

Living as Sojourners and Exiles

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[0 : 00] I said I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue. I will guard my mouth with a muzzle so long as the wicked are in my presence.

! I was mute and silent. I held my peace to no avail, and my distress grew worse. My heart became hot within me as I mused the fire burned.

Then I spoke with my tongue. O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days. Let me know how fleeting I am. Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you.

Surely all mankind stands as mere breath. Surely a man goes about as a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil. Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather.

And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you. Deliver me from all my transgressions. Do not make me the scorn of the fool. I am mute.

[1 : 05] I do not open my mouth. For it is you who have done it. Remove your stroke from me. I am spent by the hostility of your hand. When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is clear to him.

Surely all mankind is mere breath. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry. Hold not your peace at my tears. For I am sojourner with you, a guest like all my fathers.

Look away from me that I may smile again before I depart, and I am no more. And the second reading is going to be from 1 Peter chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2 is going to be located on page 1014.

Verses 1, verses 11 to 12. 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.

[2 : 24] Here in scripture reading. Here in scripture reading. Thanks for reading for us this morning, Jamico. Well, today is Pentecost Sunday. And it's a date on the Christian church's calendar.

When we celebrate and commemorate the Father and the Son sending the Spirit, who ascended on about 120 disciples who were gathered in an upper room some 2,000 years ago.

And Luke the physician in the book of Acts chapter 2 records that event.

The day of Pentecost was 50 days after Jesus raised from the dead and 10 days after he ascended into heaven. And so today, across our nation and around the world, churches are celebrating Pentecost Sunday.

And this is especially true in Pentecostal churches. But sadly, in many Pentecostal churches, the least important aspect of the day of Pentecost, and the Spirit's coming, will be emphasized most.

[3 : 51] And the most important aspect of the Spirit's coming, will be emphasized least, or even ignored altogether. In Pentecostal churches, most would emphasize and say that the Spirit's coming is about speaking in tongues.

Some would say that you're not baptized in the Spirit unless you speak in tongues, and others would go to the even greater extreme and would say you're not even saved if you don't speak in tongues.

But what is the most important aspect of the Spirit's coming? What is it? Is it tongues and the gifts that were manifested on the day of Pentecost?

Well, on the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter preached a sermon. He preached a sermon to a large crowd of people who were gathered in Jerusalem, and some of them thought that they were drunk.

They thought that because of the way they spoke in these other tongues that they were drunk. And Luke records that for us. And here's what he says in Acts chapter 2, beginning in verse 15.

[5 : 22] This is Peter's response to those who are perplexed, to those who thought that they were drunk. These people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. In the last days, it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

even on my male servants and female servants, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

No doubt, in many Pentecostal churches, this would be the part of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost that would be emphasized.

They get a lot of attention. But the part of Joel's prophecy from 2,000 years ago on that first Pentecost Sunday is actually three verses later in verse 21 when he quotes this part of Joel's prophecy.

[6 : 54] And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Brothers and sisters, we are called to embrace all that the Spirit has brought when he came to the church.

But the most important part of what the Spirit has brought in his coming is that sinners can call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

They can be born of the Spirit as Jesus emphasized to Nicodemus in John chapter 3. Because of the Spirit's coming, we can live lives that reflect that we have been brought from spiritual death to spiritual life, that we have been saved from sin and from its destructive power, and that we have received eternal life.

brothers and sisters, this is the most powerful and compelling evidence that the promised Holy Spirit has come. Not tongues, not prophecy, not dreams, not visions.

You see, we know that there are false tongues and there are false prophecies and false dreams and false visions. And apart from God-given discernment, we really can't tell the genuine from the false.

[8 : 29] But here's what can be denied. what can be denied is the compelling evidence of a transformed life of men, women, boys and girls who, because of the Spirit's coming, are convicted of their sin and repent of their sin and their lives are transformed.

And that transformation cannot be denied. This is the most compelling and enduring evidence that the Spirit has come. That God, through the Holy Spirit, is able to convict men and women, boys and girls, is able to transform their hearts and lives to the glory of God.

And this morning, as we continue our sermon series in the letter of 1 Peter, we come to two verses that remind us that the Spirit has come. these two verses remind us that the Spirit has come because they point to the transforming work of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people, enabling them to live holy lives in a sinful world.

And I want us to consider these two verses in our remaining time. But first, let's take a moment to pray. Father, we thank you that when Jesus ascended to heaven that you did not leave us alone. We thank you that together with the Son, you sent us another comforter. You sent us one who would convict us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come.

[10 : 27] And Lord, because the Spirit has come, we can know regeneration. We can know what it is to be turned from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of your dear Son.

We can know the joy of salvation. salvation. And so, Lord, we ask this morning that you would come and draw near to us. And Lord, as we consider your word, I pray that we would all rejoice that you sent your Spirit.

Lord, I pray that those who do not yet know the Savior would be convicted by the Holy Spirit. Convicted of their sin, convicted of their need for a Savior, convicted of their need to be rescued from the wrath to come.

Father, would you draw near to us as we gathered this morning in ways that only you can and ways that you know that we need collectively and individually.

[11 : 49] We ask that you would do this in Jesus' name. Amen. As we come to this section of Peter's letter, it's important to notice that we have come to an important point in the letter.

It's an important transition in this letter. Prior to the point that we have come to, Peter has been focusing primarily on God's saving work through Jesus Christ, through the gospel, and the identity of God's people because of it.

Theologians call what we find in the first section of Peter's letter, the indicatives. And indicatives are a declaration of fact.

They are a declaration of what God has done through Jesus Christ, on behalf of his people, and in his people.

That's what the indicatives are. And so, from verse 1 of chapter 1 up to verse 10 of chapter 2, what we see the apostle Peter doing is repeatedly stating what God has done on behalf of his people, electing them, ransoming them to the death of Christ, causing them to be born again to a living hope, sanctifying them, and making them his holy people.

[13:23] But this morning, the section of the letter that we come to, introduces us to what we call the imperatives. It introduces us to a wide range of commands from God to his people, telling us how we are to live in light of what he has done.

And so from this point in the letter, what we're going to find is command after command after command, do this, don't do that, live this way, don't live that way.

And it's important to see the transition that we have come to in the letter, because if we don't see it, and we take it in a vacuum, it's not going to be as meaningful to us, and in actual fact, it could be even harmful to us.

To not see the section of the letter that we're going to enter into now, connected to what has gone before. So here's how I would summarize these indicatives and imperatives that we find in Peter's letter.

Here's a summary. God's indicatives regarding his people ground his imperatives to his people.

[14:42] The imperatives don't come first, the indicatives come first. God tells us what he has done, and then in light of what he has done, he calls us to live in a certain way. So another way we can say it is, what God commands his people to do flows from what he has already done for them.

And in them, through Christ. This is very important to grasp. And it's a consistent pattern throughout scripture, and especially in the New Testament letters.

But it's a pattern that is easily missed. And when we miss this pattern, and when we misread the commands of scripture as being in a vacuum, rather than seeing that the commands of scripture come to us in light of what God has already done for us, and done in us through Christ.

And if we try to live out the commands, if we try to live out the imperatives, not mindful of what God has done, what it does is it causes us to fall into legalism.

We begin to think that we're called to do these things, we're called to live in a certain way in our own strength, forgetting that it is only because of what God has done through Christ for us and in us that he can cause us to live this way.

[16:06] And we can live this way by the power of the Holy Spirit. And so we're not just entering into a bunch of commands, a bunch of commands, husbands, draw with your wives in an understanding way, submit to authority, we're not just entering into those in a vacuum, we're entering into those in a vacuum because the God of the universe has saved us and transformed us and then he's saying to us, now that I have done this for you, live this way.

And God never calls us to do what he does and by his grace enable us to do. And so all that he calls us to do we are able to do. And brothers and sisters, if we don't get this, we will fall into legalism and soon we will fall into despair because we're trying to do in our own strength, in our own ability, and being unmindful of what God has done in Christ.

And that's not the way God has ordained it. So bearing this in mind, in these two verses that we have come to this morning, the Apostle Peter exhorts believers to live lives in this world that reflect that they are God's people.

And these two verses we see two sobering realities that Peter brings to the fore. The first is the temptations God's people face as they live in a fallen world.

And the second is the opportunities God's people have to live godly lives before unbelievers as a witness to them.

[18:02] And Peter brings the two of these together in these two verses that we're considering this morning. and here's how I would say Peter expresses it.

I would just summarize it. Peter says to believers, as you live in this world, be watchful of your soul and live mindful of unbelievers.

again in light of what God has done for you, in light of what he has done in Christ, as you live in this world, as you live in this fallen, broken, sinful world, be watchful of your soul and live mindful of unbelievers.

Peter was very aware of the difficulties of the Christian life, the peculiar temptations we face, and then the amazing opportunities that we have to be a witness to the gospel to unbelievers all at the same time.

And so I have two points this morning. two points I want us to consider. And the first is, be watchful of your soul. Notice that caring for our souls as we live in this world is Peter's first concern.

[19 : 37] Again, he's saying to us, as you live in this fallen world, you will be faced with passions of the flesh, and you must abstain from them. The New International Version translates passions of the flesh as sinful desires.

It's important to notice how Peter grounds this command that he gives us. He doesn't say in a vacuum, believers, you must abstain from sinful desires.

He doesn't say it that way. Instead, he grounds his command by calling us sojourners and exiles. Sojourners and exiles in this world.

A sojourner is a resident foreigner who's lived away from home in another place for a long period of time. He's kind of like a permanent resident, but not a citizen of the place that you're living in.

But he also says, he refers to us as exiles. An exile is someone who lives temporarily in a place, that's not home, and they generally have a desire to return home, a longing to return home.

[21 : 06] As God's people living in this world, we are both of them. We live here long term. We have to take jobs and raise families and engage in life. We do that.

And so there's a sense that we have to engage this world in a kind of long-term way. But then there's also a sense that we need to engage this world in a temporary kind of way.

There are things in this world that we need to see as exiles. We need to think the way some foreigners who live in our country, like somebody who was visiting.

I was thinking, you know, the people who were visiting on election day, on cruise ships and other things, they could care less about our elections. It wasn't a big thing to them.

They were just here really temporarily. And the aspects of living in this world that we need to engage mindful of these two ways. What do we engage in an ongoing way because we have to do that?

[22 : 06] what do we engage really in just a passing way because it's not what we need to entwine ourselves with. And again, the reason that Peter is telling us that we are as foreigners and he calls us to live this way is that foreigners tend to retain their identity when they live in another place.

Sometimes you can tell them by speaking a different language. They generally would prefer the food of their culture from their home and sometimes so much they're willing to pay a fortune to get it.

And the aspects of their identity that is just very separate and different from the place in which they live. And Peter wants us to live in this world as those who belong to the Lord as being mindful that this is not home.

We don't belong here. We don't embrace the culture. We don't live by the culture. That's not what primarily defines us. What primarily defines us is the place where we are truly from.

Our citizenship, the Bible says elsewhere, is from above. earlier in verse 9, Peter told us that we are members of God's holy nation.

[23 : 40] And what should mark us is holy living, which is very different from the general kind of living that we see in the world around us.

And Peter identifies the passions of the flesh, which are really connected to this world as being at war with our souls.

It's interesting that Peter does not explain, he doesn't elaborate on what these passions of the flesh are. things are all.

He simply says, beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh. But he doesn't elaborate, and so we can obviously conclude that his original audience understood fully what he was talking about.

I think when we hear passions of the flesh, generally speaking, we think of sexual passions. But Peter would have had much more than that in mind.

