

Living as exiles - wives and husbands

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[0:00] There's one to seven. Before we do that, we need God's help, don't we? Let's ask for it now in prayer. Our Father God, we come now to your words. We thank you that it's your word and we pray, Father, that you would help us to have ears that are ready to listen to what your word says.

Friends and hearts to respond. Help each one of us this morning as we listen. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we've talked about them already, but I'm going to talk about them again. Chameleons are indeed fascinating animals, aren't they? The way that they can change their color and blend in with the environment around them.

And it may just be that as Christians this morning, we are so at home in this world, or so desiring popularity, that we kind of seek to live like a chameleon, blending in to our environment rather than standing out and living as Christian people.

So at church, we present our kind of good Christian selves. In the workplace, we present our acceptable working self. In our family, we present our acceptable family self.

[1:45] We blend in to the environment around us and live in a way where we'll be accepted by others rather than living differently, as we're called to.

As we're called to there, as we looked at last week in 1 Peter 2, verse 11, as foreigners and exiles in this world.

Abstaining from sin, living such good lives among a world that is watching us. Live instead of chameleons as those salmon living, swimming against the tide, living differently for our God.

And we do that. And we do that. Notice there in verse 12. We do that so that people may turn and glorify God on the day he visits.

That's the day, I think, the day of salvation for people. The day when they'll call on God to be saved because they've seen Christian people living for him.

[3:00] And pointing, of course, that final day, that final day where God will get all the glory and honor he deserves. So we live differently as foreigners and exiles in this world, in this watching world, so that others may come to know Jesus for themselves.

And last week we looked at two of the three ways Peter gives us specific examples of how we live those good lives out in this world.

We had the example of submitting to those in authority over us, particularly those in government. We thought about our submission to the prime minister, whoever that may be, this time Rishi Sunak.

We also looked at submission, the slaves to masters, or as we brought it up today, those we're employed by. Or maybe if we're in education, those who teach us.

And this week we're continuing on looking at what Peter says, and particularly thinking about how this looks in the context of marriage.

[4:20] How does it look to live differently from the world around us in marriage? And just to say, before we go on, for some of us, this passage will be difficult.

Maybe we even disagree with it. For some of us, it will be difficult because of experiences we have or have had. But let's listen carefully to what God says in his words.

And do talk afterwards if you need to talk. So firstly, we see in this passage a word to wives.

A word to wives. It says this in chapter 3 and verse 1. Wives, in the same way, submit yourselves to your own husbands.

That's what he says first. Submit. Submit to your husbands. Submit meaning kind of to rank yourself under the authority of another.

[5:32] We've seen that as we are called to submit to those in authority and to those we are employed by. And now Peter shows that in the marriage relationship, it should be that a wife submits to their husbands.

He's not saying anywhere in this passage. The Bible doesn't say all women submit to all men. But he is saying for a wife to submit to their husbands.

But as we go on through these verses, hopefully it will become clear to us that we submit to God over and above your husband, if you're a wife this morning.

And this is kind of the created order of things. Think of Adam being created first and then Eve. Think of the Trinity. There's even order within the Trinity. We read in the verses before this of the Lord Jesus and his submission to his father as he went to the cross.

[6:42] It says in verse 23, instead he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He submitted to his father and his father's will. But submission, and hopefully we'll kind of see as we go through, does not mean, does not give permission anywhere for a husband to be abusing his authority.

Men and women are both created equal by God and with differences. And so that relationship looks like a wife submitting to their husbands.

And we'll look at verse 7, which addresses husbands in more detail a bit later. But Peter is very clear to husbands. Be considerate towards your wives.

Treat them with honor and respect. And particularly if both wife and husband are Christians, you are co-heirs together.

You're equal in Christ. You're not more loved or more valued than the other. So Peter first is wanting to address wives.

[8:13] Particularly giving the example of wives married to non-Christians. And if you were a first century Christian reading this letter, this would have come as a surprise to you.

Because back then, it would have been expected that the wife followed whatever religion the husband followed. And so it would be inappropriate in the society which they lived in for a wife to say, no, I'm not following that.

I'm following Jesus instead. And it would be a really hard thing to do. But Peter, out of love for his sisters in Christ, is saying, no, you are right.

Submit to God first. Submit to God first. Over and above your husband. Live differently in your marriage. Don't be a spiritual chameleon in your marriage.

Don't be blending in with the way you're expected to culturally, but the way God would like you to. Submit to Him over and above your husband.

[9:25] So what does submission look like? Well, it looks like loving and respecting your husband's leadership. So when a husband says, let's consider this together.

Let's make a decision together about this. Let's go and do this. That's a husband kind of leading the family unit well.

And a wife hopefully will gladly submit to their husband's leading in that. A husband taking initiative. But leadership doesn't mean a husband taking the initiative and doing it all on his own.

And not even listening or caring about what his wife thinks. They're doing it together. But husbands might not always do this well.

They will not always do this well. And sometimes that leadership is going to be bad.

[10:33] And that could be really hard. And sometimes, actually, you shouldn't follow your husband's leadership in things if the husband is asking you to sin in some way.

That's not something to submit to. As we saw last week, as we saw in those verses, verse 11 to 12, we're to abstain from sinful desires.

We're to submit to God over and above husbands. Submit to God first. So a word to wife, submission.

And secondly, Peter wants us to know, wants wives to know, be beautiful in the way that you live. Be beautiful in the way that you live.

You see, the concern is that people will turn and glorify God. Turn and find salvation from him. In chapter 3, in verse 1, it says, Submit yourself to your own husbands so that if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.

[11:52] So that they may be won over to Christ, to salvation from him. And wives are called to do that. Wives of non-Christians are called to do that by living lives that are beautiful.

As the husband sees the wife seven days a week, he should see someone living differently. Someone living for Christ.

And maybe that will lead him to Christ as their Savior. And so, he says, wives, don't keep nagging them to come to Jesus, but live faithfully for him.

Trust that he will be at work. We know, of course, that people need to hear of Jesus to be saved. And I'm sure these husbands of these wives will have heard from their wives about something about the Lord Jesus.

They may have even gone to church to see, what on earth has my wife got into? What? But don't keep going on.

[13:10] Don't keep going on about Jesus, but live beautifully. Live beautifully in the way you live. And that can be attractive to people coming to know Christ.

Verse 3. It says this. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.

Peter says beauty is not to be found firstly in outward looks. He's not saying that your elaborate hairstyles and fine jewelry and fine clothes.

That's not wrong. That's not wrong at all. But don't place your emphasis on beauty being that, beauty being outward. And that challenges all of us, I think.

Married, unmarried, men and women. Unmarried, men and women. On beauty. Because go on social media and scroll through and you'll see lots of people trying to make themselves as beautiful as they can be.

[14:23] If they spot any imperfections but put a filter over it or something. Delete it. Go and look at magazines and see what the world thinks is the ideal of a beautiful woman.

What they should dress in. What makeup they should wear. But we're being told in this chapter that the outward beauty fades and inner beauty it grows.

Outward beauty fades. Inner beauty grows. As Christian wives, your beauty comes from growing to be more like the Lord Jesus.

More like the Lord Jesus who was sinless and perfection. Peter says he committed no sin and no deceit was in his mouth. And as he works in us, he grows us to mature into his likeness.

That's a challenge to our idea of beauty. A challenge to wives here. A challenge to all women, really. Where are you seeking your beauty?

[15:54] Is it by dressing differently? Is it by being the right dress size? Is it by wearing the right makeup? Or are you seeking your beauty to be on the inside?

Seeking to grow in Christ-likeness? Because outward beauty fades and inner beauty it grows. Husbands, are you desiring your wife to grow more beautiful on the outside?

Or on the inside? Are you desiring and praying that your wife would grow as a disciple of Christ? If you're a man here and maybe you're hoping one day you'll be married, are you looking for someone who is so attractive, 10 out of 10 on the outside, and not even thinking about are they a good Christian, godly person?

Someone who loves Jesus and is seeking to grow in him. What's your priority? Outward beauty fades, inner beauty grows.

In verse 2, Peter says, following on from talking about being won over by the behavior of their wives, he says, verse 2, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

[17:23] So purity and reverence. Apologies, I've got all on the screen. It's not coming up one at a time. Purity and reverence. Let's be beautiful in the way you live. Think about purity and reverence, first of all.

