

# Strangers and Pilgrims

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[0:00] Go to Hebrews 11, if you've got your Bible, Hebrews 11 verse 13, we're going to go to there.! Strangers and pilgrims, strangers and pilgrims. And the writer to the Hebrews, presuming it's Paul, talks about God's heroes.

And we take it up from Hebrews 11 verse 13, where it says, These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. Hebrews 11 verse 13, they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

So here we see God's heroes. List in Hebrews 11, the hall of faith, the record of the heroes of the faith. And God's heroes are the people, it says, as reads here, they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

They're people seeking for another country. They confess, it says, that we are strangers and pilgrims here. They confessed it. And we likewise, we could consider that we're marching in their tread.

[1:21] We're in their footsteps, we're in their steps, marching with them in the same confession of faith. They confessed, we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And we likewise do so.

We confess through word, lifestyle, through our way of life, we seek a country, and we are strangers and pilgrims for the meantime. They declare, they confess, we seek a country.

Are you seeking it? Are you searching for it? Are you looking for it? Are you living for it? For that country? For that country? We know our Lord Jesus promised in John 14 verse 3 that his disciples, he tells them that he was going away.

And that he was leaving this old world, this planet. And that he was going somewhere out there to prepare a place, to prepare a place for them.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, he says, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And of course he goes on to explain the way is himself.

[2:29] I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. So, seeking this evening to communicate this theme, strangers and pilgrims.

What does that mean? And how should we translate that into our own lives? The fact is, we're really and truly just passing through.

We're just passing through. We're sojourners, we're strangers, we're aliens, we're pilgrims. We're just passing through down here. I like to think of it as some might have taken some travel here and there to different countries perhaps.

And it's almost like this is just a stopover. Who's ever had that? Like a stopover, just there for a day or two on the journey to your real destination. This is, in a kind of a way, this is like a stopover.

It's not our destination. It's just not our true home that is yet to come. That country, that land, that place, that real destination. And we belong to that place.

[3:34] We're speaking of heaven, of course. That place that the Lord Jesus, he says, is preparing for us. And it's a country far beyond our imagination. As we read of it, as Paul touches on it in 1 Corinthians 2 verse 9.

Or have the council assess it and approve it because it might crack up one day.

No, this building that is yet to come, this heavenly home, it is eternal in the heavens. Our true home. And for the meantime, we're just pilgrims and strangers here. It's got that sense that we can hang on to God's promises for the future home.

That true, eternal future home of heaven. And you, brothers and sisters here tonight, you, our fellow believers, fellow Christians, you're meant to be a stranger. Do you realise that?

Realise that. Do you get that? Do you live like that? Now, some Christians are stranger than other Christians. But in a good way, I want to be a pilgrim and a stranger down here.

[5:01] Don't you? To be a pilgrim and a stranger. To have that sense that, well, this is just a passing through, a preparation, a kind of holding place for that eternal home that we are preparing for.

And the preachers from God's word here in Hebrews are telling us that God's people are supposed to be strangers and pilgrims. So what does it mean? Paul uses a word here for stranger that means foreigner, an alien, one who is different, a foreigner.

Now, I could think back to me as a young lad of eight and a half, and I arrived on these shores from the fair motherland of England, and it was quite a strange experience for me.

I was a foreigner here, and I can remember being in the Pennington hostel as a young lad, eight and a half, and someone introduced me to an Aussie rules football.

And I thought there was something wrong with that ball. I've never seen a ball like that before. I'm used to these round balls called soccer balls. And, you know, and when they gave me this footy, this Aussie rules football, I didn't even know what to do with it, how to kick it or how to hold it.

[6:10] I still don't. But, you know, there's that sense where I was a stranger here. In a way, I still am. You know, but I'm a foreigner here in a sense. And that's the sense of it here, that we as godly people are kind of just temporarily here in this strange land, in this strange planet.

And we're foreigners here. We don't have to conform. We don't have to fit in and follow suit with a godless culture. You know, I've been corrupted since I was here as a young lad.

My language has been corrupted. I talk a lot more like an Aussie now. You know, I lost that perfect, pristine, perfect Mother England tongue. You know, how English is really supposed to be talked.

