

Elected Exiles

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Date: 26 May 2019

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[0 : 00] It is a great privilege to be with you this morning. When Colin asked me last week if I would be willing or able to preach this week in his absence, I jumped on the opportunity.

Jumped on an opportunity because I wanted an opportunity to share with you and to minister to you and encourage your hearts in this grand city of Glasgow as to how God has been encouraging my heart recently.

This text, 1 Peter 1, verses 1 and 2, is something that came up in my morning readings and my devotion. And I've been looking at what is known as a two-word sermon, elect exiles.

And I've been studying that as to why Peter, a messenger, an apostle, a disciple, one of the twelve, one of the intimate three, one who is now an apostle to the Gentiles, why he would address the congregation and his hearers as elect and exiles.

But that is what we are. Wendy and I are frequently asked in the week that we've been here, usually the first question is not, what is your name, but where are you from?

[1 : 34] And Wendy snapped a photo of my back on the streets of Glasgow, and you can observe that I have a backpack on, and I've got rolling luggage in each hand, and that's because we've stowed the other very four large bags in Colin's office.

And we have been moving. We've been on a bit of an adventure. We've been moving around from Airbnbs and twice now back and forth to the most gracious host and hostess that we could have ever fallen in with, and that is Evan and Allison McDonald.

They've opened up their home and their cat to us, and we've enjoyed our time there, not to mention Allison's cooking. But when we first landed at the airport, and we came with our passports and then our temporary visa to the customs officer, she asked us, well, where are you coming from?

And we said, well, we're coming out of Charleston, South Carolina. Well, where are you going to be staying during your time here? Well, there was already the makings of a glitch in that, and so we're like, we don't quite know.

Already we were beginning to assume the posture of exiles, fresh from your homeland in a new place and not quite sure of where you're going to go. Well, what are you going to be doing during your time here?

[3 : 00] Are you going to be touring our lovely country? I was wanting to say, because I did feel like a tourist at that point, having just got off the airplane, I wanted to say, yes, we're going to have a great holiday.

No, this was a one-way flight. We're going to be living here. We're going to be staying here. And then she proceeded to welcome us to the country, and then she asked again, well, what are you going to be doing?

And we said, our prayer is to work and to be of some assistance to the Free Church of Scotland, particularly attached to Glasgow City Free Church.

And she said, oh, that's going to be grand. Welcome to Scotland. And so we're here.

And we're here for the next four to five years. We have a three-year visa, and then we reapply. But we are here as long as you will have us. And we're delighted to be here.

[4 : 03] If you wanted to have an outline this morning for the blank sermon notes section, then I would encourage you with three Cs. First of all, I just want to talk a moment about context.

Let's get into Peter's head. Let's understand his heart to his readers. And who are his readers anyway?

Secondly, after we look at context briefly, I want to have you look at chosen people. Chosen people. And then third, to conclude, look at chosen places. Context. Context. Chosen children. Chosen places.

First of all, context as to who is Peter and who is he writing to. Well, I've already said that he's more than a Bible teacher or a mere author.

[5 : 00] He was one of the disciples. He was one that walked with Christ alongside of him and sat at his feet in his teaching during those three years of Christ's public ministry.

But more than that, he was one of the three. He was a part of some very intimate experiences, such as the transfiguration. And we also know that when Christ was seized, that in the garden, Peter fled with all the other disciples, but then drawing near to the courts and by the fire, three times denied Christ.

But then upon Christ's resurrection, he came back and he specifically called out from the disciples a meeting with Peter.

And there, with breakfast on a beach, fresh fish that he himself was preparing, Jesus spoke to Peter. And he asked him, do you love me?

Three times. Parallel to the three times that he denied him. And Peter said, yes, I do. And he said, feed my sheep. Care for my little lambs. And he restored him.

[6 : 14] Peter in Acts, we see him preaching at the event of Pentecost and 3,000 converts, 3,000 who were far from God, but near to Peter, heard him.

And the Holy Spirit struck their heart that this is true. The forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, whom we crucified, now ascended at the right hand of God, it's true.

And convicted of their sin, they received Christ as their Savior. Many were Jews, but more were Gentiles.

And over a period of time, communities of faith began to be established. Churches were established. He's speaking here to the churches that are in the provinces of Pontus, Galatius, Cappadocius, Asia, and Bithynia.

And looking at a map, that is a map of the Roman Empire. Imagine the mail carrier. Peter has elicited the services of a scribe.

