

1 Peter 1. :17-21  
Living as Exiles on Earth

<sup>17</sup> And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, <sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> 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.

- I. ***Conduct your lives in the fear of God.***
- II. ***Know that you were ransomed with Christ's precious blood.***
- III. ***Through Christ our faith and hope is in God.***

***Main Idea***

Conduct your life on earth in the fear of God because he is an impartial Judge who by the shed blood and glorious resurrection of his Son grants his people faith and hope in himself.

Applications:

Do not live your Christian lives nonchalantly or frivolously but in all seriousness and commitment, seeking to fulfill in your life the will of God as revealed in the Word of God and to fulfill the specific calling and ministry that he has sovereignly placed you in.

You will receive a rich welcome...

Phil. 2:12-13 - ...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. 1:11

## *Goal of Sermon*

*Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, open up your holy Word to us today. May its truth shine before our minds with clarity and conviction. May it instruct us, encourage us, and strengthen us for the race set before us, in your name we pray, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

The Apostle Peter, who had been the right-hand man of the Lord Jesus, and the leader of Jesus' apostolic band, wrote this letter to a group of local churches in what is now present-day Turkey. In verse 1 he called them "elect exiles." Some other versions of our English Bible translate this word "exiles" as sojourners or strangers or pilgrims. All these words indicate that for Christians living in human culture, this world is not our permanent home, but we are here temporarily. We are passing through. Our final destination awaits the future when Christ returns to earth. So we should not be too attached to this world, but our hearts and minds should be more set on Christ, our Savior, at God's right hand, and on the things of his holy kingdom

On the other hand, while we are only temporary residents on earth, our residency here is crucially important, everything about our lives is crucially important, it's important to us, it's crucially important to Christ's church, and it's crucially important to God's purpose and glory. Christian believers have a high and holy calling. It is not an easy calling. But it is a calling that has great value because in this calling we have the opportunity to offer up our lives to something greater than ourselves – it is to the purpose and glory of God. The eternal God is great and glorious but we can do something to enhance his glory through the offering up of our own lives. What a great calling we have! We can pray, "Lord, use us as instruments of your glory in the earth!"

Our own purpose for our lives is often of a very narrow perspective, very short sighted, and lacking in connection to God's great plan of the Ages to call out a people for his own possession and his own glory. But to be called

by God into this kind of relationship with him and into this mission for our lives is a gracious gift of God with blessing and benefits beyond what we could have imagined.

Today we want to carry on with this letter, this letter to these Christian exiles, or pilgrims or strangers, and see what else the Apostle Peter would teach us about this kind of life lived before the face of God.

I want to bring out three major ideas that are in this passage, in these five verses.

Verse 17: ***17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,***

So here's the first point:

### ***I. Conduct your lives in the fear of God.***

I would say that there is no greater attribute, no greater characteristic, that a person could have, than to have the fear of God in their lives. By fear I don't necessarily mean a terror or dread of God but an awesome respect for God. Yes, we should fear his anger for sin, his judgment on sin, we should fear offending him and displeasing him. We should fear grieving the Holy Spirit.

Peter says "conduct yourselves with fear..."

If I was counseling any person about considering a marriage partner, I would suggest that the most valuable trait you would want them to have is the fear of God in their lives. Outward beauty will fade, but the fear of the Lord will carry a person well all the days of their life.

#### ***A. If you call upon him as Father... v. 17***

The person who calls upon God as his or her Father is among the most blessed people on earth. Why?

Because most people do not know God as their heavenly Father.

This is an "if...then" situation. If one thing is true, then a result should follow.

Example, "If Mr. Jones becomes my new supervisor, I will have to quit arriving 5 or 10 minutes late every day and taking too long on my lunch breaks. My work habits will have to improve."

But if we call on God as Father it opens up a whole new world to us.

“Call on him” means to be in relationship to him. To call upon him as a child would his or her father:

In time of need.

In time of thanks.

In a time just to share what happened to me today.

In a time of being in his presence:

Beseeking him to hear, to listen – to my complaint or my confusion or my adoration.

To call on” indicates a vital relationship. Jesus called on his Father in Garden of Gethsemane...

Matthew 26:39

And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, “**My Father**, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, **not** as I **will**, but as you **will**.”