And now I talk in an Aussie, you know, this corrupted Australian accent. And so, you know, there's that sense where we are strangers. We don't have to conform to this world. You know, there's that sense as a young lad, I had to conform.

Otherwise, I'd get teased like mad. But we don't have to conform to this world. We don't have to fit in and follow suit with this world because we've got a culture that is of God. We've got a godly culture in living in a godless land, a godless culture.

[7:20] So in saying that, I'm saying don't be afraid to be different. You don't have to conform. In fact, the Bible tells us not to conform. Now, let's rather be strangers.

Let's be pilgrims. Let's not be afraid to be different. Peter uses a word for stranger, a different word. That means a foreigner, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship.

So it's got that sense, that strict sense where we actually don't have citizenship here. We are a foreigner who's in that sense of not being a citizen, not having a right of citizenship.

So a Christian is a stranger in this world, a foreigner, a foreigner, and a misfit in this society, a non-conformist. And we, as God's people, we don't fit in with this culture.

Because, let's face it, the culture of the world is sin and sinfulness. The value system of this world is so different for us who believe this world, the language of the world, the thinking of the world, the loyalties of the world.

[8:25] In my experience, I've found, sadly, some who profess Christ, but yet want to keep their feet in the world, make a real mess of it.

They tend to hammer it up. You know, they don't grow as Christians because they've still got that tie. They're tied to the world and the worldly ideas. And they never grow as strong and as wholesome as they could do for Christ.

They're not as fruitful for Christ because they're hanging on to such things as the worldly music or worldly loves or just the worldly ways, worldly mindset.

They've never made the break from it. And that can be a real, that can be hamstrung in their Christian life. And they end up as weak as water. You know, don't be afraid to be different, people here tonight.

Don't be afraid to be a stranger for God, a pilgrim for God in this world. Don't be afraid to be different. We see Hebrews 11 tells us about some such Bible characters, Bible strangers, if you like. [9:28] Bible strangers. Now, just reflecting further on this theme of strangers in a foreign land, strangers in a foreign land. I can remember as a young lad, we went back to England for a time and had a stopover in Hong Kong.

And I can remember going to Hong Kong. It means a lot to Julia Hong Kong, of course. But I had a little stopover as a young lad. Maybe I was about 15 or something in Hong Kong.

And I can remember getting out of the plane and walking down the streets of Hong Kong and everything was written in Chinese. And it was just mind blowing. I just couldn't get my head around it. It just was so strange for me.

It was so confronting for me. And to think, I'm a stranger here. You know, everybody looks different from me. Everything looks different. All the Chinese, you know, the Chinese characters on all the signage.

And it was very confronting for me to be a stranger in a foreign land. And that should be the kind of mindset we should have in the sense that we don't have to conform to this world. All right.

[10:32] So we see some examples of Bible strangers here in Hebrews 11. Number one, we see Noah. Noah, you could see that he was a stranger in the land. He was a misfit.

Not because he built a boat in the middle of nowhere. But he preached and practiced righteousness in a perverted culture. Noah. Now the world will put up with unconventional people so long as they don't hassle them about their sinful lifestyle.

Noah was willing to be different. Noah was willing to be outspoken. Noah was willing to stand out from the crowd. In Hebrews 11 verse 7, we see, and notice what made a difference to make him a pilgrim or a stranger was by faith.

By faith. By faith. The recurring phrase, by faith. That's what made the Hebrews 11 people different. That's what made them strangers and pilgrims. Noah, by faith, it says, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, it says.

You know, the fear, the wrath of God, the reverence of God, moved with that sensitivity to God. He was moved with that. And it says he prepared an ark to the saving of his household, by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith.

[11:42] So here it says Noah condemned the world. He prepared an ark. He was moved with fear. And he became an heir of righteousness, which is by faith. By faith again.

Noah, it says in 2 Peter 2 verse 5, he was called a preacher of righteousness. A preacher of righteousness. And so we see, are we a stranger like Noah?

Think of that. That's pretty radical, isn't it? To think that concept. We're walking in Noah's footsteps. We're walking in that same journey of faith. By faith, we ought to be like Noah.

Are we a stranger like Noah? Do we see the things to come? Do we see the things that are to come? Do we preach and practice righteousness, even if it makes us misfits in this world?

We read on in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11, of these faith heroes in Hebrews 11. You could read from verse 32. We're not going to touch on every element here.

[12:41] But it says of these ones in Hebrews 11, from verse 32 to 40, it says that these ones, they saw the promises of God. They journeyed forward by faith. They held loosely to this world.

They held firmly to the promises. They confessed, it says, confessed, it says, that they were strangers and pilgrims, just travelers in the earth. Hebrews 11, verse 13. So these were people who were looking for something better.

They said, this is not our country. This world is not our permanent home. This is not the place where we are at home. We do not belong here. Here we have no continuing city, it says.

Hebrews 13, 14. But we seek one to come. Do you confess that? Do you declare, Australia is not my country? This world is not my world.

The Bible calls this world warped, twisted, perverted, this present evil world. And what's more, it's governed by the devil.

[13:39] The God of this world is one of his titles in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 4. So the God of this world is the devil. And it says of those who are in his train, that in whom the God of this world had blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So we are God's strangers. We are, as God's church, we are strangers. We're not part of this system. We're actually counter-cultural.

We're counter this system, this world system. We're not a part of it. And just trying to grasp that concept can really help us to really steer a course that is different and not be afraid to be steering a course of your life that is different from the world around.

And our Lord says as he prayed for the church, for us, as he had in foresight, it says, I have given them thy word and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world.

Not of the world. Even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. I mean, the Lord Jesus himself, he was the ultimate stranger.

[15:01] He came unto his own and his own received him not. He was despised and rejected of men. We need to walk in his tread and have that same mindset that we will follow Christ. He is the ultimate one.

And we are in his company. We are willing to be estranged from the world. We are not of this world. Our identity is not based on this world. Our culture is not based on this world system.

Our way of life. Our lifestyle. It's not based on this world, but it is based on heaven. Heaven to come. So, friends, I urge you tonight to consider, are you on this quest?

Are you on that journey to look for that better place? That better place? That better home? Awaiting. Looking for the Saviour's grace. Looking for the Master's face. Looking for that better place.

Our permanent abode is not here. Australia is just temporary. You know, we got the politicians trying to save the planet at the moment. Look, it's...

[15:58] Without sounding like you're dismissive of trying to be a good steward of this planet. Really, climate change, whatever. They can't save the planet by man's effort or intent.

Because ultimately it's all going to go up in smoke. Australia is just temporary. Just passing. Just short term. We're looking for a city.

We're looking for a country. We're looking for a place. And that is our forever home. That is eternal. In the heavens. And God is eventually going to pull the plug on planet Earth. And man can't save the planet.

Whether it needs saving. Environmentally is another question. But man can't do anything to save the planet. The only one who can save the planet is the Saviour. As far as what the ultimate problem is, is the fall of man.

That's the problem with planet Earth. That it is fallen. It's a fallen planet. And Australia is not going to go on forever. So let's not put our stakes down too deep in this Earth of Australia.

[17:00] Paul said we should no longer walk as the other Gentiles. God has changed our mind, our understanding, our heart. We read in Ephesians 4 as he writes from verse 17.

He says, So there's lots of pictures there being alienated from the life of God.

Being in ignorance. Being in blindness. Blindness of heart. Lacking that understanding. The understanding being darkened. You don't want to be there people. You don't want to be amongst that.

You don't want to be of that. Of that world. But of the life of God. Some are estranged from the life of God. They're in darkness. They're doomed.

And they're blinded. But we, God helping us by faith. We that trust him. That know him. We are not estranged from God. But the opposite.

[18:28] We're near to God. We're near to the very heart of God. We're held in his keeping. We're in his closeness. In that proximity.

In that very close nearness to him. And that is the picture for us. That we are not estranged. As in divorced from. Separated from. Far from.

But we are close to. We are brought near. We are close to God. Yet we're living. Let's face it people tonight. We're living in a world full of blind people.

Think of that. They're actually blind. They're blind people. They cannot see. They cannot truly see. In a world where most people. Their understanding is darkened. It's darkened.

There's like this big cloud. Over there. Understanding. And they've shut out the light. They don't even realize that. They don't have the light. Our true home is yet to be revealed. Sometime in the future.

[19:24] For the meantime. We are unusual to this world. Think of it friends. You are unusual. Now of course we know. Some would label. And mock. Churches.

