



Foreigners in a Strange Land: Preaching thru 1 Peter

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Text-Driven Preaching Conference 2019

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March 4, 2019

Summary: Christians today are at a crossroad between Christ and culture. The world claims that the church “is on its way out.” The Bible teaches that believers are “on our way up.” As Christians, we live between two worlds. We are foreigners in a strange land. Take a quick journey through the Book of 1 Peter as we understand that those who do the most for the present world are simply those who think the most of the next.

I. Observation: “See the Big Picture”

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Observation: “See the Big Picture”

1. Authorship

- ❖ The letter claims Petrine authorship, “Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1)
- ❖ The earliest evidence and tradition of the early church supports Peter as the author
- ❖ The letter critiques “deceit” (2:1, 22; 3:10) and, if written by another author, it would be inconsistent with the moral and ethical exhortations in the letter.
- ❖ No compelling external or internal evidence suggests otherwise

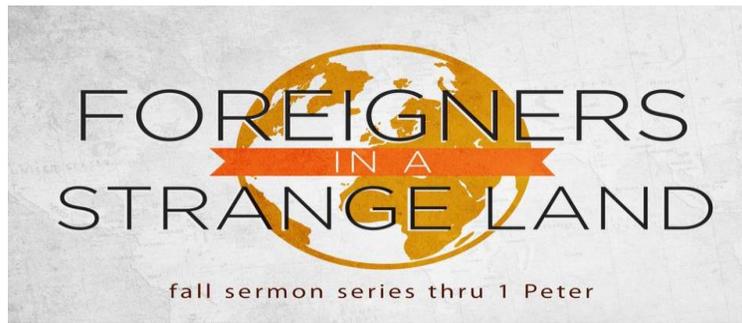
2. Date

- ❖ The acceptance of Petrine authorship determines the date of the letter. If affirmed that Peter is the author and if accepted that he wrote from Rome (as the reference to Babylon in 5:13 indicates), the letter was likely written at the conclusion of Peter’s life. An exact date cannot be determined, but it is likely that the letter was written before the commencement of the Neronian persecution.

3. Purpose, Occasion, and Background

- ❖ The reference to Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13) is generally accepted as a reference to Rome. As such, Peter wrote the letter to churches in Asia Minor from Rome.
- ❖ Peter wrote to marginalized believers on the frontier regions of Asia Minor “to those dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia” (1 Pet. 1:1).
- ❖ The recipients of the letter faced persecution and, based on the tone of Peter’s letter, the intensity of the persecution would likely increase as time progressed.
- ❖ The persecution, at the time the letter was written, seems to be local, regional, and intermittent. The persecution, if prior to the commencement of Neronian persecution, was not state sponsored.
- ❖ Christians living in the frontier regions of Asia minor were marginalized and mistreated, but Christianity, as a religion, was not illegal.
- ❖ The letter contains a Jewish flavor with Old Testament allusions throughout the Book (1:16, 24-25; 2:3, 6-10, 22; 3:10-12; 4:18; 5:5), but most scholars assert the recipients of the letter were primarily Gentiles, especially due to the reference in 4:3-4.
- ❖ Readers are identified as “exile(s)” (see 1:1 and 1:17). Elliott asserts that the plural “exiles” refers to permanent strangers and the singular “exile” indicates those who living as temporary aliens thus suggesting that readers were not exiles because of their faith.¹ Such a conclusion dismisses the tension of Christianity’s exclusive claims in an inclusive society and is an improbable

¹ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 37-49; 129-32.



interpretation of the text. The recipients of the letter were labeled “exiles” and “an exile” due to spiritual and theological reasons.

4. Literary Genre and Features

- ❖ The structure of the book is marked by salutation greetings. The first major section begins with a blessing (1:3) and the two subsequent sections are demarcated by “dear friends” (2:11 and 4:12). The final section ends with a doxology (5:11).
- ❖ Kendall noted that all the imperatives in the letter (1:13-5:11) flow from the introduction in 1:3-12.² As such, 1:3-12 is deeply theological in which Peter grounds subsequent ethical expressions in the finished work of Christ.
- ❖ The theological, specifically Christological, thrust of 1:3-12 paves the way for the following structure:
 - 1) 1:13 - 2:10 focuses on three major topical headings (holiness: 1:14-21; love: 1:22-2:3; election: 2:4-10)
 - 2) 2:11 - 4:11 offers application of the topical subdivisions (holiness, love, and election) in societal settings and everyday life (government, work, marriage, church).
 - 3) 4:12 - 5:11 provides a general summary of the letter with specific instructions for how Christians should relate to hostile unbelievers (4:12-19) and how fellow Christians should relate in the church (5:1-11).

5. Purpose

- ❖ The letter purposes to encourage believers in faithfulness despite the inevitable sufferings of the present age. The present persecution, though difficult, is only temporary as foreigners in a strange land. The letter instructs believers to consider the suffering of Jesus Christ and follow his example of suffering when trouble is met.

6. Overarching Message and Theological Thrust

- ❖ The journey, as foreigners in a strange land, from present suffering to future glory has a costly challenge but a crowning purpose.

² D.W. Kendall, “The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3-12,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 103-120.



Examination: “Focus on the smaller units”

7. Identify the natural units for preaching

- ❖ 1 Peter 1:1-12
- ❖ 1 Peter 1:13-25
- ❖ 1 Peter. 2:1-10
- ❖ 1 Peter 2:11-17
- ❖ 1 Peter 2:18-25
- ❖ 1 Peter 3:1-7
- ❖ 1 Peter 3:8-12
- ❖ 1 Peter 3:13-17
- ❖ 1 Peter 3:18-4:6
- ❖ 1 Peter 4:7-11
- ❖ 1 Peter 4:12-19
- ❖ 1 Peter 5:1-4
- ❖ 1 Peter 5:5-14
- ❖ Conclusion

8. Exegete the text and arrive at the main idea

Sermon # 1:

Text: 1 Peter 1:1-12

Title: “A Living Hope”

Main Idea: There is a hope that never dies because there is a Christ that ever lives

Key Words and Topics: elect, exiles, dispersion, foreknowledge, sanctification, obedience sacrifice, new birth, great mercy, living hope, inheritance, imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven, rejoice, suffer, various trials, proven character of faith, love of God, sufferings of Christ.

Outline:

1. A living hope provides us an identity as exiles on earth (1:1-2)
2. A living hope prepares us for the promises of heaven (1:3)
3. A living hope insures us of the possessions of heaven (1:4)
4. A living hope guards us for the promises of heaven (1:5)
5. A living hope offers us the ability to overcome (1:6)
6. A living hope gives us the opportunity to worship (1:7)



Sermon # 2

Text: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Title: “Developing a Lifestyle of Holiness and Love”

Main Idea: As holy people and a holy church, we must set our hope on Christ in holiness, worship, and love.

Key Words and Topics: ready for action, being sober minded, set your hope, do not be conformed, be holy, conduct yourselves, exile, redeemed, empty way of life, precious blood, unblemished lamb, foreknown, raised, glorified, having purified, love, having been born again

Outline:

1. Commands for the Christian (1:13-21)
 - ❖ Fix Your Hope on Christ
 - ❖ Pursue Holiness
 - ❖ Worship God with a Holy Respect
2. Commands for the Church (1:22-25)
 - ❖ Show love for one another
 - The basis for love: salvation
 - The confidence for love: the living Word of God
 - The announcement of love: the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Sermon # 3

Text: 1 Peter 2:1-10

Title: “Growing-Up in Christian Identity”

Main Idea: God’s growth plan requires for you to give-up past iniquities to pursue a new identity.

Key Words and Topics: Malice, deceit hypocrisy, envy, slander, desire, grow up into your salvation, living stone [see connection to living hope (1:3)], living word, spiritual house, holy priesthood, built, spiritual sacrifices, royal priesthood, holy nation, ruled by Christ, people for his possession, proclaim praises, having received mercy

Outline:

1. Reject Sin (2:1)
2. Desire God’s Word (2:2-3)
3. Live-Out Your Christian Identity (2:4-10)
 - ❖ Living Stones
 - ❖ Spiritual House
 - ❖ Holy Priesthood
 - ❖ Spiritual Sacrifices
 - ❖ Chosen Race
 - ❖ Royal Priesthood
 - ❖ Holy Nation
 - ❖ Ruled by Christ



Sermon # 4

Text: 1 Peter 2:11-17

Title: "Social Interactions: Government"

Main Idea: Obey the government until the state forbids you to do something God commands or commands you to do something God forbids

Key Words and Topics: Urge, strangers and exiles, abstain from sinful actions, conduct yourselves honorably, be subject, God's will, submit as free people. Notice four imperatives of verse 17 (honor everyone, love the brothers and sisters, fear God, honor the emperor)

Outline:

1. The Christian and his actions toward unbelievers (2:11-12)
 - ❖ Remember Your Position
 - ❖ Refrain from Sin
 - ❖ Renounce False Accusations by Good Deeds
2. The Christian and his allegiance toward government (2:13-16)
 - ❖ Submit to the State
 - The state is an advantage to loyal citizens
 - The state is an adversary to lawless citizens
3. The Christian and his attitude toward God (2:17)
 - ❖ Demonstrate You are Surrendered to God
 - Show Respect to All
 - Love Believers
 - Fear God
 - Honor the State

Sermon # 5

Text: 1 Peter 2:18-25

Title: "Social Interactions: The Workplace"

Main Idea: Work is a great ministry when you fulfill your greatest ministry at work.

Key Words and Topics: Submit, suffering, pain, Christ

Outline:

1. The Exhortation to Christians (2:18-21)
 - ❖ Submit to Your Superiors
 - ❖ Expect Suffering
2. The Example of Christ in Suffering (2:22-23)
 - ❖ The Pain of Suffering
 - ❖ The Patience of Suffering
3. The Gospel of Christ in Suffering (2:24-25)
 - ❖ The necessity of His death
 - ❖ The nature of His death



Sermon # 6

Text: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Title: “Social Interactions: Marriage”

Main Idea: The marriage that works is work

Key Words and Topics: marriage, husband, wife, heart, submit, honor, prayer

Outline:

1. A message to wives (3:1-6)
 - ❖ Behavior: Your actions speak louder than words
 - ❖ Beauty: Your attitude is your prettiest feature
 - ❖ Biblical Examples: Godly woman in the church are your greatest example

2. A message to husbands (3:7)
 - ❖ Know your wife
 - ❖ Honor your wife
 - ❖ Avoid division with your wife

Sermon # 7

Text: 1 Peter 3:8-12

Title: “Social Interactions: The Church”

Main Idea: The compelling and attractive church has an attitude that determines its altitude; is known for her reactions and actions; and places Jesus above self-purposed agendas.

Key Words and Topics: like-minded, sympathetic, love, compassion and humility, sin, avoid evil, blessing, peace, victorious living, revenge, tongue

Outline:

1. The attitude of the church (3:8)
 - ❖ Like-minded
 - ❖ Sympathetic
 - ❖ Love-One Another
 - ❖ Compassionate
 - ❖ Humility

2. The response of the church (3:9-11)
 - ❖ Do not seek revenge
 - ❖ Use your tongue to encourage and not to insult
 - ❖ Speak well of others
 - ❖ Love life
 - ❖ Avoid evil and do good
 - ❖ Seek peace

3. The motive of the church (3:12)
 - ❖ The Lord knows our problems
 - ❖ The Lord hears our prayers
 - ❖ The Lord protects His church



Sermon # 8

Text: 1 Peter 3:13-17

Title: “A Rightful Response to Wrongful Suffering”

Main Idea: There is a rightful response to wrongful suffering.

Key Words and Topics: Fear, Lordship of Christ, apologetics, suffering, Christ, cross of Christ, resurrection

Outline:

1. The general rule: Sharp critics will not hinder good deeds (3:13)
2. The eventual result: Persecution will arrive in time (3:14)
3. The greatest rebuttal: A holy life, an intelligible faith, and a clear conscience (3:15-17)

Sermon # 9

Text: 1 Peter 3:18-4:6

Title: “A Redeeming God Who Redeems Time”

Main Idea: Christ redeemed us that we can redeem time.

Key Words and Topics: suffering, God's will, time, sin, slander, death, hell, eternity

Outline:

1. The Example: Christ Redeemed Us (3:18-22)
 - ❖ The death of Christ: Christ suffered to bring us to God
 - ❖ The resurrection of Christ: Christ was raised to proclaim victory over death
 - ❖ The exaltation of Christ: Christ was exalted to a place of power
2. The Exhortation: Redeem Time (4:1-6)
 - ❖ Flee from Sin
 - ❖ Find God's Will
 - ❖ Forget Your Past
 - ❖ Find the Lost

Sermon # 10

Text: 1 Peter 4:7-11

Title: “Before Time Runs Out”

Main Idea: We need to use to rest of our time to invest our time in God's will.

Key Words and Topics: prayer, love, compassion/care, Bible, service, gifts/ministry

Outline:

- 1) Pray Diligently (4:7)
 - ❖ Repeated prayers
 - ❖ Focused prayers
 - ❖ Blameless prayers
- 2) Love Abundantly (4:8-9)



- ❖ Love the costs
 - ❖ Love that covers
 - ❖ Love that cares
- 3) Serve Faithfully (4:10-11)
- ❖ The Speaking Gift
 - ❖ The Serving Gift

Sermon # 11

Text: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Title: “Direction for Dark Days”

Main Idea: When suffering comes, do not be surprised or ashamed but rejoice in your suffering and respond to it.

Key Words and Topics: suffering, test, rejoice, judgment, God's will, creation/creator

Outline:

1. The “Don’ts” of Suffering (4:12, 4:16)
 - ❖ Do not be surprised when you suffer
 - ❖ Do not be ashamed when you suffer
2. The “Dos” of Suffering (4:13, 4:15-18)
 - ❖ Rejoice in Suffering
 - ❖ Evaluate Your Suffering
3. Respond to Suffering (4:19)

Sermon # 12

Text: 1 Peter 5:1-4

Title: “Marks of a Christian Leader”

Main Idea: The scorecard of pastoral success: God determines greatness by how many people you serve, not how many people serve you.

Key Words and Topics: Suffering, pastor, ministry, greed, money Christ, eternity,

Outline:

1. The Pastor and His Role (5:1-2)
 - ❖ Elder: Mature in Wisdom
 - ❖ Shepherd: Motivated in Caring
 - ❖ Overseer: Managing in Leadership
2. The Pastor and His Requirements (5:2-3)
 - ❖ The Priority of His Ministry: Biblical Preaching
 - ❖ The Purity of His Ministry: Honest Motives
 - ❖ The Pattern of His Ministry: Godly Example
3. The Pastor and His Reward (5:4)



- ❖ A Coming Christ
- ❖ A Crowning Glory

Sermon # 13

Text: 1 Peter 5:5-14

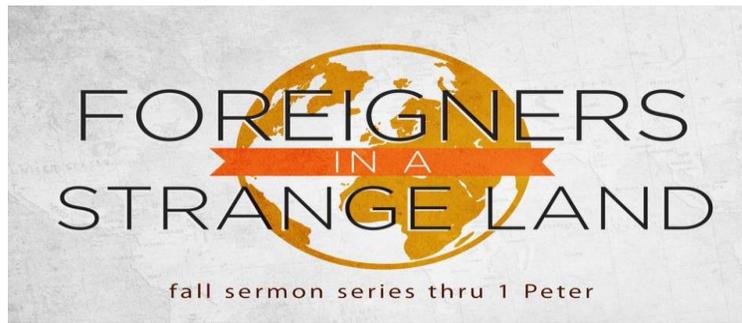
Title: “Under the Mighty Hand of God”

Main Idea: Position yourself for victory -- under God, over evil, and in Christ.

Key Words and Topics: Humility, pride, exalt, prayer, devil, sin, faith, suffering

Outline:

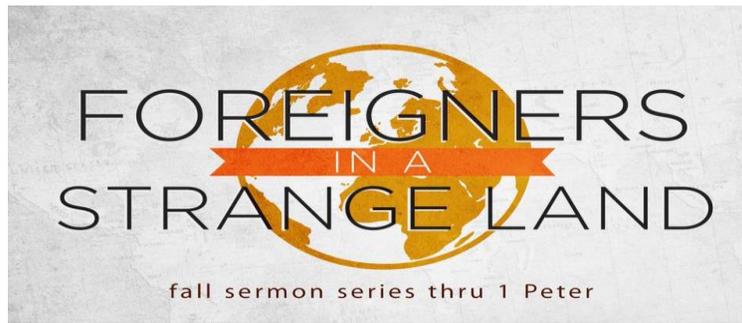
1. The Position of Humility – Under God (5:5-7)
 - ❖ The Mark of Surrender
 - ❖ The Mark of Service
 - ❖ The Mark of Humility
 - ❖ The Mark of Faith
2. The Position of Victory – Over Evil (5:8-9)
 - ❖ Recognize the Devil
 - ❖ Respect the Devil
 - ❖ Resist the Devil
3. The Position of Hope – In Christ (5:10-14)
 - ❖ Restore
 - ❖ Establish
 - ❖ Strength
 - ❖ Support



Application “Aim for the Application”

9. General Trips for Preaching 1 Peter

- 1) Ground all ethical expressions in the theological foundation of the gospel (1 Pet. 1:1-13)
- 2) Offer the principle of “dependent responsibility:” positional vs practical holiness (1 Pet. 1:14-16)
- 3) Preach a big God (1 Pet. 1:17-21)
- 4) Give ’em a high view of Scripture (1 Pet. 1:23-25)
- 5) Preach against sin but do not preach moralism (1 Pet. 2:1-10)
- 6) Focus on the four major areas of social interaction – in society, in the workplace, in the home, in the church (1 Pet. 2:11-3:12)
- 7) Prepare your audience for difficult days (1 Pet. 3:13-17)
- 8) Do not omit the challenging passages (1 Pet. 3:18-22)
- 9) Help ’em remember: time is short (1 Pet. 4:1-6)
- 10) Focus on spiritual disciplines and gifts (1 Pet. 4:7-11)
- 11) Preach through a missional lens in a hostile world (1 Pet. 4:12-19)
- 12) Step on your own toes: preaching as the pastor to the pastor (1 Pet. 5:1-4)
- 13) Finish strong (1 Pet. 5:5-14)



Preparation “Resources for Text-Driven Preaching”

10. Recommended Resources

- Davids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Forbes, Greg. *1 Peter*. EGGNT. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2014.
- Helm, David R. *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing in Christ's Sufferings*. Nashville: Crossway, 2008.
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- Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Expository Sermons on Peter*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1983.
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- Thomas, Griffith W.H. *The Apostle Peter: Outline Studies of His Life, Character and Writings*. Wordsearch 2009.