**1. [1 PETER] ELECT EXILES. (1 Peter 1:1-2)**

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**The Bethel Pulpit.**This is a significant week for me. This week I begin YEAR FIVE of pastoral ministry here at Bethel Church. We have been blessed far beyond what I imagined and I have a very active imagination. Thank you. Bless you. I love you. Bethel Elders. Bethel Deacons. Bethel People. Thank you. Bless you. I love you and thank God for you.

During this time I have opened the word of God every week and taught and preached and exhorted for the good of your souls. When I came here I had no idea that I would preach one spring under the open sky from the roof of my office and that Amens would be replaced by honking car horns. I had no idea that I would preach all summer from a platform outside to people in lawn chairs, caps, and sun glasses. I had no idea that I would have an in-person congregation and a large on-line congregation in many states. **I did know that every time I stepped before the people it would be with an open Bible, it would be to bring the Word of God to the People of God.** Often I have preached through books or parts of books: **Like basic good nutrition**:

**Expository**

—Romans—**The Heart of the Christian Faith**

—James—**Real Faith**

—Jonah—**The Jonah Story**

—Titus—**The Little Red Book of Church**

—Philippians—**The Bethel Wheel**

—Ephesians 1—**RWYA**

—Matter 5-7 Sermon on the Mount—**Jesus People**

—Joel**—Repentance and Refreshing**

—the entire book of Revelation in 35 sermons

Sometimes I have preached Biblical messages on various texts with a particular aim, using the Bible **like a medicine cabinet**. **[ill] Lady at the bank said you need to drink your greens…. For that problem**

**Topical/Textual**

**—A Treasure of Good Things**

**—Growing a Family with A Life-Long Love for God**

**—Crafting a Holy Life**

**—Angels, Demons, God and You**

**—Building Better Relationships**

**—Knowing God by Heart**

**—Can We Trust the Bible**

**—The Rooftop Sermons**

**—Between the Fires**

**A great deal of thought and prayer goes into the menu here in the Bethel Pulpit as I’m sure you can tell. So maybe you are asking the question, What’s Cooking? Where in God’s book are we going next and why?**

**We are going to 1 Peter and here is why: 1 Peter is about enduring suffering faithfully. The heat is steadily being turned up on Bible-believing American Christians. Christians around the world are being persecuted even unto death right now. Here in America we are facing increasing pressure and pressure is growing into misunderstanding, misunderstanding into contempt, and contempt will become outright persecution… the “various trials” are likely to become “fiery trials” soon and I’m concerned because we really have not done well under the mild misunderstandings we have had to endure in the last couple years… I’m not sure we are ready for any real persecution.. But by the Spirit we have a book written to brothers and sisters in a very similar situation… 1 Peter.**

**Elect Exiles of the Dispersion. This a reference to the church in Asia Minor in a region south of the Black Sea and the letter is meant to travel around the basic circle. This is a letter to the churches made up of Jewish and Gentile converts. In using this language when writing to a mixed group of believers from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds he is identifying the church of Jews and Gentiles as the people of God. So he called them ELECT though they are not all Jews. And he called them EXILES though they are not physically exiles. They are spiritual pilgrims—refugees—rejected. Stott: “He writes to those who already feel the scorn and malice of an unbelieving world.”**

**Who was Peter?** Probably the first disciple Jesus called. From Bethsaida and later Capernaum. He was the head of a successful fishing business and fishing was big business in Capernaum. He followed Jesus and was in the inner circle with James and John. He was a leader, always mentioned first in lists of disciples. Calling. Transfiguration. Slept and then defended Jesus in the garden. Denied him. Was restored over breakfast. Leader in the church. Preached at Pentecost. Apostle. Died for his faith.

**Identity. Who Am I? Really?** In this first chunk of the letter Peter is going to orient us to **who we are who we are becoming.** He is going to orient us to **where we came from and where we are going** and this will help us **endure whatever we have to face. [Jesus said to Peter; who am I? Then he addressed Peter’s identity and his mission. Who am I and what am I doing? Who do you think you are and where do you think you are doing?]** Saved people are **elect by God** and **exiles on earth**. We are **chosen by God** but were are **rejected by the world**. He calls the readers elect, exiles. You are refugees, but you are precious, chosen by God. Elect. He will list **three dimensions of election**.

