

# “Strangers & Exiles”

“...it was said by a professor that one of the great tasks of leadership is defining reality”

I will attempt to do that before I get to the crutch of my message today.

**Hebrews 11:8-16** By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith **he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land**, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; <sup>10</sup>**for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God**. <sup>11</sup>By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.<sup>12</sup>Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants* AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.<sup>13</sup>All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and **having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth**. <sup>14</sup>For those who say such things make it clear that **they are seeking a country of their own**. <sup>15</sup>And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, **they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one**. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; **for He has prepared a city for them**.

- The church in America needs a reality check, we are not in the “Promised Land” but in fact we are in “exile”....we are still looking for a “Promised Land” life...

Last month we ended a series entitled “Strangers & Exiles” drawn from the book of Daniel. We must recalibrate ourselves to our present reality. We are no longer the dominant culture and our values are not going to be expressed. (Our responses don’t help the cause of Christ)

## **Defining Terms:**

**Stranger:** a person who does not belong to the family, group, or community; an outsider

**Exile:** a person expelled or barred from their native country, banished

## **1. We are a rescued people and a new creation!**

**Colossians 1:13** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-21** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup>Now all *these* things are from **God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ** and gave us the ministry of recon-

ciliation, <sup>19</sup>namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Rescued from the bondage of sin & the wrath of God
- A new creation...becomes a new/peculiar people (love our enemies etc...)
- We are now “present in the world as the people of God”

#### REALITY:

“We have been reconciled to God...by His initiative”...He pursued us...

“We have been given the ministry of reconciliation...as ambassadors of a new King/kingdom”  
(representing His interests and kingdom, not ours)

## 2. “A **RECONCILED** people, living in **EXILE**”

**Jeremiah 29:4-7** “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,<sup>5</sup> **Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce.** **Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands,** that they may bear sons and daughters; and **multiply there and do not decrease.** **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 have welfare.**’

- Build houses – move in, build communities, live in community
- Plant gardens/eat produces – cultivation...nourishment
- Take wives.... – create bonds of love/deep relationships
- Multiply/do not decrease – expand as a people/occupy (not in a colonial sense)
- Seek the welfare of the city – give the city your heart...care for/love it (...in its welfare you will have welfare)

## 3. “We must **RETAIN** our identity”

**Daniel 1:8** But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.

- In exile...many cannot withstand the rejection and assimilate into the culture...make a counterfeit piece (Lot – tragic tale)
- In exile ...many huddle up and begin to rail against the culture
- In exile...you find a way to retain your identity (not like the Amish)

Note: Daniel chose his daily food...to be his habitual pattern to remind himself of who he was...  
The inference is that he did assimilate in many other ways...and he didn't fight against it...