



## **1 Peter 1:1-2**

**September 12, 2021**

**Chosen Exiles**

**1 Peter 1:1-2 “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.”**

This book opens, as letters in their day did, by starting with the name of the author. And it says it is written by Peter, an apostle of Jesus.

According to history, Peter was writing this around the year 63 AD, shortly before his death in 64 or 65 AD. Shortly after this letter was written, In AD 64, the city of Rome burned under Nero’s leadership. And even though Nero may have started the fire so he could rebuild Rome better than it was built before, he had to blame somebody for the devastating fires, so he blamed the church.

This has been a repeated pattern throughout history, a major crisis comes upon society and the Christians get the blame. The same thing happened in St. Augustine’s day when Rome fell and Christians were blamed for undermining morale by worshipping a new god. There’s a ton of writing that was done in the early church to defend Christians from scapegoating, false accusations, and unwarranted hostility. We’ll see some of that come through later in Peter’s letter here as well.

So because the church was being blamed for the burning of Rome, a huge persecution broke out against the Christians in 64 AD, in which Christians were being slaughtered and crucified and burned left and right. This was the time when Nero was known for taking Christians and dipping them in wax and lighting them on fire to light his garden parties. In that wave of persecution, Peter was crucified,

just as Jesus had told him he would be.<sup>1</sup> And according to history he was crucified upside-down, feeling himself unworthy to be crucified in the same way Jesus was.

Hatred for the Christians didn't grow to the this level overnight. For a society to get to the place where burning Christians seems legitimate in just a year or two from the time this was written, there had to already be serious anti-Christian sentiment. Hitler wasn't able to do what he did to Jews in Germany without there being an awful lot of anti-semitism already in the air to make it seem reasonable to the soldiers and the populace. And Nero wasn't able to burn Christians for their faith without the city of Rome already teeming with distrust, hatred for, and suspicion of the Christians.

So Peter is living in the city that will soon start killing Christians. That's probably a reason he says in chapter 4 that he's writing from Babylon<sup>2</sup>, that was the city that destroyed the people of God in the Old Testament<sup>3</sup>, so it made sense to call Rome "Babylon" because the climate was similar for the Christians. (Babylon was also a nickname for Rome in a lot of Jewish literature at the time.) So Peter is living in a hard place and he can sense that things will get worse soon.

In chapter 4 he'll write:

**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"**

Peter wrote this probably not knowing how literally fiery his ordeal was about to be. But he writes like a trial is coming to the church.

So that's the climate Peter is living in, and that the church in much of the world was living in.

And we have every reason to hang on every word in this letter.

---

<sup>1</sup> John 21:19

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter 5:13

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 50:11

**For one, Peter knew the Lord.** He was there in person for all of the greatest things that happened in the Gospels. He walked on water with Jesus, multiplied loaves and fishes with Jesus, was up on the mountain with Jesus when Jesus was transfigured and glowed and Moses and Elijah showed up.<sup>4</sup> So we have an eyewitness to Jesus, writing us this letter after knowing Jesus in person and following Jesus after Jesus's ascension for almost 30 years.

**And it's good to hear the message of this book because Peter is a seasoned Christian and pastor.**

Peter was pastoring the church that he had planted in Rome, in faithful obedience to what Jesus had called him to.

Remember, Peter had denied the Lord three times when He was going to be crucified. And in a dramatic scene, Jesus, soon after his resurrection, met Peter on a beach and commissioned him to a life of ministry, ending in a martyr's death on a cross. This happened in John 21:15, Peter had been fishing off the shore, and Jesus showed up and cooked the disciples a fish breakfast on the beach.

**John 21:15-19** "15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." 19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

---

<sup>4</sup> Luke 9:28-36

So Jesus tells Peter that, for him, a life of love for Christ will be demonstrated by Peter's feeding Christ's sheep. He would go on from here to teach the word, to be a faithful pastor in the early church, and to be so faithfully committed to Christ that he was willing to be crucified for his faith (according to verses 18 and 19).

