

We Need to be Different

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles or devices and go to 1 Peter or 1 Peter chapter 1.

If you're visiting with us, you can pull out that black Bible and the chair in front of you and go towards the back and find page 180.

1 Peter or 1 Peter chapter 1. I'm going to do two verses.

I didn't know what to do with myself. Only two verses. I'm used to like 15. It's like, wow, how do guys preach on two verses? I'm just kidding. Just kidding.

Just kidding. It's needed though because these two verses set the stage for the next 20 weeks.

[1:01] We'll be in 1 Peter for 20 weeks. 20 messages are mapped out in 1 Peter. Which will take us to like the beginning of January, I believe. So this sets the stage.

It sets the theme. Peter's point. What's he going to talk about? What's he going to write about?

What is authoritative, not just for his readers at that time, but for us today?

Well, chapter 1 verses 1 and 2. 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 foreknowledge 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. John Cougar, John Deere, John 3.16.

Song by country music singer Keith Urban. And that was the title given by Jared Wilson as a way to jumpstart his blog post from this past week, July 25th.

[2:34] In this blog post, Jared Wilson asked this question, where does, quote, fear-filled political mania among conservative Christians in the political arena, where does it come from?

Fear-mongering. The fact that our country is in such bad shape. Is it? Is it? He says, where does this come from?

Wilson says, it's the idols of, quote, a zeal for power and a conflating of God's kingdom with our nation.

In other words, he says, it's our theology. Track with me as I read a large portion from his blog posts.

Wilson says this, the dominant moralism of the fundamentalist revivalistic evangelicalism of the 1960s and 70s, gave way to the dominant moralism of the attractional contemporary evangelicalism of the 1980s and 90s.

[4:00] And we, the American church, disciplined our people right into this mess. when we traded in biblical exposition for self-focus how-tos, when we blended up a syrupy syncretism of Americana and Judeo-Christian values, when we stopped prophetically proclaiming and started handing out trite inspirational slogans, when we started treating congregants like customers, and church programs like consumer products, when we moved the gospel to the end of the service and then escorted it out of the sanctuary altogether, we basically asked for this.

We set these wheels in notions, but not before we loosen up the lug nuts. He continues, the evangelical voting bloc's willingness to sell its soul for political power is a direct result of American evangelical churches having disciplined generations of Christians into pragmatism, superficial religiosity, and therapeutic deism.

It's our own fault that our people compartmentalize their lives to keep their religious self cordoned off from the rest of their selves when it's spiritually convenient to do so, and then swoosh everything into one crazy schizophrenic stew when it's politically expedient.

It's our fault our people are quickly taken in by trite soundbites, Tourette's level political sloganeering, and fact allergic boogeyman chasing.

It's our fault so many evangelicals are too busy cordoning off Jesus and his teaching from their political selves when they're not making Jesus their own personal Uncle Sam.

[6:20] It's our fault, he says. Keith Urban's John Cougar, John Deere, John 316 is not just a catchy pop country song, but a trenchant insight into the personality of American Christianity.

This is our holy trinity now. Pop culture, Americana, and religion, or at least the parts of it that we like.

So what do we do, says Wilson? The problem began at the pulpit, and that's where the solution must begin as well.

Evangelicalism has a discipleship problem, so we need some discipleship solutions. So may this pulpit stand strong in the truth of the gospel and not cater to the times of our culture.

And this book, 1 Peter, it will gently, it will lovingly, it will graciously point us in the right direction so that we will be a people that's vastly different from our world.

[7:44] So what's Peter's point? I'll give it to you first, and then we'll unpack the verses that show us this. Peter's point, by God's grace, be wise, winsome, weirdos, in a wicked world.

Be a wise, winsome weirdo. In a wicked world, thank you John Piper, in his article, Winsome Weirdos, I stole that from him.

So it's not plagiarism if you admit it, right? Winsome Weirdos, a serious call to Christian exiles, that helped me formulate the book title. I just expanded it out.

