

Elect Exiles Scattered

[00:00:13] I have to tell you I am I am really excited to enter into this series I started it last Sunday. But we're going to be making our way through the pestles letters of Peter to us to the church. And I find it interesting idol. Think in my life I I know I haven't preached through Peter and I was trying to think even as I was preparing this if I've ever even been led through a study of Peter. It's a little bit I think of a forgotten part of the Bible. Maybe it's because it's right there with Jude and tucked up against revelation right at the end of the New Testament. But when we think about Peter there's a few verses that stand out like First Peter 3:15. Always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who might ask you to give the reason for the hope that you have you know that verse right many of you do if you were raised in the church. I think about Chapter 5 Verse 7 Cast all your cares or anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Great Truth. Great verses but as we think about those verses I think that with the lack of really digging in to Peter we can miss you know failed to wrestle rather with what it means to be a foreigner right here in Chambersburg because of our faith in Christ. When you get right down to what Peter is trying to say yes Cast your care upon him yes be ready to give an answer.

[00:01:50] But the real heartbeat of Peter has to do with what it means to be a foreigner right here in our home town. I love what Douglas Webster said in a commentary he said.

[00:02:05] First Peter waits to be discovered. It's not written in secret code or designed to be obscure but its message remains hidden. What message there were foreigners right here in Chambersburg believe. Believers have their reasons he says for maybe ignoring revelation with its symbols or its images.

[00:02:26] But first Peter is as straightforward as it can be reflecting the personality and method of its author of Peter the letter and Apostle are both dynamic. Peter and his heart beat. In these letters is immersed in the Great Commission in the struggle for making disciples from every tribe and every people group. That's what Peter is all about. So why have we missed it. In a way I didn't even have that. Why is that. Why have we missed Peter's message to the church in these two letters. I know I'm making an assumption when I say that but I think in large part we have why. Well I think in a way as I am now really digging in to first and second Peter I will tell you the message is incredibly hopeful but truly challenging. Peter has some very challenging words for us for the church wonderfully encouraging but truly challenging as we see right out of the gate in the first two verses we're going to really dig in today just to the first two verses of First Peter Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to God's elect exile scattered throughout the provinces of Pontas glacier capite Asia Asia and the Affinia who have been chosen according to the foreign knowledge of God. God knows in advance what we're all going to do and according to this for knowledge we have been chosen by God the Father through the sanctifying work of the spirit in our hearts to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood grace and peace be yours in abundance. This is far more than just a hey how you doing all right. Far more than I hope life's going great for you where we might begin a letter Peter jumps right in with some pretty deep truth and he starts I think it is very important for us to understand at least geographically where these places are Pontas.

[00:04:48] You've probably heard of glacier book in the Bible named Galatians. Paul wrote that letter to people that lived there. Never heard of capital. We now know of Asia but it's moved considerably further east than when it was where it was in the time that Peter wrote this and Bethania again a place we don't know. So here's the map here. Down here is Jerusalem Sea of Galilee flows down into the Dead Sea Israel's down here. I call that headquarters this is where the church really begins after Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven headquarters. And we move way out here to Rome aka Babylon. I put that because that's what Peter calls Rome in code because he we don't know quite sure why he uses this phrase it clearly is referring to Rome. And I

showed you last week if you were here talked a good bit about how Nero was the emperor and he was really truly setting out to destroy Christianity in the year 63 A.D. 63-64 Rome was also the capital of the world and Peter was writing from Rome to Paul's believers in Christ scattered throughout Pontus kind of goes clockwise and these are actual regions of what is modern day Turkey. Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia these five areas I indicated 45 to 55 A.D. really because that's when the early church was established in Jerusalem spread to the north and really took root first in modern day Turkey. This is where Paul spent a lot of his ministry where he was from Paul was from Tarsus which is down here in the area around capital C. But this is who Peter is writing this letter to. He's sending this letter out to people scattered over these five regions of what was part of the Roman Empire. It was a large area think of Montana and even larger than that. It's very rural. There were a few larger cities we know emphasis was along the coastline. Paul spent some time there. Troas ours was up to the north there along the Aegean Sea.