[25 : 02] The Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 5 verses 16 to 24, he actually identifies a list, not an exhaustive list, but a representative list of what are passions of the flesh and how we can live lives not yielding to them.

And here's what he says in verses 16 to 24 of Galatians 5. But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. And these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. Now, the works of the flesh are evidence. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

So, not exhaustive. it's representative. And he says this, I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[26 : 34] love, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things, there is no law. And those who belong to Christ crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.

Notice how, what the Apostle Paul does, is the Apostle Paul identifies, he talks about, first, the desires of the flesh, then he talks about the works of the flesh.

Those are two very different things. Desires of the flesh are part of the reality of indwelling sin. Desires of the flesh, or passion, sins, of the flesh. Even though the Lord has saved us, even though we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of his dear son, indwelling sin is still a reality, and these desires of the flesh, we still wrestle with, we still battle with.

[27 : 51] And so that's why the Apostle Peter says, you are to abstain from these desires. When we yield to the desires of the flesh, when we yield to the passions of our sinful nature, they are the works of the flesh.

And Paul refers to both of them in this passage in Galatians 5. sin. And so we need to distinguish between them. And I want to say to you this one, this is so important to understand, especially for young believers.

Sinful desires in and of themselves are not sin. Desires that we have that are contrary to God's word are just that. But the Bible says we are to abstain from them.

If we do not abstain from them and we commit them, then we have fallen into sin. It's very interesting to really think about the point in Peter's letter that we are at, where Peter says this, compared to where we were last Sunday.

Last Sunday we looked at verses 9 and 10. They were part of the text that we considered. And this is what Peter says. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

[29 : 28] Once you were not a people, now you're God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

So in verse 11, Peter is urging those who are God's chosen race, his royal priesthood, his holy nation, to abstain in desires of the flesh.

And the point couldn't be clearer. The point couldn't be clearer in the sense that even though we are God's holy nation, God's royal priesthood, the passions of the flesh, the temptations to sin as we live in this fallen world are real and they are ever present with us and they will be with us until the day that we die or the day that Jesus returns.

And so I say to us this morning, do not fall for the lie of the enemy, that because you have a sinful desire, well then you can't be saved because you had that thought.

You can't be saved because you had that impulse. Now what Peter says, he says, you are God's holy people, you are God's royal priesthood, you are a people of his own possession, you are those who have received mercy, but as you live in this fallen world, be aware of the passions of the flesh, they war against your soul, abstain from them.

[31 : 16] And he calls us to abstain from them because we can by the power of God, through the help of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of God at work in our lives, we can do what we are being called

to do.

But let us be honest with what we are saying in this passage. I remember I grew up in a church, grew up in a Pentecostal church, and they would have testimony every Sunday and my brother BJ, I saw BJ earlier, where'd he go, you know, we'd go to church and we could, whenever sister so-and-so got up, we could say a testimony because we heard it so many times, we knew what she was going to say.

And they all had similar ways of the way they would say it. And they would always say this, they would say, I'm saved, sanctified. Not being sanctified, my sanctification is done, over.

And some of them will go as far as to tell you that, oh, sin, I don't get tempted anymore, temptation doesn't move me anymore. And right there, they were lying.

this is a reality that we face. But here's the thing, brothers and sisters, those of us who have come to Christ, we're no longer in the first Adam.

[32 : 46] We're in the last Adam. And sin does not have dominion over us anymore. We've been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness.

And we no longer yield our instruments, our members as instruments of righteousness. And so the Apostle Paul puts it in Titus chapter 2 verses 11 and 12.

He tells us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

That's what God has done in Christ for his people. And here's the good news. The good news is that as we grow in sanctification, as we grow in sanctification, becoming less sinful and more Christ-like over time, the intensity of the passions of the flesh are not the same.

By the grace of God, they don't disappear, but by the grace of God, they do decrease, they do diminish over time. If we, over time, grow in sanctification, we all know that sanctification is no guarantee that our sanctification will always be a forward progress.

