

# Easter III

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[ 0 : 00 ] I don't know if you've heard, but there's a big election happening later this year. Many people are quite anxious about the upcoming presidential election and the way this will shape our country, especially during a time of economic, social, and political instability.

And that's why I think it's good for us to focus on our epistle text this morning. But before we look at 1 Peter chapter 2, I want us to review what we've heard the last few weeks.

We began this Eastertide focusing on our Lord's resurrection, but we also emphasize that we too have been raised with Christ in holy baptism and that we will be raised physically and bodily at the end of human history.

That's our hope. That's our delight as we make our way in this life. We also looked at the eighth day and how that speaks of resurrection and new creation.

And last week, we heard an excellent sermon about our Good Shepherd. Jesus is the door whereby we enter into his fold, the church, the kingdom of God.

[ 1 : 24 ] But he is also our Good Shepherd who leads and guides us as we listen and as we obey his voice and as we follow him on the path to eternal life.

So it is with this in mind that we now look at our epistle text that we just heard from 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 11 through 17.

As people who have been brought from death to life by the resurrection of Jesus, which we now participate in as baptized Christians, St. Peter begins with those words, In other words, we do not belong to this world any longer.

This means we are not enslaved to the ever-changing beliefs and whims of our culture that change rapidly and constantly. We are not enslaved to the constant change in values that caters to complete selfishness or perversion.

We are strangers. We are pilgrims. Why? Because our life, our future is built on our new identity as baptized Christians.

[ 2 : 48 ] Simply stated, we belong to God. He has claimed us. He has brought us into his family, like what we witnessed last week in that beautiful display of God's mercy and grace in the baptism of little Wilhelmine.

And this puts us at odds with the ever-changing culture that subscribes to the belief of eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.

We will be considered odd for not plunging into our selfish desires or our passions. But our life is to contemplate, our life is to emulate our Lord by seeking what is true, what is beautiful, and what is good.

That's why St. Peter says in verses 11 and 12 here of our epistle text, Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.

Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

[ 4 : 17 ] What Peter is saying to this persecuted church in Rome, and what he's saying to all of us, is that we are to live life not merely consumed with our present lusts and act as lawless rebels against our Creator.

Instead, we are to patiently seek after godliness, knowing that the future will bring about our Lord's visitation.

It's another way of saying his second coming, where justice, where righteousness will be restored once and for all. Another way of saying this is that we are to seek after God, walking the narrow path by following our good shepherd, all the while looking forward to our Lord's second coming,

when the dead in Christ shall be raised to new life forever and ever.

And that's why Peter admonishes the church to abstain from fleshly lusts, so that we might show the infinite goodness and the infinite beauty of God to a world that seems as though it's spiraling into greater evil.

Now, this is not virtue signaling on our part, where we pat ourselves on the back while condemning others. Not at all.

[ 5 : 47 ] Such behavior is hypocritical. It's evil. No, we are called to get beyond the self-righteous lingo, rooted in pride and some sort of false outward piety.

We are called to order our lives by following the way of Christ so that others might embrace him rather than being ruled by the constant chaos, the ever-changing beliefs of our culture.

St. Peter goes on to say that we should submit to our governing authorities, even if they are wicked. And let me remind you once again, who was on the throne, who was ruling when Peter wrote this to these Christians suffering in Rome.

It was none other than the crazy, the infamous Nero. Friends, when we take to heart what St. Peter is saying, it should bring our anxiety level down.

The world, and by the way, when I say the world, I do not mean creation itself. Rather, I'm speaking of the immoral rebellion against God in the name of happiness and self-expression that permeates our culture.

[ 7 : 08 ] This world should not scare us. We should not live in fear. We do not have to fear life, nor do we have to fear death. Death has been swallowed up by Jesus, who has overcome death and the grave.

And our lives have a real purpose. It has real and true meaning. And that is to glorify God in all things.

So we need not fear the outcome of the upcoming elections. Whoever wins.

Nor do we need to fear anyone or anything. Let us live in the joy of our resurrection hope that we now share in as baptized Christians.

And may we live our lives following the four things that St. Peter admonishes us to do at the very end of our epistle text this morning.

[ 8 : 10 ] He says, Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king. Or in our context, our national rulers.

Or as we say in our liturgy at the end, when we confess our sins, and grant that we may hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Our Lord is risen.