

Godly Living

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[0 : 00] Our lesson this evening is about godly living.

! I've given it another alternate title, Living a Godly Life in an ungodly world.! And I think I taught a series on that. I think there's copies of it over here.

This is what the Apostle Peter has to say in 1 Peter 2, verses 11 and 12. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul. 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.

Well, those are the two verses we're going to cover tonight. And we find ourselves living out our Christian life in the opening quarter of the 21st century.

[1 : 33] We live in a day when unbelievers are constantly attacking or at least massively criticizing Christianity as it was introduced to us by the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles.

Our time today is no different than were the days lived out on earth by Christ Himself. Often this criticism is very vocal.

And sometimes it's even deadly. There was a Christian apologist by the name of Wilbur Smith who lived from 1894 to 1976.

And I assume you all understand what an apologist is. It's not someone that goes around apologizing. It's someone that defends the faith. He defends the tenets of Christianity and we call that an apologist.

I did a little research. He wrote many books all on Christian apologetics, a defender of the faith, as it had once been delivered to us.

[3 : 06] Here is a quote from Brother Smith from a book he wrote entitled, Therefore, Stand. Published in 1945, right at the end of World War II.

A little lengthy. At first, one would think that a religion which exalts and seeks to follow the only perfect and righteous man that has ever lived on this earth, who never harmed anyone, whose words delivered from superstition and fear, whose works redeemed from pain and demons and death and hunger, whose life was a great shaft of light shot into the murky darkness of the Roman world in that sensual and skeptic century, who died because he loved us, and who always sought to bring men into communion with God to bestow upon them eternal life and a home in heaven. One would have thought that such a character and the religion which is life and work on earth established, would have been welcomed with open arms.

The first moment it was announced, and would be by its very message, the good works which overflowed from it, and the hope which it established, never no opposition or attack or denunciation except from demons of hell and Satan himself who is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. When we came to our first period, all that was one sentence. But such has not been its history.

[5 : 36] In fact, the New Testament itself, from the records of the birth of our Lord down to the end of St. John's vision of the era of anarchy and persecution to come, testifies in the most startling way to the fact that Christ himself was most viciously and constantly attacked.

That is, apostles suffered the same opposition and it was predicted by these very apostles that Christianity would continue to suffer down to the end of this age.

And that's certainly true. And that age hasn't ended yet. And we deal with this at Voice of the Martyrs every week. I spent a little time out there last week, half a day, and got updated on persecution going on.

Well, that quote is a mouthful but very appropriate to our study tonight. Scotland has had more than their share of great preachers and writers of commentaries one such was Alexander McLaren and he said this, The world takes its notions of God most of all from the people who say that they belong

to God's family.

They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us but they only hear about Jesus Christ.

[7 : 37] The Lord Jesus had this to say in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5.16, In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

What Matthew wrote in the Gospel that bears his name is in essence what Peter wrote in our verses tonight.

Peter is telling us to live godly lives and that will make the teachings of Jesus both attractive and believable.

Those who received Peter's letter needed help in persevering in difficult times. In the midst of severe persecution, they needed two things to get them through the tough times.

They needed to live righteously and that was personal, inward, and private. They also needed to live godly.

[9 : 09] That was outward and public and on display to those around them. The first of these we shall refer to as godly inner discipline.

Verse 11, Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

Peter starts this discussion by referring to those believers around him and he chooses a word and the Holy Spirit led him to do that.

He chooses to use the word beloved or beloved. And that is very important for us to consider because the use of this word implies that those believers hearing Peter were the very objects of his infinite love.

If we are the beloved of the Lord we have an obligation to obey our master in all things. Next, Peter urges those around him.

[10 : 45] The word urge is parakaleo in the Greek language. It is sometimes used to describe the Holy Spirit, the paraklete.

Urge can also mean to beseech and encourage. They are being called on to reciprocate God's love by living for him.

And then Peter next uses some most interesting language. He describes those believers around him as aliens and strangers.

That is a way of saying that the believers surrounding Peter were not part of this world. It is similar to what the apostle Paul said in Philippians 3.20 But our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That passage by the way is worth quoting and reflecting on throughout the day. we are spiritual aliens.

[12 : 11] We are not to be part of the world system. The word alien is interesting in the Greek language and I really had to stretch to come up with some meaning but it literally means alongside the house.

