

July 3, 2022

I Peter 1:17-19:

Lives In Exile

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I Peter 1:17-19

Dear Friends in Christ,

If you're okay with this, imagine being on your deathbed and sitting next to you is a beloved family member or friend. You can still hear. You can still understand. You know you're going to die. And the dear one sitting next to you says something along the line of, "Remember that trip to..." - and then the itinerary of the trip is mentioned and all the things you saw and did along the way. And then the family member or friend takes you down memory lane and reminisces about the fun things you did together. And then the person says, "Think about all the family and friends who love and care about you. Hold on to the good memories." So, do you think that all the things we had and all the things we did will comfort us when we're standing at the end of the check-out lane? Will the sacrifices we've made for this world make dying and death easier?

The Holy Spirit gave the Psalmist great insight: "Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call! For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace (Ps. 102:2,3)." We've seen smoke billowing out of a chimney. It takes on forms - fades - disappears - then forgotten. *For my days pass away like smoke.*

We are to understand that in Christ our lives here are, without question . . .

LIVES IN EXILE

I. Futile Ways. V.18

I'm starting with these words from verse 18 of our text: "...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold..."

Futile ways. Futile can mean "occupied with trifles" or "failure to achieve a desired result (Webster)." This is not addressing the things we do to live and survive in this world, but trifles; things of little or no value or importance, in the long run. It moves us to the words the Lord gave John: "Do not love the world or the things of the world (Jn. 2:15)." Do not sacrifice your walk with God, as Peter stated, for "perishable things such as silver or gold."

How significant it is that Peter writes, "Be sober minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (I Pt.5:8)." Hey - listen - he's seeking someone! That someone is you, each one of you, and me. Luther's insight on Peter's words is very significant:

"Here you see what life is really like. It's almost enough to make you wish you were dead. We're living here on the devil's turf. Our situation is similar to a traveler who stays at an inn where he finds out that everyone in the place is a robber...we now live on earth, where the evil spirit is the prince and he does whatever he wants through them. This is a horrible situation if viewed correctly.

"So Peter warns us to be alert (sober minded; watchful)...aware of what is really happening." (Martin Luther, Through Faith Alone, CPH, March 21 devotion).

I think we know what a "Dystopia" is, but I decided to look up the word on Google. Listen to what popped up: "George Orwell's 1984 is a defining example of dystopian fiction in that it envisions a future where society is in decline, totalitarianism has created vast inequities, and innate weaknesses of human nature (we would say 'sinful nature') that keep

the characters in a state of conflict and unhappiness.” Fiction? What do you think? Futile ways? God help us to avoid futile ways.

II. Ransomed With Blood.

We have been ransomed. Our text:

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout time of your exile knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited by your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot (vv. 17-19).

Again, we have been ransomed. Recall when God instituted the Passover meal prior to Israel's exodus. Recall these words God spoke to Moses and Aaron; selected verses from Exodus 12, which foreshadowed Christ:

“...every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses...Your **lamb shall be without blemish**, a male a year old...the whole assembly shall kill their lambs at twilight.

“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses... It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down the firstborn in the land of Egypt...And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you...(Ex. 12:3,5,6b,7,11,12a,13b).”

Listen to the words of Paul concerning what we are to do with the leavening effect of sinning: “Clean out the old leaven... For Christ our **Passover lamb** has been sacrificed.” (I Cor. 5:7). Christ fulfilled the intent of the Passover meal! The blood of Jesus **ransomed** us, paid the price to rescue us from eternal hell and grants us eternal life. As Scriptures say, “...the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (Jn. 1:29).”

David Garrick was an English actor who was influenced by his good friend Dr. Samuel Johnson, the highly noted English writer and a devout Anglican. They both died in the late 1700's. The story goes that one day David Garrick showed Dr. Johnson his great mansion, his beautiful garden, his impressive statues and paintings at his residence known as Hampton Court. Samuel Johnson is reported to have said, “Ah, David, David, these are the things which make the death-bed terrible.” We have been ransomed from our futile ways; from our sacrificing everything to make a heaven on earth; from landing on a terrible death-bed.

III. Living in Exile.

Our text for this morning begins with, “And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile (v.17).”

Regarding the words, “judges impartially according to each one's deeds,” we must recall these words of John from Revelation chapter 14: “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them. (v.13).’” As has been stated here many times, our deeds, the things we do because of Christ's love for us, do not pay for our sin; do not go ahead of us and earn God's love or favor; do not make up

with God for the things we do that we shouldn't do. Our deeds are the evidence of our faith in Christ who has paid for our sins and won eternal life for us.

Regarding the words, "conduct yourselves with fear," Article XII of our Augsburg Confession states:

This faith gradually grows and throughout life it struggles with sin to conquer sin and death. But love follows faith... Filial fear (as in the fear of a parent) can be clearly defined as an anxiety joined with faith, where faith consoles and sustains the anxious heart, whereas in servile fear faith does not sustain the anxious heart." (Tappert, 186.37; 187.38).

Regarding the words "throughout the time of your exile," the definition of exile is "the state or a period of forced absence from one's own country or home." Exile - "absence from one's own country or home." That's where we are, absent from our true and lasting home and country; exiled from Heaven!

Tomorrow is July 4th. Most of us have seen many, many changes in America's thinking and goals over the decades. I would think most of us are deeply concerned. I would think many are very fearful of what's to come. It would be good and proper for us to remember the words given to Paul: "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Phil. 3:29); to remember these words given to Peter: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his (God's) own possession..." (I Pt. 2:9); to remember these words of Jesus: "My kingdom is not of this world." (Jn. 18:36); to remember these words given to John: "Do not love the world (again, it's the *agape* love that will sacrifice everything for something) or the things of the world...the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (I Jn. 2:15, 17); to remember these words of Jesus: "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Our post sermon hymn is "I'm But a Stranger Here." We've sung the hymn countless times. We would do ourselves a favor to think on the words, "Earth is a desert drear, Heaven is my home." It is to our advantage to take seriously the words of our text: "conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile knowing you were ransomed." Knowing that our **Lives In Exile** have been ransomed by the blood of Christ for eternal joy! That's the real and only comfort at the end of the check-out lane!

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott