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The Essence of a Heaven Bound Life

1 PETER 2:11-12

Introduction

1. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself how God views you?
2. What is His consideration of you?
3. If you are a Christian here today, you are “beloved” of God.
4. What does this mean?
5. It means that you are the object of God’s affection, you are dear to Him.
6. God used this term twice in referring to Jesus:
 - a. Following Jesus’ baptism, God declared, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).
 - b. On the Mount of Transfiguration, where Peter, James & John were privileged to see Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah, God again spoke and said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7).
7. Now, because of God’s mercy and grace which He has bestowed in our lives, we are beloved of God, He calls us saints, holy ones (Romans 1:7).
8. Paul calls us to “be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1).
9. We keep pressing “on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).
10. You and I are heaven bound, but what does a heaven bound life look like?
11. How are we to live before a disbelieving world?
12. In our text, here in 1 Peter 2:11-12, Peter tells us of . . .
 - a. The attitude we must embrace.

- b. The war we must continue to fight.
 - c. The lifestyle we must maintain.
13. As we press on toward our heavenly home let's begin by considering first . . .

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I. There Is An Attitude We Must Embrace

A. WE ARE "ALIENS AND STRANGERS"

1. These two words are synonyms for each other and are translated in a number of ways: "aliens, strangers, sojourners, exiles, pilgrims, temporary residents."
2. The first refers to a temporary resident in a foreign place.
3. The second indicates a person who lives in a place which is not his or her home.
4. Abraham referred to himself as "a stranger and a sojourner" when he asked the sons of Heth to sell him "the cave of Machphelah" so that he might bury his deceased wife, Sarah (Genesis 23:4-11).
5. The only piece of property that Abraham ever owned in the land which God promised to his descendants was this cave and the field which surrounded it.
6. Hebrews 11:9, tells us that Abraham "lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob."
7. Why? Because "he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

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B. WE KEEP OURSELVES UNATTACHED TO OUR PRESENT SURROUNDINGS

1. We often sing, "this world is not my home, I'm just a passing through."
2. Have you ever gone tent camping?
3. If so, you know one thing is definitely true — you are only staying in the

tent for a little while (overnight, weekend, week).

4. Even if you go on a vacation and stay in a nice hotel, you don't become attached to your room — you know it is just temporary.
5. Some of you don't even unpack your suitcase.
6. As Christians, you and I shouldn't become attached to this life, because we know it is only temporary.
7. A man by the name of Howard Hendricks once said, *"Most people think that they're in the land of the living, heading toward the land of the dead. But the truth is, we're in the land of the dying, heading toward the land of the living."*
8. "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).
9. We are "fellow citizens with the saints." We belong to "God's household" (Ephesians 2:19).
10. This is why we "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).

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II. There Is A War We Must Fight

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11, NASB95)

A. IT IS A WAR AGAINST OUR SOULS

1. If you are a Christian here today, there was a point in your life where you won a most important battle against the devil.
2. When you obeyed the truth (1:22) and were "born again" (1:3, 23), you "purified your soul" (1:22).
3. It was at this point that God . . .
 - a. "rescued [you] from the domain of darkness, and transferred [you] to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13).

- b. set you free “from the snare of the devil” (2 Timothy 2:26).
- 4. Even though we are Christians now, Satan has not given up in his ongoing war for our eternal souls.
- 5. No. This is a war in which you and I are engaged for the rest of the time we’re in this body.
- 6. This is why Peter tells us at the end of this letter, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8, NASB95).
- 7. This is why Paul told the Christians in Ephesus that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12, NASB95).
- 8. It is why he told Timothy to “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12, NASB95).
- 9. It is why he told the saints in Corinth, “I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27, NASB95).
- 10. Our goal as disciples of Christ is to be able to say with Paul at the end of our lives, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7, NASB95).
- 11. Whatever you do, as long as you live, don’t turn your back, don’t drop your guard, don’t stop fighting the good fight.