[34 : 18] Sometimes we regress in sanctification. But Peter calls us to abstain from the passions of the flesh because God has done a work on our behalf through Christ and in us and enables us to do that.

Brothers and sisters, when we come to a section of a letter like this, we see the grace of God.

You see these verses that God's holy nation is his treasured possession, his royal priesthood, and then the very next verses you see abstain from the passions of the flesh.

Reminding us of who we still are. Yes, we have been saved. Yes, we've been translated out of darkness into light. We still live in sinful bodies and we still face real temptations in this world that war against our souls but by the grace of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can say no to ungodliness and yes to righteousness and so scripture calls us to do that.

Reminder that we experience two realities at the same time. We are saints and we are sinners all in the same time. The sinners of God's choosing.

[36 : 11] sinners who have no righteousness of our own. We are sinners whose righteousness is Christ's and Christ's alone.

So, brothers and sisters, mindful of this ongoing reality of sinful passions, if we are going to take the Apostle Paul seriously in this call to abstain from the passions of the flesh because they war against our souls, then we have to jealously guard our souls, we have to watch our lives to ensure that we are not feeding sinful passions in our lives.

You know, our sinful passions don't need to be fed. They are there. They don't need to be fed. So, let me ask us this morning, are you being intentional to watch your soul, to abstain from fleshly lusts and the desires of the flesh?

Are you endeavoring to walk by the Spirit so that you may not fulfill the lust of the flesh? Now, you're placing priorities on those activities, those kinds of things that would strengthen your soul and would help you to resist sinful desires.

And it will cause you to better see sin for what it truly is. That we don't get swung by the devil, by the ploys that he puts in front of us.

[38 : 05] Are we growing in biblical wisdom and discernment and maturity that the things of God are compellingly beautiful to us? are we valuing and seeing the wisdom in reading God's word and prayer and gathering with fellow surgeons as we're doing this morning and as we do in discipleship groups?

Do we value embracing fellowship with brothers and sisters who would help us to walk in the light and confess sin and receive prayer and encouragement and correction?

Instead, are we living in this world unmindful of what the apostle Paul Peter has said to us? And we are fueling the passions of our flesh with all manner of activities like in godly entertainment, entertainment that by and large was created by unbelievers for unbelievers?

Are we unmindful and engaging in idle conversations and talk that is crass and not uplifting, whether at home or at work, undulling our appetite for the things of god, indulging in activities that would cause us to become more worldly and to lust and to be materialistic and to be greedy and to be carnal.

Brothers and sisters, as we live in this world, the offerings are far-ranging to cause us to do the opposite of what Peter calls us to do.

[40 : 13] And we need to be aware of that. We need to live intentionally by the grace of God. That we are helping ourselves, that we're not working against ourselves, we're not warring against our own souls, but we're doing those things that will help us to grow in grace and to grow in godliness.

the apostle Peter rightly uses the language of war, because that is what we are in, brothers and sisters. We are in a real war.

Peter says that these passions and desires of the flesh, they war against our souls. And so, brothers and sisters, let us take this command seriously this morning, and let us live as God's people in this world, but not of this world.

May we truly be spiritual strangers, spiritual sojourners, spiritual exiles in this world. Let us live by the Spirit so that we can abstain from the lusts of the flesh.

Now, while watching our soul through abstaining from flesh we lust, is the first concern that Peter lays out as he transitions to the second part of his letter, it's not his only concern.

[41 : 39] The second concern is that we would live mindful of unbelievers. And this is my second and final point. Look again at how he says it in verse 12.

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 in the day of visitation.

There are three important aspects to what Peter is saying in verse 12. Notice that Peter, first of all, refers to unbelievers as Gentiles.

All unbelievers, he refers to them as Gentiles. And remember the earlier verses, he referred to all believers as God's people or the Israel of God.

He says, you're the holy nation, you're the prized possession. And he calls us to ensure that our lives that we live, our conduct before unbelievers, is honorable.

[42 : 55] And then the second thing Peter does is he reminds us of the reality that oftentimes unbelievers would be hostile towards believers. They speak of us as evildoers even as we live honorable lives.

