

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 2:11-12

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] As we turn our attention now to our text for the message this morning, all of us want to live honorably before the Lord and before this world.

! We also want to know how do we do that. I think we all appreciate knowing the why behind what we're supposed to do.

And so today we're going to find that to live honorably, we're going to hear the why behind why are we supposed to live honorably. And we're going to find that there is both a reason for us personally to live honorably, but there is also a reason for the watching world that we are to live honorably because we are being observed.

And there's a reason the Lord has placed you in where you are in this world. So if you want to, if you have a Bible with you, I encourage you, we're in the middle of a sermon series in 1 Peter chapter 2.

If you can turn your Bible to 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 11, we'll find ourselves in the sermon series of the book of 1 Peter. 1 Peter 3.

[1 : 50] So we're going to see in our text today, and let me read our text, 1 Peter chapter 2, just two verses, 11 and 12.

We're told to live honorably in verse 2.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable. Well, we're told four ways that we are to do that. There's four things that we must adopt, so to speak, to live honorably.

Our first point that we have is we are to live honorably, that there is a mindset that we must adopt. In order to live honorably, there's a mindset we are supposed to adopt.

So, if we find that mindset in verse 11, Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles, abstain from fleshly passions of the flesh.

[3 : 07] Passions of the flesh. But we are to adopt this mindset. What is the mindset? We are to have a mindset as sojourners and exiles. Imagine with me, my wife and I were here, or we're in the location that I'm going to describe, way out in Siberia, Russia, there's a lake Baikal there in a town called Irkutsk, and that's where we were at one deep winter, and it's cold in Siberia, in case you're curious, in winter.

It's true. Negative 30 was the temperature. So, my wife and I were there, but imagine you had to make your way down to India, and you're out in the middle of nowhere, Russia, and you had to go south, you had to push down into Mongolia, cross the Gobi Desert, keep pushing out into a very barren wasteland of the Gobi Desert and eastern China, pressing further south, Nepal, the Himalayan mountains are there, and finally you get down to India.

In that journey, you would think, I don't belong here. You're a sojourner. You're on your way. You're in exile. This is not your home country. This is not your home language.

Nothing about this is familiar. And the other part about it is you're supposed to gather people along with you and say, come, I'm going to India.

You should come with me on my journey as I go. No. That is spiritually, or a physical picture of what it should look like for us spiritually as Christians.

[4 : 44] We're to have a sojourner and an exile mentality. So to help us with that, which is foreign to most of us, it's hard for us to think of ourselves as saying, I am an ambassador for Christ.

My citizenship is in heaven. I am, yes, I live in this world, but I'm going home to the Lord and to heaven, and I'm passing through, and I'm going to try to invite as many people to consider Christ and come on this journey with me as I go there.

And it takes a mentality shift to think of ourselves as that is the purpose of your life. So we are to consider ourselves sojourners and exiles on this earth.

You're here just temporarily. You're a temporary resident. You're a sojourner in a foreign country. Because the resident and the sojourner have different mindsets.

Let me try to contrast the two, just to give you an example. The resident mindset concerning attachment and detachment says this. The resident settles in. The resident of Mongolia just settles in.

[6 : 03] This is their home of China, of Nepal. They just settle in. They invest deeply in the culture and the economy and the comforts of the surroundings because this is their home. Their hopes, their ambitions, their sense of identity are tied to what happens to that nation.

But sojourners, they are grateful. They're exiles. They're foreign aliens. They're grateful for where they are, but they hold everything loosely.

They know this isn't home, so they don't put their ultimate hope in the systems or the politics or the pleasures that that culture has. Or their heart is set on a better country, and that is the one that is heavenly.

A resident and sojourner also are contrasted in terms of security and expectations. The resident expects safety. They expect their rights.

They expect stability as a normal part of their life. But a sojourner expects discomfort. They expect misunderstanding.

[7 : 11] They expect mistreatment. They see hardship not as strange, but as just part of the journey. Their security is not national. It's eternal.

We see there's a difference in resident mentality and sojourner mentality in our mission and in our purpose as well.

The resident mentality seeks to build and protect their life with a system to make things better and to make things better for them and their descendants. A sojourner sees their life as on mission to bear witness to the king as they pass through, and they see themselves as ambassadors representing another homeland and inviting others to come with them.