Because it has to be by God's grace. The way we live is in wisdom. We're winsome in how we live. And they think we're odd. Because they live in normal everyday life.

And for them, normal everyday life, what is normal anyways? Normal everyday life, is normal wicked life. That's normal.

[8:58] And they think you're odd, that you don't do that with them. Be, by God's grace, wise, winsome, weirdos.

Here's other ways to say it. God, graciously, empowers us, to live, drastically, different lives, from this world.

He empowers us, by his grace, to live, righteously, in an unrighteous, world. So stand firm, in this grace. That's his grace. Some verses that kind of, jump out, from this, chapter 5, verse 12.

Peter says, this is the true grace of God, stand firm in it. He also says, in chapter 4, verse 3 and 4, for the time already passed, is sufficient for you, to carry out the desire, of the Gentiles.

Having pursued, a course of sensuality, lust, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. And in this, they're surprised, that you do not run with them, into the same, excess of dissipation.

[10:24] And they malign you. They get on your case. They persecute you. They make you suffer.

But it's God's grace, that motivates us. His grace saving us, and his grace given to us, each and every day, motivating us, to live for his glory, in the midst, of an evil, wicked world.

And let me unpack, some of these words. First, the word wisdom, wisdom, to be wise, means you put knowledge, into practice. It's not just merely, a head knowledge.

It's not just merely, having a good theology, so to speak. It's theology, coming out, in the way you live. That's wisdom. You can take the knowledge, and put it into practice.

It translates itself, into living out, the truth of God's word. Thus the word, wisdom, wise.

[11:35] So, it's his grace, that gives us, an attitude, of obedience, submission, so that we bear up, under suffering, whether it be, cruelty or cancer.

And I use those two words, on purpose. There's cruelty, meaning a, a topic word, for type of persecution. Cancer, meaning in reference, to sickness, and ill health, and those types of things, that we have to face.

Peter's going to, primarily deal with persecution, but it also translates, and applies, to suffering, that we face, in this life. Sickness, and death, and hurts, and sorrows, and weakness.

Only his grace, in his, gracious gospel, gives us, the ability, to live, commendable lives, of goodness, in this, wicked world.

So, God does. You can only do it, by his grace. You can only live, that way, by his grace. He saves you, by his grace, and he transforms you, by his grace.

[12:48] It's his desire, that his grace, would so work in us, that we live, honorable lives, among unbelievers, wholly different.

We're unusual. We are not the norm. You're abnormal. Yet, yet, God's, empowering grace, has been lost, among Christians.

Why? Because, we Christians, say things like this, I can't do this, or, I can't handle this, or, I can't be different, from these people, or, worse, I gotta fit in, with these people.

Again, we're talking about, our praxy, our way, of living. And, these phrases, that, that, that come out, of our mouths, we, we speak these, oh, I can't handle that.

That's, that's, that's, that's, in direct contradiction, to what God, gives us, in his grace. That's, what you'll see, from Peter. His grace, reminds us, that, these phrases, I can't do this, I can't handle this, I can't be different, I gotta fit in.

[14 : 27] These phrases, should have, no part, of our vocabulary. Aren't we Christians? Doesn't that mean, that we are followers, of Christ?

Doesn't it mean, that Jesus lived, and died, for sinners? Doesn't it mean, that to live, is Christ, and to die, is gain?

But, our culture, and may I be specific, our American culture, thinks, that, that phrase, is stupid. And, you're stupid, for believing that.

You're an idiot. Right? And, I use those words, stupid, and idiot, on purpose, because, A, that's what they think, and B, I can't use, the other words, that they use, to describe, what you believe, can I?

Because, you've heard, stronger language, than that, haven't you? And, that would not, be appropriate, for me to say, but you've heard it. You've heard them, say that.

[15 : 44] You know exactly, what I'm talking about. They think, you're ridiculous. To live, is Christ, and die, is gain, and God, gives you grace, to live like that?

