the same.

Do *you* have any distinct memories of immigrating to Canada?

If you’re watching online, you can even share in the chat what country *you* came from!

Maybe you experienced this sense of “leaving home” when you moved into a new neighbourhood, or visited a new church. Maybe it was when you started at a new school, or a new job. Maybe you’re new here today, and you’ve taken a step out of your comfort zone to visit Cornerstone for the first time online or in-person; wondering if this will be your new home, and if this is a place where you belong.

Well firstly, if you *are* new here; I want to say: Welcome.

(I know in some churches they ask people to raise their hands if they’re new...don’t worry, take a deep breath of relief, I’m not gonna do that)

But you are welcome here.

Wherever you’re at in your faith, in your journey, whatever your story looks like at this point in time, I just want to say *thank you* for coming out. It took some measure of risk for

you to come visit a community you've never been to before. And I really hope and pray that you do sense and find a safe place here to connect with others and with Jesus.

If you *are* newer to Cornerstone, the next step that we would most recommend is for you to sign up for our Discover Cornerstone class taking place virtually on March 27th @ 2:30 p.m. This is a great opportunity to meet our staff, learn more about Cornerstone and get to know a few other newcomers as well. If you'd like to sign up, please go to the link<sup>1</sup> provided on the screen.

But whether you've immigrated to Canada, have recently moved to a new area, are new to this church, or maybe even new to the faith...we are ALL on a journey, a journey in which NONE of us have *arrived* yet. A journey in which we are all strangers, trying to find our way, and make sense of ourselves and the world around us while being in constant transition. In your quest for belonging, I really do hope that you feel a sense of "being right at home" right here in a community of others who are all on the same journey to find a place to call "home".

The apostle Peter has this picture of migration and being strangers in mind in 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 11. We're gonna be taking a look at 1 Peter 2, verses 11-25 today. So get your Bibles or devices ready, and let's dive in.

Are you ready to receive God's Word today?

Read with me in verse 11:

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles...*<sup>2</sup>

As we've already heard throughout this series, Peter is writing to a scattered community of believers who are being persecuted for their faith. And although they are Gentiles, which means that they're not *ethnically* Jewish, he's spent much of the letter up to this point speaking to them as if they *were* Jews. He *just* finished telling them in the previous section that they are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession". That's like if I was to write a biography of Pastor Steve, and mention that he grew up drinking coconut water, eating curry goat, and swimming in the beaches of Trinidad. I mean, I *hope* he likes curry goat, coconut water and the Caribbean...but that's NOT part of his historical or ethnic identity.

That's mine.

By referring to them as sojourners and exiles, Peter is changing the identity and tracing the history of these Gentile believers back to the lineage of faith descending from Abraham, Moses and the nation of Israel.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://cornerstonechurch.ca/discovercornerstone>

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter 2:11a

Why? (I mean) Isn't it important in our day and age to value diversity and preserve our own culture and heritage?

The answer lies in the very first word of verse 11: Beloved.

Although these Gentiles were ethnically and culturally distinct from the Jews in so many ways, all of these believers shared one reality in common: Despite being strangers in a foreign place, they found their "*home*" in the love of Jesus.

And let me tell you something, it doesn't matter what color your skin is, or where you come from, or what you grew up eating or doing...if your heart has found its home in the love of Jesus, then you belong *right here* in the community of God's Beloved. You have been adopted into the family of God and *here* are your brothers and sisters.

Look around, and take it in.

You may feel like a stranger searching for a place to belong, but if you belong to Jesus, *you belong here*.

Because you are *loved*.

And if you don't know Jesus, and are still searching for meaning, purpose, and a place to belong; the door is wide open, and so are the arms of the Father. All of us were once orphans, lost, wandering away from God; but Jesus relentlessly sought us, and Jesus tenderly brought us home.

St. Augustine said it this way: "You [O God] have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in You."<sup>3</sup>

If you don't know Jesus today, *this* is an opportunity for you to come and find your home in Him. The question is: will you?