So I ask the question, do you have a resident mentality or do you have a sojourner mentality in this world? The resident says, this is my country.

I belong here. A sojourner says, I am here for now, but my citizenship is elsewhere. I appreciate the author of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 11.

[8 : 20] It's called what I call the Hall of Faith. The author of Hebrews in chapter 11 mentions Abel and Enoch and how these people were men of faith and Noah and Abraham.

And it mentions Sarah, this wonderful woman who is a person of faith. And so the author of Hebrews is writing and he is saying, these are these people of faith.

And so let's listen then to the author of Hebrews as after he mentions those individuals that I just mentioned, he says this of them. These all died in faith, but having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on this earth.

For the people speak thus, make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had the opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. And so these people of old were looking for this city of God, if you will, off in the distance, and they kept that as their focus and aim, which they exercised faith.

[9 : 46] So to live honorably that others one day may honor God, we must first adopt a mindset. The second thing we must do is acknowledge that there is a war to fight.

It says, verse 11, beloved, I urge you as sojourners of exiles, what's the war? To abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. To abstain from the passions of the flesh. Abstain means to refrain from something, to hold oneself constantly back from something. And so we are to refrain, hold ourselves back from the passions of the flesh.

And I appreciate Paul writing to the church at Galatia. He writes down to help us out, well, what does the things of the flesh include? In Galatians chapter 5, 19 through 21, he gives us a good list to get our minds oriented on that.

The works of the flesh, we're told, are evident, which are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

[10:54] I appreciate that Paul, instead of making his list all inclusive, he may have left some things out and so he says, and things like these.

That's how he concludes. In case I missed it, whatever you're thinking about, yes, include that too. That's the work of the flesh. So we're to abstain from things like these.

And this is our war because why would we abstain from things like these? Because it says that they wage war against your soul.

That sin is either increasing ground in your soul. The image I have is that my soul, either sin is capturing ground of my soul or I'm recapturing ground and I'm gaining life because sin is being abated.

And it takes me and you the discipline to abstain from the passions of the flesh to gain ground and resist sin so our soul is enlarging to the things of God.

[12:02] If you win the war against sin in your thought life, you win the war of sin in your behavior. A few things are less enlightening than a post-game interview of a coach.

So after a coach wins a game, let's pick a football game for an example, and so then the news broadcaster goes and finds that coach and sticks a camera and microphone in his mouth and he says, how'd you win?

Or what did you find me? And they have like this three-second canned question ready to ask the coach and few things are less enlightening in this world than that response because you're going to hear one of five responses.

We never gave up. Our guys fought hard. We never stopped believing in ourselves. We gave it 110% or these kids deserve all the credit in the world. So now, after you watch today's game, just turn off the TV.

When the game is done, just turn it off because you're not going to be enlightened one whit about anything you just heard. But I'm afraid, I'm afraid that Christians are no better at responding to the question, how do you abstain from the deeds of the flesh that wage war against your soul?

[13:17] Because you'll hear us say things like, well, just give it over to God. Let go, let God. I don't know what that means, but we say it. Or give it over to the Lord.

And that's good, but what does that mean? Or just believe in the promises of God. Take God at His word. That's all very good, but what are we saying when we say that?

So to avoid providing unenlightening post-game thoughts on that very question, I'm going to try to be more specific with you. how is it that we abstain from doing the deeds of the flesh?

What does that practically look like? And I'm going to borrow from Kevin DeYoung who wrote a book and he had a four-word phrase to help us understand what does that look like.

He says it this way, that your obedience is spirit-powered. First thing, your obedience is firstly spirit-powered.

[14:19] In fact, look with me back to where we started, 1 Peter 1, verse 2. According to the foreknowledge God, in the sanctification of the Spirit, you are being sanctified by the Spirit.

So the Spirit empowers us to obey the Lord. Our obedience is spirit-powered. Spirit-powered. The Spirit, because He is the one who places us in Christ in our justification, He is also the one who is empowering us through progressive sanctification to live unto Him.

So the Christian should not ever, I don't like defeatist Christian mentalities who may say something like this, a Christian should not ever be able to say, cannot say, I was just born this way, it will never change in my life, and I don't have enough faith.

No, no, no, no, no. The Spirit brought you unto Himself, justified you, and now He is in the process of sanctifying you so you can now obey the Lord.

