

02-15-2015

SERMON: Live Like Christ in a World Alienated from Him, Part 1

TEXT: 1 Peter 2:11-17

Introduction

A. Peter spends the first 12 verses of his letter unfolding before us the past, present, and future grace God pours out upon believers in union with Christ Jesus, after which he gives us 5 commands on behalf of the risen Christ whom he represents.

1. 1:13 fix your hope on Christ's future grace to us at His return
2. 1:15 be holy like God is in all your behavior
3. 1:17 conduct yourselves in the fear of God your Father
4. 1:22 fervently love one another from the heart
5. 2:2 long for God's Word the way a newborn longs for his mother's milk.

B. The Lord will have Peter give us more commands, but before doing so, He inspires Peter to reveal more of His grace to us in 2:4-10.

1. 2:4 God has granted us believers to come into an eternal relationship with Christ, God's Cornerstone, over which all others stumble to their destruction.
2. God has granted us an eternal place of belonging with Him in His spiritual temple, the church.
3. God through Christ has given us a purpose for living, serving Him as a kingdom of priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices of praise, thanks, worship, sharing, doing good, proclaiming His excellencies, evangelizing the lost, discipling the converted.

C. It appears that the truth of God's grace to us in Christ, preached to our souls, is the fuel in our tanks, the wind in our sails, the current that recharges our batteries, enabling us to continually obey Christ from the heart by faith.

D. And so having refueled us in 2:4-10, Peter gives us a further series of commands, beginning with, and all related to, the command in 2:11 ...

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to **abstain from fleshly lusts** which wage war against the soul.

1. "fleshly" = natural, what we are born with according to our fallen nature, common to all who are born of Adam.
2. "lusts" = appetites, passions, desires. They include not only sexual desires

outside of marriage, but an inordinate appetite for praise and elevation above others, for material possessions, creature comforts and pleasures, vengeance, hostility, factionalism, control, independence of authority or responsibility.

Galatians 5:19 Now **the deeds of the flesh are evident**, which are: **immorality, impurity, sensuality,**²⁰ **idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,**²¹ **envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these**, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

E. In 2:11-17 Peter gives several reasons why we should resist the intrusion of fleshly lusts/passions into our lives.

I. We are loved by God

1 Peter 2:11 **Beloved** (agapatos), I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

A. How has the Lord loved us? He has drawn us to His Son. He has granted us to come to Christ and be built upon Him as a cornerstone and foundation for our salvation, a cornerstone over which the whole unbelieving world stumbles to its destruction.

1 Peter 2:4 And **coming to Him** as to a living stone ... ⁷ **This precious value/honor, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,** "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,"⁸ and, **"A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE";** for **they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.**

B. We have come to Christ and continue to come to Him because the Lord in love draws us to Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, *saying*, **"I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness** (hesed).

John 6:44 **"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day.⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.**

C. Why would we abandon the Lord who loves us in order to return to those who hate us, and who through inciting in us fleshly lusts would destroy us? Why would the church run from the Father's arms rather than run to His loving arms? So avoid fleshly lusts that would lead you away from the Father.

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. **Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**

Revelation 12:12 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because **the devil** has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he

has *only* a short time."¹³ And when **the dragon** saw that he was thrown down to the earth, **he persecuted the woman** who gave birth to the male *child*. ...¹⁷ **So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**

John 15:18 "If **the world hates you**, you know that **it has hated Me before it hated you**.¹⁹ "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but **because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.**

John 16:27 for **the Father Himself loves you**, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. ... 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; **abide in My love**.¹⁰ **"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love**; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

II. Fleshly lusts belong to a world in which we are now strangers and aliens.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, **I urge you as aliens and strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against **the soul**.¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, **glorify God** in the day of visitation.