Are you crazy? You belong, in that nice, white jacket, that hugs yourself. As one, pastor, said, to me, a couple weeks ago, quote, we can live, under the most, intense, and painful, pressure, because of the, empowering, work, of God's grace.

We can. Think about it. Our past, has been forgiven. Our present, right now, is protected, and enabled.

Our future, is assured. Lord, what, what, what, what can people, do to us? What, what can people, do to me?

But we just, don't think, that way, do we? That's, where we have, introduction.

[17 : 10] Let's, drop into the verses, shall we? Let's jump in. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I'll take each phrase, and unpack it, for us.

Peter, is an apostle, called by the Lord, Jesus Christ. He had the authoritative, word, to speak, for the Lord, Jesus himself. This letter, had the authority, of at the very least, the Old Testament prophets.

Thus, saith the Lord. This comes to us, as God's, authoritative, inerrant, infallible word.

And he's writing, to those, who reside as aliens, scattered throughout, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Let's take that part, okay?

Notice, how he describes them. They reside as, strangers, aliens, foreigners. Foreigners. These Christians, were separated, from their communities.

[18 : 20] Why? Because, their lifestyles, were drastically different. They're strangers. In other words, we have no, abiding home, on earth.

We're foreigners. We're aliens. This, is not, our home. And, he says, they're scattered.

The word, Greek word is, diaspora, which means dispersion. And, if you know anything, about the Jews, the Jews, were called, the dispersion, because Jews, were scattered, throughout the Roman Empire.

And, it was, known as, the dispersion. They were dispersed, throughout the world. Hoping, one day, to return, to their homeland.

land. And, he quotes, lists off, these four Roman provinces, covering, northern Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey.

[19 : 23] The upper area, of modern day Turkey. So, this is a, circular letter, sent, to these specific churches, churches, in the northern area, of this Roman province, different Roman provinces, there in Asia Minor.

And, the church is probably, a Jewish Christian, and Gentile Christians. But, I want to, zero in, when he calls them, aliens.

As the old, song goes, we are strangers, we are aliens, we are not, of this world. If you can tell me, who sang that song, name that song, I'll give you five bucks.

You cannot look it up, no, no, no, you little, internet cheater. Golly, you can tell my age. As the Jews, here's the connection now, as the Jews, of the dispersion, were scattered people, cut off, from their country, and yet, they're hoping to return.

So, what Peter does, he uses this term, the Jewish Christians, would know it, the Gentile Christians, would know it, because it was spoken, about the Jews. So, as, the Jews, of the dispersion, they were scattered, throughout the empire, wanting, hoping to return, we also, as Christians, should regard ourselves, as, one writer puts it like this, transitory sojourners, desiring to go home.

[21:02] Miss home. It's like, when you go on vacation, great vacation, but don't you just, miss your bed? Just something about, my bed, I like my bed.

That's why you have to, take your pillows, with you, right? When you go on vacation, you gotta take, your pillow. That's who we are, as Christians. We're, transitory sojourners.

We are committed, to a whole, different lifestyle, different lifestyle, from others. And they'll think us, to be odd.

We simply, don't, belong. And, we might receive, an unsympathetic reaction, from this world.

That's a nice way, of putting, persecution. But our existence, as God's people, gets its direction, from the future, not from the here, and now.

[22:09] We receive, our direction, from God himself, not from this world. As, the, the little, catch phrase, on the, cars, the bumper sticker, N-O-T-W.

Not of this world. We're not. Let me, pull out some more, of Jared Wilson, for you, from his blog post.

Listen. Quote, churches must be willing, to take whatever hits necessary, to maintain a stubborn, Christocentrism, or being, Christ centered.

We may face, empty seats, and the loss, of cultural credibility, and the admiration, of our peers. But when push, comes to shove, we must claim, only, to know Christ, and him crucified.

He continues. Churches, must recommit, to the, counter cultural, manifestation, of the kingdom.

The kingdom, is not, of this world.

[23:18] And it cannot, be contained. No more, isolating, our holiness, to Sunday morning, cultural rituals. Then he puts in parentheses.