You're not being humble if you say those things. You actually dishonor the Lord who strengthens you with supernatural power to change, to live for Him, to obey Him.

[15:37] You say, Scott, help me further understand this. Romans chapter 1 through 11 are amazing chapters.

We go through this landscape of Romans. In Romans chapter 1 through 11, we read about justification, that you've been declared righteous.

You learn about being adopted into God's family. You learn about predestination and atonement, reconciliation, preservation of your life, glorification.

These are all theological words, but it's what God has done on your behalf to bring you to Himself and the things you get to enjoy. After the 11th chapter in Romans, Paul pivots and gets very

practical in a Christian's life.

And in chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, we read the following. You may have these verses memorized. We read, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

[16:45] Look at this, look at this. In verse 1, he says, I appeal to you, but his appeal is rooted in something. Its appeal is rooted in the mercies of God, which are the things that he just spoke to, chapters 1 through 11, he's summarizing God's justification, his preservation, your sanctification, your adoption, all of these things.

He says, all of that, I'm going to just summarize by saying, I appeal to you because of the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

By His Spirit, you can do this. Holy and acceptable God, which is your spiritual service. and he goes on.

So firstly, our obedience, we must see, is spirit-powered. It is motivated by gratitude.

Oh, look at all the mercies of God that we enjoy. So it's motivated by a sense of gratitude, and secondly, the gospel motivates us by telling us the truth of who we are.

[17:57] We are in Christ. So here's some examples. You're heirs to the whole world, so why envy? If we are God's treasured possession, why be jealous?

If God is our Father, why are we afraid? If we are dead to sin, why do I live in it? If we were raised with Christ, why continue our old sinful ways?

If we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places, why act like the devil in hell? If we are loved with an everlasting love, why are we trying to prove our worth to the world?

If Christ is my all and all, why am I so preoccupied with myself? Our obedience is spirit-powered. Secondly, our obedience, I'm sorry, that was the second part I skipped, is gospel-driven. That's where I was when I was talking about Romans.

[19:03] Spirit-powered, gospel-driven, faith-fueled. It is faith-fueled. Faith is central to Christianity.

We not only are saved by grace through faith, so by faith we are justified, but by faith we make every effort to be sanctified. And by faith we are taking God at His word and His promises.

So let me share with you how faith operates and it is taking God at His promises.

It is trusting the Lord to be faithful to the promises that He's declared. So if we read, if you're looking for a place to start memorizing some scripture, I would choose the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes are beautiful. Why? There are so many promises listed in the Beatitudes. Let's look at a few as we read the Beatitudes together. It says in Matthew 5, 2-12, and He, that is Jesus, opened His mouth and He taught them and the them are His disciples that in verse 1 talk about being seated on the hillside there.

[20:20] So He opens His mouth and He teaches His disciples and He says this in verse 3, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward in heaven is great.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Here's what I want us to see. How is my obedience faith fueled? Will I take a promise of the Lord look with me again in verse 3?

[21:21] For theirs is the... Look at all the promises. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. For you shall be comforted. For you shall inherit the earth. For you shall be satisfied. You will receive mercy. You will see God. You will be called sons of God.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven and your reward is great in heaven. There are nine promises listed in the Beatitudes alone. So how does this faith... How is my obedience faith fueled?

Well, I like to think about the promises of God when I face temptation. So... And I'll say this. Verse 8 is probably the verse in Scripture that is helpful for anyone who battles with lust.

Which is all of us. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. So let me give you a practical example that really happened. I was on Division Street several summers ago.

I was memorizing Matthew 5, verse 8. And it had fallen out of my memory so I was re-memorizing this verse. And a cheerleading team was raising money to go to camp and they were offering a car wash.

[22 : 31] And so there was more skin revealed than concealed as they were showing their signs and welcoming people to enjoy their car wash. Everyone catch me? Okay. So as a result, I'm sitting in my car and there they all are off to the right, right on the sidewalk and my vehicle is maybe 15 feet.

And I think, I want to see God. Blessed are the pure in heart. I will not take a second look. I will not take a second look. So do you see how my faith is fueled by a promise of God? You're going to see God. But it requires a condition of being pure in heart.

And in that moment of temptation, I exercise. I said, Lord, I quoted this verse in my heart and I began to pray for others and I don't look.