And now, at the time of writing this letter of 1 Peter, for about 30 years since being restored on that beach, Peter has been feeding the sheep of Jesus. He hasn't been perfect for 30 years, he struggled with wanting to please people and associate with the elite in Jewish society, and dabbled in some legalism, the Bible presents his flaws to us as well. But now here he is, in the tense city of Rome, being faithful to Jesus thirty years later, in his early 60s.

And he is faithful to Jesus with no hope that the tension will let up. Jesus told him he would be killed for his faith. Which has to be a weight on a person.

I've found that I can endure a lot if I have confidence that the future is better. When I was in youth ministry, I bought a house for our family to live in that was in very bad shape. (It was the house I could afford, and we just had our third kid so we needed to make a move.) I won't go into too much detail, but it looked like a crime scene - smashed windows, blood, broken doors, a foot of water in the basement. But I knew it wouldn't be like that forever - we were working on it, making big improvements, and we were able to endure the squallor knowing the future was brighter.

But if I had moved in thinking that this was as good as it was going to get, that would have been a very depressing place to live. We can function well through a lot of hard times if we have some hope that things will improve.

But Peter knew for his whole life that his life would end with him being tortured and killed. Which has to hang like a shadow over everything that happens - all of the good times would be weighed down by the knowledge that this won't last, eventually I'll be on a cross. But Peter doesn't seem to have become grumpy and bitter, if anything we can see a positive change from the Peter of the Gospels to the older Peter who wrote this letter. He's more warm, and patient, and pastoral - even though he had no hope for a better life in his future.

But he had what he called a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). He knew that his life on this earth would be filled with suffering and hard times and that his end would be painful, but he looked forward to his resurrection. He anchored his hope there, that was the future he was looking for, and so in this letter you can feel his joy bursting through. All he had to cling to was his hope in the resurrection, and it was enough for him. It was enough to keep him joyful, to keep him living for Jesus, even knowing there was no great future for him on this side of his death.

How much would we all benefit to learn that? To go so “all-in” on our future resurrection that we can endure trials and losses here, really believing that we do have an ultimately perfect future. Just not on this side of death. How much would that diminish the frenzy to have all of the experiences, to reach every goal, to get it all in to this life because you only live once. How much warmer and peaceful would that make us?

So Peter is somebody to learn that from. Someone whose faith was always under pressure, whose future was bleak, but was bursting with joy from knowing and clinging to Christ for decades.

And it's wise for us to learn from people who are older and have followed Jesus for the long haul. Our culture is very youth-oriented. We think that you are wise when you are a teenager and then it leaks from there. So the people that are influential in our culture, the influencers on youtube, are in their teens and 20s, for the most part. Those are the influencers!

And the church community can be very similar. A lot of our worship songs that are being written today are written by people who are very young, the most popular pastors are usually in their 30s. At the time we planted grace road, the people who were influencing me the most were in their late thirties, and today a number of them have either fallen through scandal, turned from the truth of the Gospel to false versions of it, or renounced Jesus altogether. They hadn't been tested and proven yet.

And we can learn from everyone in the Christian community, even from children, but wisdom tends to reside with the aged.

**Proverbs 16:31 “Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.”**

If you’re hiking through the wilderness, you want someone who has walked this path before to be your guide. You don’t want to be guided by another person like you who has never seen this place before. And we’d all be served well to look to those older than us, who have been walking with Jesus for a long time, to be guided and steadied by them (as opposed to the young impulsive voices on twitter.)

This is true of our in-person interactions in the church and also of the things we read and are influenced by. Lewis defined chronological snobbery as *“the uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate of our own age and the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that count discredited.”*

He continues, *“It’s a good rule after reading a new book never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to three new ones.... Every age has its own outlook. It is especially good at seeing certain truths and especially liable to make certain mistakes. We all therefore need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period.”*<sup>5</sup>

So learning from older Peter who has been through his young days, who has said things he has regretted, who has been on the wrong side of issues in the presence of Jesus and the early church, but who has repented, and learned, and grown, who has scars and baggage, but who is here in his last years, still saying what he says in **1 Peter 5:11, “To him be the dominion forever and ever.”**

Peter is in a world that is full of hostilities toward Christians, a world that is quite

---

<sup>5</sup> Chesterton wrote, *“Real development is not leaving things behind, as on a road, but drawing life from them, as from a root.”*

literally going to be on fire soon, and he is faithfully walking with Jesus and feeding Christ's church. So we should want to listen to this seasoned, tested, proven Christian and pastor.