[7 : 27] He's written this letter of 1 Peter, and subsequently 2 Peter. He entrusts it to the mail carrier. Look at his route. His route is going to be all of the major provinces of Rome.

We can learn that this was an area that covered, in essence, the known world at that time. Rome was in authority, and Rome ruled, and dominated its citizens by the power of the sword.

That was the kingdom of Rome. And Peter said, here is your task. Carry this letter throughout the kingdom of Rome.

For there were Christians, primarily, again, Gentiles, but many Jews, that were located in all of these cities. What can we conclude?

What can we conclude? Because the other letters may say, as Colossae, Paul to the saints in Colossae, or Paul to the saints in Ephesus, or Thessalonica.

[8 : 48] But here, Peter covers, he writes in this letter, and he addresses every Christian in this Roman kingdom throughout the land.

What we can conclude, because these are not literal exiles. There was not a literal exodus from Jerusalem.

This was an exodus of everyday life. Perhaps it was business that took them to another place. Perhaps it was study opportunities. Perhaps you were a young person and your family moved, and you moved with them.

The word for exile can be a little bit misleading to us in our contemporary world. It really means new resident or alien.

It means this place is not where I'm from, but I'm here now. It means this is where I reside, but it's not my point of origination.

[9 : 57] It's not my homeland. An exile or an alien, a sojourner, a foreigner, a newcomer, they carry with them their homeland, many with a longing to return.

And Peter addresses them as that. You're aliens because you're of another kingdom. You may have even been born there in Pontius, Galatius, Cappadocia, Asia, or Bithynia.

You may have been born there and known no other place. And yet you're in exile as well because, as I said earlier from Colossians 1.6, you've been moved from a kingdom of darkness, if you're a follower of Christ, to a kingdom of the sun.

Side road. In 300 years, 300 years from the writing of this letter that went through all the kingdom of Rome, Pax Romana would become a Christian nation.

These exiles, they lived their faith in the place that God had placed them.

[11:19] And the big idea of this text is that we, if you're a Christian this morning, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, then He is our King.

And we are in His kingdom. We are God's chosen children and He has chosen our places to live, to work, and yes, to play.

We're chosen children. So you have the context. And look to now to see that we're chosen children. We are God's elect.

He has called us to Himself. When I was, there's universities and there are colleges in the southeast where I grew up.

Growing up in South Carolina, I wanted, when it came time to go to college, I wanted to go as far away geographically from my home as I possibly could.

[12:26] Never thinking that I would graduate, I just wanted one year of fun. Well, the farthest that I could go was the, I went from the, the, the foothills of South Carolina to the coast and the beaches of Charleston, South Carolina to a military college.

And while I was there, I lived quite wildly. But there was a man in my barracks. It was not dormitory style housing.

It was barracks type of living. We wore uniforms. We paraded with arms. We, we had drills on top of all of our classes. Many men graduated similar to West Point.

It was called the Little West Point of the South, but they would go on to the military. But there was one man who had what we might call the glow.

He was a Christian. I did not know it at that time. But I noticed that he always seemed to be happy. What I now know to be joy.

[13:31] And he, I was very angry, easy to anger over every situation, but not him. And I went to him and I said, I had gotten into quite a bit of trouble, even close to being expelled.

And he said, I said, how are you, how are you so peaceful? How are you so happy? And he says, you really don't want to know. You're not ready. And I said, no, no, I really want to know.

And he says, well, I'm not going to tell you. And I thought, well, that's, that's not very good. He said, you know, you were issued and I'll share my testimony later.

But he said, you were issued when you were admitted a Bible, just a New Testament. Go start reading that. Best thing that he could have told me because I was not interested in Christianity.

I was certainly ready to argue with him, but I thought, fair enough, you're not going to tell me anyway. I went back to my quarters. I opened up the Bible. I read the table of contents.

[14:35] I read the introduction. I'd never read a Bible before. The first chapter, the first book in the Bible is Matthew. And as we have prayed this morning, the Lord's Prayer, that was my, what we call, Converts Prayer, Sinners Prayer.

because when we got, when I got to Matthew 6, it said, go, when you pray, go to a place in secret. And I looked around there. This was a place of secret. And pray to your Father who is in heaven. I knew God as a judge or so I thought. And I feared Him and I did not want anything to do with Him. Thought He was too demanding. But to know Him as a Father. I had a terrible relationship with my earthly Father. It said, go to your closet and pray to your Father in heaven.

