

Theme: We will not reach the culture/country with the message of saving grace by becoming more like the world – but by becoming *less* like the world around us and more like the citizens of the glorious kingdom to which we truly belong.

Background: Last week – God’s sovereign rule over the governments of the earth, and our role under government. Today – How do we live in a foreign land full of fear and enmity toward us?

Introduction: It is hard to be “comfortable” in a foreign country. Can we really fit it? How do we live so that the gospel is “adorned” in such a way that it is attractive to a fearful, angry, arrogant, self-assured society? The situation he addresses isn’t very different from what we face today.

I. We Are God’s People

- A. A people redeemed (1:18,19)
- B. With a new identity (2:4-10)
 - 1. Once alienated from God
 - Ephesians 2:12; Colossians 1:21; Ephesians 2:13
 - 2. Now - Living Stones, a Chosen Race (4,5,9,10)

II. Sojourners and Exiles

- A. Citizens of another land
 - 1. Citizenship in heaven
 - Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:4
 - 2. Passing through this land/life
 - a. Exiles – like Egypt or Babylon
 - Make the best of it
 - b. Sojourners – wilderness experience
 - Requires real dependence upon God
- B. We don’t “fit in” easily
 - 1. Speaking a different language
 - “Native language” is not of this land
 - Different customs and habits (being changed by grace)
 - 2. Never quite comfortable
 - a. We shouldn’t get too comfortable here
 - b. The more we know Christ the less we will feel at home here

III. In the World But Not Of It

- A. Waging War Against Our Flesh (11)
 - 1. *Passions* of the flesh vs *health* of the soul
 - Does not mean the body is bad and soul is good

2. Passions of the flesh – defined

a. Physical and *mental* sins

- 1 Peter 4:3,4; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3ff

NOTE: We can sin with *all* our faculties!

b. It's the *heart* – not the culture!

- James 4:1-3

NOTE: We wage war against the flesh because it wages war against us!

B. Living the *good* life

1. Consisting of

a. Beautiful conduct

- Colossians 3:12-14; Galatians 5:22-23

NOTE: Good conduct shouldn't require "sacrifice" on our part. It is simply acting according to the new nature that has taken root in us as new creations in Christ.

b. Beautiful deeds (good deeds)

- Serving, sharing goods, time, lives

2. "Among the Gentiles" That is.....

a. The pagans will see it

b. "When they will speak against you"

c. The charges won't "stick" (12)

- The "beautiful life" of the believer does not stay hidden

IV. Engaging the Culture

1. Will the world see our good deeds, feel the blessing of our beautiful conduct in Christ and so glorify God *now*- not just on that final day?

2. How do we live in a "fallen" world?

a. Do we condemn it?

- Seek to live completely apart from it?

b. We critique the culture

- By our proclamation of the truth

- By our unwillingness to join in activities and attitudes of the secular world (1 Peter 4:3,4)

- Seeking to be a blessing to the culture

3. We cannot accommodate ourselves to the culture.

NOTE: Let the world see our beautiful conduct and deeds – and so come to ask for the reason for the hope that we have.

4. Let our beautiful conduct and deeds become our way of life.

- Matthew 25:34-40