But Peter is not just any older seasoned Christian pastor.

### **He is an "Apostle of Jesus Christ." (verse 1).**

And an Apostle was not just an ordinary minister. The greek word "apostolos" means "sent one." So it can just mean someone who was sent to carry out a ministry, and this sense of the word is used in the New Testament (in that sense we are all "little a" apostles).

But someone who had the office of Apostle, like Peter, was someone that was personally sent by Jesus and vested with authority to carry and write the word of God like nobody else.

To be an Apostle, you had to be an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus (Acts 1:22 - when they needed to replace Judas among the twelve apostles they saw meeting resurrected Jesus as a key qualification.)

And the authority of the apostles was often confirmed by miraculous works. After the resurrection, Peter became known for the miracles that followed him, so much so that people would lay people who couldn't walk on cots and pallets where Peter might be walking, hoping his shadow would fall on them and heal them.<sup>6</sup>

In Acts 3:6, a man who is paralyzed is laying and begging alms:

**Acts 3:6 "But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"**

And he does. He starts walking and leaping and praising God. So Peter had a level of authority that nobody has today. We can pray for healings, and God can answer those prayers, but Peter just commanded it.

And there are a number of good reasons for us to believe that nobody holds the office of Apostle today - that they all died with the first generation of Christians.

---

<sup>6</sup> Acts 5:15-16

For one, you had to see Jesus in person to be an apostle. Again Acts 1:22 indicates that, but also:

**1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?**

The second reason to believe apostles no longer exist is because Paul said that he was the last of the apostles:

**1 Corinthians 15:5-9. he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.**

A third reason to believe apostles no longer exist is because in the early church, they talked like something unique died when the apostles died:

Ignatius, who was killed in 110 A.D. for his faith, was probably a direct student of John the apostle. So if the apostles were church 1.0, Ignatius was church 2.0 – in the first generation of church fathers. And he understood that those apostles had authority that he never had. He didn't talk like the apostles died and now he took over and there would be an unbroken line of succession.

He wrote, *"Not as Peter and Paul did, do I command you. They were apostles, I am a convict."*

So the Apostles were unique. They took the place of the Old Testament prophets who spoke the word of God. Remember in the Old Testament, the prophets would go around and say, "Thus saith the Lord," and everybody had to listen to what they said, because to disobey a prophet was to disobey God. The prophets wrote the books of the Old Testament. And then on this side of the cross, the apostles wrote the New Testament and to go against the written inspired word of an apostle was to go against God.

Nobody among us can say, "What I have to say is as much inspired as the Bible."

Sometimes we'll hear of someone who seems to be gifted at teaching saying something off the wall, and nobody tests it because, "He's God's man" or "He's so close to God, he knows better than I do," or even that he's an apostle. But it is



really dangerous to put that kind of authority in any person today. God has called pastors and teachers, but they don't have the authority of an apostle. So be cautious of someone who claims to be one - it may be that they're really gifted by God to teach and pastor and even pioneer new ministries and they're just mis-labeling their gifts, which isn't a huge deal. But it could be that they're claiming a level of authority that they don't have.

But even though these guys have all died, in the New Testament, we still have preserved for us the inspired, authoritative words of the apostles. So when we look for apostles today, we look to the book, not to anybody who is still alive.

So Peter knew the Lord, he was seasoned and tested, he was an apostle, and

**Another reason we should want to hear from Peter is that he is writing to people just like us to explain how to live in a world that is hostile to the faith.**

He opens this letter by addressing it to

**1 Peter 1:1 “To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,”**

The five regions listed here are regions in modern day Turkey.

And Peter is writing to people he calls the “elect exiles of the Dispersion” that are there.

