

Living as Strangers Who Stay

Rippling Hope in a Watching World

1 Peter 2:11–3:12

Dave Geldart | March 15, 2026

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Welcome, Connect Card, Giving
- Immanuel Journaling Women's Group – Starts March 28 330pm here at Tru. Contact Lydia Barrett or info@tru.church
- NextGen Palm Sunday March 29th – PLUS POTLUCK TO CELEBRATE KAYLA

1. [1] INTRO — INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

- Have you ever had one of those moments where you suddenly realize you're completely out of place.
- I spent a couple summers in China when I was in college. I've never felt more out of place!
 - [2] SHOW CHINA IMAGE – 2nd Summer got to go with Jenn!
- Everywhere I went, not only did the people **LOOK different** from me, but everyone was **speaking** a language I didn't understand, **living** in conditions extremely unfamiliar to me, **shopping** in stores that felt surprisingly alien to my experiences. Simply **walking** down the street felt disorienting.
- Have you ever had an experience like that?
 - Whether cross-cultural travel
 - Or grabbing lunch in Lawrence
- Imagine yourself in my shoes in that picture.
- Now imagine something else.
 - Imagine instead of visiting for a summer, you actually **move there**.
 - You buy a house.
 - You get a job.
 - Your kids go to school there.
 - You're still a little different.
 - But now you're invested.
 - You're not just a stranger.
 - You're **a stranger who stays**.
- [3] That's exactly the picture Peter gives the church in our passage today.
- Peter's been teaching us that our hope in Christ begins to shape our character.
- Now he takes the next step. And asks the question:

- i. What does that holiness actually look like **out in society**?
- j. **Because Christians have historically made two opposite mistakes here.**
 - i. One mistake is **withdrawal**.
 - 1. We treat the world like a sinking ship and assume faithfulness means escape.
 - 2. So Christians retreat into safe bubbles where everything is familiar and nothing is challenged.
 - ii. The other mistake is **assimilation**.
 - 1. We blend in so completely that no one can tell the difference between the church and the culture.
 - iii. BUT Peter offers a third way.
 - 1. Not withdrawal.
 - 2. Not assimilation.
 - 3. **Faithful presence**.
 - a. Living as **strangers who stay**.

2. Let's read the passage that launches this section.

a. [4] 1 Peter 2:11–12 (NIV)

b. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

c. Peter begins this section with two powerful identity words:

i. **Foreigners. Exiles.**

d. Those aren't just poetic descriptions. They're theological categories.

i. You live here.

ii. You work here.

iii. You pay taxes here.

iv. You raise families here.

v. But your **ultimate allegiance** is somewhere else.

e. Now that you're in Christ, your identity is no longer anchored in the values, priorities, or instincts of the surrounding culture.

i. Your identity is anchored in the kingdom of God.

f. Which means something inside you is always going to feel slightly out of sync.

i. There will be moments when the culture applauds something and you feel uneasy.

- ii. There will be moments when the culture mocks something and you quietly hold onto it as sacred.
 - iii. There will be moments when everyone else runs one direction and you realize you're walking another.
 - g. That tension is not a failure of faith or witness.
 - i. Peter says it's **part of the calling**.
 - h. Followers of Jesus are meant to live with a certain kind of holy friction.
 - i. Not because we're trying to be strange.
 - ii. But because we belong to a different kingdom.
3. Now Peter immediately connects that identity to two instructions:
- a. [5] First, he says believers must **abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul**.
 - i. Notice the language of warfare.
 - ii. He's talking about desires that actively **erode the life God is forming in us**.
 - 1. Sin is not just disobedience.
 - 2. Sin is **self-destruction**.
 - 3. They slowly hollow out your character.
 - 4. They distort your loves.
 - 5. They shrink your capacity for joy.
 - iii. God calls us away from those things not to restrict life, but to **protect life**.
 - 1. **Is that how you see the commands of God?**
 - b. [6] And then Peter gives the second instruction: **Live such good lives** among the people around you that even when they misunderstand you, something about your life still stands out.
 - i. Peter says the church should live **right in the middle of society**, carrying a different set of instincts.
 - 1. Different values.
 - 2. Different reactions.
 - 3. Different priorities.
 - ii. We're called to live among people who may not share our beliefs, while embodying a way of life that reflects Christ.

4. STRANGE CITIZENS

- a. If you were writing instructions about how Christians should stand out in society, where would you start?