Where they're a bit different. They don't conform to the world's pattern. And of course we know. Some might be a little cult like. In how they might. Might manifest that. But nevertheless. They're willing. And they're willing to be. Counted different. They're willing to be. Counted strange. And you know. The world would look. And we've had comments. Such that. Oh you're. You're a bit of a strange church. You know. The people think. You know. A church that might. Actually. We actually believe the book. We try to live godly. We try to exhort people to. Truth. That we are strange. You know. We. We don't. Oh you're not like the world. You don't have the same worldly. Gimmicks. And methods.

[20:19] And such. And we don't. Mind. Confessing. That we are non-conformist. We don't mind. Confessing. That we are not conformist. That we might be unusual.

We might even be called abnormal. Or counter cultural. As I say. That. There's that sense where. Actually. We don't mind. Because we confess. That we're strangers. And pilgrims. We're not ashamed of that. We confess. That we belong to Christ. And we. We confess. That we belong to that one. The stranger. Who was. Despised. And rejected. We that can see. We want to reach the ones that are blind. When we truly see. We won't want. Blindness. We won't want that. Why would we want to go back to blindness. You that see. You that have truly seen now. Your eyes have been opened. Why would anyone who is saved. Want to go back to blindness. Because now they can see. Why would you want to. Go back. You that know.

[21:14] That know that. The knowledge of God. Why would you want to go back to ignorance. It doesn't make sense. Does it. That anyone would even contemplate. Taking such a course. And yet. Temptation will face us.

And we must be on guard. It's an interesting. Kind of analogy. That. Apparently in North Africa. There's a tree. That's called the. Lotus tree. And there's a fable about the. Lotus tree. Apparently. That if strangers eat. Of its fruit. It makes them forget. Their home. The fruit of the. Lotus tree. Of sin. And its pleasures. Has. Potentially can make people forget. Their heavenly home. So we don't. We don't want to forget. Our heavenly home. We don't want to forget. Or forsake. Our heavenly. Identity. Our. Being strangers. And pilgrims. We need to be. Beware. As it were. Of the lotus tree. You know. That kind of fruit. That would make us forget. Walk with God. But Noah was such.

[22:10] That he was a stranger. And another Bible hero. Another stranger. Is Moses. Moses. We read about Moses. Of course. We know of Moses. He was that. Babe.

In the bull rushes. As his mother. Protected him. And. Basically. He was adopted. By the Pharaoh's daughter. And yet. As he grew to manhood. We see of him. That he was not afraid. To confess. That he was a stranger. And a pilgrim. It tells of Moses. That he was choosing. Rather. To suffer affliction. With the people of God. Than to enjoy the pleasures. Of sin. For a season. He refused to partake. Of the evil world. The evil fruit. Of the world. Of the pleasures of sin. And it reads on. As we read. Of this stranger. Who was Moses. It says. He was esteeming. He was counting it. Of value. He was. He was honoring. That reproach. Of Christ. Greater riches. Than all the treasures. In Egypt.

[23:05] For he had respect. With recompense. Unto the recompense. Of the reward. He focused on that reward. He knew that he had a reward. A promise of God. Of course. The promised land.

But he knew the cost. The reproach. Of the. Of Christ. It was a. Deliberate. Price. That he paid. That he forsook. The treasures of Egypt. And he trusted Christ.

He was willing to stand. With God's people. And he wasn't ashamed. To stand. For the Lord. To stand with God's people. He would rather belong. To God's people. The people of God.

And focus on that reward. Of the promises of God. And so we should stand up. With the people of God. We think down through history. You know. Read church history. And you see the.

The. The primitive church. The apostolic church. The early church. The. The remnant church. The faithful church. Down through history. Of course. We see.

[24:00] Lots of deviations. And aberrant. Beliefs. And doctrines. But. By and large. The. The trail of the. Of the church of God. Through history. There is a remnant.

A faithful remnant. Right through history. Uh. The church history. And. You see. Those that were willing. To stand up. And be counted. People like. For example.

The Puritans. Those that. Were saved. Amongst the Puritans. They were standing for. For righteousness. And truth. And holiness. They were. In standing for the word of God.

Their. Their. Governance. Of their land. Of their laws. The Puritans. Were. An example. And we know. You know. Amongst the Amish.