Kind of a bizarre translation but I looked it up. What does it mean? And quite frankly until this lesson I had never heard that phrase alongside the house.

That's a problem for me. I don't have any house alongside. Alongside the house are Christians who live as foreigners.

And we are not part of the world system. And since we are not part of the world system we are to abstain from fleshly lusts.

Well let's be frank that's not easy. That's not easy. Even when we have been regenerated we are still trapped within the old unredeemed human flesh.

[13 : 40] And we are in a war between our flesh and our spirit which has been renewed by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.

Now the reference to fleshly lusts immediately conjures up images of sexual impurity that we have to live with in our day.

I mean they use girls in bikinis to sell hammers for ace hardware. And we think of that fleshly lusts as being sexual impurity and it might be but it goes beyond that.

It encompasses all of our basic sinful nature. Every bit of it. And Paul talked about this in Galatians.

He said beginning in verse 19 of chapter 5 Now the works of the flesh are evident. Sexual immorality impurity sensuality idolatry sorcery enmity strife jealousy fits of anger rivalries dissensions divisions envy drunkenness orgies and things like these.

[15 : 20] And then Paul goes on, I warn you as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now a lot of brothers panic when they read that list. let me assure you that if anyone here is engaged in any of those activities as a believer you're not alone.

You're not the first believer to engage in such activities. Listen to the great apostle Paul which I think we would put at the head of the class when it comes to living the Christian life.

Very famous passages in Romans chapter 7 beginning in verse 14 for we know that the law is spiritual but I am of the flesh sold under sin.

for I do not understand my own actions. This is Paul for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate.

[17 : 01] Now if I do what I do not want I agree with the law that it is good and so now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me for I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh!

for I have the desire to do what is right but not the ability to carry it out for I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing now if I do what I do not want it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me so I find it to be a law that when I want to do right evil lies close at hand for I delight in the law of God and my inner being but I see in my members another law and then he comes up with a strong term waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members there's a war going on within

Paul it is waging war against his mind and the word the term waging war is more than a mere battle it means a long term drawn out military campaign once saved we are to work at abstaining from fleshly lusts John kicked in some great advice in his first epistle 1 John chapter 2 verse 15 to 17 do not love the world or the things of the world if anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him for all that is in the world the desires of the flesh the desires of the eyes the pride of life is not from the father that comes to us from the world and the world is passing away along with its desires but whoever does the will of

God abides forever those are powerful words and they're worth going home and looking up and read periodically the other aspect that we're going to look at this evening as we examine godly living is what is called godly outward deportment 1st Peter chapter 2 verse 12 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 we can best evangelize if people see our transformed lives if they don't see any change in us it's going to be tough and by people here

I mean the outside world of unbelievers and they're always watching us aren't they always looking we're to keep our behavior excellent that means a beautiful kind of visible goodness and Peter talks about gentiles in this passage that is often used to describe the nations of the unsaved world and Israel in this day was surrounded by unsaved nations believers must live such lives that glorify God in the day of visitation interesting concept it is an Old Testament concept that was talked about in [22 : 30] Judges and Ruth 1st Samuel Psalm Zechariah to name just a few there were other books that talked about the visitation and visitation can mean judgment or blessing in the New Testament visitation means blessing and redemption redemption Zacharias a name you're probably familiar with was the father of John the Baptist and he made this prophecy in Luke 168 blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has visited and redeemed his people but there's another passage that causes great concern it's also found in

Luke for the days will come upon you when your enemies will set a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground you and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation they should have known when Jesus was coming if you look at the Old Testament prophets you could nail it down but they didn't know the Jews rejected Christ's visitation when he came bearing salvation and the visitation of

Christ to the nation Israel turned into a visitation of judgment and he brought judgment on them and they're still being judged Israel is not a believing nation not yet if you read Romans 9 10 11 and a lot of other and some of the Old Testament works they will be someday they don't even believe that but it's going to happen may it happen soon because that signals the return of Christ first for his

church and then he turns his attention to the nation let me close us with prayer gracious God and father of our Lord we thank you Lord for multitude blessings that you give us Lord we thank you for this class for the men that come out and Lord may we be found faithful as we look at these inspired words given to us by the spirit of God Lord bring us safely back next week we ask all this in Jesus name amen