And when you pray, pray this. Our Father. He could be mine. Our Father in heaven. Martin Luther says about this Lord's Prayer, he said, the Lord's Prayer, whenever we pray, we should always pause with our Father.

[15:51] I've got to move on. But can I tell you that if you're a Christian, you have a Father in heaven. Not simply a creator. Not simply a judge.

Not simply a great king and a Lord over us. But a Father. And notice, that's how Peter begins his letter. He has quite a few challenges and commands that demand our obedience in 1 and 2 Peter. But what does he start with? He starts with saying, they come from your loving Father. They come from a Father who has elected, which means chosen you.

Imagine going to an orphanage and the Father doesn't line up all the orphans that could be adopted and says, I'm going to choose that lad because he's tall and he's strong and he will fit into my family.

He says, I will take any that will come. I'll empty the orphanage. I will take them all. He chooses us. And we're unworthy.

[17 : 00] We're ragged and we're tired. We're full of ourselves. We have been enemies to him. And he says, I will wash you and I will forgive you in Jesus Christ.

And then, I will not simply call you servant and I will not call you friend. I will call you son and daughter and you will be in my household, the family of faith.

You will be in my kingdom. And so, he chose us. And Peter puts that first, foremost and in the front to say, this letter is to God's elect.

His chosen, verse 2, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father. God knew us and he didn't select us because he knew what we would do for him.

He foreknew us in that he chose from all time and eternity to set his love upon us and to woo us unto himself. And if you are a Christian this morning, he was successful.

[18 : 12] And if you're not a Christian this morning, he is calling you even now. Even now, this morning. Right now. From your seat and even silently, you can say, God, I would have you to be my father.

I am an orphan and I am alone. And I know you're there. I don't know a lot about you, but if you would be my father, then I would be your child.

And Jesus Christ, forgiveness can be yours. And you would join us in this kingdom that God has chosen us for.

Chosen places. There is, now this is, this is a, when, when, when Peter writes this, he knows that this is not a new idea.

If you look in Hebrews 11, in verses 13 through 16, it says this, in this hall of fame of the saints, it says that all these people were still living by faith when they died.

[19 : 34] They did not receive the things promised, they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

that's how the saints of old saw themselves. Abraham, well really the first exiles were Adam and Eve.

They were, they left their original home of the garden. And ever since then, I would say we have felt that dislocation from home.

and then when we receive God as our father through Jesus Christ, he has put eternity in our hearts and we have this growing sense, though we have not yet seen it, but we have this growing sense that this world is not my home, that I am destined for another home, even heaven with him.

And Peter is emphasizing that and he's saying, even the saints of old admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show they are looking for a country of their own.

[20 : 48] If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Jeremiah 29 verses 4 through 7 as was read earlier. If you look there, it says, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says to all those I carried into exile.

And if you go down further, he says, seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.

Here we understand that this is, in the Old Testament, this is the Great Commission. This is how to carry word as messengers or ambassadors of the king to the nations.

Word of his justice. Words of his steadfast love. Words of the king's values and how things operate in his kingdom.

[22 : 09] And how did he do that? He sent them out into the nations. In Jeremiah's instructions, he was talking about people who were literal exiles.

But then, Peter takes up with this in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 11 and 12 where he once again addresses them. He wants them to understand this not as a one more classifications or a metaphor describing God's people, but their identity.

Your identity is no longer in your gender or your race, your language, or even your location.

Your identity identity is that you're a member of a new kingdom. Your identity is as a foreigner and exile. To abstain from sinful desires.

My study Bible is the ESV and some of you will have Bibles that instead of sinful, it would say worldly desires. So these are instructions that Peter gives if we have the identity as exiles, as aliens in Glasgow, then it begs the question, how am I to live?

[23 : 40] What is life to be like? And you've got three choices as I see it. Number one, you can totally blend in.

There can be no difference in you and those that do not know our king, that are of the kingdom of this world.

And I believe that's what Peter is saying here, worldly desires. We don't desire the same things that the world desires. Out of their feelings of dislocation, they're going to fill it with many, many diversions.

But Peter says here and warns us that we don't become so like the world. Remember, the principle and the truth is that we're to be, we're not to be, you know, we're to be of the world, but not in it.