Do you see how obedience is spirit-powered, gospel-fueled, faith-fueled because we focus on the promise of God and say, Lord, I'm going to take you at your word and I'm going to apply your word to my life.

[23 : 48] I want to be a man who is pure in heart. It could be the same principle could be related to someone who struggles with just scrolling on social media.

And as studies have shown, you scroll on social media, people begin to compare themselves. People think, she's more prettier than I am. I wish I had a body like that person.

And so they begin to have temptations to not be grateful for what the Lord has given.

And so a person in this way can use the same verse. Lord, I want to see you and I want to be pure in heart. Help me, Lord. All of these words, spirit-power, gospel-driven, faith-fueled, my obedience is spirit-powered, gospel-driven, faith-fueled, and then lastly, all of these words, all these phrases modify the word effort.

Kevin DeYoung writes it this way, my obedience is spirit-powered, gospel-driven, faith-fueled effort. And please notice, effort is not a four-letter word.

[25 : 07] It's beautiful. It takes effort. Your sanctification, do not stall out on your sanctification simply for a lack of effort.

Let me say it that way. It takes effort to spend time with Christ and His word and to pray. It takes effort to take thoughts captive and bring them into obedience to Christ.

It takes effort to say no to temptation. It takes effort to do works of righteousness. It takes effort to serve the Lord. It takes effort to serve the body. It takes spirit-powered, gospel-driven, faith-fueled effort to be pleasing to the Lord.

I was visiting with Pastor Jay and come this Easter, we want to encourage you before Easter to 40 days before Easter to take a fast from technology, some form of technology in your life.

I just, this week, I had the privilege of sitting in a doctor's office waiting to be seen and as I was sitting there, it dawned on me, I'm the only one other than this older man sitting in the waiting room who is not scrolling on their phone.

[26 : 19] Now, I'm not saying everyone in the room is not doing something healthy on their phone. They could be checking emails or texting their family or reading their Bible app or something. I don't know what they were doing, but it just marked me.

I was thinking, we're so connected and yet detached from one another with technology and it's almost, technology is stealing our souls and we are losing our humanity with technology and I, so I don't know what that will look like in your life of giving up one form of technology or another, but to take that time and then do something productive.

I think about someone who may watch copious amounts of TV to say, I'm going to turn it off and write a letter to my loved one. I think about someone who just scrolls way too much time on social media just to say, I'm not going to do social media, I'm going to cancel my accounts and I'm going to learn a skill or bless someone, go over to someone's house, be company to somebody, visit another.

I don't know what it looks like for you and we're going to talk more about that as we approach Easter, but I just, we're one of the most connected yet isolated generations.

I also want to commend to you a consideration in this verse. We're told to abstain from the passions of your flesh.

[27 : 47] If your cell phone is a device that has access to things that do not help you or give you plenty of opportunity for temptation, I want to submit to you something called a light phone, L-I-G-H-T phone, light phone.

The light phone is a phone that is not, it's kind of a blend between a dumb phone and a smart phone. It does not have a web browser. You cannot download apps on it.

It is just simply a calendar, a phone, and a texting machine. A calendar, phone, and a texting machine and that's all it does and it allows you to almost reclaim your humanity with what the use of a phone is.

Anyway, I submit it to you and you say to me, oh Scott, that's just a sign of weakness. Actually, it just also may be a sign of wisdom and I would not, I would only commend you if you got a cell phone, a light phone and you say, good job.

If that's a device that helps you, I commend it to you. Okay. In order to live honorably, that one day we may honor God, we have a mindset of adoption, there is a war to fight, there is a righteous way of life.

[29 : 02] Look with me in verse 12. Our third point is we have a righteous way of life. Keep your conduct honorable among the Gentiles. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable. The Gentiles are those who, in this context, do not know the Lord.

Keep your conduct honorable. The way you live your life, make it beautiful and it may be attractive. Why? Because they're going to speak of you as evildoers.

But, may they see your good deeds and glorify God. So, may your life be beautiful. May they see, it says in the verse.

Even though you may not be aware of it, unbelievers are watching your life. They see how you react to things. They see how you respond to others. They see how you talk to others, handle your problems, treat your family.

They are watching all of it. And Peter is not naive to think that those good deeds will result in an immediate conversion per se.