Verses 11 and 12 form a threshold from everything that *precedes* in this letter to everything that follows. Having established their identity as a community of exiles in Christ, he begins to spell out the practical implications of this identity into every sphere of their earthly lives.

In verse 11 we see the *negative* command to "abstain from fleshly passions", and in verse 12 the *positive* encouragement to "keep our conduct honorable".<sup>4</sup>

Just like in our Lent Commitments, we must both *give up* whatever hinders and *take up* whatever draws us closer to Jesus.

Peter *urges* these believers to give up the passions of the flesh, which he describes at the very beginning of this chapter: "malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander".

---

<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessions*

<sup>4</sup> 1 Peter 2:11-12

These things are unacceptable for those who belong to Jesus and Peter says to get that garbage out of here and keep it out. We should have zero tolerance for these things, because they wage war on our soul and will ultimately destroy our lives, both individually and collectively.

But Christian life is not only about what to avoid and stay away from, it's *also* about taking up the lifestyle and culture of the Kingdom by doing good works that bring glory to our King. When you find your home in Jesus, you are now an ambassador of God's Kingdom here on earth, and you have a new passport that reads: citizen of heaven.

Your life is now an embassy of God's world in this one.

Pastor Kent Hughes says it this way:

"In Christ, we are tethered to heaven and are merely wanderers on earth. And since your true identity is tethered to heaven, its pull upon you should be irresistible; for you do not belong to this world anymore."<sup>5</sup>

But not *only* is your identity tethered to heaven; when you are in Christ, heaven is tethered to you because the moment you find your Home in Jesus, the Holy Spirit takes up residence *in* you.

Think about that for a second. Do you know what this means?

This means that the presence of God lives in you, and the gravity of God's grace working within you should initiate a pulling of this world into the next. If you are a new creation in Christ, and the old has passed away, then the world around you is going to start looking a lot more like the New Heavens & the New Earth simply because heaven lives in you. We tend to think about "salvation" as "going to heaven", but biblically speaking, heaven is less about "*where* you're going when you die" and more about "*Who* you are orbiting while you live".

So where is your centre of gravity today? Does every sphere of your life revolve around Jesus? Or something else? Because *that* will ultimately determine whether your life influences the world around you or vice versa.

Peter instructs these believers to respond to persecution and slander by overcoming evil with good, and outdoing the injustice of their oppressors with overwhelming love and benevolence.

Is your life good news to those around you?

If you disappeared from their lives, would there be a noticeable difference?

Verse 12 carries the weight of the benediction that pastor Jeremy closed with a few weeks ago, the words of God through the prophet Jeremiah to the Jewish exiles and captives in Babylon:

---

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, Kent. *Preaching The Word Commentary: 1 Peter*

“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.”<sup>6</sup> This is actually the *condition* which leads to that famous *promise* a few verses later: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” God’s plan for our earthly welfare is tethered to our responsibility to seek the welfare of the city where He has strategically planted us.

In a very literal sense, the wellbeing of our children’s future is in jeopardy because we have *failed* to steward this planet and care for God’s creation. As Christians, we *should* be the forerunners and pioneers of environmental sustainability, but instead, we often settle for a convenient theology that either protects our lavish lifestyles or disregards our responsibility for the flourishing of our home planet. I thank God for young leaders like Mia Siu Chong ; she’s in grade 11 and has started her own NGO aimed at bringing awareness to marine conservation. Why? *She* believes that God gave us the ocean as a gift and also gave us the responsibility to care for it in Genesis 1:28. We honour God by obeying Him and stewarding all He’s given us.

If *that’s* not an example of good works promoting the welfare of this world for God’s glory, I’m not sure what is.

But Peter makes it clear that these “good deeds” are not simply defined on *our* terms, but *by them*. Bible scholar Karen Jobes puts it this way:

“God is not the only one watching.