But to call on him as Father means we also have to recognize his other attributes – he is not only loving Father but he is a Judge. V. 17 says, he is a **Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds**. He is the Judge of all the earth, of all the peoples of the earth. He is the Judge of all things in heaven and earth.

And he is not a Judge who can be sweet-talked into accepting my prejudiced or selfish position on a matter. He is not a Judge who can be bribed or persuaded to compromise his high standards of what is right and what is wrong.

B. He is an **impartial Judge** – He only judges according to the facts and only in accordance with his Word – all people judged equally.

C. **conduct yourselves with fear** v. 17

We could conduct ourselves in foolish pride, or in arrogance, or an attitude of self-sufficient independence – not needing others’ help or advice.

But what we need more than anything is the fear of God – living the totality of our lives in the awareness of his presence, his all-seeing eye, his will. We need to fear offending him or running off and doing our own will and not consulting him as to his will.

D. v. 17 goes on to say, conduct yourselves with fear **throughout the time of your exile**. We need to be consistent in the living of our Christian lives – steady and true. We need to plan to run the long race before us. A runner who is running a 10,000 meter race has to pace himself so that he will have the energy he needs at the end of the race to sprint

to the finish. He needs to keep his eye on the finish line and not let anything distract him from reaching that goal.

V. 18-19: <sup>18</sup> **knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.**

## II. **Know that you were ransomed with Christ's precious blood.**

- A. "Know..." - Be aware of certain spiritual realities that are true of all Christians. Don't be ignorant of the Bible and its teachings. Desire true spiritual milk but also move on to the meat of God's Word.
- B. Meaning of "ransom" – to pay a price to obtain something of value. As to pay a ransom for the release of a kidnap victim. Or pay the price at a slave market to set someone free. The prophet Hosea bought his estranged and adulterous wife back at the slave market.
  - a. Ransomed from futile ways
  - b. Inherited – you didn't earn it – it just came to you. Adam's sin and guilt was credited to you and all the sinful habits of your ancestors were the atmosphere in which you and I grew up. But Christ came to liberate us from the stranglehold of the sins of our own ancestors and the sins that permeate the human race.
- C. A costly price was paid, says Peter, to ransom you from your sins and evil lives
  - a. It was not even paid with the most expensive materials that can be found on earth. Like all things on earth, these one day will perish in the Great Conflagration that is coming.
- D. Blood of Christ means his death.
- E. It is precious because it was the sinless Son's blood, the innocent one. Like those lambs that were slain every morning and evening in the Temple worship. In the Book of Exodus we see a description of the sacrificial lambs

Exo. 12:5 - **Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.** It had to be a perfect animal.

The eternal Son of God, who dwelt in all eternity past, in the bosom of the Father, had to take upon himself our human nature, a real human body, in order to die for our sins. Had he not become man, he could not have died in our place. And if the one who died on Calvary's cross was not God in the flesh, then his death could not have been the

payment price for the sins of all God's people in all generation from every nation, tribe, and tongue. Were he only a man and not also God, his death could have perhaps paid the price, have been the substitute, for one other man.

If a condemned criminal is sentenced die on the gallows, to be hung by his neck until he is dead, and another man jumps up and volunteers to take his place, and the judge allows that to happen – then only that one man escapes death. Such would be the case if Christ were only man.

But his death, because of who he is, the sinless Son of God, had the efficacy and power to pay the ransom price of all God's people of all times.

Only Christ's precious blood had this power, only his death had this power. All the silver and gold ever discovered and mined and refined from all the nations from all time could never pay for one sin, not for one little "white lie." But Christ's blood, because it was the blood of the one and eternal Son of God who became flesh, had the power to remove, to erase, to eradicate – to pay the debt in full that all God's people owed to God for their sin.

The Gospel song says it like this:

"I had a debt I could not pay,  
He paid a debt he did not owe,  
I needed someone to wash my sins away,

And now I sing a brand-new song,  
"Amazing grace" all day long,  
Christ Jesus paid the debt,  
That I could never pay.

I. ***Conduct your lives in the fear of God.***

II. ***Know that you were ransomed with Christ's precious blood.***

Verse 20-21 - ***<sup>0</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> 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.***

III. ***Through Christ our faith and hope is in God.***

A. Our faith and hope is not floating around loosely in the world and looking to see if it can somehow bump into Jesus Christ and get connected to him.

- B. Our salvation is linked to an historical event that God brought about – the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth.
- C. This event was not an accidental event in history that just happened to somehow fall in place at the right time and right place.
- D. The events of Jesus' entrance into the world were planned long before he came. Verse 20 says '**he was foreknown**' before the foundation of the world. The word "foreknown" here has the same meaning as "foreordained." It was God's plan from before the creation of the world to send his Son into the world to redeem God's beloved people – those whom God had foreknowledge of – remember from v. 2 – the exiles in these countries were elected by the "foreknowledge of God the Father."

It's the same basic word as "foreknown" here in v. 20– it all points to God's sovereignty and God's initiative in bringing salvation to those whom he has set his love upon from before creation. And here specifically it was God's plan to send his Son to earth to die and rise for his people.

God was not caught by surprise when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. In fact, it was there that he promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. He was not surprised that the entire human race become corrupted from then on. He was not surprised when Cain killed Able nor how the peoples of the earth descended into sin during Noah's time: <sup>5</sup> *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.*

God knew all these things would happen and he was not going to let the deception of Satan, the weakness of our first parents, nor humanity's descent into sin thwart or cancel or disrupt his plan and intention to save a great number of people out of the whole pool of humanity by the redemptive work of his Son sent from heaven.

Even before the universe was created by the command of God, before humanity had ever sinned - Christ's coming, his death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead on the third day, and his ascension back into heaven were all planned by God and executed in the fullness of time.

Notice what v. 20 says: <sup>20</sup> *He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.*

You see, the plan was in God's mind, but it was revealed to humanity, specifically to the Jewish people in the first thirty years of the first century when the Messiah arrived on the stage of human history in the fulfillment to ancient prophecy. At his birth the angels declared it from the skies. ***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"***

When Jesus entered his public ministry at about age 30, the plan of God became more and more manifested and revealed who he was. He healed the sick, raised the dead, delivered people from demons, and did many other miracles. His words of teaching struck with divine authority and his compassion and care for weak and wounded people had the fragrance divine love.

But then it was his resurrection from the dead, his physical appearance to his disciples for 40 days, that supremely testified that he was the Son of God come to earth. For a cowboy who tames a wild mustang and makes him rideable it cannot be disputed that he is an able trainer of wild horses. For a man to rise from the dead, to conquer death, it cannot be denied that he is no ordinary man. Who can defeat death, who had the power, except God himself? God in the person of his Son did exactly this.

So the Son of God was made manifest, but notice that it is not just a general manifestation - for anybody who happens to take an interest in ancient Middle Eastern history. Peter, writing to these Christian people who had gathered into local churches in the area we know call Turkey, says that Christ was made manifest in the last times ***"for the sake of you."***

When God sent his Son to the earth he sent him on a special mission with a definite end-goal in mind. He sent him to die for and rise for and ascend for the elect people of God - "for the sake of you" - says Peter. The word is plural in Greek - for "you all." The "you all" would encompass all the elect people of God from Adam until the last believer comes to faith before Christ return at the end of the Age.

God planned all this out and executed it all out throughout the history of the Hebrew people, culminating in the arrival of the Messiah, specifically for the sake of those whom he had loved from before the creation of the world.

Before Christ came to earth he knew exactly who he was going to die for. He knew them by name. He knew their sins. He knew the day and hour of



their salvation. He knew all about the circumstances of their lives. He knew how he would use each of us for his glory.

Actually, that's the end goal of Christ's saving work – that God might be glorified. You and I who belong to Christ have a purpose in life – it is to glorify God with our lives. Our lives do not belong to ourselves but to our gracious God – to use us as he will to bring glory to his name.

What a high calling and privilege we as Christian people have – that our lives could be used by God to bring glory to his name. There is no greater calling life – than to be vessels, instruments, humans in all our weakness, failings and sins, people who God can take and get glory for himself out of our lives.

How could he know this? Because he was God. And then he became man so he could add a human body to his person and be able to die for all those whom he had in mind and for whom he came to rescue.

Verse 21 again says : <sup>21</sup> *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.*

My point here iss that...

### III. ***Through Christ our faith and hope is in God.***

Look at the first phrase in verse 21: "who through him are believers in God."

These Christian people did become Christians in a vacuum. That is, they did not decide one day as they were taking their evening stroll around the town that it'd be nice to believe in a god, some kind of supreme being. So, they thought, let's see what kind of god we can think up. Maybe he's a god that sends rain, or give us victory in battle or provides us with wealth.

