

**Sermon: A Life That Points To God**

**Text: 1 Peter 2:11-17**

**Discussion Questions:**

Peter returns again and again to three major points of emphasis: Identity; Response; Future.

We see these three concepts in the first two verses of today's passage (**1 Peter 2:11-12**):

- **Identity:** *"Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles..."*
  - What do you make of Peter calling the recipients of this letter "Dear friends"? How does his addressing them (and us!) this way, effect how we read what follows? Why do you think Peter called us "friends"?
  - How often do you use the word "urge"? What does it mean to urge someone? Look up the definition, and discuss why Peter chose this word.
  - In 1 Peter 1:1, Peter calls his readers "exiles." And in 1 Peter 1:17, he calls us "foreigners." Here in 1 Peter 2:11, he combines them, calling us both foreigners as well as exiles. What are the similarities between the two? What are the differences? Why do you think Peter refers to believers in Jesus as both of these things?
  
- **Response:** *"Live such good lives among the pagans..."*
  - What do you think Peter means when he urges us to live a good life?
  - A "pagan" is someone who is either a) an atheist; or b) who believes in many different gods. Do pagans still exist today?
  
- **Future:** *"...glorify God on the day He visits us."*
  - When Peter talks about "the day that God visits us," what day do you think he's talking about?
  - Who is it that will glorify God? Is it the believer who is living the good life? Or is it the pagan who is witnessing the believer who is living the good life? If it's the pagan, why will they glorify God on the day He visits us?

**Examination:**

The Old Testament has numerous examples of people who were foreigners and exiles in a distant land. We also see how they lived what could be considered "good lives," and their exemplary moral behavior was noticed by the "pagans" around them. Consider and discuss these two examples:

- Read **Genesis 39:1-20**
  - According to verse 2, Joseph "prospered" as an exile in Egypt. Why?
  - What impact did Joseph have on those around him (v. 3)? What did Joseph's master notice about his life? What kind of "success" do you think God gave to Joseph?
  - It wasn't long before Joseph was given great privilege (v. 4). How easy can it be, when things are going well, to think that our goodness is the reason for our success—as opposed to the blessings of God being poured out upon us?

- Why do you think the Lord also blessed all of Potiphar’s household as the result of his favorable treatment of Joseph (v. 5)?
  - When Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph, what kept Joseph from giving in to the temptation (vv. 8-10)? What would have happened if he HAD given in to the temptation? How often do you think people’s lives (and the higher purposes God has in mind for them) are derailed by caving to temptation?
  - What happened to Joseph as a result of his resisting temptation (vv. 13-20)? Is this the kind of suffering that Peter says we can expect? Is this fair?
  - In what ways might Joseph’s “living such a good life among the pagans” result in God’s greater glory in the future?
- Read **Daniel 1:1-20**
    - Daniel and his three friends were selected to serve in the king’s palace, and were given amazing privileges such as food and wine right from the king’s table. Why do you think the king did this? What was his ultimate purpose?
    - How easy would it have been for these four teenagers to go right along with the king’s plan? Or to the opposite—how HARD would it have been for these four boys to resist the king’s offer?
    - Do you think all of the other boys, who were part of the king’s program, viewed the food and wine as a “temptation?” Do you think Daniel viewed these things as a temptation (v. 8)?
    - It appears that Daniel had “resolved to live a good life among the pagans.” What do you think his motive was?
    - What was the ultimate result of the courage and resolve of these boys?
  - Read **1 Peter 2:13-17**
    - Peter is commanding his listeners to submit themselves to every human authority (v. 13)—which included the emperor and local governors. Why do you think Peter is requiring this (v. 15)? How do you respond to the person who doesn’t see this as being fair?
    - How does doing good silence the ignorant talk of foolish people?
    - How do people use their freedom as a cover-up for evil (v. 16)? Can you think of any modern-day behaviors that would fit this description?
    - The last phrase of verse 16 are four simple words: “*Live as God’s slaves.*” What a powerful sentence! Think about this. Talk about it. What should this mean in terms of how we live? Is this at the root of our identity in Christ?
    - Make a list of five specific ways (in each of the four areas) we can and should:
      - Show proper respect to everyone...
      - Love the family of believers...
      - Fear God...
      - Honor the emperor...

**Application:**

When Joseph lived his life in real time, he could have easily given in to the advances. When Daniel was offered the king’s food and wine, he could have viewed it as his “lucky day”! And yet, in both situations, had these men given in, it would have derailed all of God’s plans for their lives. How is Satan tempting you? What are the consequences? What do you need to do today to get help, or turn things around?