As heralded, in so many other, country songs. Where the, hell raising, of Saturday night, precedes, the gonna church, comes Sunday morning. Right?

We cannot, serve, two masters. He says. We aren't, to think, the way, the world thinks, or act, the way, the world acts.

We're different. And we, should be, look at the next, part of the text, the end of verse one, in my translation, into verse two, who are chosen, according to the, foreknowledge of God.

We're different. How are we different? We're, we're, we're aliens. We're scattered. And we're chosen.

[24:25] Chosen means, a specific, specific persons, picked by God, from a group of others, who were not chosen. Chosen to be included, among God's people, to receive his blessings, and his benefits, says one writer.

I was, trying to think of an illustration, about chosen. And, maybe this is a good illustration, for you. Maybe it's not. Nonetheless, here it goes.

She, about the 14 year old, Wisconsin girl, was it last week, or a couple weeks ago? With spinal, spinal, excuse me, muscular, atrophy type two.

her mom, gave her, her last wish, she wanted to go to prom. Her, this disease, takes over your body, to the point where, I mean, you basically, you will die.

And so, she was going to go on a hospice, and, this whole thing, and, she asked, her last wish, was for her daughter, to have a prom. So, people, really, literally, came from all over, from California, people drove to Wisconsin, to see this girl.

[25:42] To just, just say, oh, we're so this and that. There was a particular, they didn't name the band, a certain boy band, they did a video message, just to her. One in 6,000 people, have this disease.

Spinal, muscular, atrophy type two. Now, what's my point, in this? What made her so special, to receive all this treatment, from all the other people, who have the same disease?

That she gets, this attention, via, from the media. What makes her so special? Oh, you might say, well, she did this, and she did that. Okay, sure, fine.

But, none of the other people did that? Who have this disease? See, what's the point? The point, I'm trying to show you, is that, she got this attention. She didn't deserve, she didn't do anything, to get this.

That's a small, illustration, of what election is like. God simply decides, to show love.

[26:51] The Greek word, chosen, has the, quote, sense of choice, and love, rather than just knowledge. God, decided, to love, a specific, large group, of sinners.

It was a decision, to have, a relationship, with a group, of people, whom he, would call, his own. It's God's, loving concern, for a particular people.

And it wasn't arbitrary, by the way. It was the exact amount, of people, that would give him, the most glory. But notice, it says in verse 2, who are chosen, according to the, foreknowledge of God. Some may say, see, notice, we're chosen, based upon the fathers, foreseeing our faith. Some may say, see, chosen, here, shows, it's based upon, foreseeing faith.

He chooses us. Whoa, wait a minute, not so fast. Foreknowledge, denotes God's decision. This phrase, modifies their, like status, or thus, the basis of election, is grounded, in his foreknowledge.

[28:05] But this foreknowledge, means more than just, knowing what will happen, in the future. It's an effective, loving choice. To be a part, of God's, redeemed community, is based upon, God's, active, gracious decision, to know, certain, individual.

He took the initiative, choosing us, before we did anything. It was a personal, loving, fatherly knowledge of us, not facts.

He decided to know us. So notice how he's, describing more, and more, how different we are.

We're aliens. We're scattered. We're chosen. God decided, to love us.

Decided to, know us. And then, notice the next phrase, by the sanctifying, work of the spirit. the holy spirit, the holy spirit, consecrates, or, sets us apart.

[29:26] The means, by which election, is actualized, or, or produces, an effect, is the spirit's, work, of sanctification.

In other words, Christians, are cleansed, from sin, and, consecrated, to serve God. And, in initial cleansing, you will see, that it will produce, obedience.

We'll see that, in just a moment. So, this denotes, a, past, cleansing, from sin. But, it also marks, a change, in their lives, to display, practical obedience.

He doesn't just, forgive our sins. Each Christian, is a whole, brand, new, person. Changed, 180 degree turn.

Completely, different. This is why, Christians are called, to be different. To be wise, winsome, weirdos. We should be wise, we're living out, scripture.