And so many of us are so of it that we're, we're so, we're not of it, we're so in it. I'm making hash of this. We're to, we're to be in this world, but we're to carry our values, we're to carry our identity as a child of this king, as a member of another homeland with us wherever we go.

[25 : 02] So, it's not suitable to simply blend. On another hand, we're going to be strongly tempted to avoid and to isolate ourselves that this is when we're in community and then in the world we, we isolate ourself and we have nothing to do with the world.

I can tell you, my experience is that if there is a neighbor or a family member or a friend, a fellow classmate or workmate, that you long to invite to this fellowship of Glasgow City Free Church, they're not going to be as attentive to your invitation unless you attend to their invitations to go with them.

No longer do we live in an age where we can expect people to come to us. We must go to them and it's by God's design, I believe. The Great Commission says as we are going to make disciples of all the nations.

So, the instructions here are for us not to isolate ourselves and to have nothing to do with the world for it might contaminate us. Need not fear that.

The third choice is to not simply blend in so that they do not know that we're Christians or to be so isolated that they certainly know that we're Christians but we don't want anything to do with them.

[26 : 33] But the third choice is the more acceptable one and the one that Peter is pointing us to this morning. That the saints of Glasgow City Free Church would be those that don't blend so there's no distinctives and no they're not set apart in anything in their life.

They look just like the world but to mend. We're children of the King. That we're to enter in and to operate in such a way that we serve the city.

That we look to redeem every area that God has placed us into. That we image Jesus Christ as if Jesus Christ was living in that flat or in that home, on that street, in that dormitory, that it would be as a little Christ, a Christian, to live in that place.

Well, Peter gives us some instructions. And let me just skate through this list and then give you a challenge of application as I conclude and some hope.

He tells us that we're to abstain from sinful desires. You're to live such good lives. This is 1 Peter 2, 11 and 17. Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

[28 : 00] Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every human authority, whether to the emperor or the supreme authority, to governors who are sent by him. Go down for it is God's will.

Again, God's behind where you live. Wendy and I are very prayerful and we invite your prayers. We indeed beg your prayers because we're living like exiles right now.

And it's actually quite an adventure. It's not too bad to live out of a suitcase for this time. But we are very prayerful and invite your prayers as to where we shall abide.

Where in this great city shall we live? And why are we praying? Because we believe and we want God to choose where we're going to live. And I have succeeded as a minister of the gospel this morning.

If I can leave you in just a few moments, if I can leave you with this thought that where you live is no accident, neither is your salvation. It's God the Father's will and His joy.

[29 : 06] It is for our good, but it is also in conformity to His greater plan. That though you thought you chose that place for business, for education, even for the community amenities, He chose it for you.

He chose it there that you could live out your walk with Him. for all your neighbors to see and observe and that you would be good for them, even for the city.

He tells us to live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil. Live as God's slaves or God's servant. Show proper respect to everyone.

Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor. This means three things. I want to encourage you. I want to encourage you. to consider three things.

First of all, know your place. Know your place. Now this can be fun. Do you know the names of your neighbors?

[30 : 16] Do you know who are new residents particularly? Do you know the environment or the community that you live in?

Do you know the issues that it faces? Do you know people? I can't wait to see where our adventures so far are going to bear fruit.

fruit. But I can't wait to introduce you to Frank. Frank who is the maitre d' at roasted bubbly jocks.

Go meet Frank. I can't wait to introduce you to one day I hope in this fellowship. David. David. He is the train ticket clerk at Partick.

Now there are other tellers but in my travels I specifically will wait in line for David because I want him to know me. I can't wait to introduce you perhaps one day to Robin who we hope to be our new landlord who when I invited him to church this Sunday to hear me preach he said well I'm afraid you'd be preaching to the unconverted and I said but you know you'd be most welcome anyway.

[31 : 39] Know them by name. Know them and know what they're facing. Know your neighbors. We're called to rejoice with those that rejoice and mourn with those that mourn.

That's what we're called to do. That's ministry. Secondly, pray for your place. Now for those of you who are into physical fitness or on a diet, this is great.

I am going to help you. add to your walk another block. I would love to have you have a three mile radius from your home.

If you put a push pin in where your home is, pray for everything within three miles. The hospital, the schools, the neighborhoods, maybe there's street people, maybe there are a lot of single parents that are located there or maybe there are addicts that live there.

That you would learn on a walk or a run that you would learn as you're passing by those doors to pray for them.

[32 : 56] And if I might give you some incentive, this is a good work. You may be the only person or family in a three mile radius where you're located that is praying for your community.