This is huge for understanding this book, and for understanding how to live as Christians in the world. Peter is writing to an audience that was a mix of gentiles and Jews, probably more gentiles than Jews in these churches in Turkey<sup>7</sup>, but he refers to these Christians scattered throughout the world as elect exiles of the dispersion.

The dispersion, or the diaspora, originally happened in 586 BC when Babylon conquered the kingdom of Judah and carried the Jews off into captivity. So they were brought to foreign countries, scattered throughout the world, away from their Jewish homeland in Israel.

---

<sup>7</sup> 1 Peter 1:14, 1:18, 4:3-4

And that dispersion profoundly shaped the way of life for the Jews.

It was the reason synagogues formed. As you read through the Old Testament, you notice that God never told them to build synagogues in Israel. They built a temple, and a tabernacle before that, but synagogues are never talked about in the Old Testament.

Then you get to the New Testament, and there's a synagogue in almost every town.

And they were formed during that dispersion - the people were carried off to lands that weren't their own, where most of the people worshipped other gods, and had very different ways of life. But the Jews, as soon as there were 10 Jewish households in a town, formed a synagogue. So they could gather on the Sabbath, have the word of God read and taught. They didn't have a priest there, but had a rabbi to teach them. And they maintained thriving Jewish communities in every city.

Now they were very distinct, they were almost always a minority. (And this continues today, where there are Hasidic Jews that maintain very unique cultural distinctions from the mainstream, they look and dress differently, and have community life centered around the synagogue.)

God had even given his people commands for how to live in exile:

**Jeremiah 29:4-7 "4 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."**

Even though they had no power, they weren't home, they longed for something better, they didn't have the world they wanted, God commanded them to not be

diminished by that. He said, “Raise families, start businesses, work for the good of the city even when it isn’t your city, pray to God for even the Gentile city that has taken you into captivity and mistreated you.”

So that was the last 600 years of Jewish history - varying degrees of exile and dispersion, living in different places. And it seems that the Jewish community often grew and thrived - in Alexandria, Egypt, in particular 40% of the population grew to be Jewish, all centered around community life in their synagogues and with a sense that true home was elsewhere. That they had real community and real place and real purpose, even in Egypt, but they were strangers, foreigners, and exiles.

But here in 1 Peter, Peter refers to primarily gentile Christians as elect exiles of the dispersion.

Christians, scattered throughout the world, are to see ourselves as elect exiles of the dispersion.

**That means that we know that the world is not our home yet.** Now Jesus taught that the meek will inherit the earth, that we will reign. Scripture speaks of a day when all things are made new and the new earth is indeed our home.<sup>8</sup>

So the world is ours because it is our Father’s world. But we are elect exiles of the dispersion, sojourners and foreigners here, while we wait for the day when history has played itself out according to God’s plan and the kingdoms of this world are made fully the kingdoms of our God and Christ.

**This means that we should learn to be comfortable being thought of as outsiders here.**

We can expect to be very unique and strange, often blamed for the problems in society, misunderstood, like people from foreign land whose values and customs

---

<sup>8</sup> Just like Abraham had once been promised the land of Canaan but didn’t possess it yet. So he went to the land of Canaan, the place that would be his descendants’ permanent home, but called himself a sojourner and a foreigner among them. - Genesis 23:4

and traditions are very different from the people around us. And as a result, often disliked by the world around us:

*“So it falls out that in this world, in evil days like these, the Church walks onward like a wayfarer stricken by the world's hostility, but comforted by the mercy of God. Nor does this state of affairs date only from the days of Christ's and His Apostles' presence on earth. It was never any different from the days when the first just man, Abel, was slain by his ungodly brother. So shall it be until this world is no more.”*

– Augustine, City of God

**This means that we should stop having our view of the Christian faith shaped primarily by the culture.**

We seem to have fallen into the trap of allowing the prevailing culture around us to tell us what is right and wrong in the Bible. But we, because we know we're exiles and strangers here, should be totally comfortable allowing the Bible to tell us what's right and wrong in our culture. *Living this way will cause us to not fit at all in the prevailing culture. But we are exiles. Of course we don't.*<sup>9</sup>

We should give up the quest to make Christianity acceptable to non-Christians in the culture. We bring the good news of the gospel to them, and if you come to know Jesus and learn the things he taught that changes everything for you. But we can stop trying to make the faith cool to those who don't embrace it.

