

**Victory of the Lamb**  
**March 15, 2020**  
**Sermon: Thriving in Exile**  
**Sermon text: 1 Peter 2:11-12**  
**Preacher: Ben Sadler**

**<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (ESV)**

When I was in college I spent a year in the Dominican Republic. For the first time in my life I was in the minority and I felt like an outsider. My body went into fight or flight mode. Sometimes I was hyper vigilant. Other times I wanted to run.

If you are a Christian living in 2020, you probably feel like an outsider, almost like you are living in a foreign country. You might want to either fight or flight. Either fight against the culture or run from it.

We are continuing our sermon series called **The way of the exile**. This series is about how we can thrive even when we feel like outsiders in our own culture.

**How can Christians thrive in our current culture?**

To answer that question, we are going to go back to 1 Peter. Written 60AD. Peter writing to Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. They felt like outsiders. They were being persecuted by Emperor Nero. Not light persecution. Nero blamed the Christians for the fire that burnt Rome. And he put Christians on poles and made them into human torches for his gladiator games. Peter writing to encourage them.

Let's look at 1 Peter 2:11 **Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (ESV)**

Peter calls them "beloved", loved by God. The world thinks they are crazy and evil. God loves them. The world thinks you crazy, but Jesus has made you God's child.

He also calls them "Exiles". **Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (ESV)**

Peter says he is writing from Babylon to the exiles. What does this mean? He is putting them in Israel's story. Slavery, Monarchy, and then captivity in Babylon.

Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylon: <sup>5</sup>**"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. <sup>6</sup> Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."**

Israel wasn't going anywhere. They needed to make Babylon their home. Make it a better place. Pray for it and work for its prosperity.

Same is true for us. **1. We are exiles.** We are outsiders, exiles. And our nation is not going back anytime soon. So we need to make this our home. Make it a better place. Pray for it. If it prospers, we prosper.

So how do we make it a better place? We need to take the posture of an exile. We don't have leverage or power. When I was in the DR, I had to know I was in a foreign land. I wasn't going to change the DR. We don't have the power to change our culture. We can't control Hollywood or Wallstreet or Washington DC.

What do we do? **Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (ESV)** We can't fight culture, but we need to fight against our heart. Abstain means to avoid, create distance.

## **2. Fight the flesh.**

Does that mean you run from the world?

**Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (Peter 2:12 ESV)**

Romans saw Christians as doing evil. Not just ignorant but evil. Atheists, cannibalistic, incestuous.

Christians today are not just ignorant, but evil.

How are we to respond? **Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (Peter 2:12 ESV)**

Some might know the Christian message, but now they want to know if it is good.

## **3. Do good.**

Conclusion