But God will hear you. We're instructed, pray for the city. Have you noticed that there's not one point where it says, evangelize them all, witness to them.

Not one point does he say that. But as he began by saying, you are God's chosen children. You are free. You have a father in heaven and a promised homeland.

Live. Live freely. Serve others. Pray for your city for they are watching. And then lastly, in the to-do list, serve.

Redeem your place. One of my heroes is now deceased, of course. I'm an old guy. Most of my heroes and mentors are now deceased.

[34 : 07] But Francis Schaefer. And Francis Schaefer was with a colleague in New York, a rather dirty street and they were waiting there for a taxi next to a trash bin or rubbish bin and he bent down and he collected in his hands quite a bit of rubbish.

Now he's in a suit and he's soon to speak and he collects this rubbish and he puts it into the bin. And his colleague said, now you've got yourself all dirty.

Why did you do that? And he said, because I'm the king's man and all of this is God's kingdom. I just redeemed that little bit of space.

We live in a broken world. And we're called to not simply blend so that nobody knows us as Christians or to isolate ourselves so that we're no earthly good.

We're called to come alongside in all of these broken places that want for redemption and as the king's sons and daughters to redeem it for his glory and for his honor.

[35 : 21] Now, I should right now end the sermon and send you off on your way and you would appreciate that because I'm over time.

But you're going to fail. I fail at this because it takes my time, it takes new, it means new relationships, I'm going to fail because people are messy and they're messy situations.

I can't say this now, but I can say it from where we've come. We've got messy neighbors. Where we came from in South Carolina, we have very, very messy neighbors.

We live in an area that's very heavily influenced by meth addiction. temptation. But we entered into that and we said, Lord, that's what we're here for.

We're not here simply for our own comfort, but this place you've placed us, we want to serve you. We want to operate as if our home is an embassy and from it we operate as ambassadors in all of our neighborhood and in our city and we represent you the king.

[36 : 48] But we fail. We fail. I've got good news for you. Here, Peter says that through the sanctifying work of the spirit, this ministry, this life as an elect chosen child exiled God has chosen our place that we are obedient to Jesus Christ and I might add, I would take away and and say by being sprinkled with his blood.

There's three references in the Old Testament, three instances where blood is sprinkled. There is the first and that is the beginning, Moses pulls all the people together and he says, now you are a new people, the children of God and he sprinkles blood on him.

That's the beginning of the Christian life. So Wayne Grudem, the theologian says that's not applicable here because this is a very present work.

The second sprinkling of blood is for the priest to set them aside for holy office. But again, that's a one and done, a one time occurrence. But there is a third often occurring occurrence of sprinkling with blood and it's for leprosy.

In Leviticus, in Leviticus chapter 14 verses 6 and 7, we read that if someone suffered from leprosy, which included every skin disease, that they could come to the priests and they would be sprinkled with blood.

[38 : 40] This is what David refers to in Psalm 51 verse 7, wash me with hyssop, take a hyssop and dip it into the blood and wash me with hyssop.

It's what in 1 John 1 7 where it says that we have, if we have fellowship with one another and we have fellowship with the Son, it's because of the regular and the consistent ongoing sprinkling of blood of Jesus Christ.

I certainly fail, but every day, because we are God's children, we are constantly by Jesus Christ, he is our ever-present intercessor and priest.

He is continually washing us and renewing us and strengthening us as his children to image him in our culture and society.

Let us surrender to that and let us go forth as we see our place wherever we live and we work and we play as a place he's chosen for us and he has prepared for us to serve him as our king.

[40 : 01] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I thank you. I thank you for the calling on our life.

Please forgive us when we grouse about the place that we live. would you help us to see that wherever we are found to live right now, that it is by your fatherly design, it is for our good and for the good of all of our neighbors.

It is to your glory that some might see our lives, our good lives, and our devotion to you, our walk with you, our love unconditionally freely given to them, and acknowledge that surely there is a God in heaven.

This God is real. Could he be my father? Lord, forgive us. Forgive us for selfish lives. Forgive us for those times that we have a greater longing to be of this world than simply in it.

Lord, we ask that you would forgive us our sins and that you would continue to strengthen us, that we might be those sons and daughters, that image, that we're not just anyone's children.

[41 : 43] We're children of you, our great high king, and we represent your kingdom well. And we ask this as favors and mercy and blessings in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen.