

As we turn in our Bibles this morning, we reach a text full of warning and of glorious hope

There is a word that summarizes this text: Responsibility – Fight sin and win sinners

- You have a responsibility, Christian, to wage war against sin and wage war for sinners I used to serve in recovery ministry...where war is waged...fighting for their lives addiction
- So many of the people I served alongside of then are still in ministry today...won war Those were obvious sins...obviously destructive...what about sins that are not as evident
- a. **Sins of the mind** – Pride | Envy | Jealousy | Covertness | Doubt
- b. **Sins of the heart** – Lust | Hatred | Bitterness | Unforgiveness | Selfish Ambition
- c. **Sins of attitude** – Anger | Resentment | Impatience | Discontentment | Ingratitude

Not all sins are as obvious as addiction, lying, murder, theft...many of our sins are internal

Big Idea - Wage war against the flesh and win a witness for God

How the war plays out internally & externally...we fight against sin and we fight for sinners

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

- Most think 'warfare' something happening out there—politics, culture, global conflicts
 - Iran – Israel – United States | Russian – Ukraine | (Civil) Sudan | Myanmar | Ethiopia
- Peter points finger closer to home - War being waged against your very soul
- Enemy isn't a person; it's 'sinful desires' living inside you...how that impacts evangelism

Today, we're looking at a strategy for internal battle against sin and external for sinners

How do we abstain from the things that want to destroy us

While simultaneously winning the respect of a world that is watching our every move?

1. **Our Position: Pilgrims in the World** "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles..."

- There's deep truth every Christian must come to grips with: **this world is not our home** We live here, work here, raise families here—but we do not ultimately belong here

Dual Citizenship - Legally recognized as a citizen of two different countries at the same time

Right now...we all have dual citizenship. You are a citizen of USA and of Heaven

Phil. 3:20 'our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ'

- Look at how Peter reminds them of this fact... I urge you as sojourners and exiles
 - **Sojourner** temporary resident—someone passing through – Stay w/ friends Houston
 - **Exile** is someone living away from their true homeland - Djibouti – Africa

Peter is addressing a group of people who are actually sojourning and exiled

Five regions Asia Minor (Turkey) – Pontus | Galatia | Cappadocia | Asia | Bithynia

Now...we are not spread out from homes...we live in ABQ...haven't been kicked out yet

Peter is saying: **You are spiritual foreigners in a physical world**

Your address may be here—but your citizenship is in heaven

What does this have to do with waging war on sin? Are you living like Heaven is your home?

Prayer: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be name, kingdom come, work be done
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Djibouti - enjoy scenery, learn some customs, interact with the people—never forget home

Don't adopt every cultural value | Don't invest everything into that temporary place

You live with a constant awareness: "I'm going home soon."

Takeaway – Remember your home | Will you Look Like Heaven When You Get There?

Meditate on Your Citizenship – Let Scripture reshape view of world...passing through

Model a Pilgrim Mindset – Traveler not a settler | Hold loose to things of this world

Magnify Your Homecoming – Stir your heart with anticipation for what awaits

2. **Our Problem: Passions of the Flesh** (Before we get into this point...heavy...Jesus)

"...abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."

- Christian life not playground—battlefield | B/c world not home...you will feel tension Peter doesn't say these passions inconvenience your soul—he says they wage war against it

This is not a casual struggle...It is a relentless assault | Battle = You kill sin or sin kills you

a. **The Command: "Abstain"** More than moderation—to deliberately keep your distance

- It is not "manage your sin," but "mortify it" | Not "control it," but "cut it off"
- Peter assumes something important: "passions of the flesh" still present in believers

Salvation removes sin's penalty, but not its presence

Best way defeat sin? Starve it out...sin is a monster that when you feed it...it gets stronger

b. **The Enemy: "The passions of the flesh"**

- They are called "of the flesh" because they arise from our fallen nature
- **Sin promises satisfaction but delivers destruction** | Pick sin...destroy? Right relationships Lust destroys marriages | Greed & Anger destroy families | Pride destroys relationship God

Sin wants to leave you lonely – loveless – and lost...so wage war!

c. **The Conflict: "Which wage war against your soul"**

- Peter uses military language. This is not passive—it is aggressive...actively seeking to: Weaken your faith | Distort your thinking | Harden your heart | Damage fellowship w/ God
- Notice the target: **your soul** - Not just your reputation, not just your circumstances

Your inner life with God...very center of who you are...lasts for an eternity

Takeaway – Renounce the Flesh = Recognize the sin | Resist the sin | Replace the sin

3. **Our Practice: Pure Conduct before the Watching World**

"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable..."

Something powerful life that backs up what it claims to believe – Jimmy Jehovah Birthdays

- Live in a world Christians constantly being observed, evaluated, & often misunderstood
- Misunderstanding = We can hate an ideology & love people...very careful come off as hate

Unbelievers may not read the Bible—but unbeliever read you every day

- This isn't just about reputation—it's about representation...we represent Christ

a. **The Audience: "Among the Gentiles"** = Refers to unbelievers...outside the faith

- Peter speaking about life in the world, not away from it | Not isolation but infiltration

God is placing us where people don't know Christ so our lives can shine in darkness

b. **The Command: "Keep your conduct..."** refers to your whole way of life

This is not about occasional good deeds, but a consistent pattern of living

This is Intentional - Honorable living doesn't happen accidentally—it is cultivated

Do you know why my wife grows tomatoes and I don't...I don't plant any seed and she does

c. **The Standard: "Honorable"** = means beautiful, excellent, or morally attractive

- This goes beyond simply avoiding sin—it means living in a way that is visibly good
- Integrity when no one watching | Kindness when undeserved | Honesty when costs something

This kind of life stands out and reaches people with the gospel

David and Susan – Reached more people than anyone I've ever known...Welcome Table

Takeaway – Protect your Witness

Guard Your Speech - Be intentional with your words – Speak truthfully, graciously, wisely

- Avoid gossip, harshness, and careless talk, remembering what you say reflects Christ

Guide Your Steps - Live with integrity in daily conduct... Live so your life backs your message

Grow Your Spirit - Stay rooted in spiritual disciplines like prayer, Scripture, and fellowship

- Growing relationship w/ God strengthens character & keeps witness consistent & authentic

4. Our Purpose: Proclaiming God Through Our Lives

‘...so that... they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.’

- There’s difference between what people *hear* Christians say & what *see* Christians do
- Peter doesn’t tell them to win arguments - He tells them to win *witnesses*
 - The strategy? Not just louder voices—but more visible righteous lives

This is a call to live in such a way that even critics are confronted with the reality of God

Three things I want you to see from this section of text...Visibility | Substance | Goal

a. **The *Visibility* of the Christian Life — “they may see”**

- Christianity was never meant to be hidden. Begins the heart, inevitably shows up life

Know what is wrong in Christianity? Monasticism...there have been Christian Monks 3rd

- 270 ad – Egyptian desert hermits called the ‘Desert Fathers’ withdrew from society
 - intentionally choosing poverty, chastity, and obedience to grow closer to God

You are not supposed to disappear from the world, but to be in the world to show Christ

How you respond under pressure | Treat difficult people | Handle success and suffering

- This echoes what Jesus taught: “Let your light shine before others...”
 - Christian life is not a private faith with no public evidence...It is a visible testimony

b. **The *Substance* of the Christian Life — “your good deeds”**

- Peter doesn’t say they will hear your arguments or admire your theology— **Good deeds**

Integrity when no one is watching | Compassion when it’s inconvenient

Humility when you’re wronged | Generosity without recognition

These deeds are not performed to earn salvation—but to display transformation

c. **The *Goal* of the Christian Life — “glorify God on the day of visitation”**

This is the ultimate aim: God gets the glory

- “The day of visitation” = time when God draws near—whether judgment or salvation
For some, it will be a day of reckoning - For others, a day of redemption.

- Peter is saying: your life can play a role in that moment

Your conduct today may be the seed that leads someone to glorify God tomorrow

That hostile neighbor... that skeptical coworker... that watching family member...

May one day trace their turning to God back to the life they observed in you

Think of your life as the only sermon someone may ever listen to

Text – Explanation – Argument – Illustration – Application...you could be that sermon!

Takeaway – Point to Jesus

Conduct - Live a life that visibly reflects Christ

- Godly character, integrity, humility, and love serve as a powerful testimony

Conversate - Speak about Jesus intentionally and naturally

- Share the gospel, tell your testimony, and engage in meaningful spiritual discussions

Compassion - Demonstrate Christ’s love through tangible acts of kindness and service

- Meeting needs, showing mercy, and loving others sacrificially opens hearts to Jesus

Responsibility - Fight sin & win sinners | Not at war against people...are at war for people

Wage war against the flesh and win a witness for God