[30 : 05] Rather, your good deeds may be criticized. Jealousy, guilt, insecurity, slander, they're going to speak of them as you as evildoers. So, you know, sometimes I've heard on occasion, Christians sometimes complain, I'm the only Christian in the building in which I work.

I'm the only Christian in my family. I'm the only Christian in my neighborhood. I'm the only Christian in my class at school and on and on and it can go. You know what I call that, borrowing a military term? That's a target-rich environment.

That is wonderful that you're the only Christian because look how many people get to observe your life. Wonderful. Praise the Lord.

Be thankful. Yes, it may elevate the amount of people who may criticize you, but stay faithful because, look at that verse, keep your honorable conduct among the Gentiles so that when they speak against your evil deeds, they see your good deeds or speak of you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God in visitation, which brings me to my last point.

Live honorably that others may honor, that one day may honor God because there is a mindset to adopt, there is a war to fight, there is a righteous way of life, and there is a day to remember.

[31 : 29] There is a day to remember. The day of visitation can go both positively and negatively in the Bible. It speaks of it both ways. For the evildoer and those who are lost, the day of visitation is not going to be a positive thing.

But for those of us in Christ, it will be a glorious thing to have a day of visitation. And the hope is that those in the lost world will see one's life who's living honorably, and it says that they may glorify God, they don't now, but they will one day place their faith in Christ and glorify God that in the day of visitation.

That's the hope. That's the prayer. Let me conclude with this story. There was two missionaries, a husband and wife team, Herb and Ruth Klingren.

They were missionaries in the Philippines during the close of World War II. In the close of World War II, they did not evacuate the Philippines, and so the Japan swept the Philippine Islands and captured these two, and they were put into a prison camp for civilians, this missionary couple.

Toward the end of the war, they had survived. This missionary couple had survived. They had survived torture. They had survived starvation. They were skeleton with flesh by the time the war had ended.

[32 : 49] And to be cruel of all cruels, the commander, his name was Kanoshi. He was the commandant of the prison camp. To be cruel, he wanted to give them an abundance of rice as the war was ending.

This was like a day or two before the American forces were going to liberate the camp, and the guy knew, my time is short, and so I'm going to give them an abundance of rice, but he gave it to them in the form of palais, which is husked rice.

And there was nothing in the camp to de-husk the rice so that they could eat, and because the commandant knew this is the cruelest form of torture, I'm going to give them a lot of food, but if they eat it without being husked, it will tear up that, the razor-sharp husk will tear up their intestines and their esophagus, and they will bleed to death and die.

So he gave them a ton of food, but they couldn't eat it, and there was no tools in the camp by which they could de-husk their rice. Thankfully, so then the U.S. forces liberated the camp, and before they had eaten the rice, later, this couple knew that this commandant was a groundskeeper for a golf course in the Philippines outside of Milan.

Not Milan. The capital. Thank you. Manila. Milan, Manila. Potato, potato.

[34 : 18] So, and Herb and Ruth, his wife, he, that commandant was found guilty of war crimes and killed, but before he died, he spoke that he had come to faith in Christ, and they asked, what moved you?

Why? And this was his answer. I saw the missionaries' response to the abuse and the mistreatment and for the care of others in the camp, and I could not help but think the God that they proclaim is real.

I pray we would be a people who would live honorably that one day others may honor the Lord. And so, may we live that way.

Would you pray with me? Father, you are good. We thank you for an opportunity to hear from you today, read your word, see how it applies to our life.

Lord, I pray that we would take abstaining from the flesh and that wages war, our flesh, that just wages war on our soul.

[35 : 43] Lord, I pray that we would take seriously abstaining from the passions of our flesh, that we would be a people who would honor you, and that we would keep our conduct and remember that the Gentiles, those without Christ, are watching our everyday life.

They see what our mouth says. They hear what our mouth says. They see our actions. They see our behavior. They know how we treat others. And may we be reminded, Lord, we must live honorably.

That one day they would honor you. Thank you for Herb and Ruth's example as they were missionaries and they suffered. Thank you for their example. But Lord, I pray that even this week as we go back to work, maybe there's someone to apologize to and say, hey, my life has not bore witness to the God that I serve.

Would you forgive me? And may that be a catalyst in the beginning point of a new testimony that we lay before those watching. Forgive us for all the ways that we have not lived for you. And may we do so this week.

We love you, Lord. Amen. Amen.