

AM 1 Peter 2:11-17

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[0 : 00] Psalm 106. A call to worship, by the way, is it's God's Word and it elicits worship in response to His Holy Word and its truth.

Praise the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. Who can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord or declare all of His praise? Blessed are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for calling us into this place for worship. And we ask this day that You would indeed bless us.

You would bless us with a rich understanding and fresh comprehension through the Holy Spirit of Your steadfast love, Your faithfulness that never ends in Jesus Christ, our beautiful Savior, and our Lord that we seek to follow with all of our life and our worship.

Receive our worship this day, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. I want to invite you to stand with me as you turn in your psalter to page 23.

[1 : 27] Page 23, and that's going to be Psalm 19, and we're going to sing verses 7 through 11. Please stand.

■ate 3. Please stand.

Made us. The Lord has shed light on what we see.

The fear of all is true and lost eternally. The standards of the Lord express His perfect truth and right.

The Lord has shed light on what we see.

[3 : 13] The Lord has shed light on what we see. The Lord has shed light on what we see. The Lord has shed light on what we see.

The Lord has shed light on what we see. Do we have a couple of little boys here? I was reading in the Bible about what soldiers are to wear.

What Christian soldiers for the Lord are to wear. Now I want you to make yourself, I want you to use your imagination because this is invisible.

So here's what we're told in Ephesians 6 that we're to wear every day so that we can stand protected.

Stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth. So we want to put our belt on. Having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

[4 : 23] That's like a big metal covering so that spears can't get us. And as shoes for your feet having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

So wherever we go we're happy and joyful and we carry good news. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith. We've got a shield with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.

And you take the helmet. And the helmet is salvation. And it reminds me every day that I'm the Lord's own chosen son and daughter through Christ.

The sword of the spirit. So we do have a scary sword that we can fight with. With all prayer and supplication. Praying at all times in the spirit.

So this is like a sea bag. So when I was in Charleston, South Carolina. For many years I had a boat.

[5 : 28] A sailboat. We lived on the coast. And I would have a bag that as I was prepared to go on my day off. I would just snatch the bag. And inside was everything that I might need for whatever I would face that day.

Things that I would wear. So let's see what's in this sea bag that I would grab. Well, I might want this.

This is an inflatable vest. And I never really wore it much.

Because the inflatable vest was such that I didn't want to ever wear it. But I would need this inflatable vest. Just in case I fell overboard.

And there was no one else on my boat. My boat would keep going. And there I would be in the water. And I would drown unless I pulled the cord. And I've got my inflatable vest. It would save me from going under.

[6 : 36] Okay. What else? You've got to have your ball cap. The ball cap would keep the sun from beating down on my head and the sweat in my eyes so that I couldn't see.

Or it would help shade my face so that I would have a coolness about me that I could think. What else?

Well, it's a sailor's pocketbook. It's actually called a sailor's Bible. And it would help me like I would think, oh, what kind of knot do I need to tie for my boat?

And I could. I could look up. Oh, I need, at this point, I need a bowline. And it would remind me how to tie it. So it would always guide me.

And it would help me as a great reference. I've got a flashlight. But it's more than a flashlight. It would actually, excuse me, it would actually, it could signal, I need help.

[7 : 45] Do you see the flashing light? I need help. So, never had to use that. And lastly, my radio. Boy, I would never go out to sea or out on the water without my radio.

Because the radio, I could get directions. I could get, if I was lost, or if I was afraid, I could call for help. And no matter how far I was away from shore, someone would hear me up in a tower. Someone could send help. Now think about that. If that's what a sailor would put on as his, as he would go out to sea every time, what are we, boys and girls, or boys, what are we to wear as Christians?

Well, we have a helmet. We have a Bible. Our Sunday school teachers, our mom and dad teach us from that. And it guides us. It's more than just a reference of life.

But it encourages us that we can pray like on a walkie-talkie and talk to God. Particularly when it's dark. And know that he always hears. And more than that, he sends help.