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16 “But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?”**

---

<sup>9</sup> Or, as Tim Keller puts it, “The Bible did not determine what was right and wrong in the secular, modern view—the secular modern view determined what was right or wrong in the Bible.” More on that here: [https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/decline-and-renewal-american-church-the-decline-of-the-mainline/?fbclid=IwAR25-hRQXMDR1AKXcZAFtrWpf8ROsNAg8o4H4EeglCw\\_rHbHutCZJfh1oZ8](https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/decline-and-renewal-american-church-the-decline-of-the-mainline/?fbclid=IwAR25-hRQXMDR1AKXcZAFtrWpf8ROsNAg8o4H4EeglCw_rHbHutCZJfh1oZ8)

**This means we will have to find ways to thrive in a world that doesn't understand and often rejects our beliefs.** Jeremiah told the exiles to build houses, plant farms, raise families - even if many doors to being elite in our culture close to us, we can still work hard, raise families build community, be productive and generous, and seek the good of the communities where we live even when we are just the mistreated exiles.

None of this means we disengage with the world, but we engage with the world differently than if we were trying to hang on to power and status as Christians in the world. And at times, people among us will rise to high positions, because God does that with his exiles often. That was the story of Daniel, an exile in Babylon who was made fruitful and wise and skillful by God and who was in the king's court, fully engaged, with the message of God on his tongue. But completely unwilling to compromise what was true or good, even if he got thrown into a lion's den or his boys got thrown into a fiery furnace.

**This means we will suffer.** We'll say far more about that in the months ahead because this book talks alot about suffering, but we may have to struggle quite a bit to learn what is for us a new way of thinking - a way of living as elect exiles, strangers, outsiders, as opposed to the ones in control of everything. Something will be lost.

I'm sure that for the jews to lose their homes and be carried off into exile in lands where they'd be the minorities, it was a tremendous loss. But they were blessings to all nations.

And the reason is because they were chosen by God.

**Isaiah 41:8-10 “But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;  
9 you whom I took from the ends of the earth,  
and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, “You are my servant,**

**I have chosen you and not cast you off”;**

**10 fear not, for I am with you;  
be not dismayed, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”**

Because they were chosen by God, made friends of God, made servants of God, and had God with them, they didn't have to be afraid. God provided real strength and dignity and life and community.

And, good news, God says the same thing about us

**1 Peter 1:1 “To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion...”**

We aren't only exiles. We, as Christians, are elect exiles.

The word elect means chosen. When we vote in an election, we are choosing the best candidate. (Or, usually, the least terrible candidate.) To elect is to choose.

And if we are Christians, it means God has elected, or chosen us. 23 times in the New Testament, Christians are called the eklektos, the elect, the chosen. (But the difference is that when God chooses us it is without condition, it isn't because we earned it, it isn't because we are better candidates, it is all a bit of a mystery why us - it isn't because of our superior virtue.)

Even though we are exiles, like Israel, we are also elect exiles like Israel.

And these truths about our election are some of the greatest comforts to help us persevere in a life that is full of the joy of the Lord and so many beautiful gifts of God, but also very difficult trials.

I believe that we are Christians because we chose to believe in Jesus. But I believe we only chose to believe in Jesus because God chose us (elected us) first. Otherwise we never would have responded positively to the invitation to believe.

I believe Christians were chosen to be given the gift of faith by God before the foundation of the world, predestined by God for salvation. And as a younger guy, I used to love to argue about that (the predestination vs. free-will argument was always a lot of fun. And I like to debate.)

But over the last decade, this has become something that I don't feel much of a need to argue about, but instead has become one of the greatest comforts in my walk with Jesus. I don't think God has revealed these things to us mainly so we can win a debate with others, but mainly so we can win a debate with our hearts that love to believe that the future is bleak, that we have no hope, that when the world around us seems to fall apart and turn against the Lord that somehow those walls will close in on us.

