

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let Us Live as Strangers to This Age

1 Peter 2:11-12

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: In this sermon we are exhorted as we enter into the unknown of the new year to be found faithful as believers. The world is actively at war against the Church after many years of relative peace in America. But that has changed and with it comes many temptations on how to respond. This is a pastoral plea to the people of Missio Dei to be found faithful in both the big and little things, especially the Gospel.

I. Introduction.

- A. Turn to 1 Peter 1:11.
- B. We enter into a new year and it is a habit of mine to pause for at least one week to reflect on what the church ought to keep in mind or understand better.
 - 1. Often this takes the form of reminding, which is perhaps the most common activity a pastor does for his church.
 - 2. The apostle Peter himself said this, *“Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me”* (2 Peter 1:12-14).
- C. Too often we forget what we ought to remember and remember what we ought to forget.
 - 1. The apostle Paul speaks of this. Though he was religious in every way in the eyes and standards of mankind he understood that his efforts, his bloodline and his righteousness would not save him. Instead he says, *“forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead”* (Philippians 3:13b).
 - 2. Much of our anxiety and foolish decisions lie in forgetting who Jesus is, what Jesus has accomplished and what is to be our hope.

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- D. Today I want to remember something that is very easily forgotten, that this world is not our home and we hope.
- E. 1 Peter 2:11-12.
 - 1. These two verses serve as a hinge for the entire book.
 - 2. Verse 11 basically summarizes 1:1-2:10.
 - 3. Verse 12 then summarizes the rest of the book.
 - 4. Notice by way of introduction the tone of Peter's appeal.
 - a. "Beloved, I urge you."
 - (1) The term speaks of a deep affection for these people. They are truly loved by the apostle.
 - (2) This is a pastor looking at his people and talking to them as dear, precious souls and has their best interests in mind.
 - 5. Let me take a bit of time here to explain how and why they are aliens and strangers in this world. Because if you don't know this then nothing else really matters. (Gospel)
- F. With all of that in mind we want to spend the rest of our time looking at two aspects of living as a strange in this age.

II. Let Us Live as Strangers to This Age (11b-12).

- A. We are to be a holy people (11b-12a).
 - 1. Now in the English this passage appears to be giving two separate things:
 - a. In verse 11 we are to abstain.
 - b. In verse 12 we are to keep excellent behavior.
 - 2. In reality there is only one point, that is to abstain from fleshly lusts.
 - 3. Peter is calling for an inner discipline for their lives.
 - a. He reminds them that they are aliens and strangers.
 - (1) Aliens speaks of people living in a foreign country where they do not have the rights of citizens.

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- (2) Strangers speaks of living alongside other people, with whom you do not belong to.
 - b. He is emphasizing, by putting both together, that truly we are foreigners in a Christ rejecting world.
 - c. Therefore we cannot be living out and taking part in those customs that are not Christ honoring (11).
 - d. Yet, at the same time, we are also to be living in such a way that we conduct ourselves with honor and generosity toward that same unbelieving world (12).
4. Therefore, Peter is arguing that just because we are strangers to this world does not mean that we fight against it, **nor that we withdraw from it**. Instead, we are to learn how to live out our faith in a holy lifestyle.
5. The call is to “abstain.”
- a. It means literally to be holding ourselves off of or away from something, to be distant.
 - b. This is in the present tense, so he is saying to us that there is a constant need for us to be doing this.
 - c. It is also in what is called the “middle” voice. This means that it is our responsibility, not God’s, to be doing this.
 - (1) We are not to wait until “God lays it on our hearts.”
 - (2) We are to do it because the Bible calls us to do it.
 - (3) **2 Peter 1:3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,
6. “Fleshly lusts.”
- a. Well what are these exactly?
 - (1) 1 Thessalonians 4:3, “*For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.*”
 - (2) Galatians 5:19 ff.

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- b. Let me make a key observation here.
 - (1) Peter is making this appeal with the idea that he **knows** that the people can actually do this.
 - (2) In other words, contrary to current teaching both inside and outside the church these desires are not uncontrollable for the Christian.
 - (3) **Romans 13:14**

- c. He reminds us that these desires are waging war against our soul.
 - (1) That word, “war” speaks of a strong enmity. These lusts are actively hostile toward our soul.
 - (2) The soul is the seat of our affections, will, desires, and thoughts. It has been redeemed, and is to be protected.
 - (3) This term, “war” speaks of, not a mere battle, but an actual military campaign.

- d. In verse 12 he then changes to the positive side of this appeal.
 - (1) Here he is looking at the visible fruit of this struggle against fleshly lusts.
 - (2) Again this is in the present tense. He is describing our lifestyle before the world—a day-to-day life.
 - (3) Our behavior is to be excellent or good.
 - (4) Peter is very concerned that our behavior before the world be proper and excellent.

- 7. So the first point in understanding our mission as Christians is that we are to be a holy people

- B. The second is that it is at the heart of evangelism (12b).
 - 1. Let me repeat that, the abstaining from fleshly lusts and having an excellent life before the unsaved world is the heart and soul of true evangelism.
 - 2. Notice the goal of this according to the Holy Spirit: “So that. . .” this speaks of the goal, or aim of his appeal.

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3. What happens is this: you begin to abstain from fleshly lusts
 4. But Peter tells them that they can turn the tables on these people. In the very things that they discredit you, you're going to prove them wrong and you're going to even lead them to trust in the gospel.
- C. So what do we do to deal with false accusations?
1. You live a life that is so above reproach, so godly, so honorable, so excellent, that you become a living billboard for the power of the gospel. That trusting in Jesus alone is utterly life-changing.
 2. Notice that word, “observe” or “see.” It speaks of a close scrutiny of an eyewitness.
- D. “The day of visitation,” What does that mean?
1. You may think of this as referring to when God comes and judges. But that is incorrect.
 2. The OT uses this and it is very, very common. This phrase speaks of God visiting for the purpose of blessing, for deliverance, for rescue, or for salvation.
 3. The NT uses it only one way—of salvation.
 - a. But all of the New Testament usages of "visit" refer to a visit for redemption.
 - b. Luke 1:68, *"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for He visited us and accomplished redemption."* In Luke chapter 7 and verse 16 we also read similarly, it says regarding Christ, *"God has visited His people." And this obviously for redemption.*
 - c. Luke 19:44 it talks about the time of the future when judgment will come and the end of the verse says, *"Because you didn't recognize the time of your visitation."* That is you're going to be judged because you didn't know when God visited you to save you, you rejected the visitation of salvation, He'll come in judgment.
 - d. So all of those visitations of the New Testament have inherent in the expression the idea of a visitation for salvation. What he is saying is simply this, that because of the ongoing observation of the character and quality of a Christian's life, an unbeliever will glorify God in the day when God visits him to save him.

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- e. In other words, at the time when the marvelous grace of God begins to move on the heart of an unbeliever, he will respond with saving faith and glorify God because he has remembered the tremendous testimony of believers that he saw. That's what he's saying.

III. Conclusion.

- A. As we go our separate ways now, I want to leave you with a key thought.
- B. The quality of our transformed life must be visible to the unsaved world. There are no secret disciples of Jesus Christ. (Repeat)
 - 1. You either bring glory to the Lord or you don't.
 - 2. You either show to a watching world salvation to be attractive and excellent, or you don't.
 - 3. So ask yourself right now, is your lifestyle before your unsaved co-worker, neighbor, friend, spouse, so excellent, that it becomes a tool of showing them the gospel?
- C. May each of you make the right and wise choice today.

Benediction

May the Lord remind you all of the richness of His grace and the manifold blessings that belong to you in Christ Jesus our Lord. May you walk in His promises and by the power of the Holy Spirit as you engage this fallen age for God's glory. Amen