[9 : 02] And the greatest help that he sent is in Jesus. So think about it. Every day, because you're a Christian, as you follow Jesus, there's things that you put on in order to be protected and to walk with him.

Let's sing again. And you'll find Psalm 51 on page 68 of your Psalter. Psalm 51, and we will stand and sing verses 7 through 15.

Page 58. Psalm 51 antholic Let the bones in crowds be joyful, may I joy and madness know.

From my failure I do raise, lotters of my wickedness.

Lord, create a new heart in me, and a steadfast mind renew.

[10 : 45] Do not take your spirit from me, cast me not away from you.

Give me back the joy I hide, keep my willing spirit light.

Then I'll teach you ways to sinners, rebels will turn back to you.

Free me from what killed my Savior, God most merciful and true.

Then I'll praise your righteousness, teach my lips your name to bless.

[12 : 21] Please join me in your hearts as I lead us in a prayer for our church and intercession.

Heavenly Father, it's not simply children that need to be reminded that we have the great privilege of prayer.

And that you always listen and you always answer. And you always do so for our good, but also for the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Father, we're moved to think that Jesus Christ prays still.

He ever lives to intercede at your right hand. And for us, by name, by issue.

But in the heavens, He intercedes for us, and we have the Holy Spirit to help us in our prayers, to make them acceptable, and also to instruct us to know what we ought to pray for.

[14 : 04] So, Father, we come to you with great confidence, and yes, humility, but we come in the very name of Jesus Christ, through the medium of the Holy Spirit, now in our prayers for our church, and for one another.

Father, we ask your blessings upon our congregation here in Dumfries. Father, we know that our church has a purpose and a mission, that you have called us to be your ambassadors in our neighborhoods and on our farms and on the streets, in the classroom, in the workplace, on the

sport field, meeting friends for tea or coffee.

We are your representatives, and we pray that you would use us in this community, that others might see that there is a difference about our heart, our faith, even in times of trial, that there's a joyfulness about us that is more than happiness over circumstances or our lot.

Father, that they would literally, as someone once said, see the glow about us and know, perhaps unable to explain it, that we are Christians, that we even radiate out your love placed upon us and a love for others.

We pray that you would not only strengthen our witness, but our worship. Father, we do pray, as we have prayed earlier, that our worship service this morning, this evening, would be acceptable to you.

[16:18] But we don't come perfunctory or legalistically or simply because it's our duty, but we come because it's our delight. Holy Spirit, visit us and attend upon us even this morning and draw out our praise.

Draw out our hearts. And again, like children, that listening to your word might once again find us discovering and hearing as if for the first time your truths, your will, your way and even your pleasure for us.

And that our worship, Father, might become known in Dumfries, that this is a house of worship that is true to you, Jesus Christ. And that your name is often heard on our lips in this place.

and that we're known as a people that are faithful in our attendance, not simply to tick a box, but we're faithful because we are devoted to you who are devoted to us.

Father, we ask your blessings upon our church. We ask your blessings upon every age from the very youngest, Hannah, to the oldest.

[17:48] Father, as we face life and we face its challenges to health, be it physical or emotional, Jesus, loving shepherd, we ask that you would draw near and you would lead us even through the valley of the shadow of the death.

You'll lead us through the dark. Perhaps, Father, we're facing a decision and we don't know which way to go. Lead us, shepherd. Guide us. Perhaps, Father, we're experiencing a trial or a great heartache or a loss and grief.

Oh, shepherd, bring your peace heal, restore. Even a sense of your nearness and your presence gives us as your flock comfort in the night.

We ask that you would bless us and keep us faithful, that you would ever forgive us of our sins and we would be ever repenting. We would be a people that we don't fear repentance, but we even look forward to opportunities to give you more and more of our offenses, our weaknesses, the troubling sin, our addictions, but that we turn to you with these and we raise them up to you and you forgive us with fresh pardon and forgiveness ever by your shed blood, Jesus, by which we are now called sons and daughters, righteous ones, not in and of ourselves, but in you by our union with you.