- i. Maybe personal morality.
 - ii. Maybe evangelism.
 - iii. Maybe spiritual disciplines.
- b. Peter starts somewhere else: **How we relate to the Government.**
- c. **[7] 1 Peter 2:13–17 (NIV)**
- d. ¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.
- e. This instruction surprises a lot of modern readers.
- f. Because when we think about Christians relating to government, especially in our culture, the conversation usually starts with **rights**.
 - i. My rights as a citizen.
 - ii. My rights as a voter.
 - iii. My rights as an American.
- g. But Peter starts somewhere else.
 - i. He starts with **posture**.
 - ii. Submit yourselves to government rulers for the Lord’s sake.
- h. And we should remember the context when Peter wrote this.
 - i. The Roman Empire was not a model of righteous leadership.
 1. It was frequently corrupt.
 2. Power was concentrated.
 3. Justice could be quite uneven.
 - ii. And within a few years of this letter being written, Emperor Nero would begin persecuting Christians violently AS STATE POLICY!
- i. So Peter is not writing to believers living under a perfectly just government.
 - i. He is writing to believers living under **imperfect and sometimes hostile leadership**.
- j. Which means this passage speaks directly into the kind of tension many Christians feel today.
 - i. Because we live in a politically polarized moment.
 - ii. Some people trust those in power.
 1. Others deeply distrust them.
 - iii. Some feel hopeful about political leadership.

1. Others feel angry or discouraged.
- iv. And often those differences show up **inside the church**.
- v. We live today in a moment that makes this passage feel urgent in a new way.
 1. As tensions in the Middle East have escalated—with American forces now engaged in conflict with Iran that is already reshaping global stability—the news cycle is running hot.
 - a. Some people are anxious.
 - b. Some are angry.
 - c. Social media is a fire hose of partisan outrage and fear.
 2. Here in central Kansas, it can still feel somewhat distant.
 - a. But it isn't. Conflicts like this send shockwaves through oil prices, global markets, and the families of service members.
 - b. The world feels less stable than it did a year ago.
- vi. When the world destabilizes
 1. fear gets weaponized.
 2. Political tribalism intensifies.
 3. And too often, the church gets swept into that current
 - a. posting the same outrage,
 - b. speaking in the same panicked tones,
 - c. choosing political sides with the same reflexive certainty as everyone else.
- vii. **But look at what Peter is saying.**
 1. He's writing to people living under an empire that was actively moving toward persecuting them.
 2. Geopolitical instability was their reality.
 3. And his instruction isn't: panic, protest, or pick a political team.
 4. Instead, his instruction is:
 - a. live with honor.
 - b. Respect governing authorities.
 - c. And respect God above all.
- viii. Here's what I believe:
 1. when the world becomes more unstable
 - a. and it may get more unstable in the time to come
 2. Gospel opportunities increase.
 - a. People who were perfectly comfortable without God start asking questions.

- i. What do we anchor ourselves to when the news is terrifying?
 - ii. Where does hope come from when the institutions we trusted are shaking?
 - ix. The church that has been quietly, faithfully living as strangers who stay --
 - 1. not panicking, not posturing, not retreating into partisan fury --
 - 2. becomes a lighthouse.
 - x. Your neighbors will notice how you respond to this moment.
 - 1. Do you spiral into anxiety or outrage with everyone else?
 - 2. Or do you carry a different kind of steadiness
 - a. because your citizenship is ultimately in a kingdom that cannot be shaken?
 - 3. That is the witness Peter is describing.
- k. Peter reframes the conversation in a way that cuts through the noise.
 - i. He says our posture toward governing authorities is ultimately **“for the Lord’s sake.”**
 - 1. Not because leaders are always wise.
 - 2. Not because policies are always good.
 - 3. But because the way we conduct ourselves reflects on the name of Christ.
- l. Peter is reminding the church that the watching world often forms its impressions of Jesus by watching **the behavior of his followers**.
 - i. And that includes how we speak about leaders we disagree with.
 - ii. How we respond when decisions frustrate us.
- m. Now this doesn’t mean Christians never disagree with government.
 - i. Scripture clearly shows moments where obedience to God requires civil disobedience.
 - ii. When authorities command what God forbids, or forbid what God commands, believers must remain faithful to God.
 - iii. But even in those moments, the posture of Christians historically has been marked by **respectful conviction** rather than contempt.
- n. Peter’s point is that believers should not mirror the hostility that dominates public discourse.
 - i. Fear God. (respect, revere)
 - ii. Honor the emperor.
 - iii. But we still treat human authorities with dignity and respect because we understand that **order itself is a gift from God**.
 - iv. He says that when believers live this way, it **silences ignorant accusations**.

- o. In the first century, Christians were often misunderstood.
- p. Peter says one of the most powerful responses to those accusations is **a life of visible integrity**.
 - i. When Christians live honorably
 - 1. paying taxes
 - 2. serving communities
 - 3. acting with integrity
 - ii. it becomes harder for critics to dismiss the faith as destructive.
 - iii. Not because our ultimate loyalty is to the state.
 - iv. But because our loyalty to Christ makes us people of character.