And look at what he says about our election in verse 2:

## **2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,**

Some have taken this to mean that we are elect, chosen by God, because he foreknew who would choose Him. That he looked down the hallway of time to see who would respond to the Gospel and chose them to be His people.

But, according to passages like Romans 3, we wouldn't respond positively to God on our own. Our sin corrupted us too much.

This foreknowledge of God is a knowing beforehand. To know someone in scripture is often not just an awareness of their existence and their choices, but of having an intimate love for a person. It's even used to describe how Adam knew his wife Eve and she became pregnant. So to know someone, in the biblical sense, is to be intimately acquainted with them.

And to foreknow a person, is to know them well beforehand. To forelove them.

Christians are people that from before He created the world, God knew. (Before you were formed in the womb, I knew you!)

**Ephesians 1:3-6** “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 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 to himself 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.

*“Your salvation did not begin with your choice to believe in Christ—a choice which was real and necessary. Your salvation began before the creation of the universe when God planned the history of redemption, ordained the death and the resurrection of his Son, and chose you to be his own through Christ. This is a great objective ground for assurance. And we should consider it deeply.” - John Piper*

And if our belonging to Jesus originated with God’s choice of us before the foundation of the world, if it was only possible to save us by sending His son to die, and He did send his son to die, then we can expect that nothing will keep us from the ultimate good end - our resurrection. He foreknew us and chose us, of course He will keep us.

### **1 Peter 1:2 [elect] in the sanctification of the Spirit,**

In this verse we have all three persons in the trinity mentioned - we are foreknown by the Father, sanctified in the Spirit, and chosen for obedience to Jesus.

And we have been chosen in the sanctification of the Spirit. The Spirit sanctifies us, sets us apart for God’s use. Christians are people who have been set aside by the Spirit for God’s use - so we can expect that, regardless of how hard things are out there, we can always grow in holiness, we can grow in joy, we will be able to really know the Lord in it all.

**for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood**



We are chosen, not because of our obedience to Jesus, but for obedience to Jesus. Christians are exiles in the world, set apart by the spirit, for obedience to Jesus. And for sprinkling with his blood - which may be referring to the daily cleansing and power for obedience that the death of Jesus gives us.

So if all three persons of the Spirit are working to choose us, to change us, to set us aside, to bring us into obedience. If God has so worked on our behalf, we can be absolutely confident that even in the days when we'll feel that we are exiles, we won't be without God.

And as a church we can become a very distinct community. A community where pain and hope live in the same body. Where we can lose the whole world but know we've gained our souls (and one day the whole world to boot.) Where we can feel totally out of place at school, on campus, in any political party, at the job, but still be increasingly growing in joy and warmth through the sanctification of the Spirit.

Or, since scripture puts it better, we can be a people where:

**2 Corinthians 4:7-12 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.**

And I want to invite you into that life.

To become a Christian is a very unique thing - it is unlike any other religious achievement. The way of the world around us is you achieve something to gain a position.

But to gain a position as a Christian, you have to admit that you can't achieve what you need. That you have fallen short of God's glory by your sin, you deserve judgment and hell, and are powerless to save yourself.

So, as strange as it sounds, you hang all of your hope on the achievements of another - of Jesus. Who, as the perfect son of God, perfectly obeyed, died on the cross to take the punishment for sin, rose again, and offered that death to all who would turn and believe.

----

Sermon written by Kevin Maloney with contributions by Abbey Sitterley.

----

The prayer of confession after today's sermon was adapted from a prayer entitled, "The Good News," written by Barbara Duguid, in the prayer book, Streams of Mercy.

### **Sermon Discussion Questions for Small Groups:**

- 1) Consider the changes we can see between Peter in the Gospel narratives and Peter as an older man who penned this letter. How does he seem to have changed? How has growing closer to Jesus changed you?
- 2) Consider the term "chronological snobbery." What are some ways in which we discard the wisdom of our predecessors?
- 3) Are there older people in the faith that you seek counsel from? (Friends, family, favorite authors, etc) What have you learned from them?
- 4) What does it mean to "live like an elect exile" as a Christian?
- 5) How does the 'hope of glory' give us courage today?