There would be some. Who are saved. The Mennonites. There would be some. Amongst them. Who are saved people. That they took the word of God. Seriously. That they were willing. To be mocked. And scorned.

[24:55] And laughed at. Derided. And you know. Dressing different. Looking different. That element. Where they were willing. To stand up. And be strangers. To be strangers. And pilgrims.

And there's a sense. I think. For us today. To have that same mindset. We're willing to be. Counts it. As. Unusual. Not normal. We're willing to be. Counts it.

Extreme. Maybe. If it be so. If the world. Counts it. Extreme. To actually believe. In a saviour. To believe in a book. That tells. Of a heavenly home.

A life. Of the heart change. That Christ can affect. Then we don't. We're not ashamed. To be. Counts it. Different. To be. Counts it. Strangers.

We see. Another bible hero. Was Abraham. Abraham was another. Stranger. If you like. It says. Of Abraham. Hebrews 11. Verse 10. Says he looked for a city.

[25:50] He looked for a city. Which has foundations. His builder. And maker. Is God. And Hebrews 11. 16. Who desire. A better country. That is. And heavenly.

Wherefore God is not ashamed. To be called their God. For he hath prepared for them. A city. So all of these people. Hebrews 11. These people. They kind of stood out. From the crowd. They stood out.

From the. The world. They were willing to be counted. Strangers and pilgrims. Noah. Moses.

Abraham. We could think of Daniel. And his three friends. They were strangers.

They were strangers in Babylon. Babylon. They were in Babel. But not of Babel. And it's the same for us. Now as the. Government of the day. Ordered them to bow.

They knew that they could not bow. Because they. Were strangers. And pilgrims. Their. Their allegiance was foremost. And uppermost. To the Lord. Their God.

[26:46] God. And. Nebuchadnezzar. Tried to. Indoctrinate them. He tried to. Babylonize them. If you like. They. They had three years. Of intensive.

Training. To become. Babylonian. In their. Mindset. In their. Thinking. In their. Culture. In their. Lifestyle.

Down to that golden. Image. You know. They were. Respectful. How they put it. But they. Not. They said. We're not. Going to compromise.

Our conscience. Our faith. Our trust. In God. And so. They were different. They were strangers. And so. They were different. They were strangers. And so.

They were different. They were strangers. And pilgrims. And so. Should we be. Don't be afraid. To be different. You will stand. For the right. They were different. From the crowd.

[27:41] The country. They desired. Was a heavenly. One. And so. They. God. They weren't ashamed. To call. God. They're God.

If you like. Be not ashamed. Of the gospel. Don't be ashamed. Of Christ. Of his words. God is preparing. A city. And we are. The people. He's preparing.

For that city. Peter talks. Along similar lines. In 1 Peter 2. To you. I appeal. To you. He says. As strangers. And pilgrims. He's saying.

I'm appealing. To you. Strangers. Pilgrims. I'm calling. You. Abstain. He says. From. We're. We're. We're. We're. We're. We're. We're. We're. We're. We're. To you. To you.

[28:36] To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you.