Purity. Are you, as a wife, seeking to live faithfully for your husbands? Are you taking sin seriously? Taking abstaining from sin, which wages war against us, fighting against sin? Are you taking that seriously?

Seeking to live a life that is quick to show love and mercy and forgiveness to others? A life following in the footsteps of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this purity of life is one that should come from reverence to God or fear of God.

[18:28] That's what Peter says here. When they see the purity and reverence of your lives or fear of God. They may expect, the readers of this letter may expect Peter to be saying something more like, fear your husbands.

But actually, Peter says, no fear God. Respect him as your Lord, as ruler of your life. Seek to please him over and above your husbands.

Obedient to God first. And so if your husband is calling you to stop going to church, to stop reading your Bible, that is not something you can seek to honor.

Because you're submitting to God first. Obedience to God to be your first aim. Revering him, respecting him as your Lord.

Reverence. And out of that reverence and respect to God, he'll help you. I'm sure he will help you live a life that is pure.

[19:52] And he goes on, talking about being beautiful in the way you live. So purity and reverence. And then gentle and quiet spirit.

That's what it says down in verse 4. Have a look. Verse 4. Rather it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

A gentle and a quiet spirit. What does that mean? Because gentle may be perceived to be by some as weakness.

It is not weakness. In fact, it's to be like our Savior, Jesus. A gentle, apparently this word here means an amiable friendliness.

That sounds rather nice, doesn't it? Be welcoming, respectful, friendly. Don't be rough and bad-tempered towards others. Be gentle like our Savior, Jesus.

[20:59] He was gentle. He was gentle towards others. He says, I am gentle and humble in heart. He does not treat sinners as they deserve, do they?

But has compassion and mercy upon those who come and call upon him. But he also spoke up when he needed to be.

He was assertive in his gentleness. He called Pharisees hypocrites and snakes and whitewashed tombs, sons of hell. He was gentle.

He was assertive. He was truthful. And gentleness, it goes with a quiet spirit.

That doesn't mean hiding away in quietness and saying nothing to your husband. Saying nothing to your husband if he gets it wrong. But rather it's a peaceful, calm, contentedness.

[22:05] Rather than being restless and rebellious. Seeking to live at peace in your relationships. And these are virtues which we're told are of great worth in God's sight.

This is inner beauty that can grow. We can grow in these things. We're not perfect in these things. But we can grow in them. The Christian wife seeks to honour their husband.

Seeks to honour their husband. Submit to him. But seeks to honour God first. And grow in purity. And Peter. And all this.

So that the husband may be won over to Christ. And Peter gives us an example. An example from the past. Of those who have lived like this.

Those who have gone before. Verse 5. For this is the way the holy women of the past. Who put their hope in God. Used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands.

[23:23] Like Sarah. Who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. Or her master. As some of your Bibles might say. You are her daughters.

If you do what is right. And do not give way to fear. Sarah. The wife of Abraham. Whose spiritual daughters are Christian women.

See Abraham and his wife Sarah. They were people who lived by faith. Who looked forward by faith. To the coming Messiah. That promised descendant.

Of Abraham. The Lord Jesus. But they couldn't see him. But they were called to live by faith. In their God.

And his great promises. And all those who are now Christian people. Who walk by faith. We look to Abraham and Sarah.

[24:21] As kind of fathers and mothers in the faith. Peter says. You are her daughters. Jesus. Following her example.

And he gives the example of her living. A life as a wife. She honored Abraham. As her husband. Called him lord. Out of respect. For him. Following his lead. As he sought to live a life. Of faith. In God.

And Sarah. And other women. In the Old Testament. They were ones. Who did this. Because they put their hope in God.

They put their hope in God first. He is. Lord of lords. Isn't he? He's the one. They should be.

[25:18] And were seeking to submit to. Over and above their husbands. And even today. As women. As wives. Who put their hope in God.

Who submit to him. First of all. They should be seeking to live those different lives in this world.

And as they do. Peter says. You can live fearlessly. You can live courageously. It's exciting. Verse six. You are her daughters.