[30:44] We should be, winsome, our lives, are pleasant, sweet, attractive, to people. And yet, we're weirdos. They think, you're odd, strange.

In this, wicked world. Their lives, and our lives, should be, totally different. Nights, and day.

So, notice, we were elected, based upon God's choice, not ours. The effect was, the sanctifying work, of the Holy Spirit, and then that leads us, to the next phrase, the purpose.

Notice he says, that you may obey, Jesus Christ, or unto, obedience. The purpose was, obedience to Jesus Christ.

Obedience, of the goal, of the purpose, the result, is that, God's people, obey him. That's the response, of the believer. It's a life, of faith, or commitment, to the Lord Jesus.

[31:54] We turn, from living life, our own way, submitting, to the call, of the gospel, and embracing, Christ's lordship. That's what happens, to us. That's why, we're different.

So the two key words, that's used, throughout all, the New Testament, even throughout, the scriptures itself, repent, and believe. Repent, you turn, from your past, way of life.

Faith, you commit, to Jesus Christ, as savior, and Lord, and it results, in a life, of obedience, to him. So as, the father, elects us, the spirit, does the, sanctifying, change, in us, it affects, infects, affects, effects us, there's obedience.

And, by the way, we obey God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, not because, we have to, though that's true, we should, but because, we want to, and we're now, able to, we weren't able, to do this before, we didn't want, to do this before, we're different, we're, weirdos, now.

It's because, the spirit, has, sanctified us, and is dwelling, in us, that we can, live a, vastly different, life from the world, that's where, God's grace, comes in.

[33:33] We, as a church, should live, differently, responding, differently, than, how the world, responds, to things.

Oh God, change me. We should be, radically different, when we're at the store, radically different, when we're at the gym, radically different, when we're dealing, with our neighbors, should I say this?

Friends, we should be, radically different, when we're voting, in this election. Radically different, with our words, our reactions, when we're driving, oh, oh, that, ah, that just hits me, in the side. When we're behind, the counter, when we're behind, when we're behind, when we're behind, when we're behind, when we're behind, friends, we cannot make this, merely a Sunday thing, as most, well, I shouldn't say most, as many, country singers, put it, right?

it should be more like, how, well, Toby Mack puts it, three, six, five, every minute of the day.

[35:04] We're aliens, scattered, chosen, sanctified, there's obedience, and then he says, and be sprinkled with his blood, and be sprinkled with his blood, drawn, oh, by the way, and this is for free, in 1 Peter, there are more reflections, back upon the Old Testament, than any other book, in the New Testament.

It's a really short book, 1 Peter, so there's more allusions, to the Old Testament, other books, but in terms of, how short it is, and how many allusions, and reflections, back to the Old Testament, has the most, than any New Testament book.

And here's, here's the first one, like within the first two verses. He takes us back, to the covenant ratification, done with Moses.

That's why, we read together, Exodus 24, verses 1 through 8. Where the people, notice, twice, did you see that, as you were reading it, twice, the people pledged, whatever, what the Lord says, we will obey, right?

Twice, we read that. The people, when they pledged themselves, to obey the Lord, they were sprinkled, with the sacrificial blood.

[36:33] blood, that's creepy. You just got splattered, with blood on your forehead, and if you're shaving your head, I got blood all over that, oh sweet, let me take that off, for you.

Jesus, so now, what he's doing now, he's making the connection, that it's Jesus, sacrificial blood now, ratified, in this, new covenant.

covenant, we're dedicated, to Jesus Christ. We're sharing together, our dedication, to Jesus Christ. This promise, of obedience, was sealed, by, Moses sprinkling, the blood on the altar, and on the people.

The same thing happens, here with us, the New Testament assembly. Now Jews, and Gentiles, were one, but now, this sealing, is effective, because it's done, in the power, of the Holy Spirit. We're changed, we're different, we're radically different. We are sprinkled, with the blood of Jesus, as a way, to consecrate us, to be vastly, and supremely, different, from this world.