To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. To you. australia let's not get so wrapped up in the aussie kind of culture where it's godless but rather to stand for truth because we are a holy nation a peculiar people god's own special people it says in 1 peter 2 verse 9 peculiar has got the sense we're special we're especially in god's uh in god's calling where we are called to be that special god's own special people and we're strangers and pilgrims verse 11 and we are called the righteous 1 peter 4 verse 18 1 peter 2 verse 10 we call the people of god so today's christians people here tonight are we truly confessing that we're strangers and pilgrims don't be afraid to confess i'm a christian don't be afraid to confess i'm a stranger and a pilgrim peter cries out to believers from his heart he says abstain from fleshly lusts abstain means hold yourself back from continually hold yourself back from is the sense of it and paul lists the works of the flesh again we could list them here in galatians 5 in contrast to the fruit of the spirit the works of the flesh are manifest adultery fornication uncleanness lasciviousness which is that kind of sensuality idolatry witchcraft hatred variance emulations wrath strife seditions heresies verse 21 envyings murders drunkenness revelings and such like of the which i tell you before as i've told you in time past that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of god so here you see a whole long list of fleshly things sexual sins fornication sins of the emotions hatred outbursts of wrath jealousies envy paul's telling us here these are the works of the flesh and we peter says abstain from such abstain from it they war against the soul when it says when peter says abstain from it's got the sense of hold ourselves constantly back from it's kind of a constant thing because it hits you from here there and everywhere through life as a christian as you grow you're going to have the fleshly lust it's constant bombardment and so it paul peter's saying abstain hold yourselves constantly back from have that constant mindset reinforcing it continuing in that abstaining from why because such things war against the soul so we're on a spiritual pilgrimage pilgrimage and the world that we live in let's face it these things that we just read through in galatians 5 20 21 that's what the world's all about isn't it that's what yeah generally some of this stuff here in galatians 5 just to just look at that list there it's it's modern movies isn't it that's uh modern music uh the world's trash it's filled with such things worldly thinking all of those things it's all the world and the things of the world it's interesting um apparently in corinth you know the church of corinth had a lot of attacks like this there was very many fleshly temptations and and troubles in corinth the church at corinth and apparently there was a saying in corinth uh that well there was such a thing as to live a corinthian life to live a corinthian life in other words it was corinth was known as being a pretty fleshly um godless unspiritual place a corinthian life we could think uh of really the the godless aussie kind of life couldn't we the godless aussie life and you know for some um that's all they know that's all that's that's life to them life is you know um work hard drink hard party hard or you know what the kind of slogans people come up with isn't it the worldly slogans or you know it's almost like that they wait for the weekend to get paralytic to get you know to get sloshed to get stoned to get off their face as if that's somehow some they've arrived when they've reached that point of their ecstasy that they've reached such ecstasy that they're spewing in the gutter and that's the that's the ultimate high of the aussie culture of our day isn't it let's face it i'm talking a bit crass here but that's how people think isn't it that's how the worldly culture thinks that they want to wait till the happy hour or so-called when they get sloshed and they they glug glug glug and to blow away their minds from all their all their worries as if that's some kind of solve all but really it's vanity it's a waste of a life it's that's the world and the things of the world we want to abstain from all of that and to mind rather the things of the spirit and peter urges he says having a conversation honest among the gentiles so this word honest it means honorable 1 peter 2 verse 12 having a conversation in other words your way of life honest among the gentiles what he's talking about is being honorable and we as god's people