If you do. What is right. And do not give way to fear. As you put your hope in God. As you seek to live for him. Above others.

You can live lives that are fearless. That are courageous. As you follow God. As you live by faith in him. Even if. Your. Relationship with your husband.

[26:16] Isn't. The ideal. That you would like it to be. You fear God. Not human beings. And live differently for him.

And we do that. Because this world is not our home. And we do that. So that they may be won over to him. Won over to God. So a word to wives.

We've spent longer on this. Than we will on husbands. Because Peter spends longer on this. In this passage. So secondly. A word. To.

Husbands. A word to husbands. Peter's. Words to women. Here. To wives. They may be difficult.

For us. As 21st century people. To hear. First of all. They are counter cultural. But hopefully. We've seen. We've seen. The goodness of God. In them. We need to remember.

[27:15] That in verse 7. Peter also addresses husbands. And. What he says to husbands. Could be tricky too. Men are not to live.

In any way. Lives that are. Seeking to be harsh. Asserting their dominance. Over their husbands. Over their wives even.

But verse 7. What does it say? Husbands. In the same way. Be considerate. As you live with your wives. And treat them with respect.

As the weaker partner. And as heirs with you. Of the gracious gift of life. So that nothing. Will hinder your prayers. As we've said.

Men and women. Are created equal. By God. And with different roles. To play. And one of those differences. Is physical differences. Don't need to tell us.

[28:17] That men and women. Are different physically. And generally. Men are stronger. And women. Weaker. For example. It's only fair.

In sports. Isn't it? That men compete with men. And women with women. Or a mix of the two. And Peter says.

Listen husbands. Don't use your strength. In a way. That's going to. Mistreat your wife. Instead. Treat them. With respect. That's what he says. Down here.

Husbands. In the same way. Be considerate. As you live with your wives. Treat them with respect. There should be respect. Within the marriage. Respect. From a wife. As they submit. To their husbands.

Respect. From the husband. As they. Treat their wife. With respect. As they lead them. With respect. As people. Created. Together.

[29:11] In the image of God. Precious to him. Remember. That if your wife. Is a Christian. Together.

You are. Heirs. The gracious gift. Of life. Heirs. Of that. Promised. Inheritance. That we have. That can never. Perish. Spoil. Or fade. Co-heirs.

With Christ. And if a husband. Is loving. His wife. As they should be. Then that.

Means. Good things. Spiritually. Means. A good. Prayer. Life. Life. That's what. Peter says. So that. Nothing. Will hinder. Your prayers.

But if a husband. Is abusing. And in any way. That God. Given. Authority. He has. Over his wife. God. God's. Going to take. That so. Seriously. That he's. Going to interrupt.

[30:08] Their prayer life. Do we see. The honor. That God. Has. Of this. Marriage. Relationship. The honor. He has. For. These individuals.

Created. In the image. Of God. So. Much. So. That he. He will. Interrupt. A husband's. Relationship. With God.

If they are. Not. Treating. Their wife. As they should be. I've. Realized. I've. Kept. A word. To wives. Up there. Apologies. Here's a quote.

From. Wayne. Grudem. So. Concerned. Is. God. That. Christian. Husbands. Live. In. An. Understanding. And.

Loving. Way. With. Their. Wives. That. He. Interrupts. His. Relationship. With. Them. When. They are. Not. Doing. So. No. Christian. Husband. Should. Presume. To. Think.

[31:02] That. Any. Spiritual. Good. Will. Be. Accomplished. By. His. Life. Without. An. Effective. Ministry. Of. Prayer. And. No. Husband. May. Expect. An. Effective. Prayer.

Life. Unless. He. Lives. With. His. Wife. In. Understanding. Way. Bestowing. Honor. On. Her. God. Treats. Marriage.

The. Marriage. Relationship. Seriously. And. So. Husbands. Listen. To. What. God. Says. Here. A. Word. To. Husbands. Honor. Be. Considerate. Treat. Your. Wives. With. Respect. So. That. You. And. Your. Wife. Can. Live. Together. Live. Out. This.

Calling. Of. Living. Differently. In. This. Watching. World. So. That. Others. May. Come. To. Know. Christ. For.