[37:53] And everything, that happened, with the Old Testament, it was a real covenant, that God made, but it was, pointing to, the need, that we, needed, in Christ, and the Spirit.

It was begging, the need, for a new covenant. Because the Old Covenant, just would not do it. We belong to Him.

He belongs to us. We should be changed. Jesus' blood, brings forgiveness, and cleansing, and is the way, God, consecrates, His people, for service to Him, as His own.

Christians, are dedicated, to God, because we've, been sprinkled, with the blood, of Christ. Jesus. Notice. Notice, notice what He's doing here.

Notice how He's showing, we're aliens, scattered, chosen, sanctified. There's obedience, sprinkling. Notice how, even God the Father, God the Spirit, God the Son, effected this work, in us, as His people, the triune God.

[39:05] These two verses, set the stage, for what, Peter will call, his readers, to be.

Wise, winsome, weirdos. And notice, what He says here, the end of verse 2, He sets this up, and then He says, may grace, and peace, be yours, in fullest measure.

Grace, and peace, be multiplied. Grace, what is grace? God's loving, undeserved favor, towards sinners, supremely displayed, in the Son. Peace, has to do, with being right, with God, through reconciliation, along with blessings, that flow to us, as His people.

We get God's favor, we get God's friendship. We get God's favor, and it continues, and we get God's friendship, and the peace, that comes upon us.

So may God's grace, which has saved you, be multiplied. That is, on a continual, daily basis, we live in God's grace. It's the only way.

[40:17] May God's peace, which reconciles us with God, may it also be multiplied. That is, His blessings, His benefits, flow to us, because, it's not easy, to be a wise, winsome weirdo.

It's not easy, to live a life, of obedience, is it? It's hard, especially, when you suffer for it.

You're doing, all the right things, and God, you're having me suffer, whether you're talking, about cruelty, or cancer, persecution, or illness.

What gives God? I have this sickness, I have arthritis, I lose my job, I'm harshly treated. Father, what are you thinking?

I'm facing this conflict, with this person, with this situation, in the family, whatever. Father, what are you thinking? No, Christian, on the contrary, what are you thinking?

[41:34] What do we expect? A six course meal, every time you wake up, in the morning, with a plethora of desserts, to choose from? Is that what we expect?

That's what I expect. Did we expect, the Christian life, to be easy? didn't Jesus say, whoever comes, wants to come after me, he must take up, his chocolate cake, and, and follow me?

Oh wait, that's not there, is it? That's in the dessert, translation. He must take up, his cross. I saw this, this past week, one person said, quote, until you follow God, expecting no personal benefit, you're not really following God.

Oh, it's like, boom, right in the gut, right? Is it all about me? Or is it about living, the living God, and living in his grace?

You know, it's hard to believe, but it's well, well worth it. We will see that, in the coming weeks.

Great, unending, satisfying joy. Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ today?

[43:02] I mentioned this earlier. Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you want to know, how you can be changed, how you can have forgiveness, how you can have freedom?

Come to Jesus Christ, he will free you. He will save you. God's arms are wide open, to sinners, who repent, and put their trust, in Jesus Christ.

Christ. And you'll become a wise, winsome weirdo. May we not conform to our American culture, the John Cougar, John Deere, John 316 culture.

But may we have a life that stands out, from our culture. Wise, winsome, weirdos. Father, help us. to do this by your grace. We cannot do this at all. Help us to live in wisdom. Help our lives to be attractive.

[44:08] Yet realizing that we will be considered odd and strange. because we do not run with them. No, we are aliens, scattered, yet you chose to love us.

You consecrated us. You changed us so we can obey you, and we're set apart for you. as this church, as this church, for us, as a church, we pray, may grace and peace be ours, in fullest measure.

if you would take some time to ponder what we've seen in the scriptures, take a few moments.

We'll have a few moments of silence for you to do that. And then we'll do our time of giving, singing our last two songs, and our closing prayer.

Take a few moments, if you would, and ponder what we've seen in God's word. and ponder what we've seen in the scriptures.