

# EXILES

LIVING IN HOPE  
1 & 2 PETER

SERMON TITLE: Standing Together in the Storm

DATE: January 27, 2019

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SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:1-10

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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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I am growing more and more convinced that having an "exile identity" is one of the most important ways to think about what it means to follow Christ in this country today. The fact is, we are living in a post-Christian culture. The church is on the margins of society. We are out of step with our culture and we are being ostracized for it. People today aren't just indifferent to Christianity. They don't just think we are wrong in what we believe and how we live. They believe Christian beliefs and values are dangerous and deviant. There's a black-is-white and white-is-black reversal taking place in our culture today and Peter says, "Don't be surprised by it" (cf 1 Peter 4:12). Peter's readers are not being imprisoned or fed to the lions—that will come later. Instead they are facing slander and hostility from their neighbors, from former friends and family. 2:12—talks about how they are being *falsely accused of wrongdoing*—3:16—talks about being *slandered*—4:4—talks about how former friends *malign* them when they don't join them in wild partying, drunkenness, and immorality. And that's the way it is today—if you teach in a Christian school or work at a place like Miracle Hill, a church, or some other Christian organization, you can be accused of promoting *dangerous bigotry*. If you hold to a Scriptural view of marriage and sexuality, you can be slandered as a hate-monger. If you commit to remaining a virgin until you get married, your college friends act like you're from another planet. Living as an exile is hard and it's getting harder. But it's worth it because God is growing his family through people living in hope in the midst of hardship.

Peter's audience was asking questions like—*How do we remain loyal to Jesus in the face of all this scorn and hostility? How do we resist the shame and endure the suffering? What can we do so their maligning words have less impact on us? How do we help people who are giving in to this social pressure? If our families and friends and neighbors no longer welcome us and honor us then how do we live as outcasts? And even more important—What does God think about us? Does all this suffering mean that he's rejected us to?* Peter writes to answer questions like that. And in our passage this morning—2:1-10—he begins to unpack the answer. Keep in mind that everything Peter says in 2:1-10 highlights the honor and privilege of living in the chosen community of God's exile people. The whole passage focuses on the ideas of shame and honor.

How do we remain loyal to Jesus in the face of shame and ridicule? How do we lessen the impact of harsh words leveled against us?

#1 — Read 2:1-3 —Make your \_\_\_\_\_ life your life. How so? By putting away all hateful attitudes and actions that can stunt your spiritual growth.

#2 — Read 2:4-10 —Value the \_\_\_\_\_ the way God values the \_\_\_\_\_. How does God value the church?

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*Discussion Starters —*

Have different people read through 1 Peter 2:1-10 —then ask—

"From what you heard in Charlie's message or what we just read:

1. *What are some of the "AHAs" you had?*
2. *What did you hear that resonated with you?*
3. *What new thoughts and insights did you have?"*

When someone volunteers an "AHA" ask follow up questions to dig deeper and to keep the discussion going. Ask the group, *"Anyone else have this same "AHA"? What do you think about this insight?"* After you've exhausted topic, throw the original question back out to the group, *"Who else had an "AHA?"* —Repeat the pattern above. —

If someone says, *"I didn't really have an "AHA," it's more that I don't understand ...."* Then go that direction. Ask follow-up questions to help them clearly articulate the issue. *"Anybody else think about that/struggle with that?"* Ask the group for input, *"So, how would you answer that question?"* Whoever answers, ask follow up questions, ask for input from the group on that answer (*What do you think about that?*), etc.

*Discernment Exercise*

In hearing the Wall Street Journal article—"The Shaming of Karen Pence"—leaving politics aside—What would Peter say our response should be to how Christians are being maligned in our country today?

How does placing a high value on meeting together as God's people help us stand against the storm?