That may have happened in a similar way with many people around the world, but not with these people. The gospel of Jesus Christ came to them through preachers who came north from Jerusalem.

And it was not some nebulous Savior that these gospel preachers were proclaiming but a Savior who had been predicted by the OT prophets and who appeared in human

history and by many irrefutable proofs showed that he was indeed the very Son of the living God.

It was through the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth alone that these people had become believers in God. This is always true of all people everywhere. No one can become a believer in God, that is, in the true God, the Creator God, the God who revealed himself through the OT prophets and then finally and supremely in Jesus Christ, no one can become a believer in the true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, except he or she come through Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6. You cannot be a true believer in the true God except you come through Jesus Christ. You cannot come through Mohammed, through Hindu gods, through Joseph Smith of the Mormon religion, through the Watchtower Society of the Jehovah's Witnesses, nor through Ellen G. White of the Seventh Day Advents. You have to come through Jesus Christ and him alone. You must call on him to save you from your sins and bring you to his eternal kingdom. The Gospel call is the same for all people in all cultures everywhere \_ "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

Verse 21 goes on to say why it is only through Christ that a person can be a believer in the true God – it's because God raised him from the dead. This resurrection from the dead is proof-positive that Jesus was who he said he was – the Son of the Living God, the one who had existed eternally with the Father and Spirit and who was sent to earth to take upon himself our full human nature, except without sin.

Peter had seen the risen Christ; he had seen him on the same day he rose, and then several other times. With his own eyes he had seen him, he had sat with the other disciples and heard Jesus teach them, he had eaten and drunk with Jesus after he rose from the dead. Peter was an eyewitness to Christ's resurrection and he knew full well this was a fulfillment of OT prophecy and the cornerstone of the Christian faith. So, like Paul, he never tires of mentioning Christ's resurrection from the dead. Christianity stands or falls on the truth of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Peter knew he arose and he himself stood tall and bold to proclaim this great fact all the days of his life.

This resurrection brought Christ glory. He was the victor over death, over sin, over Satan – his power conquered all these evil powers and showed him to be the invincible, all-conquering Son of God who came to undo and destroy all the evil forces aligned against God and his people.

Where does that leave the people of God? The last phrase of verse 21 tells us, “so that your faith and hope are in God.”

These people’s faith and hope were no more in their pagan idols or in their own strengths and wisdom, or in their family background, or in their political affiliations, or in anything but in the living God himself, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Their faith was not in the Emperor or in the efficiency of the Roman government or in the system of the Roman roads, nor in the skill and strength of the Roman legions. Their faith was in the living God himself as he was revealed through his Son. ***He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*** Heb. 1

Likewise their hope was not in anything, any power, any wisdom, any philosophy in this world but their hope was in God. And their hope had a solid basis in a real historical event, in the resurrection of Christ. None of the Greek or Roman gods had any grounding in history – they were all legends and tales passed down from one generation to another.

We read in 1 Pet. 1:3, ***he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*** This was the ground of their hope in God and in a future resurrection of their own bodies – Christ’s glorious resurrection. Christ’s resurrection was the ground of their hope in the forgiveness of their sins, their escape from the Judgement to come, and their own eternal life in the new heavens and earth that will come down from heaven at Christ’s return.

The hope that Christianity had given to these people in comparison to their former beliefs and way of life was like the difference between darkness and light, between starving to death and banqueting on a rich meal, like the difference from drowning in quicksand to standing on a solid rock.

The promised Messiah of the Hebrews had come, he had lived, he had died, and he had risen. He was seen, he was touched, his teachings were heard, and they saw him, Peter saw him, ascend back into heaven. And then ten days later they had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and they were filled with the presence of God and with boldness to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world of their time.

And so the baton has been passed down to us. This is our time, our moment in the stage of human history. Let’s take up the baton and run hard to the finish line, knowing

that Jesus is beside us every step of the way, so that in the end he may receive us and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Amen.

So let us...

- I. ***Conduct our lives in the fear of God.***
- II. ***Know that we were ransomed with Christ's precious blood.***
- III. ***Through Christ our faith and hope is in God***

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for your Word today. Work its great truths into our understanding and in the continuing transformation of our lives so that in our frail bodies and lives we can reflect your glory and our lives will count for eternity. In your name we ask it. Amen.

-by Jeff Gregory, pastor  
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