5. STRANGE WORKERS

- a. Peter's next example of faithful living moves inward a level, from broad public engagement to the smaller everyday public sphere of our WORK:
- b. **[8] 1 Peter 2:18 - Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.**
 - i. This doesn't overlay perfectly with our modern employer-employee system,
 - 1. So we're not going to as much time in this section
 - ii. But the core message of this and the following verses is clear and applicable:
 - 1. **Work well for your bosses** – even when they're unfair and harsh
 - a. Not demanding your rights
 - b. Or skimping on your responsibilities
 - 2. But working well – even in difficult circumstances
 - a. Following the example of Jesus Christ
 - b. Because you know your ultimate boss is God himself
 - iii. **And in so doing, you'll stand out, shining brightly to a watching world!**

6. STRANGE MARRIAGES

- a. Peter's next example moves from public life to the most personal place possible:
 - i. **[9] Marriage.**
- b. And before we read this section, it's important to understand the cultural backdrop:
 - i. In the Roman world, the assumption was simple:
 - 1. **The wife adopted the religion of her husband.**
 - 2. The husband determined the spiritual direction of the household.
 - ii. So when a woman became a follower of Jesus and her husband did not, it created social tension.

- iii. Peter is addressing a situation where a **believing wife is married to an unbelieving husband**.
- c. Here's what he says.
- d. **[10] 1 Peter 3:1-4**
- e. "Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."
- f. Now at first glance, passages like this make many modern readers even more uncomfortable than the good citizens section.
 - i. And honestly, sometimes they've been used poorly in the church.
 1. They've been used to silence women.
 2. They've been used to justify unhealthy dynamics.
 3. They've been used to reinforce power rather than mutual Christlike love.
 - ii. But when you read this carefully in context, Peter is actually doing something **radically dignifying for women in his time**.
 1. Because in the ancient world, wives had **very little social power**.
 - iii. Peter doesn't tell these women they're powerless.
 - iv. He tells them their **Christlike character carries spiritual influence**.
 - v. He says a husband might be "**won over without words**."
 1. Not manipulated.
 2. Not pressured.
 3. But drawn toward Christ through the visible beauty of a transformed life – far more powerful than great hairdos or jewelry.
- g. Now we also need to balance this with the fuller biblical teaching on marriage.
 - i. In another letter, the apostle Paul says this:
 - ii. **[11] Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."**
 - iii. Notice the direction of sacrifice there.
 1. **Husbands are called to die**.
 - iv. Christ loved the church by giving himself.
 1. So if Peter speaks directly to wives here, the rest of Scripture makes clear that **men bear enormous responsibility in marriage**.

- v. **In fact, mutuality is the context of this teaching: mutual submission** out of reverence for Christ.
- h. Now Peter adds something specifically for husbands.
- i. **[12] 1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)**
- j. “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”
- k. Notice that phrase: **“Heirs with you.”**
 - i. Equal recipients of grace.
 - ii. Equal participants in the inheritance of life.
- l. Which is exactly why Christian communities historically elevated the dignity and value of women in ways the surrounding culture did not.
- m. The big picture here is this:
 - i. Faithfulness to Jesus should reshape **even the most private relationships**.
 1. Your marriage.
 2. Your household.
 3. Your closest relationships.
 - ii. Because when the gospel changes a home, the ripple effect is powerful.
 1. Your kids see it.
 2. Your friends notice it.
 3. Your neighbors feel it.

7. STRANGE COMMUNITY

- a. Peter now speaks to the whole church
 - i. Because the credibility of our witness doesn’t just come from individual behavior.
 - ii. It comes from **the kind of community we become together**.
- b. **[13] 1 Peter 3:8–10**
- c. ⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.
- d. Peter now brings the whole section together by describing **the culture of a Christian community – how we treat one another and how we treat our neighbors**.
- e. And notice how functionally **counter-cultural** this list is:
 - i. Be like-minded.
 - ii. Be sympathetic.
 - iii. Love one another.

- iv. Be compassionate.
- v. Be humble.
- f. And in our moment, that kind of culture stands out more than we may realize.
 - i. Because the default posture of our society right now is not humility.
 - ii. It's **outrage**.
- g. Think about how many public conversations unfold today.
 - i. Political conversations.
 - ii. Social media debates.
- h. Everyone is talking.
 - i. Very few people are listening.
- i. And Peter says the church should feel different.
 - i. Not quieter because we have nothing to say.
 - ii. But **gentler because we follow Jesus**.
 - 1. **Truth without compassion** becomes harsh.
 - 2. **Conviction without humility** becomes arrogance.
 - 3. But **truth delivered with humility** carries a very different tone.
- j. He says we should not **repay evil with evil**.
- k. Instead, we **repay evil with blessing**.
- l. That is not natural.
- m. Everything in our instincts pushes the opposite direction.
 - i. If someone insults you, you defend yourself.
 - ii. If someone attacks you, you push back harder.
 - 1. Retaliation.
 - 2. Escalation.
 - 3. Payback.
- n. But Peter says the followers of Jesus interrupt that cycle.
 - i. Not because we are weak.
 - ii. But because we are **anchored somewhere deeper**.
 - a. When Jesus was insulted, he didn't retaliate.
 - b. When Jesus suffered, he didn't threaten.
 - c. Instead, he entrusted himself to the Father.
 - iii. Because most of us here don't face persecution the way the early church did.
 - iv. But we do experience **relational friction**.
 - 1. The coworker who takes credit for your work.
 - 2. The neighbor who treats you with suspicion.
 - 3. The family member who mocks your faith.