**John Piper wrote that:** **“…these three dimensions of election are each related to a different divine Person of the Trinity. Our election is rooted in the foreknowledge of God the Father. Our election is experienced by the sanctifying work of the Spirit. And the aim of our election is that we obey Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”**

**1. You are Known and Loved by the Father.** You are troubled but the Father knows you and loves you with a determined and indestructible unflagging love. **The Father Loves You. [ill] Dad’s are full of life-wisdom. Water is essential to life—without it you can’t make coffee… [ill] your car is your life-blood. Without it you can’t work. May Dad’s father gave him a car when he sold his farm. My father gave that car to me when I got married. It’s not hard to give when you are a father. There is nothing brings you greater pleasure… and we are “evil” (Matt 7:7-11)**

**“…this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.” (Acts 2:23, ESV)** This proves that “foreknowledge” is to be understood foreordination. Chosen ahead of time not just known ahead of time. Loved ahead of time. Known. **“I never knew you…”**

Sam Storms wrote this: **To foreknow is to forelove**. That God foreknew us is but another way of saying that he **set his gracious and merciful regard upon us, that he knew us from eternity past with a sovereign and distinguishing delight.** God's foreknowledge is an active, creative work of divine love. It is not bare pre-vision which merely recognizes a difference between men who believe and men who do not believe. God's foreknowledge creates that difference! Foreknowledge is destiny shaping! Speaking about God's foreknowledge is a way of expressing his eternal commitment to individuals as part of his determination to bring them to faith and to all the glories and benefits of Christ's work. God’s divine initiative in pursuing you has been operative from eternity past, long before you had any awareness of God or even thought about pursuing him

**Spurgeon Wrote in his Autobiography: In the very beginning, when this great universe lay in the mind of God, like unborn forests in the acorn cup; long before the echoes awoke the solitudes; before the mountains were brought forth; and long before the light flashed through the sky, God loved His chosen creatures. Before there was any created being --- when the ether was not fanned by an angel's wing, when space itself had not an existence, where there was nothing save God alone --- even then, in that loneliness of Deity, and in that deep quiet and profundity, His heart moved with love for His chosen. Their names were written on His heart, and then were they dear to His soul. Jesus loved His people before the foundation of the world --- even from eternity! and when He called me by His grace, He said to me, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee’” (Spurgeon; Autobiography, I:167). Not controversy and argument, but worship!**

**The Exchange between Charles Simeon and John Wesley: “‘Sir, I understand that you are called an**[**Arminian**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminianism)**; and I have sometimes been called a**[**Calvinist**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism)**; and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction…**

**Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God if God had not first put it into your heart?’ “Yes, I do indeed.’ ‘**

**And do you despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?’ ‘Yes, solely through Christ.’**

**‘But, Sir, supposing you were first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?’ ‘No; I must be saved by Christ from first to last.’**

**‘Allowing then that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?’ ‘No.’ ‘What then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother’s arms?’ ‘Yes, altogether.’ ‘**

**And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?’ ‘Yes, I have no hope but in him.’**

**‘Then, Sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance: it is, in substance, all that I hold: and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.’”**

**A Challenge:** **Put up your dagger and pick up your Bible**. I encourage you to explore the chosen, predestined, election… passages of the Bible… Just make of study of them. Don’t study them to support how you feel or what you think… Study them in the light of the rest of Scripture. Don’t try to make them fit your preconceived ideas. I don’t intend to kneel on your shoulders and try to shove these doctrines down your throat. They are truths of God. I will just lay them on the table and walk out of the room so you can explore them without pressure and you can take them or leave them, **but this I will tell you: There is no sweeter comfort when confronted by evil, experiencing betrayal, enduring hardship—then the knowledge of the sovereign governance of God over the universe, your enemies, and the very details of your own life, down to the numbers of your days and the amount of hair you have. You are chosen and cherished by God.**

**2. You Are Being Sanctified by the Spirit.** You are troubled but the Spirit is at Work in You. He is setting you apart to be more and more like him though the on-going process of sanctification. **By the Spirit we are set apart unto God as holy and growing in holiness. In the OT we learn that God is absolutely holy and demands absolute holiness. We are hopeless. Jesus is the slain lamb and the Spirit then works within us to make us holy, sin less, break the law less and less, and keep the law more and more. Baptized, Sealed, Filled, Walk in Spirit, Fruit of the Spirit.**

**3. You Are Continuously Cleansed by the Son.** We live in **obedience—but when we fail we are cleansed.**

**Exile, but Elect—People have rejected you.** The Father knows and loves and choses you.

**Exile but Elect—The world around you, dark forces, my own remaining sin is always trying to drag me down into sin**, but the Spirit is at work Sanctifying you.

**Exile but Elect—You are haunted by your own faults and failures…** But the blood of Jesus continually cleanses you and always will.

**The World is more and more against me. But God always has and always will be for you—if you are in Christ.**

When things are hard it really helps to know who you are, where you came from and where you are going. Then you know you will have **grace and peace multiplied to you.**

**Conclusion: You are an exile in this world. Rejected. But you are Accepted and Loved and Chosen and Cherished by God and with a storm cloud of pressure, misunderstanding, rejection and persecution coming, that is a great comfort.**

**Let me leave you with the words of Peter that would have been sweet to Greeks and Hebrews alike. The greeks said, grace be unto you. The Hebrew said, “peace be unto you.” Peter said, “Grace and Peace be multiplied to you.”**

**It is when we know who Jesus is and what he is going, when we know who we are and what we are doing that grace and peace are multiplied to us even when we are misunderstood, treated with contempt, and one day, even when we suffer persecution. May Grace and Peace be Multiplied to you.**