

EXILES

LIVING IN HOPE

1 & 2 PETER

SERMON TITLE: Exiles and Marriage
SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 3:1-7

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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.

Jesus' first words in the whole Bible are "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This means that God's new creation has dawned in him. He's the Second Adam, the king of the kingdom. While God's kingdom isn't fully here, it is truly here, and that's the beautiful, yet awkward space that we get to live in.

This is the narrative that first century Christians realized was coming true all around them and within them, and this is the paradigm in Peter's mind as he writes. Because of this, he addresses his friends as exiles and foreigners. Yet there's something else that Peter's friends are slowly learning, and that is that a Christians convictions and values in the first century aren't going to be the most popular or accepted. The same is true for us today.

As Jesus followers, how we think about money, sex, power, parenting, entertainment, and relationships will usually not make us hot spots of relevance in the world. Just like Peter's friends, we're still learning that Jesus' kingdom doesn't advance in the same way that earthly kingdoms advance. One of the primary places where this conflict of value is seen is marriage.

Many in our culture believe that marriage is an outdated human institution that weighs people down. Even if someone dares to say that marriage can still be good thing, a Christian's convictions on marriage are still frequently seen as useless or just plain wrong. So, we have to ask, what does a healthy Christian marriage look like? What does it mean to be a part of kingdom come, and humbly hold to God's view of marriage in a world that might think we're crazy? And along these lines, what does it mean to be a biblical woman or a biblical man? Or simply, how to we live *as exiles* and *in marriage*? 1 Peter 3:1-7 will help us out.

First off, what makes this passage extra difficult is that it's not just a view of marriage in a world that likely disagrees, but there are also some Christians who use some of the language in this passage to talk about marriage in a way that is demeaning to women. They wrongly interpret ideas like submission, having a gentle and quiet spirit, Sarah calling Abraham "lord," and Peter using the phrase "weaker vessels" as grounds for strange marital patriarchy. But if you read these things in context, and see what Peter is trying to communicate, these verses are an invitation and not a deterrent.

Broadly, Peter is encouraging Christian women to focus on inward beauty over external beauty. Inward beauty grows and deepens, but the outward beauty fades. And this is consistent with how Jesus' kingdom comes from heaven to earth - not through externals like force and power, but through internal things that leak out, like gentleness, trust, and fearlessness (3:6). And inward beauty like this could even win your husbands to Jesus if they don't know him. There is a unique and fragile strength that women have that is meant to be cultivated alongside a meek and confident beauty. This is what their husbands (and the church!) need.

For married men, Peter calls them to live with their wives in an understanding way, honoring them as partners in grace and partners in life. This is about truly knowing her, seeing things from her perspective, sympathizing with how's she's making sense of the world, being aware of her greatest needs, and leading her from a place of service and not entitlement. And doing these things isn't possible if you take her and her love for granted. She has a unique and fragile strength that you

need. She's your partner, and not your lesser. And God has called you to love her like Christ loved his bride, the church, by laying down his life for her.

For both Christian husbands and wives, this call is to be a part of kingdom come. The invitation is to, by your marriage, point people to Jesus. We are exiles. We are foreigners. The world as it is isn't our final home. And our values might not get us cultural cool points, but as we await the fullness of God's new world, we're called to an imperishable love and hope that binds our marriages together, and that shows people the love of Jesus.

Discussion Starters

Have someone people read 1 Peter 3:1-7 then ask...

1. Why will a Christian's convictions and values likely be different than those of the world?
2. What are ways that a biblical view of marriage differs from modernity's view of marriage?
3. Name a couple that you know that embodies the ways that Peter talks about marriage in this passage.
4. What does the "imperishable beauty" of a godly Christian woman look like?
5. How should Christian husbands live with their wives in an understanding way?
6. What is your biggest "take away" from this passage—this message?