- 4. The social media post that misrepresents what Christians believe.
- v. Those are everyday opportunities to decide what kind of people we will be.
- vi. Imagine what it would look like if our church became known for this.
 - 1. Not known for anger.
 - a. Not known for culture wars.
 - b. Not known for constant outrage.
 - 2. But known for humility.
 - a. Compassion.
 - b. Thoughtfulness.
 - 3. People who listen before speaking.
 - a. People who bless instead of retaliating.
 - b. People who carry themselves with a quiet steadiness because their hope is anchored in Christ.
- o. That kind of community would feel **strange** in our cultural moment.
 - i. But it would also feel **deeply attractive**.
 - ii. They're hungry for something different.
- p. And Peter says the church should be that kind of place.

8. THE POWER OF FAITHFUL PRESENCE

- a. Peter closes this section by reminding believers that the kind of life he's describing is not random moral advice.
- b. **[14] 1 Peter 3:10–12:**
- c. ¹⁰ For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."
- d. Peter reaches back into the Old Testament, quoting Psalm 34, and reminds the church that God has always been attentive to the lives of his people.
 - 1. Ultimately, you are living **under the attentive gaze of God**.
 - a. God sees.
 - b. God hears.
 - c. God cares about the quiet faithfulness of his people.
 - ii. It will often feel ordinary.
 - iii. Choosing integrity in your work when cutting corners would be easier.

- iv. Choosing respectful speech in a political conversation that is spiraling toward hostility.
- v. Choosing forgiveness in a marriage when resentment would be simpler.
- vi. Choosing compassion toward someone who looks down on your faith.
- e. These moments rarely feel heroic.
 - i. They feel small.
- f. But Peter says these small acts are exactly how the church lives as **strangers who stay**.
 - i. Not by staging grand confrontations with culture.
 - ii. Not by retreating from society altogether.
 - iii. But by quietly embodying a different way of life in the middle of the world.
- g. Think about how Jesus described the kingdom.
 - i. A little yeast in dough.
 - ii. A small seed in the soil.
 - iii. Something small that quietly changes everything around it.
 - iv. Ripples of hope that spread into a watching world
- h. People are watching more than we think.
 - i. Your kids are watching.
 - ii. Your spouse is watching.
 - iii. Your coworkers are watching.
 - iv. Your friends and neighbors are watching.
 - v. Not necessarily looking for perfection.
 - 1. But looking for authenticity and hope.

9. So let me leave you with three simple questions to consider now and carry into this week:

a. [15] First: Where is God asking you to practice faithful presence?

- i. Your workplace?
- ii. Your neighborhood?
- iii. Your family relationships?
- iv. Not escaping those spaces — but staying and engaging there as a follower of Jesus.

b. [16] Second: Where specifically might God be inviting you to live differently?

