



Resident Aliens: Week Three Sermon Notes

Verse 13 sets the stage for our whole conversation today:

1 Peter 1:13

Here Peter outlines a progressive movement in response to the security that we discussed last week. The believer who finds life and grace in the collective work of the Trinity will find themselves moving into three imperative realities.

1. **Prepare your minds for action.** Peter uses a Greek term that translates as “girding up one’s loins” which was a tangible illustration common in that time period involving the clothing most men wore. This term “gird up your loins” became synonymous with “be ready for action”.
2. **Keep sober in spirit.** Several manuscripts and translations do not include “in spirit” however I like it. Spirit in the lowercase form such as this was used to describe the internal drive of mankind. So what Peter is saying is that your internal drive must remain sober and balanced. As we have already seen though, this can only be done through the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. That’s why I like that this translation uses “in spirit” because it poses a good reminder that the only way my spirit is to remain sober is by allowing the Holy Spirit to do His transformative work.
3. **Fix your hope on future grace in Jesus.** Why is this necessary? Because what we face now, today, often carries the tendency to diminish hope rather than increase it. So Peter is very much urging us to look beyond our present circumstances and fix our focus on the hope being guarded and protected for us in heaven.

1 Peter 1:14-16

The best way to relate to a God who desires to father us is to accept the position of children. Here, Peter defines it further as becoming “obedient” children. It’s an understanding that the Father’s love, discipline, and rebuke all work together for our good. His desire is to protect, enrich and equip us for life lived at a maximum level. In order to reclaim this sense of rhythm in our lives, Peter assures us that we will need to move away from the lusts of our former way of thinking and into holiness as modeled by Jesus. Holiness, by definition, is the absence of sin. God dwells in perfect holiness, with no trace of sin.

1 Peter 1:17-21

Here Peter wants to remind us of just how much skin God has in this game. The price for our forgiveness was not silver or gold, it was blood. This plan did not take God off guard, it was long-awaited. In this plan there is no regret, God knew what He was doing and He willingly did it. In response to this plan and its fruition, Peter reminds us that we are called to “conduct ourselves in fear”. When fear is talked about in scripture in relation to God (i.e. fear the Lord your God, work out your salvation in fear and trembling, etc) it is never used with the intent to indicate the crippling, soul-crushing fear administered by our enemy. Fear in relation to God is always meant to indicate reverence.

1 Peter 1:22-25

This is a really important section. In our modern culture, much of what we talk about in the realm of faith has been individualized. It’s all about how you personally connect to God and align yourself with His purposes. This would not have been so back when Peter was writing. There was no separation between what God was doing in me and what God was doing in us. Faith was 100% communal back then and that was by design.

Two New Realities:

New Born Babies:

1 Peter 2:1-3

1. **Malice** - This first word is really more of an overarching concept of all that we are called to take off. The original word defines as “the intent to do evil” and was understood as all that was counter to Christian love.

What Peter means is that we must eliminate everything that disables our ability to selflessly love one another.

2. **Deceit** - This was defined as “trickery aimed to gain one’s own ends”. Manipulation is probably a more familiar terminology for us. When people are means to your desired end they fail to be the image-bearers we are called to view one another as.
3. **Hypocrisy** - The root word is actually one used to describe an actor in a play which is a pretty good definition of hypocrisy. Hypocrites are those who pretend and profess to be committed to the way of Jesus but who are in fact acting the part in order to, again, achieve their own purposes.
4. **Envy** - This is when we diminish the work of God in “us” because we are too preoccupied that the work in you might be greater than the work in me. This is the hardest sin to kill and tends to be the last one to die. In the weakness of our flesh, it is near impossible to not be consistently comparing ourselves to one another.
5. **Slander** - This is gossip or “talking about someone rather than talking to someone”. There are a lot of reasons and motivators for gossip but none of them are good. There are few instances in which talking about someone while they are not present equates to anything good. We like to assume that this sin is only characteristic of a few in our culture and that they are mostly women. That is a great lie. We are all guilty of this far more than we realize.

All of these things must die, Peter says. Now, why the whole newborn baby illustration? Partly it’s to reinforce the idea of rebirth but also to illustrate that these character defects are all learned behaviors. No one is born with any of these things... we are born with sin and learn how to live it out. The same is true for holiness. We can learn to live in a new reality so Peter urges us to imagine ourselves as being reborn like brand new babies.

Living Stones:

1 Peter 2:4-10

1. **We are not scattered stones.** Our new identity requires connection to other stones. Our purpose in being transformed into stones was purely for the purpose of the temple construction. This attacks our concept of

radical individualism even more. You cannot pursue a healthy faith experience in an individualized fashion. Spirituality requires your being connected to other believers.

2. **Jesus is a stumbling block.** What does this mean? Quite literally it means that Jesus is in the way. He's unavoidable. Every living, breathing human will have to decide what to do about Jesus. As Peter notes, some will reject Him and some will accept Him but everyone will have to encounter Him. **What does verse 8 mean?** Simply that the destiny of those who choose to reject Jesus will be set for them. If you reject Jesus you are destined for existence in separation from God. Doctrinally we understand this as hell.
3. **We were once not a people and now we are a people.** 2000 years ago we would not have been a part of this conversation unless we were of strict Jewish heritage. We would have been outsiders in the conversation of hope. But Jesus' church included stones from everywhere. He didn't get his supply from one person in one location, we were all invited to the party.