

A Pilgrim's Progress (1 Peter 1:1-3)

Introduction: *What is the nature of our pilgrimage in this world?*

The tension between living in the “city of man” and having our pilgrimage toward the “city of God” is as old as Abraham. Yet throughout the ages and still today we mistake the meaning of our pilgrimage. In every way, Christians are to be “worldly” in the best sense—but by “seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt 6:33). Loving God first and most enables us to love everything and everyone more.

C. S. Lewis: “If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. ... It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in.’ Aim at earth and you will get neither” (*Mere Christianity*). What things? “[Preserving] such secular civilization as survived the fall of the Roman Empire; ... to it Europe owes the salvation, in those perilous ages, of civilized agriculture, architecture, laws, and literacy itself. ... This religion has always been healing the sick and caring for the poor; ... it has, more than any other, blessed marriage; ... arts and philosophy tend to flourish in its neighborhood” (*Some Thoughts*).

1. Faith

“... for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner, as all my fathers were” (Psa 39:12). David says, our life is brief, and there’s no answer for him in this life and this world, nothing permanent to hold on to. “But having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ... But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” (Heb 11:13, 16).

2. Obedience

“Because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay [or sojourn] here in fear” (1Pe 1:16-17). “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles ...” (1Pe 2:11-12).

Peter does not tell us to be coarse, rude, and arrogant, and denounce the ungodly people in authority over us, nor to segregate ourselves into separate communes. Rather, he tells us to live our godly lives right in the midst of the society that rejects us, maintaining our present relationships, always being ready to give an answer for the hope that’s in us (3:15).

3. Patience

“His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Pe 1:3-5). “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;” (1Pe 1:13)

Conclusion

“Of this just man let this due praise be given,
Heaven was in him, before he was in heaven” (Thomas Ken)