Because we are also being observed by unbelievers, our Christian lifestyle should, to whatever extent possible, be characterized by a way of life that *even* unbelievers could recognize as good.”<sup>7</sup>

Now you may not start your own NGO in grade 11, but what would the unbelievers in your life say about your conduct? Would they say that you’re a good listener? That you take time out of your busy schedule to spend time with them? That you go out of your way to serve them? That you make them laugh? That you grieve with them when they lose someone?

Is your life good news to the people around you?

The old Christian phrase rings true, that “the only Jesus people will ever see, is the Jesus in you and me.” We are not *merely* citizens of heaven, we are the living embodiment of Jesus’ presence here on earth until He returns.

---

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 29:7, 11

<sup>7</sup> Jobes, Karen. *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Peter*

But *until* He returns, there *will* be resistance. Not only is there a war being waged against our souls (as Peter mentions in verse 11), there has been a war raging since the dawn of creation. A war between good and evil, a war between holiness and sin, a war between God's way and our way. And it shouldn't take a Russian invasion to make us concerned about the brokenness and hostility of this world; because what's happening in Ukraine, and in Afghanistan is all a symptom of an even greater spiritual warfare taking place behind the scenes, right here, right now. This reality is so clear in Scripture that I think sometimes we use our progressive Western bible highlighters to blot out these verses. The Bible is filled with warnings *and* teaching about spiritual warfare.<sup>8</sup>

So do not be deceived; there is an enemy at work through the powers and systems of this world, as well as in our everyday conversations and actions.

Kevin Spacey's character said it well in the 1995 movie, *The Usual Suspects*: "The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist."<sup>9</sup>

This world is a system of spiritual rebellion against God's wisdom and authority, and there are unseen spiritual beings at work stirring up division and hatred between humans. Racism, Political Strife, Oppression, Abuse, Slander...these are all visible symptoms of an invisible war.

Tim Mackie notes that "Demons are spiritual forces at work behind corrupt human power structures, but in the Bible, they also work on the personal level, animating and exploiting humanity's greed and selfishness, as well as the weakness of our mortal bodies. In Scripture, spiritual evil is at work in anything that drags God's good creation back into chaos, darkness and death."<sup>10</sup>

The sad truth about this reality is that those who have not found their home in the love of Jesus are in fact serving another master. There is no neutrality.

The Apostle Paul grieves that, "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ..."<sup>11</sup>

So *when* you face resistance, and when the going gets tough...just remember that there's a lot more going on *beneath* the surface than meets the eye. Have *you* faced resistance from others towards *your* faith?

I know I have.

---

<sup>8</sup> Luke 22:31-32, John 16:33, Romans 7:23, Romans 13:12-14, Galatians 5:17, Ephesians 6:12-13, 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 2:3, Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 Peter 5:8-9, Hebrews 12:4

<sup>9</sup> *The Usual Suspects*. 1995 Movie Directed by Bryan Singer; quoted by Kevin Spacey.

<sup>10</sup> Mackie, Tim. *Spiritual Beings: The Satan & Demons*

<sup>11</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4

So what do you do when others slander or look down upon you because you're a follower of Jesus; when they shut down all your arguments with anger, apathy, or *better* arguments? What are you supposed to do when they scoff at your salvation and mock your sincerest efforts to please Christ? And how do you respond when you are treated unfairly, or even *cancelled*, while trying to do your best to be a citizen of heaven on earth?

The apostle Peter goes on in verses 13-20 to instruct these persecuted Christians in their respective relationships to ungodly authorities and unjust employers. Strangely enough, Peter encourages civil obedience, joyful submission, and humble servanthood in the face of persecution, mockery, and suffering.

Theologian *Edmund Clowney* notes that "This whole section is in direct *antithesis* to the spirit of the world, where every individual and group *demand*s its rights and understands liberty as freedom *from* responsibility. The apostle [Peter] describes what is, for *our* time, a strange liberty."<sup>12</sup>

But this strange liberty is no different from the paradox of the Gospel in which our Savior conquered the forces of evil, sin and death through His *limitless vulnerability*. And more than just some moralistic command to "submit", there is a deeper current underlying Peter's instruction here, which he turns to next in verses 21-25.