Strengthen our faith in that, Father. Even as you strengthen us today, we ask that you would bless our church, that you would bless each one of us, for truly you are our Father, Christ is our Savior and our brother and our Lord and the Holy Spirit is with us.

[20:11] And we ask all of these things in your name, Jesus. Amen. Our hymn for the morning is, The King of Love My Shepherd Is.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is. The King of Love My Shepherd Is.

humery Saver heraus Oh, the dog mill In my armies And he his mind Forever My gem containing his ■■■ Deep Blue flag It sought me I long It showed the Chains we laid And home

Rejoicing Brought me And so Lord therefore In España Se ■ quant junto Com■ Myife Make Be Now So Please be seated.

I neglected to bring the words in the pulpit with me. I'll not make that mistake tonight. But you sing beautifully. Particularly up front here.

[22:38] I thought we had a good solo going. You've got a great voice. Was it? Yeah, together. Our scripture that we're going to be looking at both this morning and this evening is out of 1 Peter.

And this morning I want to look at 1 Peter chapter 1 and I'm going to read verse 1 and 2 and then I'm going to invite you to turn in your copy of the scriptures to 1 Peter chapter 2 where I'm going to read verses 11 through 17.

A little bit longer section there. And the focus is that we are God's chosen people destined for a homeland in all of eternity in the heavens with God, the new heavens and the new earth.

But while we're here, we're identified as exiles. And so the focus is going to be what does it look like for us to be exiles, exiles in this world?

1 Peter chapter 1 verse 1 and 2. Peter, and I'm reading from the English Standard Version, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatius, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father and the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood.

[24 : 16] May grace and peace be multiplied to you. And then, out of chapter 2, verses 11 through 17, Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Be subject, for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. This is God's word. May He grant to us now, as His children, a rich understanding of this, His holy word.

[25 : 48] What's Dumfries famous for? I mean, Locke Finn is famous for its salmon.

Wendy and I last weekend were in Aberdeen. Aberdeen is famous for its Angus. And I think I, they should be famous for their strawberries.

They were great. There's Argyle venison. There's Dingwall haggis. And my favorite is Storn Away Black Pudding. There's Lewis lamb.

And there's Aaron grains. So a little bit of interaction here. Dumfries, we passed on an awful lot of farms as we drove from Glasgow. What's Dumfries famous for?

What food item? Dumfries. Belted Galloway cows. What's that? Belted Galloway cows. Ah, yes.

Well, I actually grew up on a small cattle farm and never could get over the strange appearance of Belted Galloway cows.

[26 : 56] Well, we have to be careful how we finish our own definition of ourself when we begin with the words I am.

When Wendy and I first moved here, and even today, this happened just yesterday to me, people will hear our American accent and it's twangy because unlike many on TV, we have a southern accent so it's real twangy.

It's very country. And so people will hear our accent and they'll be like, you're from America, right?

And we go, good guess. That's a very good guess. And then they ask, well, why are you here?

And we begin, we just launch right in and I say, I'm a minister of the gospel and we're working with the free church for a number of years and churches and fellow ministers.

but I also find that instead of simply beginning my definition of self with I am, I jump very quickly to we, me and Wendy.

[28 : 11] So that I don't identify particular simply things that are particular to me but things that are particular to us as a family. We, and normally when I say we, I began to talk about our association with the region of the country or with a culture even as I've just done or our family.

We are from the south. We are from America. We are married. We have a family. We are a part of the free church.

We are Christians. Christians. Peter, this could be a two word sermon. Don't worry, I'm not going to do that because I'm a bit more long winded than that but the two words would be in verse 1 elect exiles.

Peter, right off the bat and throughout this letter of five chapters, he wants you to know who you are and not simply how you define yourself but how God defines you.

