

Sin Abstaining, Right Living Weirdo's

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 September 2016

Preacher: Jim Masters

- [0 : 00] If you would take your Bibles, please, and turn to 1 Peter, chapter 2. 1 Peter, chapter 2.
- If you're visiting with us, the black Bible in the chair in front of you, black Bible, pull that out and go to page 181, towards the back, 181.
- I actually want to read, starting in chapter 1, verse 1. This is going to be fun. We'll do something fun today. I want to start reading the beginning of 1 Peter, chapter 1, so actually go a page or two back in your Bibles.
- I'm going to start in chapter 1, verse 1. I'm going to read all the way to chapter 2, verse 12. By the way, this whole thing about Colombia, this is a big deal.
- Over 50 years of war, and they're actually, today is actually, I think it's today they're supposed to meet together and agree to peace.
- [1 : 13] And then I think it's the 5th of October or the 4th of October? No, the 3rd of October. I think it's the 3rd of October they're supposed to actually sign it. Oh no, it's supposed to actually vote on it.
- Which is a big deal. I mean, but it's hard because here you've got the rebels who used to kidnap and assassinate these people and they're just coming out of the woodwork and now it's just like, hey, how's it going?
- You know, it's like, hey, you like killed my family. You know, it's going to be really weird. Awkward. So it'll be interesting to see what happens to the cocaine merchandise.
- The ideas at FARC, the rebels used to fund drug trafficking of cocaine. That's how they funded their whole army. So, over 250,000 people killed.
- 7 million displaced. They've got a lot of work to do. Anyways. You can be praying for Columbia.
- [2 : 14] 1 Peter 1, starting in verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the full knowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood.
- May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again, unto a living hope, to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance, imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith, unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, since it is necessary, you've been distressed by various trials, that the genuineness of your trust, more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- And though you've not seen Him, you love Him. And though you do not see Him now, but because you believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and glorious, obtaining the outcome of your trust, the salvation of your souls.

Verse 10, As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeing you to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as you predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

[4 : 03] It was revealed to them that they are not serving themselves, but you in these things, which now have been announced to you, to those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to your former lusts and your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all conduct, because it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy.

If you address Father, the one who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during your sojourning, and that you are not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your feudal way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless of Christ.

For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for your sake, you who through Christ are believers in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

Since you have an obedience to the truth, purified your souls unto a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again, not a seed which is perishable, but imperishable through the living and abiding word of God.

[5 : 33] For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever. And this is the word which was gospelled to you.

Chapter 2. Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk.

By it you may grow unto salvation since you have tasted that the Lord is good. And coming to him, a living stone, rejected by men, but chosen and honored from God, you also as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built up unto a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices pleasing to God through Jesus Christ.

This is contained in Scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen, honored cornerstone, and he who believes in him shall not be disgraced.

Therefore, to you who believe is honor. But for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word and to this they were also appointed.

[6 : 55] But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people unto possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

You have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul, having your conduct excellent among the nations, so that in that which they slander you as evildoers, because observing your good deeds, they may glorify God in the day of visitation.

Amen. The article began, white, working class Americans have a split view of Muslim immigrants.

Strong majorities believe both that immigrants from Muslim countries increase the threat of terrorism in the United States, but also that most immigrants from those countries are good people.

It makes sense why some Americans don't trust immigrants. People who are aliens, illegal aliens, illegal immigrants for that matter, from certain countries.

[8 : 26] Unfortunately, it's judging a book by its cover though, huh? It's not necessarily fair. But that goes for any immigrant. It goes for any refugee for that matter.

Syrian refugees? It's hard to trust. Why? Because there's a stereotype. The stereotype is, they're not going to abide by the laws of our land, huh?

That's the stereotype, right? Right? In the first century, Romans trusted only Romans.

Anyone else, they completely mistrusted you if you were not a Roman. Interesting that Peter brings up something, not necessarily immigrants, more like alien sojourners, and it's us.

There'd be a stereotype that would be brought upon us, which is why, or which is, brings out even more so the command that he gives to us in our passage this morning.

