

# EXILES

LIVING IN HOPE  
1 & 2 PETER

SERMON TITLE: Elect Exiles

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SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:1-2

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Identity is an ever-present buzzword. This should especially be true for Christians. We are chosen, loved, forgiven, and secure in Jesus. But Peter reminds us of another part of our Christian identity—we are exiles. The "world as it is" isn't our home. We are pilgrims on a journey, telling others along the way about the wonderful things God has done in calling us out of darkness and into his light. And just like Peter's personality, these two letters that share his name are bold invitations to cling to a living hope in the face of any suffering that may come our way.

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In our culture today, identity—finding yourself—discovering who you are—is both a passionate personal pursuit and big business. ...Even though we try to define ourselves in hundreds of different ways, most people struggle with understanding who they are. ...As a follower of Christ, we find that the NT is full of descriptions of our new identity in Christ. But in all the lists you can find online, there's one important part of our identity that I couldn't find in any list. And that is, the Scriptures tell us that we are exiles. At the core of "who you are in Christ," God says you are an exile.

**READ 1 Peter 1:1-2.** The idea of God's people being exiles in this world is not new one. Since the fall, since humanity was exiled from our home with God in the Garden of Eden, we have been exiled from our true home with God. Hebrews 11:13-16 tells us how ancient men and women of faith understood themselves. This world was not their home. They saw themselves as sojourners and exiles and so should we. So the question is—*How does having an exile mindset shape how we are to live our daily lives?* The letters of Peter will help us answer that question.

According to v.1—the apostle Peter wrote this letter to mostly Gentile Christians (see 1:4; 1:18; 4:3-4) who had literally been uprooted from their homes and sent to live in Asia Minor. And Peter knew they were facing increasing hatred, hostility, and harassment. They were being ridiculed and belittled. They were being marginalized and socially ostracized. He wrote to give these Christians hope, comfort, and encouragement by calling them to remember their true identity in Christ and how even suffering was a part of that identity.

*And here's one way to summarize the BIG IDEA of the book — There's a storm coming. The hostility and suffering you face now will grow worse and worse. Expect to suffer because of your faith in Christ Jesus. To survive the storm, remember you are God's chosen exiles. Fix your hope on the coming of Jesus. At that time he will set right all that's wrong. Until then, you are tasked with the responsibility of telling others how great and good God is. Do this as you have opportunity with gentleness and respect. Grace and peace.*

Even though Peter is writing mostly to Gentiles, he connects NT believers to OT themes all through this book. He wants these suffering, non-Jewish Christians to see that through Jesus—they now belong to the family of Abraham and so they are wandering exiles just like him—*misunderstood, mistreated*—and they're looking for their true home in the promised land.

Peter writes to "elect exiles"—"elect" simply means to be chosen. Here's his point—Because you are chosen, you are exiles. Because God has set his love on you and called you into an exclusive relationship with himself, you are not at home in this world.

In v.2 you have the whole Trinity involved in God's choosing you for salvation. We are chosen *according to the foreknowledge of God, by the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.* The Father, Spirit, and Son are all involved in your salvation. I take it that he's talking mainly about our initial salvation experience. That's the reason for the order *Father, Spirit, and Son* rather than what we might expect *Father, Son, and Spirit*. ...Here's how I understand this verse—The foreknowledge of the Father *leads to us* being chosen through the sanctifying work of the Spirit. *That results in* our coming to Jesus for salvation and receiving his sprinkled blood for the forgiveness of our sins. ...Let's expand on that a bit--The foreknowledge of the father—(his choosing us, not him knowing those who would choose him)—his choosing us means he *set his love on us*—that leads to the Spirit setting us apart as someone who belongs exclusively to God--which begins as the Spirit opens our eyes and heart to God's love,—and that

results in our obeying the Gospel command to believe in Jesus as our only hope for a restored life with God and faith in Christ results in the forgiveness of our sins.

Living with an exile mentality—(to be *IN* the world, but not *OF* the world)—from God’s perspective, is not a negative orientation toward life. It doesn’t allow us to look at the world with an attitude of superiority like—“I thank God that I’m not like ‘those people’—OR—“We’re better than ‘those people’—NO—Because you are chosen, you are exiles. *Because by grace, you have been chosen, by grace, you live as an exile so you can extend grace to others.*

Your exile identity comes from pure grace, God’s grace. It comes from God choosing you, setting you apart, calling you to believe in Jesus and to follow Jesus with the promise of ongoing forgiveness through his blood. This we do as we wait for Jesus to return and take us to our home in the New Heavens and New Earth. God choosing you has nothing to do with you choosing him. The fact is, we choose against him all the time. But his choice of us stands. Peter chose against God several times, but God’s gracious choice of Peter held firm. No wonder Peter encourages and reminds us to embrace our exile identity. It’s the key to experiencing “the true grace of God. No wonder he calls us to “stand firm in the grace of God” no matter what trouble we face (1 Peter 5:12).

#### *For Discussion —*

When you listen to Bible teaching, you should be listening with an ear to learn, but also an ear to share with others what you are learning. Keep that in mind as you discuss today’s message. How do you need to internalize this message so you could share this Good News with people who need to hear it?

- (1) As a group, talk about what you know about Peter. List as many things as you can that tell us about his personality, his following Jesus, what transformed his life, and to the man we see in the book of Acts.
- (2) Have someone read 1 Peter 1:1-2. Talk about this whole idea of our identity being rooted in the fact that we are exiles. What is an exile? What are Bible examples of exiles and how does that help us understand what Peter is trying to tell us?
- (3) How does Hebrews 11:13-16 help us understand our exile identity?
- (4) Talk about what was happening to those exiled Christians in Turkey. What kind of trouble were they facing? ...
- (5) Talk about any parallels from Peter’s day to our day in what we are facing in this country?
- (6) Charlie asked: If our children and grandchildren will grow up in a world that’s much more hostile to our faith than the world we grew up in then how should we be preparing them to live in that world? ...How would you answer that? ...How will you prepare yourself to answer that question?
- (7) What might be different in your life in 2019 if you tried to see all of life through an exile identity filter?

Make sure to check out the Bible Project’s excellent overview video on 1 Peter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhP7AZQlzCg>

As well as their two video’s dealing with our being “exiles” in this world. “

Exile”— [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSua9\\_WhQFE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSua9_WhQFE) ...and...

“The Way of the Exile” —<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpa0gcPyo> on YouTube