Not simply your identity even in your community but your identity in God's kingdom. It's very important particularly to a people that in Peter's writing this sermon and it goes to quite a large area that I'll mention in just a moment.

[29 : 46] But as it goes to the entire church, the church is facing an upheaval. They're facing a trial for their faith.

They're facing where they were, they've become believers and followers of God in a world that does not welcome them or want them.

They've become like exiles from another homeland and he's giving, as it were, a guidebook and encouragement for them to be a hopeful people for exiles do have a homeland, it's just not earth. He's saying you have a homeland and it's with God and all of his people and so when you face trials, rejection, persecution, mockery, indifference, even simply being marginalized and ignored here, oh, you're a Christian, you must not be very smart, you're a Christian, you've got a crutch in Christianity, you're weak, oh, you're a Christian, you're so common.

He says, no, be encouraged even in trial to know that you're in exile, that you've got a fatherland where God is your father, Christ is our savior and there's the presence of the Holy Spirit.

[31 : 20] I Peter, which I want to look at 1 Peter briefly this morning in chapter 1 and this passage out of 2 to look at Father, what does it mean to be an elect exile?

And then tonight, I want to take up with verses 1 through 10 in chapter 2 and look at a further identification or definition for us as God's people as living stones alive, not just blockheads, rockheads, but actually what does it mean to be a living stone?

I'm going to be back in July, at the very end of July, the fourth Sunday in July, and there I'm going to take up 1 Peter 4 and 1 Peter 5.

But let's dig in and I want you to see the main idea is that Christians are elect exiles. Another way to put that is you are chosen children with God as your Father and you have a promised homeland, the new heaven and the new earth, heaven.

heaven. You've got a promised homeland and therefore we have hope for every trial that we face. I want to look at three things.

[32 : 40] I want to look at first of all the context of this, who's writing it, who is he writing to, what's the purpose that he's writing and then secondly I want to look at what does it mean to be a chosen people?

How do you know that you are chosen? How do you know that you are elect and in exile? And then lastly I want to look at chapter 2 and those verses to get really practical to talk about chosen places. Dumfries, your neighborhood, what does it look like if I'm a chosen person living here? What am I to do?

Well first of all the context. If you look at the end of verse 2, you probably now we didn't have the, we don't have the punctuation in the original Greek in the New Testament that we have in our English version Bibles but you probably have a colon after sprinkling with his blood, colon, may grace and peace be multiplied to you.

This is Peter, he's identified himself as an apostle. He was one of the 12 disciples but more than that he was one of the intimate three.

[34 : 04] He was one of the three amigos so to speak following Jesus every day for three years. Witnessing Jesus, hearing Jesus, knowing Jesus intimately.

We know that Peter denied Christ and yet a resurrected Christ, when he found out or heard word that the tomb was empty, he outran John out of hopes of being reconciled with Christ.

Later, Christ would meet him for breakfast on a beach and he would say, do you love me? And Peter would say, oh yes, I love you. He'd say, well then feed my sheep. Do you love me?

Yes, yes, then tend my sheep. Do you love me, Peter? Three times he had denied, three times he would affirm that he did love him and three times Jesus would say, you have something for my sheep.

The greatest thing that Peter has for his sheep is his personal experience of grace from God through the forgiveness of sins, even his rejection of Jesus who he knew and had walked with intimately and the peace that that brought to be in a right relationship with God as his father.

[35 : 29] That is what Peter, that's the, that's a, that's really a theme that he carries through 1st Peter and I believe into 2nd Peter that he wants for God's people, he wants for us, the hearers and the readers today, he wants no matter whatever we face, he wants a personal experience of grace through Jesus Christ to carry us with all hope and joy through any trial, any laughter, any mocking, any persecution, any sidelining, any temptation that you'll face.

Now he's writing during the time of Nero. The writing of 1st Peter and 2nd Peter, you know, some books of the Bible and letters, we, we, it's a lot more guesswork than certainty, but we are certain for 1st Peter.