[9 : 39] As we look at 1 Peter, by God's grace, being wise, winsome, weirdos, in this wicked world, today, the kind of weirdos that we want to be are sin abstaining, good living weirdos.

Weirdos who abstain from sin and weirdos who live good, upright lives. Sin abstaining, good or right living weirdos.

What if as immigrants, or as aliens, we lived unbelievable lives in this world?

We are sin abstaining, right, or good living weirdos, because we're aliens of a country that's filled with grace, compassion, and mercy.

That's our home. Our home is a place of compassion, right? Our home is a place of grace and mercy, right?

[10 : 59] That's our home. That's our country. So we're stepping into this country, this world, as aliens.

We're sojourners. Sojourners. And Peter's going to call us to be sin abstaining, good living weirdos.

Another statement for you. How are we to live in relation to this world? We live lives of such high character that even non-Christians recognize the quality of our lives.

We show in our conduct that we are citizens of a better country. Not that we're better, that's not what we're saying. But the country that we're a part of, oh, it's a better country.

It's a country of grace and mercy. It's a country where God loves sinners like us and saves sinners. That's where we're from. Interesting, these two verses really, it's going to govern how Peter writes the rest of his letter to his readers.

[12 : 19] Specifically, how we as followers of Jesus should live in our relationships. This is the practical implication of our changed and privileged status.

Chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's possession. It changes things.

It changes our relationship with our governments, with the U.S. government. At least it should. It changes our relationship between slaves and masters.

At least it should. It changes our relationship between wives with their husbands and husbands with their wives. At least it should.

It changes our relationship with other Christians. At least it should. So these two verses, they're the premise statements.

- [13 : 21] It all starts here. Having the right focus from chapter 1, verse 1, all the way to chapter 2, verse 10. Peter kind of launches into something here.
- And he starts with this premise. Because Peter's going to get very real and very practical about how we live out holiness in our lives, how we love others, how we trust God.
- How do you trust God? How will you trust God if Donald Trump is voted for? How will you trust God if Hillary Clinton is voted for? How will you trust God in that?
- Honestly, I'd rather have either one than Nero. How about you?
- First, sin abstaining weirdos. Notice verse 11. Beloved, his love for his readers. I urge you, I exhort you, I beseech you, listen to me, please.
- [14 : 28] You don't have to say please though because he's an apostle. But notice he said, I beseech you as aliens and strangers. Now, we really got to get this.
- This is not the first time he's called this. Like the third or fourth time really, right? You're aliens. You're sojourners. You're just passing through.
- We're temporary residents and foreigners in this world. think of yourself as a Syrian refugee. Think of yourself that way.
- We are permanent, resonant aliens. Temporarily in the area. We're not of this world. home. But, this should not lead us to withdrawing from the culture.
- It shouldn't lead us to withdrawing from people, though that's tempting to do. we take our standards of living, not from the culture, this culture, but from a culture which is our eternal home.
- [15 : 45] Our allegiance to this world is transitory. Your allegiance, should there be an allegiance, so to speak, to the U.S.
- and the country you live in? Yes, I agree. And yet, that's fleeting, and that should be nothing compared to our allegiance to our eternal home, right? It's brief.
- This is not our home. We really need to understand this. Because this is a thing that motivates us.
- This is a thing that drives us, that we're aliens. What is it that inspires, motivates, drives, invigorates us to live a separate kind of life?
- The fact that we're citizens of a different country, a nation that is holy, a territory that has Christ as our King. It's because God has ginormously been merciful to us.
- [16 : 56] He's been ginormously merciful to us and His Son. I like that word, ginormously. That's our home.
- Christ is our King. This, that, this, that, this is the thing that motivates us, that drives us. We must get this. Motivation is the fact that we belong somewhere else.
- Christ is my King, I'm His servant. We must have this as our drive because if we don't, then all we're doing is simply modifying our behavior.
- The psychological term is called cognitive behavioral therapy. That's really what they do. It's a therapy called cognitive behavioral therapy.
- See, that's the problem with secular Christian psychology today. They use this behavior modification, but that's not the point. It's not about modifying our behavior.
- [18 : 07] It's about being driven by Christ and God focused in our worship. That's what it's about. So this is our motivation.
- we're aliens, we're strangers. Our home is with Christ. That's the culture that we're from. It's a gospel culture. So now, as aliens, strangers, notice he says, abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

Say that ten times real fast. Total abstinence from fleshly lusts. That's funny.

