

I. Introduction

A. Where are you from? Where is home for you?

1. Specific location
2. Characteristics: accepted/welcomed/belong; where the heart is; where my stuff is; where I'm emotionally and financially invested; safe, comfortable, familiar, happy, and where I can rest

*These are all things that make us feel home and all things that we want to experience wherever you live. But is fulfilling these desires right now actually a biblical way of living?

B. Home and following Jesus

1. John 17:14-16; Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 3:20

I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (John 17:14-16)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

But our citizenship is in Heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:20-21)

2. But, do we really live in light of what the Bible teaches?

C. The more my life moves toward harmony with Jesus, the more disharmony I will experience with this world.

1. This is absolutely true.
2. If this is not accurate of my life, then there is a growth problem. 1 Peter was written to help Jesus' followers become the kind of people who are prepared to participate in God's Kingdom—our actual home. There is a perspective change, from ruling to serving. Yes, we will rule with Jesus in His Kingdom, but for now, we serve. Serving is one foundational way we prepare to participate.

II. 1 Peter 1:1-12

A. Verses 1-2

1. Peter (apostle of Jesus; walked closely with Jesus; a leader in the early Church)
2. Elect Exiles

- a. Why “exiles”?
 - 1) Circular letter to churches in Asia Minor (ex. Central Valley churches).
Some grew up there and some didn’t.
 - 2) Doesn’t seem to make much sense.
- b. “Parepidemois”: the Greek term used here
 - 1) A person who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to abide there with the natives temporarily.
 - 2) Used in Genesis 23:4 and Hebrews 11:13 as well
- c. Unpacking “exiles”
 - 1) People faced with a different culture and different gods (things that demand loyalty and love)
 - 2) Conventional options
 - a) revolt and win or lose
 - b) give-in and assimilate
 - 3) Another way, Jeremiah 29:4-11
 - a) Exiles in Babylon
 - b) Verses 4-11

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in My name; I did not send them, declares the Lord.” For thus says the Lord: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you My promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

- c) Settle in, live life, work toward success for the nation but always remember where you’re from and to whom your loyalty and love is anchored.

*The other way, the biblical way, is to do good and live in peace but don’t mistake that place for home. It’s a mix of loyalty and subversion.

- d. Jesus’ followers as exiles
 - 1) Believers are exiles not because they are displaced from their homeland, but because Jesus is their new home and this world does not recognize Jesus.

2) 1 Peter 5:13

- a) Babylon, but writing from Rome
- b) Babylon is any institution that demands allegiance to its idolatrous redefinition of good and evil, right and wrong.

*We need to recognize that when we surrender to Jesus, we begin a life as exiles in this world—including the nation we were born into and grew up in.

B. 1 Peter 1:3-12, a living hope

- 1. Verses 3-5: New Birth
 - a. New origin
 - b. New destination
- 2. Verses 6-9: New Position
 - a. The world will grieve and test you.
 - b. God will give joy through grief and test to bring purity.
- 3. Verses 10-12: Old Plan
 - a. Foretold by prophets (Zechariah)
 - b. God has given a “heads-up.”
 - c. Angels
 - 1) They don’t experience the Gospel the way we do.
 - 2) They are not recipients of redemption.

*The Old Testament prophets saw salvation from far off. Angels marvel at what God has done in Christ. But we get to actually experience it all!

III. So what?

A. Some keys to living as exiles

- 1. Hopeful, broken-hearted outsiders
 - a. A focused mind with a hurting heart
 - b. Joy and grief (v 6)
- 2. Human culture is characterized by shame and headed toward self-destruction—including American culture from the beginning.
 - a. American culture does not belong to Christians—neither in reality nor theologically
 - b. What we are experiencing right now is not different from 40 or 100 years ago. We have not fallen from a Christian ownership.
 - c. “I felt more comfortable in ...
 - 1) The America of the past
 - 2) The America of today... is actually a reflection of your disharmony with Christ.

*The more my life moves toward harmony with Jesus, the more disharmony I will experience with the world.

- 3. We are called to ...

- a. ... faithfully participate in our nation of exile.
- b. ... faithfully pursue and submit to Jesus.

*The greatness of Christian exiles is not our success but our service. Whether we win or lose, we image for the world truth, beauty, and joy. We don't own culture or rule it, we serve it as hopeful, broken-hearted outsiders for the good of humanity and the glory of Jesus.

B. Questions

1. Does my life resemble a citizen of or an exile from this world?
2. As I experience the world around me, am I characterized as a hopeful, broken-hearted outsider or am I angrily trying to reclaim what I think I've lost or do I just blend in?
3. What one thing can I do right now that will help me remember how I am called to live and impact?