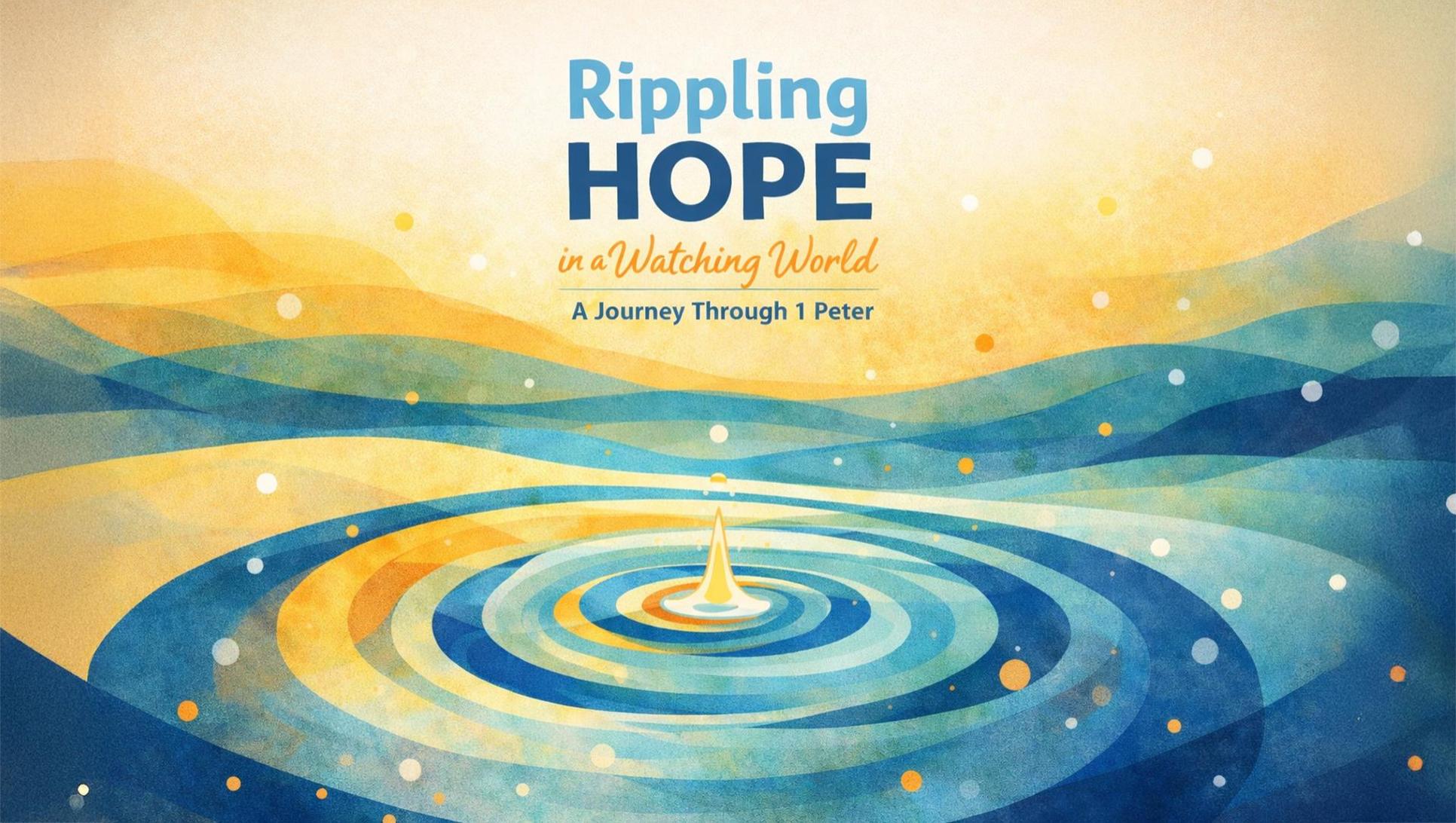
- i. Is there a conversation where humility needs to replace defensiveness?
- ii. Is there a relationship where blessing needs to replace retaliation?
- iii. Is there an area of life where your conduct could more clearly reflect Christ?

c. [17] And third: Where might God want to create ripples through your quiet faithfulness?

- i. Not dramatic gestures.

- ii. Just steady obedience.
- iii. A variant of this question would be: **WHERE DO YOU LONG for God to create ripples of transformation and blessing through your quiet faithfulness?**
- d. Because Peter's message to the early church was simple:
 - i. You may feel like strangers.
 - ii. You may feel out of step with the culture around you,
 - 1. But don't leave. Don't hide. Don't blend in
 - 2. Stay and engage.
 - iii. Live holy lives
 - iv. Love people deeply.
 - v. Respond to hostility with grace. Love your enemies.
 - vi. And trust that God will use your lives to create ripples of hope in a watching world.
- e. That is how the gospel spreads.
 - i. Not only through what we say.
 - ii. But through the kind of people we become.
 - 1. Strangers Who stay.
 - 2. And whose lives quietly point others to Jesus.

10.[18] PRAY



Rippling HOPE

in a Watching World

A Journey Through 1 Peter



LIVING AS STRANGERS WHO STAY

1 Peter 2:11-3:12



LIVING AS STRANGERS WHO STAY

1st PETER 2: ¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as **foreigners** and **exiles**, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.