we should be honorable because we represent as the strangers and pilgrims we represent the ultimate stranger we represent the ultimate our lord who we walk after the one who's ultimately honorable the one who is most full of honor and decency and and that which is righteous and true that which is most beautiful is our precious lord we want to live a life that is honorable among the gentiles so in the sense of those that don't know god we should live honorably friends we should have honorable conduct we see even yeah it's kind of ironic these days isn't it when you hear of some disgraced footy player now a disgraced football player has had an affair with someone or other and and so he's been disgraced even the world's got a conduct even the world's got a level a standard of conduct a standard of of a living that they would say that's conduct unbecoming that's conduct dishonorable even the world has got a sense that's wrong there is a right and a wrong and they'll condemn them they'll put them on the front page of the advertiser and condemn them or even you know these as we know the new south wales premier and accusations that are being thrown around that there's a potential that she could be found of doing something dishonorable even the world's got a level of what is dishonorable and what is honorable how much more for we the strangers and pilgrims how much more for you that you ought to live as having an honorable conduct having a conversation your way of life honest or honorable among the gentiles think of how you live how you conduct yourself if they got if they got such high standards for footy players what about we the people of god what so not saying we're uh saving ourselves by our works or by being good or doing good works we're more um we're more saved than someone who's not but it's that sense where we because we love our lord honorable conduct conduct that's becoming of a christian it ought to be our aspiration because we want to glorify our god let's face it we want to live like we're citizens of heaven amen can you get that that we want to live like yes we are citizens of heaven and even more so we're ambassadors and it makes you wonder as you know um yeah it's one of the kind of high offices in government is to be an ambassador of the nation and they got pretty high standards for ambassadors uh how much more for we that are ambassadors of the kingdom of god we're strangers and pilgrims we're representatives of heaven so we ought to have conduct that that is becoming and let's not get ourselves so wrapped up in this world too comfortable too attached to this old world but rather consider that our citizenship as we read revelation 3 verse 20 our conversation or you could put it our citizenship is in heaven where we look for the savior the lord jesus who's going to transform our vile body citizenship for us is heavenly that's that's our that's our ultimate citizenship you know you might i've got dual citizenship of uk and australia but really got a triple citizenship amen because my citizenship is in heaven and you that believe you that are aussies you might just have your citizenship as an australian but if you're a safe person you've got a you've got a dual citizenship because your citizenship your your conversation your citizenship is in heaven so with friends friends we're foreigners on this earth and just capture that just just just grasp that in some measure i i pray tonight we're called to pass the time of our sojourning in other words our kind of traveling through in fear that's 1 peter 1 verse 17 we're called to pass the time of our sojourning our traveling through in fear in other words live reverently live in the fear of god and this this short time span this short lifespan this this vapor this this puff of of the life that we live that's here one minute and gone the next uh we let's make it count for an eternity and be willing to be a stranger don't be afraid to be a christian don't be afraid to talk different to look different to think different to act different to be different paul says we're citizens of heaven and and friends citizens have rights and privileges but they also have responsibilities think of it now some people they they want to be an australian citizen and it gives them all sorts of rights and privileges but they've also got responsibilities to to act according to that citizenship and what about you and me that that trust christ that we're born from heaven we're born from above we're born again our home is not here beneath but it is there above and it tells us we seek a better country it's better it's better than australia you might think australia is a fair land but friends this country yet to come is far better far better as someone said if god made this world so fair where sin and death abound how beautiful beyond compare will paradise be found you know think of all the beauties of uh you know lovely gardens and scenery and landscapes and and and beautiful places you could visit on this planet heaven is far better far better a better country and we desire to be at home there in heaven so just hang on we've still got a bit longer to go but soon we'll all be there that trust him we'll all be reunited we that love the lord and know him it tells us that we will be together but for the meantime we've got some work to do we got some we got some actions to take we've got some activities to fulfill it tells us that our treasure is in heaven um that we're not of this world it tells us that we're pilgrims we're travelers just visiting planet earth for a time for a season and when

we're on a journey we're on our way to the destination so let's not get overly caught up with all the sights along the way you know sometimes as we're traveling through that we've got to have the mind that our destination is heaven we're we're just let's not get caught up in all the sights along the way that we miss the point of our life is heaven to live heavenly and we've got a different driving force from the world around us that's why we strange

the world around you has a different driving force they're they're driven by riches by pleasure by vanities here's what jc ryler an old time faithful man preached he said the world is an enemy to the christian soul and there is an utter opposition between the friendship of the world and the friendship of christ we're strange we're we're in in some ways we're opposite where this in a way there's a kind of hostility an enmity between the world and the faithful christian because the world and its ways should have no draw upon us the world's people can only see and sense the things of earth we know the familiar scripture romans 12 be not conformed to this world you're a stranger here you're a pilgrim here don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of god so friends just to come to a drawing this to a close now be a stranger be a pilgrim don't be don't be afraid to confess that you're a stranger and a pilgrim and don't settle for the things of earth these are temporary these will not last seek that which is eternal desire it tread that holy heavenward path be willing to have honorable conduct that is fitting for you that are the saved the sons and daughters of the living god ambassadors for the kingdom of god he who would valiant be gain store disaster let him in constancy follow the master there's no discouragement shall make him once relent his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim who so beset him round with dismal stories do but themselves confound his strength the more is no foe shall stay his might though he with giants fight he will make good his right to be a pilgrim since lord thou dost defend us with thy spirit we know we at the end shall life inherit then fancies flee away i'll fear not what men say i'll labor night and day to be a pilgrim now these are truths we can take heart in today i trust and put into action just to wrap up with one little further comment and the writer of that those verses i read is john bunyan and john bunyan he was one of the faithful puritans of old england you know the puritans went to america numbers of them john bunyan was a puritan uh an old time baptist of of the day uh who stayed in england and he was in prison simply for being a non-conformist he was a stranger and a pilgrim he didn't go along with the establishment church of the day you know they they wanted him to conform to some rules and regulations about fitting in with the i guess to the anglican church of the day that they had precise directions of the government of the time and you had to be accredited by the bishops and whatnot but he said no i'm just going to be a faithful bible preacher i'm just going to preach as god has called me to preach to the little flock that he had and he was faithful in that and for that he was in prison for more than 15 years fancy that he did no crime all he simply did was preach the gospel as god had called him to preach it and not to be a conformist but to be a non-conformist he was willing to be a stranger and a pilgrim and he wrote that famous book pilgrim's progress and just a little quote here about one of the accounts and pilgrim's progress is a lovely book and you do well to to search it out and have a read of pilgrim's progress there's much you can learn from it it's a telling story that illustrates truth and we read about a couple of the pilgrims or christian and faithful they visited a place called vanity fair in the town vanity so it's kind of a picture of the pilgrims these two going into a worldly

