

Christ Reformation Church

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Living as Exiles in a Hostile World – The Epistle of 1 Peter

(Part 03 – Chosen, Regenerated, and Kept)

July 24, 2016

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 1:1-5

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1

1Pe 1:1-5 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are **elect** exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) **according to the foreknowledge** of God the Father, in the **sanctification** of the Spirit, **for obedience** to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to

an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, **kept in heaven for you**, (5) who by God's power **are being guarded** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Reformed theology properly emphasizes the sovereignty of God in all things. We believe that the Bible does the same thing, yet without denying that man has a will. In fact, we maintain that the Bible says that man the sinner is free to choose what he desires. Listen to the doctrine stated in the London Confession of Faith –

Chapter 3: Of God's Decree

1. God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency

of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree. (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5)

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. (Acts 15:18; Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18)

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. (1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:5, 6; Romans 9:22, 23; Jude 4)

4. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. (2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18)

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto. (Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12)

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

(1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10:26; John 17:9; John 6:64)

7. The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled

with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

(1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; Romans 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20)

Peter, as we saw last time, is addressing the Diaspora – Christian Jews (and probably some Gentiles too) who are Christ’s true remnant and who have been scattered throughout the known world, often persecuted for their faith. Peter writes to them to instruct and encourage them to persevere in faith in Christ, keeping their eyes set on His certain promises to come again and bring His people into the fullness of a completed salvation.

As he opens this letter, Peter uses terms and phrases that attribute all glory for our salvation to God, not to us. In doing so, Peter is encouraging us to remember that the accomplishment of our salvation in Christ, past, present, and future, is entirely the Lord’s doing and therefore *certain*. If you are a

Christian, if you have been born again by faith in Christ, you have been radically transformed, adopted as God’s child and heir, and all His promises to you are certain –

Rom 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (38) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Many professing Christians have been taught, and believe, that a true Christian can indeed fail to come into their inheritance and end in hell after all. That theology is generally called Arminian theology in opposition to Reformed theology. Numbers of Christian denominations embrace the very opposite of what are often called the five points of Calvinism (TULIP is the acronym for those 5 points). For now, just be aware that Arminian theology claims that a true Christian can sin seriously enough to be cast away by God, “lose” their salvation so to speak, and end in hell. We maintain that the Bible absolutely denies such a thing and instead affirms that a Christian can never, ever be lost. [NOTE: Reformed theology or Calvinism does not teach that a Christian can therefore choose to

continue to walk in sin and yet end in heaven anyway. Absolutely not!]

Joh 17:6-10 "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (7) Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. (8) For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. (9) I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. (10) All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

Let's consider this morning then these words and phrases that Peter uses right off in the opening of his epistle which teach us that our salvation is the Lord's doing and that He is going to faithfully keep His own people secure until He brings us safely home into our inheritance, the New Heavens and New Earth. Here is the passage again –

1Pe 1:1-5 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are **elect** exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) **according to the foreknowledge** of God the Father, in the **sanctification** of the Spirit, **for obedience** to Jesus

Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, **kept in heaven for you**, (5) who by God's power **are being guarded** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Elect. Elect exiles. Think about this word. It doesn't mean that some vote was held and we came out with a favorable majority. It really is synonymous with, "chosen." Here is an example from the Gospel of Mark –

Mar 13:19-27 For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. (20) And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. (21) And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. (22) For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. (23) But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand. (24) "But in

those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, (25) and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. (26) And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. (27) And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

And even more clearly here in Romans –

Rom 11:1-7 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. (2) God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? (3) "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." (4) But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." (5) So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. (6) But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. (7) What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

See it? The elect are "the remnant." They are the people whom the Lord "foreknew." People "kept" by the Lord (preserved by Him) and who worship Him in truth, refusing to bow to idols. Now notice this extremely significant phrase –

Chosen by Grace

See it. The elect, the remnant, are people whom God has *chosen* and He chose them totally *by grace*, not by any merit in themselves. In fact, He *foreknew* them. That is to say, he "knew" them (loved them) BEFORE they even existed. Paul says that the remnant, the elect, are people who are not just Jews (or Christians) outwardly, but who have truly OBTAINED God's promise of salvation in Christ.

NOTE: This is vital to get hold of! The outward, visible "church" is corrupt. It always has been. R.C. Sproul says that the visible church is the most corrupt entity in history! Why? Because there are among it many people who are not Christians at all, but who pretend to be. However, the TRUE church is the elect, the remnant, and they exist as the real article! You might have to go look in a cave or prison camp somewhere to find them, but God always has His people. He chose them. He saved them. He adopts them. He sanctifies

them (makes them more and more like Christ). He preserves them and He will take them safely home one day, gathering the true Dispersion from the four corners of the earth.

Do not let the widespread corruption of what claims to be the Christian Church in this world make you doubt the truth of God's promises.

It is to the *elect exiles* that Peter writes. To the true people of God. MANY of the counterfeits are to be found in visible, local churches all around and that is how it has always been.

J.C. Ryle, the great Anglican evangelical pastor of the 1800's grew up in all of that non-elect false Christianity. Iain Murray writes about the beginning of a new and true church that aided Ryle in coming to true faith and repentance:

“One of the circumstances to which Ryle refers was the start of a new Church of England congregation in Macclesfield unlike the two already existing ‘where you might have slept as comfortably in those churches under the sermons of their ministers as you might in your own armchairs, with nothing to wake you up.’ In contrast, the ministry of John Burnet at St. George's brought “a new kind of religion into the Church of England, in

that part of Cheshire...It certainly set many people thinking who never thought before about religion, even though they were not converted, and of these I was one. There was a kind of stir among dry bones, and a great outcry, and kind of persecution was raised against the attendants of this new church.”

One of the attendants was Ryle's close friend and relative, Harry Arkwright. Another was his sister Susan. When both embraced what they heard, ‘Evangelical religion in one way or another began to be talked of and too often ridiculed and abused in our family.’” [J.C. Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone, by Iain Murray, 2015]

NOTE: It is vital that we put a serious question to ourselves right now. Namely, “*to which group do I belong? To the elect remnant or to the counterfeit?*”

Elect According to the Foreknowledge of God

When did God choose His elect? When, that is to say, did He set His love upon them? The Bible is plain –

Act 2:22-24 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you

yourselves know— (23) this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (24) God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Eph 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (5) he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (6) to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

See it? Before Genesis 1. Before the creation of the world. God knew His elect and chose us for this salvation. He “predestined” us – so that it would be absolutely certain we will arrive at our promised destination.

All of this matter of election and predestination then comes under the heading of the “U” in TULIP. “Unconditional election.” God chose His people, His elect, His remnant,

based on NOTHING in us, but by His own free choice. Romans 9 is very clear on this – chosen before doing anything good or bad.

For Obedience to Jesus Christ

As I mentioned earlier, one of the most common objections to these doctrines is this – “you reformed people teach that someone can be elect, chosen by God, saved, totally apart from anything they do and therefore you teach that a Christian can just keep on sinning all he wants and still end in heaven.”

The Bible teaches nothing of the sort and we see it in many places, one of which is right here in our text. Look at it again. Peter says:

...To those who are **elect** exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) **according to the foreknowledge** of God the Father, in the **sanctification** of the Spirit, **for obedience** to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

Notice that this election and foreknowledge *result in sanctification and obedience* to Jesus Christ. EVERY elect member of this remnant, every true Christian, is given the Holy Spirit to work in them and lead them into holiness and obedience to Christ. Sanctification is, you might say, “the

holy-izing” of the Christian. The Spirit in us leads us to be holy as God is holy. It is, therefore, impossible that any of the elect would willfully continue in the same wickedness they walked in before Christ brought them to this salvation.

He Has Caused us To be Born Again

“According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”.

Once more Peter emphasizes that our salvation is all of the Lord and that we have nothing to boast about. It is the Lord who *causes* a sinner to be born again. He is the cause. He is the reason anyone is His child. He effected our salvation through Jesus Christ, raising Him from the dead so that we might be raised from the dead.

There are still a few phrases we will want to look at in more detail in these verses next time such as this matter of being “sprinkled” with Christ’s blood, and of course these words in verse 5 –

...kept in heaven for you, (5) who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

These speak to the “P” in TULIP – the perseverance of the saints.

But let’s close with a consideration of a very important question that may well be in our minds as a result of hearing of this matter of election and remnant and predestination. Namely –

“If salvation is ultimately a matter of being chosen by God – or not – then is it not true that there is nothing at all I can do about it if I am not a Christian? And how is it that God holds anyone accountable? How can it be anyone’s fault if they are not chosen by God?”

When we looked at the Confession of Faith earlier, we read this phrase –

God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; **nor is violence offered to the will of the creature**, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established...

The Bible clearly teaches us that we are saved *through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ*. Listen to it in Peter’s own sermon where in one breath he speaks of the

foreknowledge and election of God and then calls upon people to repent and believe in Christ to be saved -

Act 2:22-39 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— (23) this Jesus, **delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.**

(24) God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (25) For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; (26) therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. (27) For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. (28) You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

(29) "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. (30) Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, (31) he

foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. (32) This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

(33) Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. (34) For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, (35) until I make your enemies your footstool.'" (36) Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, **this Jesus whom you crucified."**

(37) Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (38) And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

That same promise is given to everyone today. Repent. Turn to Christ

for forgiveness of your sins and you
WILL be saved.