

1 Peter Chapter 1A

In recent history the flood of refugees fleeing from places like Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh and even the Ukraine have captured the attention of the world.

More than 12 million people (entire population of PA) have fled Syria since 2011, Three million have fled Iraq since 2013 and 1.3 million people have been displaced in the Ukraine since 2015.

- The look on the faces of those who stand behind barbed wire tell the painful story that is too often repeated in the days in which we live.

I bring this up this morning (Two reasons: First – to remind you to Pray for them) Secondly: to draw your attention to the recipients of this letter penned by the Apostle Peter. He addresses them in the first verse as “Elect Exiles.”

The Term Exile refers to a person or persons who are separated from their homeland, forced to leave their country. We hear stories of those who have abandon their home in order to escape persecution, abuse or even extermination.

- BUT Peter is describing a different kind of Exile, He is describing people who are called and redeemed by God, citizens of heaven who live as exiles in this present fallen world.

I believe that Abraham would fit that description very well. God revealed himself to Abram and called him to leave behind his family and his homeland.

Genesis 12:1 **Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.**

Believers in the New Testament are described as a royal priesthood a holy nation, a people of God's own possession, (1 Peter 2:9) they are citizens of God's eternal Kingdom living in a foreign World.

- The Citizenship of the Saints is described as being “heavenly,” rather than being “earthly” it is eternal rather than temporary

Philippians 3:20 **But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

- Although they live in this present world, you could say that believers possess a dual citizenship. Physically they may dwell in Philippi but spiritually they are citizens of heaven!
- If you are a Believer today this earth is not your home; you are a pilgrim, stranger, alien, an exile.

The writer of Hebrews, speaking of the “Heroes of Faith” calls them “Exiles.”

Hebrews 11: 13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

- Once again, remember that Abraham lived his life as a pilgrim; wandering through the land of promise, in search of that city with foundations whose designer and builder is God.

In the same way, King David looked back at the end of his life and recognized that He too was a stranger on the earth.

1 Chronicles 29: 13 And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.
14 "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.
15 For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding.

This morning, as we begin our study in the First Epistle of Peter, the Beloved leader of the Disciples, addresses his readers as “**Elect Exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,**”

- It becomes obvious as you read Peter’s words, that these Elect Exiles were Believers, spiritual Exiles, like those spoken of in the Book of Hebrews who were scattered throughout the region that we now know as Turkey.

Peter writes in 1:17 that these Exiles should, **conduct themselves with fear throughout the time of their exile,**

- It is not uncommon for refugees, exiles to live with some level of fear in light of the fact that they are dwelling in a strange land. (look around you, the land that we live in seems to be growing stranger every day)
- BUT it is not the land or the people of the land that we should fear. We are called to walk on this earth with a healthy fear of God, a reverence for our eternal King.
- Peter addresses his readers in the same way in Chapter 2:

IN Ch 2: 11 **Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.**

As is often the case, Exiles, strangers and aliens suffer a variety of hardships in light of the fact that they live in a foreign land. So, Peter calls these believers to prepare themselves for suffering.

1 Peter 4:1 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Think about it, What do exiles who are far from home, what do refugees who are suffering hardship what do they really need? They need Hope? Comfort? Encouragement? And those are the things that Peter provides for his readers.

This morning we will only cover the first two verses, and in these two verses, Peter encourages his readers by reminding them that they are:

1. Chosen By God (they are God's Elect Exiles)
2. Cherished By God (they were foreknown, loved by God in eternity past)
3. Changed By God (sanctified by the Spirit of God)
 - LET'S look at the Text:

1 Chosen By God

1 Peter 1: 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

- As quickly as the Gospel of Jesus Christ spread throughout the Roman World, just as quickly the persecution of the church spread as well.
 - All you need do is follow the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul to see the radical response that arose when the Gospel infiltrated pagan society.
 - 2 Corinthians 11: Paul describes his suffering: 5 times whipped with 39 lashes, Three times beaten with rods, countless imprisonments and beatings, and once he was stoned and left for dead. (that's just part of it)
 - The life of an exile is a hard and treacherous existence.