He's writing under the realm, under the leadership, even identifies when he says, as I read earlier, over in verse 13, to be subject to the emperor supreme, there's language there that he's actually, it's code for Nero.

Now Nero had not, it's around 64 A.D., 64 A.D., Jesus dying on the cross around 33 A.D.

So it's approximately 30 years later. Now Nero is beginning to persecute Christians in Rome and it's going to radiate out all to the Roman Empire.

[37 : 08] He's going to bring them into the, you know, the gladiatorial games. He's going to begin to blame them for the fire, which is yet to happen. So Nero, the persecution is not yet as fierce as it's going to be, but eventually Peter himself will be martyred and crucified.

Reportedly, legend says that he did not even count crucifixion like Jesus did not count himself worthy, so he was crucified upside down. But Peter is writing, it identifies five churches, think about five population or church centers.

They didn't during this time have churches as beautiful as Dumfries. A lot of the churches met in homes, more like home churches. Some met even in outdoors, along rivers, having better weather conditions I think many times than Glasgow does.

But these are all located in Asia Minor, what is now Turkey. so it's not downtown Rome, but it's the outlying areas.

And it's an area that had become identified with the dispersion. Now the dispersion was when the Jews, many of them voluntarily, had left Jerusalem.

[38 : 37] Some because of economics and finance, some because of Roman oppressor, they didn't want to be around the Romans, and they sought areas that were yet not quite under the Roman thumb.

But these areas, it's important that you recognize, these areas, and I'll say this again in just a moment, they represent the entire church. Think about a postal service.

This letter of 1 Peter, and there's, as he identifies them in order, if you were to have yet one of those Bibles, I wish that my latest ESV, which I've had for a number of years now, had the map.

When I was a kid, I didn't appreciate the map in the back of my Bible, but I do now. But if you could identify these areas on a map, you would see that he names them, and it's like a circuit, and this letter would go, and it would reach what some commentators say would be such a high percentage of Christian folk that it's like reaching every Christian in the known world.

So his message is not like Paul to the Corinth church, addressing a specific problem with a specific congregation. But it's as if Peter is saying through this letter, Dumfries, I count you as a part of the church, you're universal.

[40 : 02] But this is not a historical document for a particular time, a particular place. This is a church, this is a document that the church needs to hear. And as an apostle, I'm writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to you.

One more thing about the context before I quickly talk about what does it look like to be a chosen person in a chosen place. His primary audience were Gentiles.

This is not Jews. His primary audience were Gentiles, not Jews. Now think about, if this is if you know your Bibles and you particularly know Romans and Galatians and the argument of the apostle Paul, that there was a great race war.

The two races of Jews and Gentiles were not reconciled. They were in enmity against one another. And here is a Jewish fisherman. He will become known as the apostle to the Gentiles. He is able to say, Gentiles, you're a part of this universal church too.

[41 : 23] This is a message for you. He includes them. He goes out of his way to include them. I think this is a great place to just identify the gospel.

It's a great place to identify that we do ourselves an about face on race or differences in other cultures and other people because of the gospel.

If I'm a beneficiary of the gospel of grace, if Jesus shed blood was not held back from me, there is no one too far from the forgiveness of their sins.

And once forgiven, they're called my brother and my sister no matter the skin color, culture, no matter the language. I have to remind myself of that.

I come from the south. We've got a long history of race wars because of our history, dark history of slavery. Wendy and I are part of a church plant in Helensboro.

[42 : 28] And you have Helensboro, and you've got Greenock, and you've got the port of Glasgow. Did you know that there was a direct link between Helensboro, I don't know if you're very familiar with Helensboro, or if you've ever driven around the peninsula to see the homes on the peninsula, but they were built, many of them, by trade with Charleston, South Carolina, our hometown.

Because the ships would leave the port of Glasgow, and they would come to America with their cargo, many of them slaves, and they would sell the slaves, but they would come back with sugar, and rum, and tobacco to the very port of Glasgow.