[45:05] kind of setting and so here they were in the vanity fair where there's all this you know all of this hoo-ha going on all of this you know showy sensual fleshly entertainment and such in the town of vanity and they looked upon these two christian and faithful as strangers and these two pilgrims are on the way to the celestial city which means heaven they stood out as different okay i'm kind of paraphrasing a bit because there's some old english words here but so these pilgrims it says for three reasons they stood out from the crowd so the first one the pilgrims were clothed with such a raiment that was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in the fair and so they were considered to be full so they were dressed different there was an appearance there was a physical appearance that was different and then secondly it says that they were wondered also not just at how they were dressed but at their speech they spoke different it says for few could understand what they said they spoke the language of canaan but they that kept the fair were

the men of this world and so they seemed as barbarians each to the other so that again the pilgrims that were strange because they spoke different they had a different way of talking and thirdly it says they were kind of looked down upon because they would not buy or uh or turn uh to the vanities that were in the fair it says they put their fingers in their ears and they cried turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity and look upwards signifying that their focus was in heaven so it's just a nice telling kind of story to illustrate don't be afraid to confess that you're a stranger and a pilgrim the world might look at you and think well you look different you don't look like you're um you know fleshly uh in in how you conduct yourself you know we see it could be more apparent with women that they look like they're fleshly revealing a lot of flesh but we're clothed with a garment uh and with a life that is projecting christ we we're clothed with the garments of the robe of his righteousness we we have that um we're clothed with that armor of light the armor of god so there's that sense where even uh our our composure our our presentation should be different not really talking about clothing so much as more that that the attitude of life that that that we're clothed with humility for example that it's that conduct that that attitude of life and then secondly our speech you know the world would think it's normal to use f words and whatnot and to curse christ and to use his name as a swear word just saying omg and such and just use god as if he's some kind of uh filling in word that they can use like a curse word and demean the name of our precious savior the world would think that's routine and normal and and uh absolutely fine but we speak another language we speak a language of god and we speak that words that were edifying build up words of comfort words of scripture words of love and then thirdly we see that these pilgrims they wouldn't buy into all the all the wares all the the carelessness the vanity the emptiness of the world they weren't caught up in all the trappings of what the merchandisers at the fair were offering but they said that they want to turn their eyes away from beholding vanity and to rather have their focus on the things of heaven and it's the same for you and me brothers and sisters as strangers and pilgrims let's confess that we are such and let's conduct ourselves as such for the glory of god let's pray lord we thank you that your word shows us how that we are to be different from the world as noah was as abraham as moses as daniel as the three hebrew children lord as many others men and women through that word of god through hebrews 11 and through your word lord we

see that recurring theme and we see through church history too lord of the faithful church that soldiered on despite much falsehood and the false regime of of the roman catholic church and other falsehoods lord that the salt the faithful few the faithful remnants soldiered on as faithful pilgrims and strangers lord help us to to not be ashamed of the cross to not be ashamed of you our lord and lord and lord we know that you will not be ashamed of us that we will confess that we're strangers and pilgrims will confess we belong to you that we will confess that we are saved by your saving power will confess that we know you as our savior and lord and will confess our faith before men and give us the grace to lord tactfully wisely with wisdom that we might lead others to to join our number and to be strangers and pilgrims in that walk of faith lord we thank you that's all only entirely by your grace that we would even have the opportunity to know this saving grace of god we thank you for it and we praise you lord help us to live accordingly unto your praise lord give each one strength in these days ahead for whatever faces us that we will not shy away we will be willing to stand up and be counted and to be strong in that faith that you grant us lord in jesus name we pray amen