[00:07:10] A few other larger cities but by and large think Montana very rural. And yet Peter is writing to say hey Nero is now in charge and you need to know that persecution is coming. That this is going to be difficult. And so here he's writing this letter to those believers in Christ that are scattered throughout these five regions. And what Peter is saying to them is three things were going to come back to these themes over and over again. So Mark them down who are you in Christ. How do you respond to the world around you. How do we respond when suffering comes when persecution comes. You have to know how to respond and thirdly you have to know where you are headed. These three questions identity response and future. They truly do make up the heart beat of what Peter writes So Peter an apostle of Christ to God's elect exiles to God's elect. Quia exiles scattered throughout these various provinces. I want to pause on these three words. Is a common there but I'm going to take the com out these three words a lacked exile's scattered Paul. Peter is writing to Godsey lacked. Who are exiles who have been scattered or to put it another way chosen people of God who are aliens in this world. Strangers on this earth in our communities wherever we live and who have been scattered or dispersed which implies placement. It implies that not only are we scattered geographically but we have been put wherever we are for a divine reason chosen aliens dispersed which gets back to who are we in Christ. How do we respond to the world around us. And what is our purpose what is our future. Where are we headed. So to think about this word elect or chosen it's the Greek word *eklektos*. It appears numerous times throughout the Bible particularly in the New Testament. We even see a greater description of what *eklektos* means down and verse to write you who have been chosen according to the fore knowledge of God the Father through the sanctifying work of the spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood *Electus* I think of Romans 8:23 where Paul writes If God is for us who can be against us who will bring a charge against God's elect those that God has chosen or cautions 3:12. Therefore as God's chosen people wholly and dearly loved chosen according to God's fore knowledge that's what it means to be *eklektos*. Now I know this word elect can tap into the question of election predestination. Calvin Arminius all of that. I don't think that's at all what Peter is touching on here. He is describing that according to the fore knowledge of God followers of Jesus are chosen by God they are his special people his special people. And a question arises well as Peter writing to just Jews because the Jews in the Old Testament are considered God's elect people. But I don't think so. Look at Chapter 2 verses 9 through 10. Peter says you are a chosen people. *Electus* a royal priesthood a holy nation. God's special possession. Who's he talking about here. Just Jews know that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people well that can't be referring just to Jews because they have been a nation they have been a people. What he's talking about here is the church he's talking about people that have been far from God. Once you were not a people or the people of God but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy. Now you have received mercy. You are a chosen people God's special possession and it's so interesting to see that who we are. As a result of what God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives. Look at verse 2. Did you see this. You who have been chosen according to the fore knowledge of God the Father through the sanctifying

work in your heart the cleansing work in your heart of the Holy Spirit. The Empowering work and the obedience. And to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood. It's the Trinity isn't it. It's God the Father God the Spirit God the Son at work in our lives. And what is Jesus doing in our lives.

[00:12:56] We are a special chosen cleansed forgiven set apart children of God that's who we are sprinkled by the blood of Jesus. Do you know what that refers to the High Priest would go into the temple or the Tabernacle and he would take the blood of goats or bulls once a year and he would sprinkle it on the cover of the Ark of the covenant in between the two cherub that were there and carved in the seat the top the lid of the of the ark in that flat space was literally called the mercy seat. The Mercy Seat and the priest would take blood and sprinkle it on the mercy seat because that blood would signify the cleansing and in fact actually the life of that animal was given was more than just signifying it really happened. Jesus said I am that land and my blood has cleansed you so that God no longer sees your sin.

[00:14:02] He sees the blood of Jesus sprinkled on our hearts who M-I a special chosen cleanse forgiven set apart child of God what it means to be elect collect us and then we see this word keep going here.

[00:14:22] How do I respond to this world. We get this this concept of being exiles. This world is not your home it's the word parapet. The moths getting a little bit into the Greek but this word means exile or Sojourner. In other words you are not at home wherever it is you live. This world is not your home.

[00:14:50] Just yesterday. Pastor Ron Cook performed a funeral here in this room. There's going to be one again tomorrow. There was one last Monday funerals. We do a lot of funerals here at Kingstree and these funerals three in the last seven days remind us of the fact that this world is not our home. We are exiles in this world. We are Sojourners. This word Parab redeem us it's a rare term in the Bible indicating someone living in a foreign land. Think about look over real quick at verses 11 and 12 of Chapter 2. Dear friends I urge you as foreigners and exiles to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul lives such godly lives among the pagans that though they may accuse you of wrong they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day that he visits us in first Peter the Christian believers are alienated from a hostile society whose values are at odds with the teaching of Jesus. Now this is referring to the Roman Empire which really truly called every Roman citizen to worship Nero or to worship the emperor. This is truly at odds with the Christian values. Peter is calling us to think of ourselves as immigrants who are socially disconnected from the dominant culture something we're thinking about. We are immigrants passing through this world and not just hostile and general but hostile towards us. This is personal. This word exile literally translated means the state of being barred from one's native country for punitive reasons. We are exiles and can expect to be treated just like Jesus was. This points us directly to Jesus as we identify with Christ. We have to work through the very rejection that Jesus did. The root of Christian self understanding is aliens and exiles lies not so much in the story of Abraham and Sarah and the nation of Israel as it does in Jesus his mission and his rejection which ultimately brought him to the cross. What's Peter saying. He's saying you're an elected exile. That's who you are and this is in essence how you must respond to the world around you as an exile one who is just passing through this world is not your home and this last words scattered. It's the Greek word diaspora that literally means Jews living outside of Israel but it can also mean the dispersion of any people from their original homeland. What we need to see ourselves as the church Peter is basically describing the church as a colony in a strange land an island of one culture and the midst of another. And what I want you to see and that is God places us right where he wants to be a follower of Christ a believer in Jesus makes us in one way a stranger an island of one culture in the midst of another culture. This new birth that gives us a new identity and a new citizenship makes us

foreigners aliens and exiles. It's a challenging message and yet that's exactly what Peter is calling us to and it's what he was calling his original readers to I've really tried to pull pull myself into this letter. And I wondered OK how would what Peter was writing be received by people in that time. See this is not just general truth. This is God's direct word to me and to you and to the people to whom he was writing so I thought about it.