But you know, while it may seem like a tangent, it's so remarkable that this letter is set, and it's a Jewish fisherman who sees no difference between a Gentile, formerly pagan, and idolatry, probably of Rome, because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Well, who are these people that he's writing to that he identifies? Well, he calls them elect exiles, as I said earlier. That means they're chosen people. Chosen by who? Chosen by God, he says.

He says that I'm writing to elect exiles, verse 2, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. He could say, God their Father. The Father because he's the Father of us all.

[44 : 07] Wendy and I have never met physically any of you until this morning, but this is what I know about you. If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, if you've experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, then God is your Father.

But guess what? Me and Wendy are now your sister and your brother. You're stuck with us. And we can be tough to love. But it's good to meet you, brothers, sisters.

It's good to meet you. So, Peter is writing to family. And he's saying, even though you're spread out and there are people that you've never met, you're a part of the universal church in this world, and you're God's chosen people.

But he says, you're scattered. Some of your Bibles will actually instead of, it'll say, elect exiles scattered in Pontus, Galatius, Cappadocia, Asias, Bithynia.

And that's what the dispersion is about. This is not the great Jewish dispersion, but he's saying, even as Gentiles, apart from history in Judaism, you're experiencing an exile, but you've never left home.

[45 : 25] You know, an exile is someone that they leave home. Maybe they're fleeing persecution. Maybe they're fleeing for economic reasons.

Maybe they're running from trouble, but they go into a place where, like a refugee, it's not their homeland.

In other words, they've got a passport from another country. Well, he's saying Gentiles in these areas, most of them, they've never left home, but they have.

because now they've come to faith in Jesus Christ. In chapter four, in chapter four, verse three and four, he says, for the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do.

He's talking to them, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry, with respect to this, they are surprised when you, reader, you, audience, you, congregation, do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you.

[46 : 43] So he's saying, when you become a Christian, you set yourself up to be maligned because every exile has a story.

What brought you to this country? Well, I had, Wendy has, and I would count her as a friend to me now, though Wendy is much closer to her, she has a friend from Iran.

And her husband, after many, many months, has finally been able to come and to join her. But she fled, she fled Iran because of a forced marriage arrangement with a Muslim.

And she was a Christian. and so she fled to Glasgow, Scotland. That's her exile story. The Gentiles, even we, we've got an exile story.

Maybe you've lost friendships, maybe you're misunderstood now. If things keep going the way they are, it's going to get worse. Christians, it used to be, and you Scots are far ahead of us than America.

[47 : 56] But there was a day where Christians in Scotland, they were the first to be interviewed and invited to the table to lead the country.

Then over time, you began to be treated with indifference, and then you were dismissed, and now you're beginning to face persecution. The good guys are actually now seen as the bad guys.

you're holding back progress because you don't join in the reindeer games, you don't join in the orgies, or the passions, and the sensuality, or the gender issues.

You don't join in that, and it comes to be a point where you're not only seen as different and pushed to the margins, but you're actually going to face persecution.

Peter is writing this letter to us. Peter is let me just leave this by saying you are a part of a community, you're not alone.

[49 : 00] Everyone in this room is pushed to the margin of what we used to call the fringe, in some degree or another. Some degree or another you are, but we're together out there on the margins.

We're together in this outpost of Dumfries Church. We're together. And you have brothers and sisters. You're not alone. And what's more, you're elect.

You're chosen. Later on, Peter will say, you're God's peculiar people. You're his sons and his daughters, as incredible or as fantastical as that could sound.

But he now sees you in your union by faith with Jesus Christ as his dear children. Chapter 2, verses 11 through 17, we're introduced to another word for exile.

And it's sojourner. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles. Well, is he just being grammatically redundant? No. Sojourner is different from an exile.

[50 : 13] Sojourner is what we get the word pilgrim from. But I don't think pilgrim's a good definition because we tend to think of pilgrims as being people that are on a journey that they very quickly or systematically travel through a town or community.