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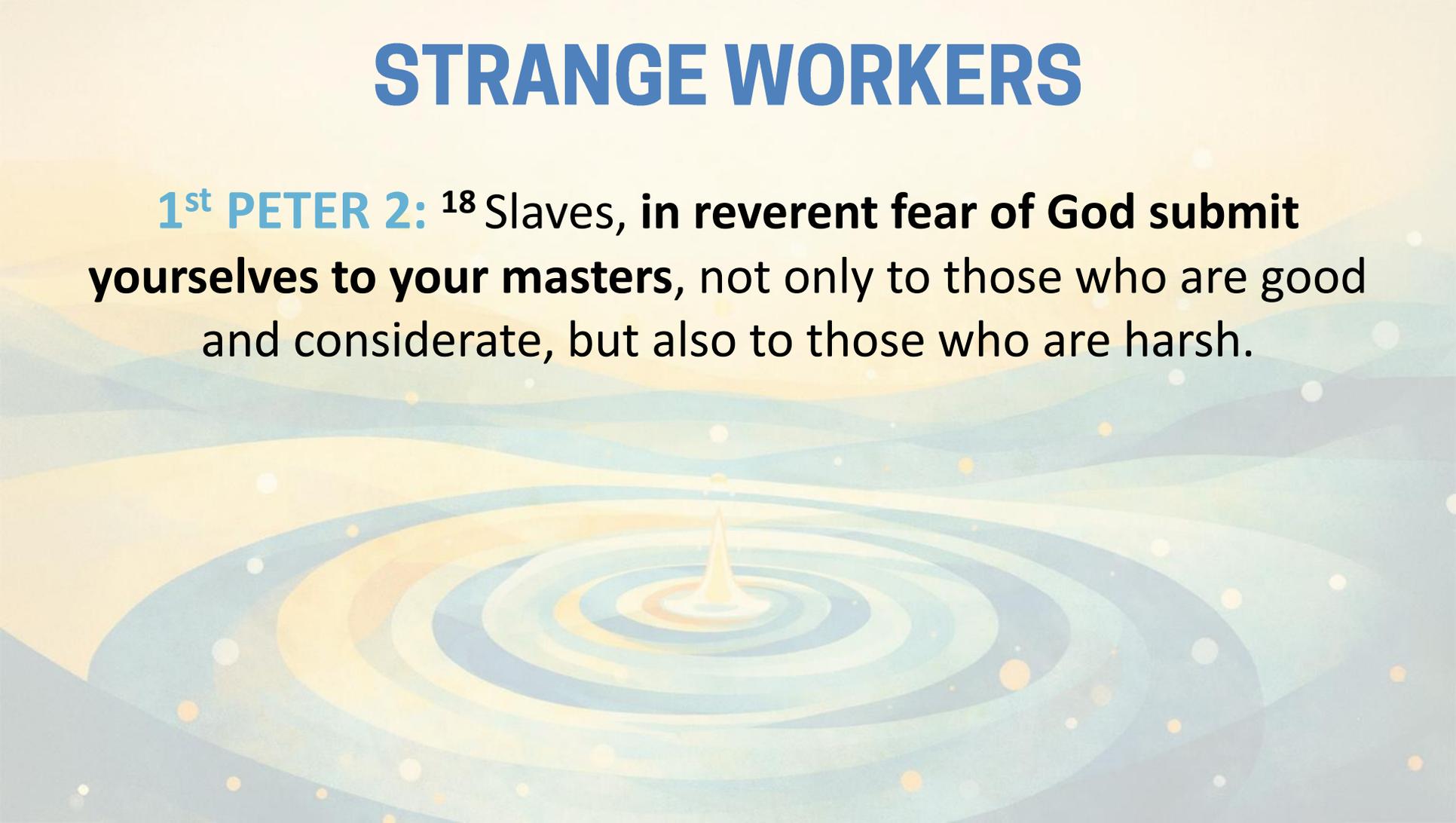


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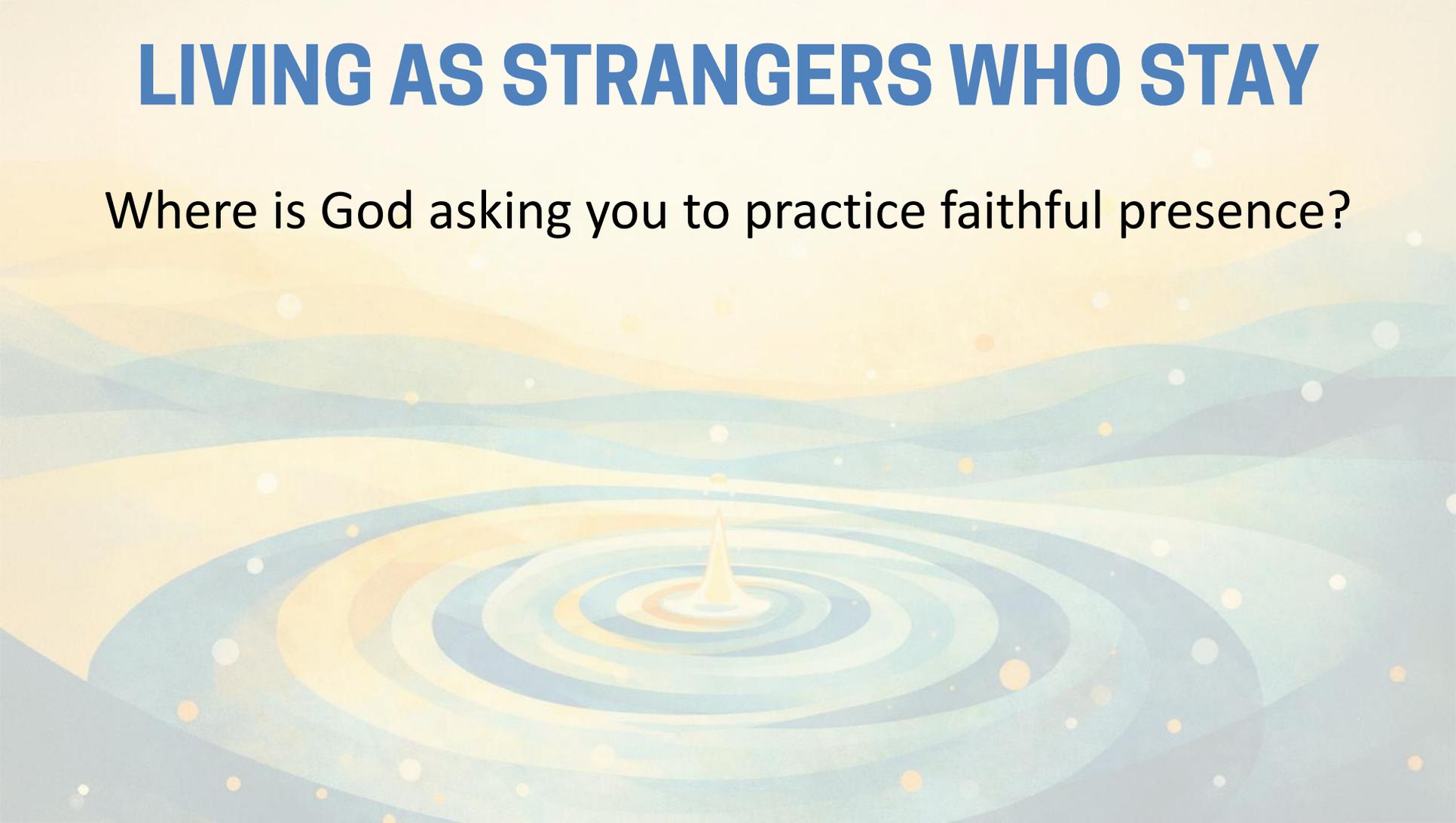