A. Fleshly lusts belong to the realm of this world - they are part of its customs, patterns, and even its values.

B. But Christians, those who love the Father and follow His Son, Jesus Christ, do not belong to the realm of this world. God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light to be the people of God, a chosen race, a holy nation. By God's choice and design we are strangers and aliens in the nations of this world, because, as Paul writes in Philippians 3:20, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"

C. Notice that our 3rd and 4th reasons to avoid fleshly lusts involve the salvation/preservation of souls and the glory of God. What is less important to the world? Could it be any more obvious why Peter calls us aliens and strangers in this world? The world promotes fleshly lusts which destroy the soul and has no interest in promoting the glory of God, but rather promotes its own glory. John Piper observes that the salvation of human souls ...

... is one of the great issues in the world. It affects everybody without exception. And it affects everybody forever. And it affects everybody forever in an ultimately serious way. And yet our world does not give serious attention to it. There is no column in the newspaper, there is no public service announcement on the radio, there is no soundbite on television, there is no values-clarification course in our schools, there is no government agency or even a welfare pamphlet that counsels us how to wage war for the eternal life of our souls. We are told how to wage war against AIDS; against sunstroke; against mosquitoes; against drunk driving and pollen and depression and rape and fire and theft and cholesterol and dandelions. But the world we live in gives no counsel on how to fight for the eternal life of the soul. ... Is it any wonder that Peter begins this

second section of his letter the same way he did the first one by calling us "aliens and strangers" (cf. 1:1)?

D. How many of us here have traveled to a foreign country?

1. Did you relinquish your cultural identity - cease to be an American?
2. Did you take on the prevailing political and religious beliefs of that country?
3. Did you pledge allegiance to that country above your own?
4. If you went as a soldier, did you desert to the other nation's army?
5. So as citizens of God's kingdom, don't become a deserter, don't embrace fleshly passions that are part of the cultural fabric of this world which wars against God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven.

E. If we embrace God's calling on our lives to be strangers and aliens in this world, if we live with this mind

set, then we will guard ourselves against being carried along by cultural drift away from Christ. As

Piper once again puts it ...

We don't assume that what is on TV is helpful to the soul; we don't assume that the priorities of advertisers are helpful to the soul; we don't assume that the strategies and values of business and industry are helpful to the soul. We don't assume that any of this glorifies God. We stop and we think and we consult the Wisdom of our own country, heaven, and we don't assume that the conventional wisdom of this age is God's wisdom. We get our bearings from God in his Word. ... When you see yourself as an alien and an exile with your citizenship in heaven, and God as your only Sovereign, you stop drifting with the current of the day. You ponder what is good for the soul and what honors God in everything Aliens get their cue from God and not the world.

III. Fleshly lusts war against our souls.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to **abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.**

A. Fleshly passions and appetites do not simply hinder our souls, they corrupt our souls, they tear and shred the fabric of our souls.

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped **the corruption that is in the world by lust.**

B. They replace our appetite for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word (2:2), and fill our minds and hearts with deceitful desires - which falsely promise to satisfy.

Ephesians 4:22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside **the old self, which**

is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

B. Left unchecked, their corruption of our souls would lead to the destruction of our souls. The love of the

Father would be replaced in our hearts by the love of the world, and we would pass away with it.

Galatians 6:7 **Do not be deceived**, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.⁸ For **the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption**, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.¹⁵ Then **when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**

Galatians 5:19 Now **the deeds of the flesh are evident**, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, **of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**¹⁶ For **all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh** and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.¹⁷ **The world is passing away, and also its lusts;** but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

C. What is the antidote to these poisonous passions of our flesh? With what will we replace the love of the world and its lusts with the love of God and His righteousness? With the power of our crucified, risen, reigning Lord Jesus Christ applied to our souls by His indwelling Spirit.

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Galatians 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

D. To be clear, while the Lord will save all of His elect, He will not save them in spite of their consciously walking in the stubbornness of their unrepentant heart with a faith that fails, but by granting them repentance and preserving their faith that obeys Christ as Lord from the heart.

Romans 8:12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--¹³ for **if you are living according to the flesh, you must die;** but **if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Conclusion

A. Fleshly lusts war against our souls, tear at the fabric of our hearts, promise satisfaction and pleasure, but
in the end deliver disappointment and pain.

B. God in His love for us sent His Son to deliver us from fleshly lusts, desires, passions which corrupt and destroy us. So ...

Romans 13:13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.**