Or from sinful desires. I'm going to say sinful desires from now on. Live out what we know. Not yielding to uncontrolled desires, which is really yielding to the enemy. What kind of things are you speaking about?

Chapter 4, verse 3. Pursuit a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

[19 : 22] That's a short list. The longer list is Galatians 5, 19-21. And then the little phrase that Paul uses down there is like, anything like this. That's the catch-all phrase, right?

Don't indulge in these lusts, he's saying. What's our temptation? Our temptation is to go back to our old way of life. Why would people do that? Why would Christians do that?

What if people are making fun of you because of your beliefs? What if they mock you for the way you live? Or mock you because of what you believe? Or persecute you for what you believe?

That could be a temptation. It's about putting to death the sinful things that creep up from within our souls. And notice he says, do this because they wage war.

These sinful desires wage war against our lives. We're engaged in warfare against these desires. Ephesians chapter 6, 10 through 20.

[20 : 36] Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, the heavenly forces, right? And here Peter says, it's inside of us.

Our flesh is warring against us. We war and we must stop it. Beware. Don't be spiritually weak. If we're spiritually weak, we're going to be in trouble.

Peter's saying, wake up, wake up. Abstain. Sin abstaining weirdos. They're going to think we're weird because we abstain from these things that they do, that they don't see a problem with.

And they're going to think you're a weirdo when you have good living. Oh, I put this up there. What about things? 4, 3. Good living weirdos. Good living weirdos.

Verse 12. Not a new sentence. He just continues on having or keeping your conduct excellent.

[21 : 41] Your behavior honorable. A life that is holy, good, right. You can see this theme throughout. Chapter 2, verse 15.

By doing right, you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Verse 20. But if when you do what is right and suffer, you patiently endure it, this is grace.

Chapter 3, verse 1 and 2. A husband may be one without a word as he observes your chaste, respectful, honorable behavior. Verse 6 of chapter 3.

Do what is right without being frightened by any fear. Chapter 3, verse 13. If you're doing zealous for what is good. Chapter 3, verse 16.

Keep a good conscience so when you're slandered those who revile your good behavior. Notice how many times, good or right, good or right, good or right. This is how we're known.

[22 : 47] We're known. We should be known. Good, right living. we live more moral lives than the unsaved.

And by the way, we're not talking about a legalistic standard, but clear biblical commands. Not standards that we make up on our own.

I think one time I had somebody, this is months ago, somebody threw my sermon back in my face and you know you should be doing this and this and this.

I'm like wow, really? Like a legalistic standard that they had. So it was quite amusing. Kind of whoa. That's not what he's talking about here.

We have to be careful of our legalistic standards that we come up with. He's talking about clear biblical commands and how we live. This good living, notice he says among some of your versions say Gentiles or say nations.

- [23 : 53] They can be translated as peoples even. Why does he use this with his readers? Why does he describe this with them versus the Gentiles or nations?

As Israel was separated from the nations around them, so we as Christians are separated from the nations around us. Those who don't know Christ, those who don't follow Christ, those who don't worship the Lord Jesus Christ, that's who he's talking about.

We're not in this world. Not that we're better. It's not our home. Peter established our identity in Christ already, chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, and since we have this position or standing before God, it should result in a changed life.

Local churches that live with Jesus as our King, Jesus as our Savior. God, it should be crystal clear the way we live our lives, drastically different from the culture around us.

And yet, unsaved people have profusely criticized us as being what? Hypocrites.

- [25 : 25] We act one way on Sundays, and we act another way the rest of the week. If there's one accusation unsaved people have on us today, it's the way we nullify the gospel by the way we live.