And you know, this really should not surprise us. this is the ABCs of the Christian life. This is the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus tells us that this would happen. And so it should come as no surprise to us when we find ourselves being spoken of as evildoers.

Because it's just a part of the territory. we need to be aware of that. We should be surprised when it comes our way.

In Peter's day, the believers were spoken of as evildoers because they lived through the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

[44 : 07] And they were accused of being disloyal to Caesar and all manner of other things. because of the love that they had among them.

Because of the affection that they shared. And they were brothers and sisters. They were accused of being incestuous. The third thing that Peter reminds us of is that our good deeds, our honorable conduct, can result, may result, in unbelievers glorifying God.

In plain language, what Peter is saying to us, is he's saying to us, he's saying, unbelievers are watching your life as you live it. Even though they speak against you as evildoers, they are watching your life as you do it.

And so, his instruction is that even though unbelievers are speaking evil of you, they are able to recognize good deeds.

And so, he is saying to us, in face of what they may say about you, or do towards you, you are to conduct yourself honorably, you are to clearly be exhibiting good deeds in your life.

[45 : 41] And then, he doesn't say that they will, he doesn't say that they will do this, what he says is that they may see our good deeds.

And by God's grace, some unbelievers who speak of us as evildoers, who see our good deeds, not all of them, by God's grace, some of them.

And whether they see our good deeds or not, you belong to Christ, are called to live honorably before them, we are called to manifest good deeds before them.

And we do so with the hope that perhaps God will have mercy on them, and visit them with salvation, salvation, and they will glorify God.

How can we keep our conduct honorable before unbelievers? I know it's a question that would be answered in different ways based on the contexts in which we live, what we face at home, perhaps at work, in our neighborhoods, and in the wider community.

[47 : 03] I think one of the commitments we should all make is to just do our best to live faithfully according to God's word. But if there were one way that I would commend to all of us that we should endeavor to conduct ourselves honorably before unbelievers, it would be to say to us, let's guard our speech.

Let's guard our tongues. Let's guard our words. And James helps us to see this in James chapter 3. James just tells us of the destructive nature of our tongues.

He tells us that if we're able to master our tongues, we can master our lives. And I think we'd all agree that most of the offense that we have brought to others in our lives has come from our lips. We don't so much lift our hands against people or do things against them, but it's with our speech. In the first scripture that we read this morning in Psalm 39, David is facing some difficult circumstances.

We're not told what they are, but they appear to be related to sin on his part. We can draw this conclusion from a few of the verses.

[48 : 31] He cries out to God and he says, deliver me from all my transgressions to not make me the scorn of the fool. Then he says, remove your stroke from me.

I am spent by the hostility of your hand. When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him, surely all mankind is in their death.

We look at this and we don't know what it was, but clearly David is under God's discipline. He is undergoing God's loving discipline because of his sin.

But in those circumstances, David decided that he would keep his mouth closed, that he would hold his silence. And this is how he begins Psalm 39.

I said, I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue. I will guard my mouth with a muzzle so long as the wicked are in my presence.

[49 : 44] silence. I was mute and silent. I held my peace to no avail and my distress grew worse. And then David writes, when my heart became hot within me, I mused.

The fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue. He's instructed to see what David says after he has taken this time in silence and his heart directed towards God.

And he said, my heart became hot within me. My spirit mused and I burned and then I spoke. And this is what he says. Oh Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days.

Let me know how fleeting I am. Behold, you have made my days a few hand breaths. And my lifetime is as nothing before you.

Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath. Surely a man goes about as a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil.

[51 : 04] Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather them. brothers and sisters, we may not be facing similar circumstances to what David was facing in this psalm.

But I think we can learn from David's example. I think what David did by choosing to guard his speech by maintaining silence, we would all do well to do the same.

Especially in the presence of unbelievers. believers. I encourage us, let us pray for God to give us the awareness of the difference between being in the presence of believers and unbelievers and to be mindful of the effect and the opportunity that we have in the presence of unbelievers.