Here at the very outset of this letter, Peter seeks to comfort his readers in the midst of their suffering by reminding them that they are in fact God's Elect people. Separated and chosen by God Himself before the foundation of the world.

- Throughout the Bible, the doctrine of election is always presented as grounds for great comfort and hope.

This doctrine should not be controversial; it should not be avoided or set aside as if it were unimportant. The value of the doctrine of Election can be seen in the frequency in which it is repeated throughout the Bible.

- Peter uses this word Chosen or Elect again in chapter 2 when he identifies his readers in this way:

1 Peter 2: 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.

- This idea of election, this wonderful truth that God graciously selects people to be His very own possession is found in both the Old and New Testaments.
- You may remember from previous studies on Election that God sovereignly chose the nation of Israel from among all of the nations of the world to be His unique and holy people.
- You don't find God sitting in heaven pouting and lamenting saying "I wish there was one, even one nation that chose to follow me." No, He didn't leave it up to the depraved, sinful will of man, He chose the nation of Israel to be his people.

Deuteronomy 7: 6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

- Think about it: in the ancient world, Israel alone possessed the Word of God; they alone had the revelation of God as the creator of all things and the redeemer of sinful man.
- Of all the nations on the earth, Israel alone worshipped the true and living God, They were the only people whose sacrifices were able to make atonement for sin.

In the same way that God sovereignly, graciously and lovingly chose of the Nation Israel and revealed himself to them in His Word, we learn in the N.T. that He sovereignly chose specific individuals to make up His church.

- The Lord Jesus told his disciples:

Joh 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

- The Apostle Paul affirms the words of Jesus declaring this great doctrine of Election when he writes to the believers in the church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us (Same Word as Elect) in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

C.H. Spurgeon that Great Preacher summarized His teaching on Election saying:
“I believe the doctrine of election because I am quite sure that if God had not chosen me, I would never have chosen Him; and I am sure that He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterward.”

An honest and thorough study of the Scriptures must leave you with the understanding that there is in your flesh NO good thing and that the only possible explanation for your redemption is the sovereign, gracious intervention of a loving God.

- The next question that Peter deals with as he addresses these exiles is WHY would God chose ANY of us?

2 Cherished By God

1 Peter 1:1 **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.**

- As we move from verse one to verse two we discover the SOURCE of divine election and that source is the “**Foreknowledge of God the Father.**”

NOW many of US were raised in churches where WE were taught that the foreknowledge of God referred to God’s unique ability to look down the corridor of time and see who would believe the Gospel and who would not.

- Having that divine foresight God chose for himself all those whom He knew would make the right decision and accept His gift of salvation.
- Like knowing who is going to win the NBA playoffs before the games begin. You can bet on the winner and be right every time.
- You had nothing to do with the game you merely SAW in advance who would win.

One preacher actually put it this way:

- When it comes to our salvation, God has one vote, Satan has one vote and YOU have the deciding vote.
- In my humble opinion that statement is not only completely unscriptural but it borders on Blasphemy. I see at least three problems with that preacher’s view of foreknowledge.

FIRST: It removes the sovereignty of God in Salvation and wrongly assigns that sovereignty to fallen man. (I decide my own eternal destiny)

Remember the Words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John 15:16 **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide**

SECOND: It gives man undue credit for his own salvation, enabling him to share the glory that belongs to God alone. Listen to Paul's words to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 1: 27 **But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,**

THIRD: IT assumes wrongly that fallen man, who is dead in sins and transgressions, has the ability on his own to seek after God. On the contrary Paul writes: Romans 3: 11 **no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."**

- Paul tells the believers at Ephesus that they were Spiritually Dead before God did His gracious work of regeneration in them.

Ephesians 2:1 **And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, 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,**

Let's try to get a handle on this: IF our elections IS based upon the foreknowledge of God BUT that foreknowledge is NOT God's ability to look down the corridor of time and see who would choose Him, what is it?

- A more careful look at the Word of God reveals that:
- Divine foreknowledge is God's eternal, loving and saving intention that was predetermined before the foundation of the world.
- SAY THAT A BIT MORE SIMPLY.
- Before the creation of the world, in order to display his glory, in Love, God chose a remnant of sinful men and determined, of his own will, to save them from the penalty, the power and even the presence of sin.
- In 1 Peter 1:12 Peter uses the word "Foreknown" to describe Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1: 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.

- “HE” that is Christ, is the object of God’s foreknowledge, not only what HE would do, and accomplish but CHRIST himself as a person was foreknown.

Before the foundation of the world God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit existed eternally in loving union with one another.

- When Peter speaks of Christ as being foreknown, he is speaking first of that loving union and secondly of the predetermined plan of God by which Jesus would come and sprinkle his precious blood for the redemption of God’s elect.

Often in the O.T. the word translated knowledge, to know, known or knew actually refers to the intimacy of a love relationship.

- Genesis 4:1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain,
- Jeremiah 1: 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."
- Of the elect people of Israel the prophet Amos says:
- Amos 3: 2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth;

What I am saying is this. The foreknowledge of God speaks of that special LOVE the Father had for the elect from eternity past, before the foundation of the world.

- Not only did He love you from eternity past he also predetermined to send his Son to die in your place so that your sins would be removed so that you could dwell with Him forever.
- Peter affirms that this great salvation is a work of the Trinity, Listen carefully to our text and see if you can pick out the work of all three persons in the Godhead.

1 Peter 1:1 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.

- Peter speaks of the sanctifying Work of the Spirit and that brings us to our final point.

2 Changed By God

When it comes to our Salvation, God the Father Elected those who would be saved, God the Son, put on human flesh purchasing their salvation through His sacrifice on the cross and in time, God the Holy Spirit Applied the finished work of Christ to those who are God’s Elect, bringing them from death to life through the New Birth.

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit includes such things as

Repentance (Acts 11) The Holy Spirit provided grace for repentance to the Gentiles

- When Peter reported how the Holy Spirit came upon those who gathered in the house of Cornelius. “they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:18)

Regeneration – is a sanctifying work of the H.S. (Titus 3) 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Adoption – another part of the Sanctifying work of the H.S. (Romans 8:16) 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (The spirit of Adoption whereby we cry Abba)

You could rightly say that God’s sovereign election becomes a present reality in the life of those who believe through the saving, sanctifying work that is carried out by the Holy Spirit.

- The Sanctifying work of the Spirit delivers believers from bondage to sin, it brings them out of darkness into light, from unbelief to saving faith.

John 3: 5 Jesus answered, (Nicodemus) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

- It is the Holy Spirit who produces in us a desire for the sincere milk of God’s Word as well as a hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- It is the Holy Spirit who equips us with everything good in order that we may do his will. It is the Spirit working in us that which is pleasing in his sight.
- We were unholy, He makes us holy, We were rebellious He makes us obedient.

Friends, It is my sincere and heartfelt desire that the Truth of God’s glorious work, (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) would bring about in YOU a response of exuberant and joyful worship, it is my prayer that a deeper knowledge of God would result in a deeper love for God.

John Piper:

“My experience is that clear knowledge of God from the Bible is the kindling that sustains the fires of affection for God. And probably the most crucial kind of knowledge is the knowledge of what God is like in salvation. That is what the doctrine of election provides. Not the power and sovereignty of God in general, but his power and sovereignty in the way he saves people. To experience God fully, we need to know not just how he acts in general, but specifically how he saves us — how did he save me?”

When you are of the opinion that God has one vote Satan has one vote and You have one vote. Your God is too Small, Satan is TOO large and you have a higher opinion of yourself than you ought.

When your eternal life is determined by your own decision rather than the eternal counsel of God you cannot experience the fullness of JOY and perfect peace that God desires that you should walk in.

As Elect Exiles, we are comforted knowing that we were loved with an everlasting love from before the foundation of the world.

The doctrine of divine election does not remove our responsibility, now that we are saved to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the sanctification process. We are called of God to put off the deeds of the flesh, to pick up our cross and follow him.

BUT we have this confidence:

Php 1:6 **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.**