THE POWER OF FAITHFUL PRESENCE

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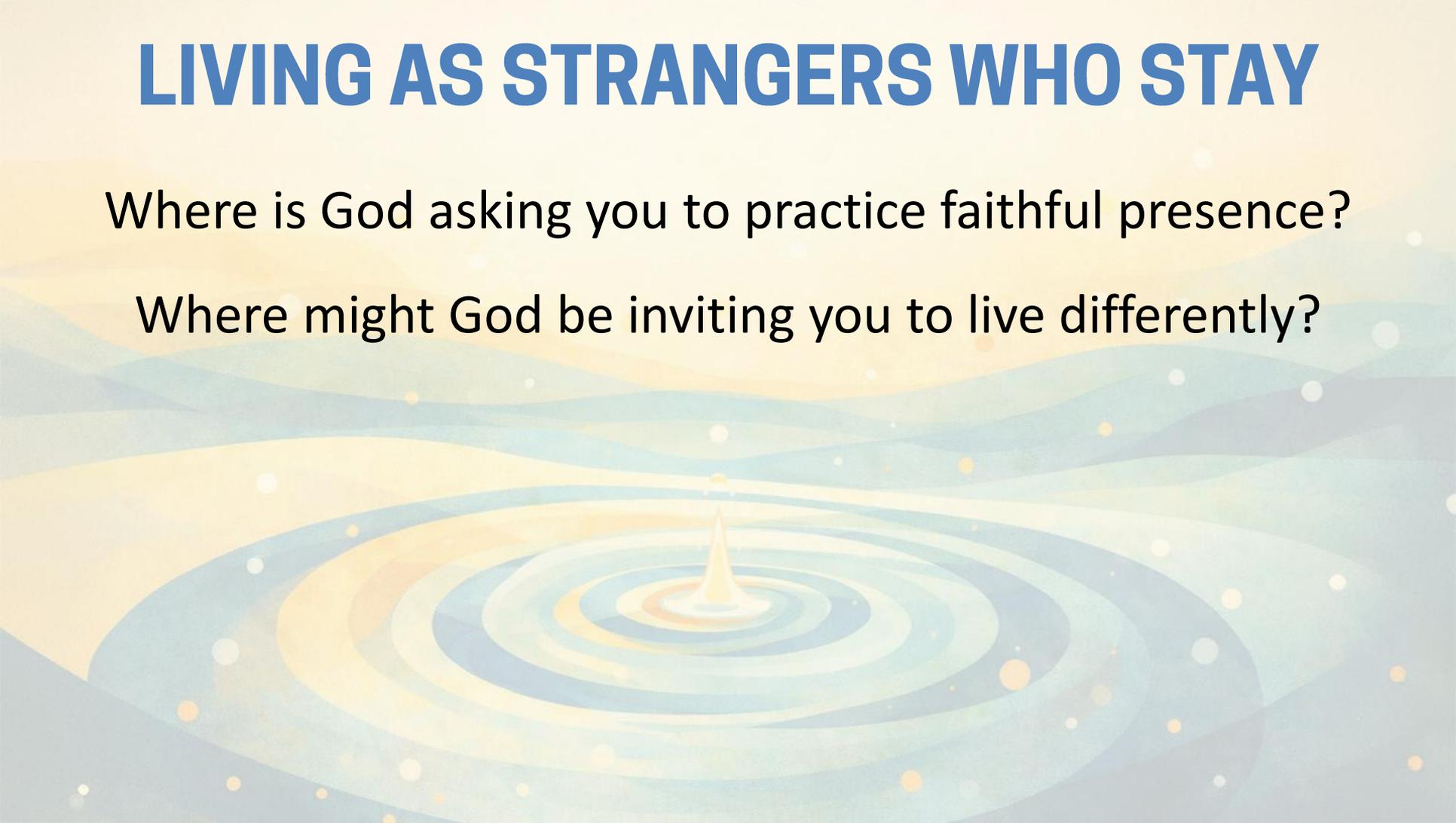
Where is God asking you to practice faithful presence?