[00:19:06] He's writing to people in Bethenny and Galatians Kapinos Seah and I thought about okay let's just pick a spot right there in the middle of what was Bethenny and this is now part of north west Turkey In fact here's now a CA. Today contemporary view of this very same area is Stamboul is right here. You've heard of Istanbul and I wanted to zero in on a dot on the map. OK. And I chose a spot called Yena Pazar because it's right in the heart of what was within it.

[00:19:41] What do you think it looks like out here. You know one of the cool things of Google Maps is you can take that little yellow man of any of the doneness and you drag them and drop him in to a spot on the map we've ever done that. It's kind of fun to do. Well I did that a drug a drug the little yellow man on google maps and I dropped him right into Yena pads are there's a little blue dot there on my google maps. And when I clicked when I drop the yellow man into that little blue dot it shows me exactly what it looks like right there.

[00:20:11] And it's very rural. This is Yena Pazar ancient Affinia. And these are the people to whom Peter was writing and I got to tell you I doubt this has changed much in the last 2000 years.

[00:20:26] And I thought about these farmers. Now I doubt that house was standing although it looks old enough that it could have been 2000 years ago but I thought about the family that lived here in here and I imagine what of living in this house was a woman named Elizabeth and her husband and their three children elementary age children just for the fun of this kind of work with me I googled Turkish farmer wife and I got this picture pretty cool picture Turkish farmer wife and I don't know which one of those is Elizabeth but let's pick the one in the middle.

[00:21:06] And let's just say this is for the sake of application. Let's just say this woman is Elizabeth from Yanti Pazar of ancient Bethany I thought how interesting how cool this is who Peter was writing this letter to so often we reduce Bible passages to this high theological truth which is good and right.

[00:21:36] But it's also a letter written Elizabeth.

[00:21:39] And I imagine Elizabeth sitting there in church I thought of her story kind of fictionalized it but let's just say a friend of hers led her to Christ there somewhere in the 50s 60s first century maybe.

[00:21:54] Paul had come through and and we know he ministered in this area and let's say a friend of Elizabeth had led letter to Christ but her husband was not yet saved.

[00:22:04] He was a farmer.

[00:22:06] Like I said three kids and I imagined Elizabeth attending a church on the outskirts of town in another farmhouse. The lady that letter to Christ had a church that met in her house and I imagined this woman pulling out this letter that was making rounds throughout all of these churches scattered and Bethenny and capital C and she said we have a letter from Peter.

[00:22:34] And what did Peter have to say to Elizabeth he said Elizabeth you are elected by God chosen by God. Specifically beloved and chosen by God. Elizabeth you're now in exile because of

your faith. You need to know Elizabeth that persecutions coming Nero is really clamping down on anyone in the Roman Empire that calls themselves a believer. But Elizabeth you are scattered and not just randomly. You are exactly where you live in Yena Pazar Zarba Thania because I have placed you there now that ministers to me. And it makes me think about this about you as I think about applying Peter's letter to us.

[00:23:33] Do we let these truths soak into our hearts. Do we understand who we are in Christ. Do you believe what Peter says about who you are in Christ do you believe that God has chosen you that he loves you that you are is his precious child.

[00:23:54] Do you understand how you need to respond to the world around you.

[00:23:59] I think of the imagery of being a frog in a kettle right where so often the heat gets turned up and the frog doesn't try to Junbao because it's just part of the water of culture. How are we to respond to the world around us. And what you believe is true about your purpose and your future. Peter is writing to us. As he lacked exiles scattered and to know that the blood of Jesus has been sprinkled on our hearts and that God the Father does not any longer see our sin. He sees the blood of Jesus or Jesus we thank you today that we are chosen by you.

[00:24:49] A royal priesthood a holy nation called out by God the father according to your for knowledge father. We would believe about ourselves that we are exiles in this world that we are passing through as much as we might love Chambersburg Pennsylvania God this world is not our home.

[00:25:11] We're just passing through and Lord God to believe that we are specifically placed and scattered by you in our schools and our workplaces and our neighborhoods. It's not random. We are placed by your sovereign will exactly where we are for a higher purpose and Jesus as we come to this table we thank you for your blood and your body given for me and it's in your name we pray.