Slide 5**B. TO BE SUCCESSFUL, WE MUST “ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS”**

- 1. When we abstain we . . .
 - a. hold ourselves back from something
 - b. walk away from it
 - c. avoid something.

2. That something from which we are to abstain are those “sinful desires, which war against [our] soul” (NIV84).
3. Because you and I are citizens of heaven, we should never allow ourselves to be tangled up in the things of this world.
4. The apostle John put it this way, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15, NASB95).
5. He then added, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 John 2:16, NASB95).
6. These “sinful desires” which Satan utilizes so effectively to tempt us are “strong desires motivated by selfishness.”
 - a. Some desires are not wrong or sinful in themselves — they become wrong when we attempt to satisfy them in a way that is contrary to God’s Word.
 - b. Other desires are wrong from the start. These we must avoid.

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III. There Is a Lifestyle We Must Maintain

A. THE CONTENT OF OUR LIFESTYLE

“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles”

1. Excellent behavior
 - a. It doesn’t matter what you are doing:
 - 1) Working at your place of employment.
 - 2) Eating a meal at one of our local restaurants.
 - 3) Shopping in one of our businesses.
 - 4) Watching your children or grandchildren in a sporting event.
 - ❑ There is always someone watching you and observing how you

conduct yourself.

- b. Our way of life, our conduct both at home and out in our community is to be good and honorable.
- c. In Philippians 2:14-15, the apostle Paul said, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14-15, NASB95).
- d. We “never pay back evil for evil to anyone,” but “respect what is right in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17).

2. Good deeds

- a. You and I are to be known for our good deeds.
- b. This is was the example that Jesus set — “He went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).
- c. Our Paul told the believers in Ephesus that you and I are God’s “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10, NASB95).
- d. Through His death, Jesus redeemed us from all wickedness and purified us for Himself so that we might be “eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:14, NIV84).
- e. You and I are to think about how we can “stir up one another to love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

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B. THE RESULT OF OUR LIFESTYLE

“... so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

1. Until our Lord returns, there will always be those who look to slander us as evildoers.
2. Jesus told His disciples “you will be hated by all because of My name” (Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17).
4. When Peter wrote this letter, there were those who accused the early Christians of . . .
 - a. Cannibalism because they were eating a man’s flesh and drinking his blood.
 - b. Incest because they spoke of loving one another.
 - c. Rebellion because they were “saying there is another king, Jesus” (Acts 17:7).
 - d. Breaking the law because they were persuading men to worship God contrary to the law (Acts 18:13).
5. Though the accusations have changed, the efforts to slander God’s people as evildoers hasn’t.
6. What does Peter say that you and I are to do?
7. We are to keep doing good.
8. Remember what Jesus said? “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
9. There are those who are not Christians who are observing us all the time.
 - a. They pay attention to how we react to things at work.
 - b. They see how we talk to others.
 - c. They study the way we treat the various members of our family.
 - d. They are attentive to the way we respond to our problems.
10. For the last 17 months, people of this community and beyond have watched us as a congregation.
 - a. They have watched the way in which we have responded to the needs of our friends and neighbors.

- b. They have looked at the way in which we have interacted with each other from day to day.
 - c. They have studied us in our worship, either in person or online.
11. I believe that many have come to glorify God because of what they see in us.
12. It is my prayer that God will continue to glorify His name through this church in a great way.

Conclusion

1. On the day of our Lord's return in glory, there are some, who, because of the good they saw you doing turned to Christ in repentance and "obedience to the truth."
2. They will glorify God for the mercy He has shown them and the grace by which He saved them.
3. On that day, they will gladly "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father" (Philippians 2:11).
4. For those of you who are my brothers and sisters in Christ here today, I want to encourage you to keep letting your light shine.
5. It may be that one day someone will stand before our Lord and thank Him for the good life you lived in their presence.
6. If you are someone who is still watching us today, please know that while we try to live the life Christ has called us to live, we are not perfect.
7. Please do not allow our failures to keep you from following the God we know and love.
8. Please come to Him today and know the salvation He offers to you through His Son, Jesus Christ.