Friends is pathetic. And I include myself in on this. Our behavior should not be stumbling blocks for unsaved friends, and yet, sadly, that's what happens.

are we known to be kind, considerate, merciful, gracious, a good sense of humor?

Or mean, thoughtless, legalistic, harsh, negative, judgmental, and just plain grouchy? just crappy. What's our attitude?

What's the purpose of abstaining? What's the purpose of this good living? God's love? So that's in the situation that they slander you, or in the situation that they speak evil against you, saying we're evildoers.

- [26 : 48] Well, that's kind of weird. Why do they call us evildoers? Christians in the first century, they were accused of practicing murder, incest, and cannibalism.

Did you know that? Why murder? Because they would have a love feast? They thought they were murdering people at the love feast? They thought they were committing incest because they called each other brother and sister in Christ?

And then they thought they were practicing cannibalism because they would take the Lord's Supper and they would eat the body and the blood of Christ.

Seriously, in the first century that's what they thought. They thought these Christians they're murderers. They're committing incest and oh my goodness, they're eating each other up.

That's what they thought. Oh yeah, there's a message coming there. I better take that. Weird.

- [27 : 59] Weirdos. The unsaved will always find something to mock us or to accuse us of wrong. They'll always find something. Let's not let them have an edge on it.

It's about a day-by-day pattern of living, moment-by-moment way of life. It's just who we are as followers of our king. We overcome this slander by living lives of unbelievable goodness.

Look, we live in glass houses, not just a pastor, all of you. They're watching you. because as they are observing your good works, Peter says, because of observing your good works, they may glorify God in the day of visitation.

Non-Christians watch our very lives and see how exemplary it is. When the unsaved see a steady, consistent life of righteousness, even these pagans will be forced to give approval saying, man, you're the real deal.

You're for real. Friends, we should be totally different from the world we live in and how we live our lives, how we react, how we talk, how we joke, how we treat family members, how we treat those we work with, how we treat those we work for, how we treat politicians.

[29 : 41] You may not be a person who's for President Obama and the things that he's done. You may look at our government and get angry about I get angry with some of the stupid things they do.

I do too. But for somebody to actually mention, I hope President Obama gets assassinated?

Really? And that's coming from Christians. I mean, what's wrong with you? Or even if Hillary Clinton can drop dead?

Wow. Or Donald Trump, he can go to, really? From Christians. You know, and this plays true, this also plays true to our corporate life as a church.

If our conduct, if our lives reflect abstaining desires and having pure godly conduct, it will be seen by others and it will give us a great reputation in this community.

[30 : 54] It will. Because, you know, people will see the way you live, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, they'll start talking and they'll find out you go to Cottonwood Bible Church.

How are things going to roll? How are things going to roll? Find out we're part of Cottonwood Bible Church and be like, whoa, that's pretty cool.

Or like, whatever. how is that going to play itself out? Now, if you're feeling like me, what about the times when we blow it?

What are the times when we don't live or act the way we should? I know none of you here have done that. But let's just say, I know I have.

So what do we do at that point? Admit it. Don't hide it. Confess it. And you know what?

[32 : 04] That's why Jesus had to die, huh? That's why Jesus had to die. That's why Jesus had to show grace to us, right? But notice what he says.

They're observing your good deeds. And then he says, that they may glorify God in the day of visitation. What does he mean by this? Some think he's talking about like a day of judgment.

Nah, I don't think so. As they observe your good, excellent conduct, the unsaved will glorify God. Remember, we read from Matthew chapter 5, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and what will they do?

Glorify your Father who's in heaven. What will happen? The day when God visits. What's the day of visitation? In other words, I'm with others.

That we think Peter speaks about the possibility of this unsaved person or persons converting to Christ due to our good conduct as Christians.

[33 : 19] They will be more ready to listen to the gospel because of it. I mean, think about it. If you're here, you're not a follower of Jesus. I give you the gospel. God is a holy God.

He must judge you and he will condemn sinners and yet he shows grace in Jesus, sending Jesus who lived, died and rose.

So you, if you repent, turn away from sin and put your trust in Jesus Christ, God will save you. That gospel truth will have so much more meaning to that as you see a Christian really living that out.

Wayne Grudem says this, quote, a Christian's good life even in the face of continuing slander and false accusation may still result in the unbeliever's salvation.

No matter what happens in this election, we should be known for this. No matter how things roll, our lives should be known like this.

[34 : 31] They are persuaded by the attractiveness of our lifestyle or the word that we've used as our title for Peter, the winsomeness of our conduct and behavior.

So God's visit is merciful and that as he uses our lives of holiness, these come to Christ seeing our uprightness, seeing how we treat them regardless of their status, regardless of their condition, regardless of their race, regardless of their beliefs, regardless of even if they're homosexual.

Now, I'm not saying we endorse that lifestyle. I'm not saying we endorse homosexuality. I'm not saying we endorse those in the LGBT community. I'm not saying that. But how many homosexuals do you know?

You know any? Are they your friends? Does she or he know you care about them?

Do you totally disagree with them? Now, here's where it gets sticky, right? In society now, people have to agree on everything else that's perceived as bigotry, hatred, racist, or prejudice, right?

[35 : 50] I had one guy in Jerome, him and I were talking about that very issue. I won't use the explicitives that he used, but because he was very colorful in his language about that idea, but he basically said, if you have to agree with people on everything, and if you don't, then you're hating that person, that's logically ridiculous.

It is. So, how much more then do we need to have conduct that is brilliantly magnifying grace?

Magnifying the gospel of grace. We are living in an unbelieving society.

We live in an unbelieving society, so it is pertinent, it is so vital, that we avoid sinful desires, and continue to maintain a pattern of life that is exemplary, so that the unsaved will possibly give glory to God by coming to Jesus Christ to be saved.

That's the passage in a nutshell. That's what Peter is saying. Friend, do not be surprised your religious liberty is going away.

[37 : 18] do not be surprised by that. That is a privilege, by the way, and this is for free, I can present a case to you that shows it was our Baptist brethren who were part of making that happen.

The liberty of conscience, religious liberty, that that belief is embedded within the culture of American society because of our Baptist brethren.

That's what they believed. They wrote about it. And they were part of establishing the undergirdings of this country because that was unheard of and it's unheard of in the rest of the world.

So don't be surprised if it's going away. Why? Can I use the laser for you? We live in an unbelieving society. They don't care about the gospel.

what makes you think they will? And if you tell them that they're wrong, you hate them. That's the way they roll, right?

[38 : 29] That's how they think, right? And I don't know what to tell you about that. It's frustrating. It's logically ridiculous and absurd.

that's why we need to be this. We avoid sinful desires.

We maintain a pattern of life that exemplary so that the unsaved will possibly give glory to God by coming to Christ. That's what Peter's telling us to do. And praise God for his grace to help us to do it, right?

Oh man. Just a little side note too here. Notice, and you'll notice throughout the rest of Peter, it's not about doing social justice.

It's not about doing some type of social justice and doing these things and doing that. It's about us living out the gospel with the government, our work, our familial relationships, marriages, especially in the church.

[39 : 34] that's what it's about. It's not social justice. And I'm not saying, you're going to say that social justice is wrong, but it's the wrong focus for the church.

We are sin abstaining, right, or good living weirdos, because we're aliens of a country. sojourners from a country were filled with grace.

It's a place filled with compassion. It's a place filled with God's mercy. So let's show that. Let's display that. How?

Peter's going to tell us. Government, where we work, as we suffer, in marriage, with our Christian brethren, he's going to give us those specific ways.

Father, thank you. Thank you that you show us your grace, because we, probably more times than not, we live out the sinful desires, and we don't have good conduct.

[41 : 11] We pray you would build, build this church, spiritually and numerically, so we can be a distinct place in this community that displays the gospel of grace.

Holding the truth, but we speak this truth with such love. Let us be known to be a people like this.

Take a few moments, if you would, and ponder what we've seen in God's word, and after a few moments of silence, we'll worship in our time of giving, sing our last two songs in our closing prayer.

Ponder, think, pray, ask God to work in you, ask God to work in us as a church, age. For the glory of his name.

Thank you.