[31:58] Together. Your. Heirs. Heirs. Of. The. Inheritance. To. Come. This. World. Is. Not. Your. Home. And. One. Day. We. Will. Be. There. And. We. Will. Live. In. Perfect. Harmony. Marriage.

Relationship. Is. Two. Sinners. Coming. Together. But. One. Day. We. Will. Be. Completely. Sinless. The. Wonderful. Thing. And.

Men. In. The. Room. Do. You. Just. Thinking. About. That. Bit. About. Prayer. That. Peter. Mentions. Do. You. Pray. For. Your. Wife. Do. You. Pray. With. Your. Wife. Do.

You. Pray. That. Together. You. Be. A. To. Live. Differently. From. The. World. Around. You. Together. You. Help. One. Another.

To. Abstain. From. Sin. Rather. Than. Fall. Into. Sin. As. We. Called. To. Live. Differently. In. This. World. To. Live. As. Christ. Has. Lived. And.

[32:57] Notice. That. There's. Something. We're. Much. In. Common. With. These. Two. Sections. That. Peter. Writes. He. Says.

In. Three. Verse. One. Wives. In. The. Same. Way. And. He. Says. In. Three. Verse. Seven. Husbands. In. The. Same. Way. What's. he. Saying? In. The. Same. Way. As. What?

Is. In. The. Same. Way. As. Who? Well. It's. In. The. Same. Way. As. Christ. First. Twenty. One. To. this. You. Were. Called. Because. Christ. Suffered. For. You. Leaving.

You. An. Example. That. You. Should. Follow. In. His. Footsteps. He's. Not. Saying. That. Marriage. Is. Or. Should. Be. Some. Sort. Of. Agonizing.

Sacrifice. Like. Christ. Made. On. The. Cross. But. He. Is. Saying. That. Both. Wives. And. Husbands. Are. Called. To. Live. In. The. Same. Way. As. Christ.

[33:49] Did. Christ. Who. Laid. Down. His. Life. For. Us. His. Church. Verse. 24. He. Himself. Has. Born.

Our. Sins. In. His. Body. On. The. Cross. So. That. We. Might. Die. To. Sins. And. Live. For. Righteousness. Live. Those. Such. Good. Lives. In. This. World. By.

His. Wounds. You. Have. Been. Healed. For. You. Were. Like. Sheep. Going. Astray. But. Now.
You. Have. Returned. To. The. Shepherd. And.
Overseer. Of. Your. Souls. The. Big. Example. Given. For. Wives. And. Husbands. Is. The. Lord.
Jesus. Christ. And. So.
Wives. Particularly. If. You're. Not. Married. To. A. Christian. Don't. Win. Over. By. Following. Jesus.
Living. Those. Beautiful.
[34:44] Lives. Laying. Down. Your. Life. To. Follow. Jesus. And. Laying.
Down.
Your. Life. To. Serve. Your. Husbands. As. God. Calls. Us. To. And. For. Husbands. Christ. Laid.
Down. His. Life. In. Great.
Love. For. You. And. For. His. Church. Paul. Writes. Elsewhere. Husbands. Love. Your. Wives.
Just. As. Christ.
Loved. The. Church. And. Gave. Himself. Up. For. Her. We. Follow. Christ. We. Follow. In. His.
Footsteps. Lay. Down. Your. Life.
Gladly. Sacrificially. For. Your. Wife. We. We're.
[35:43] Going. to. Pause. Just. Pause. And. Just. Respond. To. God. In.
Our. Hearts. Simon. Will. Have.
Affected. Us. I'm. Sure. In. Different. Ways. Will. Have. Challenged. Us. In. Different. Ways. Will.
Have. Encouraged. Us. And. As. I. said. At. The. Beginning. Some. Of.
Us. May. Find. This. Passage. This. Sermon. Hard. And. If. That's. True. For. You. Then. Please.
Please.
Do. Talk. I'm. Happy. To. Chat. With. You. Today. Or. Some. Point. In. The. Next. Week. Or. So. Or.
Find. Someone. Else. That. You. Trust.
And. Would. Like. To. And. Sing. Our. Next. Song.