

## A Plea for Pilgrim Living

1 Peter 2:11-12

We all like to feel at home. And in large part, that means feeling comfortable. But this world is not a place where Christians can or should feel very comfortable. In our text Peter pleads with Christians to live as pilgrims here on earth. Let's work through Peter's plea by considering three main points: 1) Our identity as pilgrims, 2) our war within our own hearts, and 3) our witness within God's world.

### 1. Our Identity as Pilgrims (or ... exiles)

- a. what is a pilgrim/exile?
- b. the status of a pilgrim/exile
  - minority
  - lack privileges citizens possess
  - lack positions of power citizens occupy
  - 'alien' status (cf. Eph.2:19, ESV)
- c. examples of pilgrims/exiles
  - Abraham (Gen.23:4 – “I am **alien/stranger** among you”)
  - Jacob (Gen.47:9 – “The yrs. of my **pilgrimage** are 130. My yrs. have been few & difficult”)
  - Moses (Act.7:29 – “Moses fled and became an **exile** (πάροικος) in the land of Midian”)
  - OT people of God (Heb.11:13-14 – “<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were **strangers** and **pilgrims** on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland [πατρις – fatherland, ie. 'Fatherland'].”)
  - Adam & Eve (Gen.3:23-24 – “<sup>23</sup> So the Lord God **banished** him fr. GoE ... <sup>24</sup> After He **drove** the man **out**, he placed ... cherubim & flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”)
- d. (be)loved as pilgrims/exiles by The Exile
  - Heb.13:12 – “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”

### 2. Our War as Pilgrims (within our heart)

- a. the call to wage an abstinence war against fleshly lusts (v.11b)
- b. what are fleshly lusts?
  - 1Pet.2:1 – “Therefore, laying aside all *malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking*”
  - 1Pet.4:2-3 – “<sup>2</sup> he [should] no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup> For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”

c. what's the danger?

- Gal.5:19-21 – “<sup>20</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; ... <sup>21b</sup> of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

d. the necessity of the war

- Romans 7:15-23 – “<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is **sin living in me**. <sup>18</sup> I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my **sinful nature**. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is **sin living in me** that does it. <sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, **evil is right there with me**. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see **another law at work** in the members of my body, **waging war** against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work w/i my members.”
- James 4:1 – “Where do **wars** and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your **desires for pleasure** that **war** in your members?”
- Mark 7:21-23 – ““For it is from w/i, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup> adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. <sup>23</sup> All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

e. the normalcy of the war

- Gal.5:17 –“The **flesh lusts** against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to o/a, so that you do not do the thgs. that you wish.”
- 1Pe.5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

f. encouragement in the war

- Romans 7:24-8:1 – “<sup>7:</sup><sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> I thank God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. <sup>8:1</sup> *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”
- Jam.4:7-8 – “7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”
- John 15:4 – “Abide in Me, and I [will abide] in you.”

### 3. Our Witness as Pilgrims (within God's world)

- a. the purpose of pure, pilgrim living: witness
- b. verbal witness
  - is important and necessary
    - 1Pet.3:15 – “Always be prepared to give an answer to e/o who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this w. gentleness & respect.”
- c. visible witness
  - is the starting point
    - 1Pet.3:1-2 – “<sup>1</sup> Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do **not obey** the **word**, they may be **won w/o a word** by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”
  - unbelievers are ‘overseeing’ our lifestyle
    - 1Pet.2:12 – “by your good works which they **observe** [ie. inspect/supervise/ overlook/look over]”
  - be visible!
    - aliens, but not alienated / engaged exiles
    - Jeremiah 29:4-7 – “<sup>4</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> **Build** houses and dwell *in them*; **plant** gardens and eat their fruit. <sup>6</sup> **Take** wives and beget sons and daughters; and **take** wives for your sons and **give** your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. <sup>7</sup> And **seek** the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and **pray** to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.”
- d. the occasion for witness: false accusations
  - 1Pet.2:12 – “having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that **when** they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
  - Luk.21:12-13 – “<sup>12</sup> ... they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. <sup>13</sup> This will be your opportunity to bear witness.”

### Conclusion

If you are at home in this world now, then hell is your home forever. But if you feel like a stranger, a pilgrim, an exile in the world now, then you can rejoice, for you have a place in the new heaven and new earth being prepared for you! Though you be an alien now in the eyes of the world, you will inherit the earth (Mat.5:5)!