A sojourner is defined as someone that's a longer term resident. But they still have their passport back home. they still can't claim all the rights of a full citizen.

Like in America. It was a big deal when Arnold Schwarzenegger wanted to be the governor of California because of his birth. He eventually wanted to be and would try to run, but he wanted to be president of the United States, but he couldn't because he wasn't born.

So there were certain rights in the United States. There were certain claims that he couldn't ever make. That he would be considered long-term resident, but not all the rights were his.

In Jeremiah 29, now this is what I believe Peter had in mind when he writes very specifically about what life in God's chosen place for us.

[51 : 41] God's very aware, just as aware that we're his chosen people as to where we are. Where we are actually by God's design is a mission field.

It's both for our sanctification, it makes us draw more and more upon God through the spirit to become Christ-like, but it's also a place that we're able to be fruitful, faithful, but that is not simply for ourselves, but it's for the very mission of God, which is to bring his kingdom into this world.

In Jeremiah 29, God himself in verse 4 says this, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

So, he's getting ready as a prophet to say, you're in exile, here is your travel guide. Peter is doing the same. What is it?

Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their produce. So, I must be going to stay a while. Wait a minute. I don't like exile life. I want to be back in Jerusalem.

[53 : 00] I want to be back with the true church. I don't want to be out here on the outpost and say, no, plant a garden. In fact, get married. Have wives. Have sons. Have daughters.

Take wives for your sons. Give your daughters in marriage that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there and do not decrease. In other words, say I don't want my kids born here.

I don't want my kids in this environment. But seek the welfare of the city. Now, remember those would be the ones that took them into exile. That would be the ones that would actually look down their noses at them as Jews and Hebrews.

Seek their welfare. Where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on his behalf. Did you catch that? It's a chosen place. I sent you into exile.

I know exactly where you are. To me, it tells me to stop whining and serve. And pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare, you will find your welfare.

[54 : 09] In serving even our enemies, we actually become more like Christ and we grow. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel.

Israel. Now, I'm not going to go through what I read earlier in verses 13 through 17, but I'd like for you to do so. And I'd like for you to just circle or highlight or write on a piece of paper one of those things.

One of those things, not that is easy for you that you're doing already, but one of those things that you got to question about because it's difficult.

If I were to ask a congregation in Bithynia to do this, they would right away, they would say, for the Lord's sake, I'm supposed to be subject to Nero and what he's doing to our church and God's people.

Yes, you're supposed to be subject to him. God is telling us that we've got three choices and two of the three choices are actually pitfall temptations.

[55 : 20] What are your choices? First of all, you can totally, totally hide in our culture. There can be no difference between you and your neighbor that does not know the Lord Jesus Christ.

You fully immerse, immerse yourself in the culture. You become a good Unitarian. You know, you got to worship, so you become a good Unitarian.

Or, you know, the second pitfall and temptation is to isolate yourself. In America, I don't know what it would be here, though I've got a, I think I do.

In America, we have the Amish. Wonderful Christian people. Wonderful. Except they're totally isolated. They've got their community and they draw the line between their community and their way of life and their culture and their faith and their worship and their witness and you.

They actually don't want to catch what you have. So they live in what Francis Schaeffer, a Christian philosopher, called a Christian ghetto. Only my Christian friends.

[56 : 30] Only my Christian church. Only my denomination. Only the free church. church. But if you look, Peter says that we are in verse 16 to live as servants of God.

And if you go down and have a footnote like I do, that footnote is *doulos*, which means sometimes it shows up as slave.

It's a slave servant, a bond servant, someone who is, they're serving to work off, they're working off their redemption price.

They were redeemed. I buy you slave. I buy you servant. I'll pay your debts. But now you've got to work it off. But it's much happier hearing.

Isn't that the way obedience works with us? We don't obey all this. You look at this list and it's daunting to serve my neighbor, to bless my neighbor, to pray for my neighbor, to look for any opportunity and yet the way they belittle Christians, but I'm to serve them.