For them, eternity is hanging in the balance. These are men and women, boys and girls who are on their way to a chaliceless hell unless they repent.

And we can be praying, oh Lord, would you help me not to be idle in my speech or careless in my speech. And it's interesting where David's heart turned to, David's heart turned to his mortality. [52 : 29] His heart turned to how brief his days were and how futile it was to be living, keeping up wealth, not knowing who would receive it.

You know, some of my most sober days, some days when I'm reflecting most, are the days after I return from the funeral.

Because at a funeral, you just become, face to face with the reality of the way you're going to go eventually unless the Lord comes.

And it causes you to think about these things. It causes you to think about your own mortality, the brevity of life. It causes you to think about how you're using your time and how you want to use your time.

And the thoughts are more guardward than outward. Brothers and sisters, I believe that we would do well to ask the Lord.

[53 : 40] Lord, help me to guard, help me to guard all of my conduct in the presence of unbelievers, but especially help me to guard my mouth. Help me to watch what I say.

help me to have my heart directed towards you that I may, as we sang this morning, receive messages from you. And I can be profitable to unbelievers.

I can make the most of the opportunities that I have before them. And so, brothers and sisters, we're surrounded by unbelievers.

Some of us in our homes, some of us in the places we work, the neighborhoods we live in, places in the community we go, we're surrounded by unbelievers in an ongoing way.

And so, we need to be mindful of this in an ongoing way. We need to be asking the Lord to help us to do this. Because of what God has done in Christ Christ, for us.

[54 : 53] Because of what God has done in us, in saving us, he calls us to live this way. To be watchful of our souls by abstaining from the desires of the flesh.

To be mindful of unbelievers by keeping our conduct honorable before them, even though they may speak against us as evildoers.

Praying that perhaps as we live our lives honorably before them, as we do good deeds before them, God will be merciful to them and save them, and they will on that day glorify God.

Brothers and sisters, let us make every effort to live this way. And here's the truth of it. with our best efforts, none of us will do this perfectly.

None of us will do it perfectly. And sometimes, rather than abstain from the flesh, we will sinfully indulge in the flesh.

[56 : 05] And sometimes, rather than live our lives honorably before unbelievers, we will live dishonorably before unbelievers. others. But even then, we can take hope and we can thank God that our Savior and our substitute perfectly abstained from the flesh.

And he perfectly lived an honorable life for foreign believers, even on his cross, as he was being crucified, cried out to the Father that he would forgive those who were crucifying him.

He is our Savior and he is our substitute. And God credits his perfect righteousness and his perfect fulfillment of both of these commands to all of his people.

And that is our confidence. And that is our hope. Not our own performance, but Christ's perfect performance in our behalf.

I've been here this morning as an unbeliever. One of the things that many unbelievers do is they try to live a better life.

[57 : 31] They're aware that things aren't right in their lives and they try to change this and change that and modify this and modify that, stop doing this and start doing that. That's not the answer.

The answer is found in one person. The answer is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only one who's able to translate sinners out of death and darkness into life and light.

And to enable sinners to live the way that they want to live by saying, I want to change this and I want to change that.

He does a real transformation in our lives, on the inside, that's seen on the outside. And so if you're here this morning, present, or you're watching online, if you do not know Jesus Christ, come to Jesus and let him transform your life.

And what better day than on this day, Pentecost Sunday, when the Spirit came primarily so that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[58 : 46] Eternally saved. call on Jesus, if you don't know him this morning. Let's pray. Father, we are so grateful for what you've done for us and in us through Jesus Christ.

would you help us, Lord, to remember that as we seek to live and obey these commands, to abstain from the passions of the flesh that war against our souls, and to conduct ourselves honorably before unbelievers, so that even though they speak against us as evildoers, they may see our good deeds and they may glorify you on the day of your visitation.

God have mercy on us this morning, we pray. In Christ's name, Amen.