



Beginning With Identify | Rev Tim Frickenschmidt | January 12, 2020

Old Testament Reading

[Song 1:2, 5-6, 4:1, 7](#)

1² Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
For your love is better than wine;

...

5 I am very dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
like the tents of Kedar,
like the curtains of Solomon.

6 Do not gaze at me because I am dark,
because the sun has looked upon me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
they made me keeper of the vineyards,
but my own vineyard I have not kept!

...

4¹ Behold, you are beautiful, my love,
behold, you are beautiful!

Your eyes are doves
behind your veil.

Your hair is like a flock of goats
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

...

7 You are altogether beautiful, my love;
there is no flaw in you.

Epistle Reading 1 Peter 1-2, 5:12

1¹ 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.

...

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him,
I have written briefly to you, exhorting and
declaring that this is the true grace of God.
Stand firm in it.

Gospel Reading Luke 22:47-51

22⁴⁷ While He was still speaking, there came a
crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the
twelve, was leading them. He drew near to
Jesus to kiss Him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him,
"Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a
kiss?" ⁴⁹ And when those who were around Him
saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall
we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰ And one of them
struck the servant of the high priest and cut off
his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, "No more of
this!" And He touched his ear and healed him.

Introduction

•The two-fold purpose of Epiphany is (1) to see Christ's glory and (2) to reflect it to others. It is also a time during which we seek to learn how to live in this world as Christians. •The main focus of 1 Peter is his reader's identity, because we cannot live rightly in this world if we don't know who we are as Christians, or if we've forgotten who we are. Peter uses three words to tell us who we are: (1) Exiles, (2) Elect and (3) Sewn.

Background

1. Exiles (the first part of our identity)

- a. Exiles are first strangers in someone else's land who want to go home: sojourners on a journey seeking to go home (in the OT: Abraham, Joseph, all of Israel).
- b. Even with the coming of Jesus nothing changes, because this world is not His home: Born in a manger; always on the move as a sojourner in a foreign land. And, that's us if we are going to follow after Him; following Him home to His Kingdom. So, this world is not our home; we're strangers/exiles in a foreign land.
- c. Part of Peter's point, in 1 Peter, is to say we Christians will feel in this life on earth that we are sojourners in a foreign land, sometimes even being executed for our Christianity. ([Armando Valladeres, Against All Hope](#) Vivo Christo Rey!)
- d. We need to heed Peter's point because our culture is not becoming more Christian. Our land is becoming stranger to us; we need to recover our exile identity.

2. Elect (in the second part of our identity Peter is emphasizing we are chosen/loved)

- a. Elect (1 Peter 1:1) means to be chosen/loved – which creates a tension with the first descriptor of Christians as exiles/hated; which is the tension of Christian life.
- b. Foreknowledge (1 Peter 1:2) is the same idea as elect but in the context of loving before anything is done to deserve love (e.g., parents' love of an unborn child). God's love is like that for His elect: i.e., we Christians don't have to earn His love.
- c. God loves us, His people, like the husband in the [Song of Songs](#) loves his bride; she/we is/are loved even though we have lived hard, troubled, difficult lives. We are loved because He sees us with eyes of grace as chosen with foreknowledge.
- d. God loves us, wants us and pursues us because of our faith in Him. We may struggle accepting His love because we know of our dark flaws. But, God's grace allows Him to love us like we are lovely (Song 1:5) and have no flaws (Song 4:7).

3. Sewn (the third part of our identity, as seeds of Christian faith being scattered)

- a. (1 Peter 1:1) Dispersion of Christians throughout the Middle Eastern world; like seeds sewn into the ground, sprouting and bearing the fruit of Christianity. Christians and Churches are like seeds sewn together by God to change the World. Seeds bearing His light to push the darkness back for others; **that's Epiphany.**
- b. Wherever we are located in the world, God has sewn us there. We haven't been randomly dropped where we are; we have been sewn where we are by God. Peter says "Stand firm in it." in God's grace to us.
- c. If where we are feels bad (bad home, bad school, bad work), it may feel like how it feels in exile. Jesus sewed us where we are and He's been there, the very light of the world in the darkness of the world. But, new light burst forth in His resurrection. He imparts that light to all of us baptized in faith so we might help spread His light.

Discuss

1. What is our Christian identity? Do we feel exiled, elect and sewn?
2. Describe your sense of exile, sojourning in our earthly home, preparing to go Home.
3. Why/how must Christians maintain the tension between being exiled and being elect?
4. How can we stand firm in His faith and shine forth His light in this world?
5. Do we hesitate to shine His light (speak of Him), because we fear persecution?
6. Does our darkness perturb our identity, interfering with our ability to shine His light?
7. How much of changing our lives involves looking inward or outward or upward?

Conclusion/Application

•Change is possible, for us and for those around us. Even Peter changed: 30 years before Peter was living by the sword but now he is writing a book (1 Peter) about peace and suffering and loving one another from a pure heart. How? By knowing Jesus, crucified and resurrected, and receiving His forgiveness even after betraying Him.
•We should ask how and where God has sewn us into the world; where does He want us to go to shine His light. Stand firm in His faith and shine forth His light in this world.