[57 : 43] I do so not simply out of obedience, but I do it from obedience that flows from the gospel. Because Jesus paid my debt.

Because he redeemed me. I can redeem anybody, any situation, any neighborhood, even in the smallest of ways.

I become an ambassador of the king, his representative. I become like Jesus Christ in my community. Now, let me be immensely practical and yet still leave it to you to fill in the very specifics for this, even by name.

First of all, do you know Dumfries? And do you know your community? Do you know it? Do you know it sins? Do you know where it does not know God?

Do you know where, do you know where they're far from God? God. When we plant churches, one of the first things we do is we exegete a community.

[58 : 59] We break it apart. We look and we say, what do they struggle with? What's the sin pattern there? What are the needs? How many Christians are there? How many people, is there a need for a new church there?

Do you know your community and its needs? Do you know the mission field? Number two, you can pray. Elsewhere in 1 Peter, he says, you have been blessed for this very reason, to bless other people, not curse them.

He says, don't curse them. You've been blessed. And what's up with that? Keep it to yourself?

Isolate? No. To bless others. Think about a prayer walk through your street, maybe in the workplace, maybe in the classroom, a prayer walk, and you're just saying, Lord, bless them.

We've got a difficult neighbor in our building. When I walk by their door, I actually, they're on the third, and we're on the ground level, but when I see them, I'm always thinking, Lord, bless her, bless her, bless her, silently.

But I'm praying, and I really mean it. Serve. This is going to take all sorts. This is going to look in all sorts of ways, but think of somebody that you can serve, even in the smallest of ways, but it's got to cost you something.

[60 : 15] It needs to be something that is a bit of a sacrifice. sacrifice. And then, as I said earlier, the last is to redeem. Know that this is purposeful.

You may be, what if, what if you're the only Christian in your neighborhood? Is it going to make a difference? You may never see the difference in your lifetime, but if you're praying, and you're blessing, and you're looking for opportunities to be the neighbor that serves, you're going to appear to be an exile.

You're not just a Dumfries citizen. There's something peculiar about you. There's a glow about your life, and you may even have an opportunity to say, it's Jesus.

Let me pray. Heavenly Father, Father, we give you Dumfries. It's the place of our exile as Christians.

But we also give you our very lives and our heart. Because, Father, you've given to us Jesus Christ. Not only did he shed his blood for us, but we read here by Peter that he sprinkled us with that blood. [61 : 42] We have daily pardon and forgiveness by the shed blood of our Savior. And now, Father, we want to bring glory to Jesus.

We want to be like him in our families, in all of our relationships, in our neighborhoods, in this town, in our nation. We know, Father, that we're mocked, treated with indifference, even hostility.

But, Father, we would show that you are our true king. That we are exiles from a homeland, but we would have others to come along as well.

And show us opportunities, not so much to speak, even though we want to be found ready for that, but as to serve. would you show us, and would you show us, ever and always, how you serve us with all grace through Jesus Christ, that the overflow of our life might be acts of service for his kingdom's sake and his name's sake to bring him glory.

And we ask all of these things in the name of Jesus. Amen. We're going to conclude in song by singing Psalm Oops, I lost my notes.

[63 : 11] Okay, Psalm 67 and it's verses Okay, it's in the whole song, the whole psalm.

Page 300. Here we go as Shine on us where thy face Like the earth, my heavenly nations Call me, Lord, I say in praise Let me, O praise thee, Lord

Let me, O holy praise O let the nations be glad In songs their voices raise Now just sing, O just On earth, my nations All let me, O praise thee, Lord Let them praise thee, O great and small

The earth, my full shall yield Our God shall praise sing God shall us rest And shall have fear Unto their sons will stand Now this day may you know love of God as your Father And may you know the grace of your Savior Your Redeemer and your Lord Jesus Christ

And the abiding peace by the very presence of the Holy Spirit With you today and forever Amen Amen Amen Amen