LIVING AS STRANGERS WHO STAY

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Where might God be inviting you to live differently?



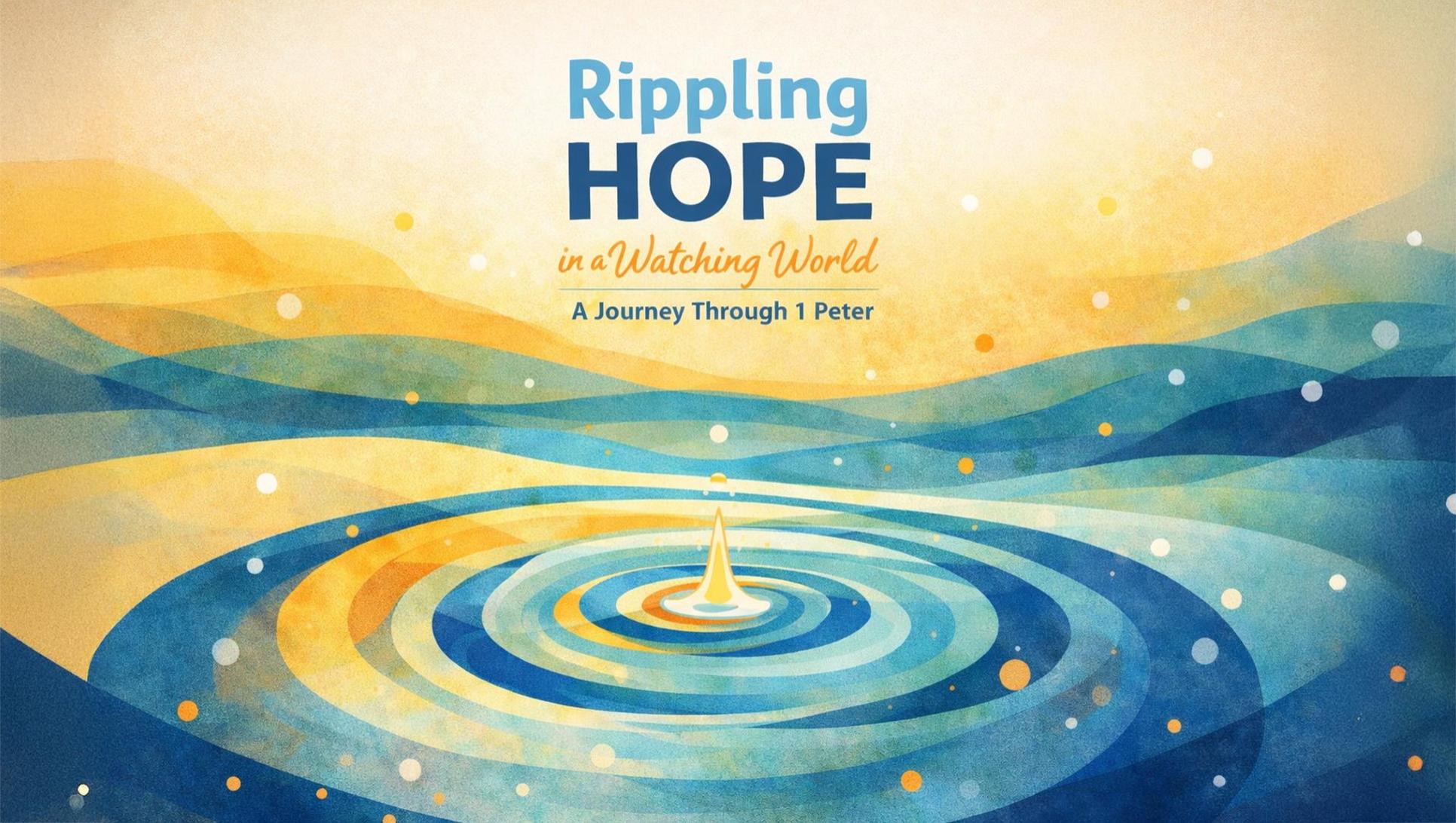
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Where might God want to create ripples through your quiet faithfulness?





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