In this section, it becomes clear that Peter's exhortation to submit to ungodly authorities and unjust employers, *revolves* around the example of Jesus. Peter weaves in the language of the Prophet Isaiah to paint a powerful portrait of Jesus as the long-awaited Suffering Servant in Isaiah 52 and 53.

And *here* we find the glorious heartbeat of that Good News we've been talking so much about. So *why* are we called to submit?

Because Jesus suffered for you.

When you didn't desire Him, he desired you.

When you despised and rejected Him, he embraced You.

When you sinned against Him, and mocked Him, He opened not His mouth, but stayed silent and gave His life for you.

When you cursed His name, and lived in such a way that denied His existence, He took your curse upon Himself, and endured your eternal punishment on the cross.

---

<sup>12</sup> Clowney, Edmund. *The Message of 1 Peter*

It was our sin that nailed Him to that tree, but from those very wounds that we inflicted would flow the blood of God that would heal our sick souls and set our hearts free. These lyrics by Kings Kaleidoscope capture the strange irony of this war between our sin & God's grace:

*"I'm a torn man, spirit fighting flesh  
There's a battle raging deep in my chest  
But all that haunts me, all that leaves a stain  
Only sings the sweetness of my savior's grace*

*Jesus bought me, and now I am His  
Dying with Him, in His death I now live  
All my vices, to which I was chained  
Only speak the sweetness of my savior's grace*

*A fortunate fall, my sins are stories of grace to recall  
A fortunate fall, I glory in my sins forgiven...*

*And still I'm a wicked, wretched man, I do everything I hate,  
I am fighting to be god,  
I seethe and claw and thrash and shake,  
I have killed and stacked the dead,  
on a throne from which I reign,  
In the end I just want blood,  
and with His blood my hands are stained!  
See the God who reigns on high,  
He has opened His own veins,  
From His wounds a rushing torrent that can wash it all away..  
Grace upon grace, upon grace upon grace,  
Grace upon grace upon grace upon grace."<sup>13</sup>*

This is why Peter says in verse 20, that when you endure suffering for doing good, it is a *gracious* thing in the sight of God. Because when you faithfully suffer for Jesus, you position yourself within the majestic current of God's amazing grace flowing from Calvary. The strange liberty of being at home in Jesus is that the house rules of this upside down Kingdom consist of some radical, counter-cultural realities: Our freedom in Christ liberates us to *serve* others.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Felix Culpa*. Song by King's Kaleidoscope; lyrics by Chad Gardner.



Our life in Christ, leads us to lay down our life *for* others.

Our identity in Christ, means we relinquish every right and privilege we have for the sake of others.

Through His self-sacrifice on the cross, Jesus cancelled cancel culture. And He calls us, through suffering and hardship, to follow in His footsteps; outdoing the selfishness of our enemy by living lives of self-sacrifice, out-matching the bad news of the world with the good news of our honourable and benevolent conduct.

For though we were once wandering *from* Christ, strangers to God's household,  
We are now beloved sojourners and exiles *in* Christ,  
At home in the love of Jesus,  
The Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.

So when the going gets tough, friends, and you face the resistance of unbelief and suffering, remember that you were once on the other side. And Jesus calls you to do for them, what He did for you.

#### CLOSING BENEDICTION

So just as the apostle Peter concluded in chapter 2, if you can open your hands as if receiving a gift, and go forth with this benediction of Psalm 23 as both a promise and a comfort in your affliction:

The LORD Jesus is YOUR shepherd;  
in Him you lack nothing.  
He will lay you down in green pastures,  
and lead you beside still waters.  
He will restore your soul.  
He will lead you in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

And *when* you walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
Have no fear,  
for Christ is with You;  
His rod and staff will comfort you.  
He will prepare a table before you  
in the presence of your enemies;  
He will anoint your head with oil;  
And your cup will overflow.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you

As you follow Him all the days of your life;  
And may your heart find rest in the love of Jesus,  
Both now and forevermore. Amen.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from Psalm 23 by Keegan.