

## WHILE WE WALK THE PILGRIM PATHWAY

### **TEXT: I PETER 2:11-20**

#### **Introduction:**

1. The words "strangers and pilgrims" are found twice in the Bible. Here in I Peter 2:11, and in Hebrews 11:13.
2. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."
3. Some one has said:

A fugitive is one who is running from home.

A vagabond is one who has no home.

A stranger is one away from home.

And a pilgrim is on his way home.

4. Therefore, according to our text, we are strangers away from home, and pilgrims on our way home.
5. The greatest book ever written, after the Bible, is *Pilgrim's Progress* written by John Bunyan in the 1670's while he was in jail for preaching without a license from the Church of England.
6. The book is a great allegory. The pilgrim is named "Christian," who takes a fascinating journey from his hometown, the "City of Destruction" (representing this world), to the "Celestial City" atop Mt. Zion (representing heaven).
7. Christian is weighed down by a great burden, the knowledge of his sin, which came from his reading the Bible.
8. This burden, which would cause him to sink into hell, is so unbearable that Christian must seek deliverance. And thank God he does find deliverance.
9. Christian arrived safely in the Celestial City, along with his friend "Hopeful." Their fellow traveler, "Ignorance" turned aside and was cast into hell.
10. Then Mr. Bunyan awoke from his dream.

### **I. THE PILGRIM'S CONVERSATION (2:11, 12)**

1. In Scripture, "conversation" means "behaviour" or "conduct" (cf. 3:1, 2, 16; II Peter 2:7; 3:11).
2. Ephesians 2:3 says, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

3. Ephesians 4:22 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."
4. The Bible draws a contrast between our former conversation and our present conversation. As strangers and pilgrims we are not conducting ourselves the way worldly people conduct themselves (I Peter 2:10, 11).
5. These Scriptures remind us that we are to be separated from the world (cf. 1:14-17).
6. First John 2:15-17 says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
7. James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
8. First Peter 2:11 says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
9. This has wider reference than just sexual sins, though "fleshly lusts" would certainly include fornication, adultery, impure thoughts, pornography, etc.
10. But "fleshly lusts" would also include overindulgence in eating, materialism ("lusts" means "desires"), worldly pleasures and pursuits, etc.
11. All these worldly cravings and desires hinder our pilgrim walk. They hinder our spiritual growth (I Peter 2:2).
12. Sometimes I peruse websites for pastors. Some are helpful. I saw an article entitled, "What's the Big Deal about being a Fat Pastor?"
13. The article mentioned that at the 2010 annual meeting for the Southern Baptist Convention, free health screenings were administered. Of those screened 73% were found to be overweight or obese. That is a higher percentage than those who do not attend church.
14. I am sure the percentage for independent Baptist pastors would not be much better. The author gave several good reasons why it is not good for a pastor to be overweight.

15. What I found very interesting (but not surprising) were the comments made by readers in response to the article. Or should I say excuses and complaints made by chubby preachers upset about the article?
16. Our pilgrim conversation should be "honest" (I Peter 2:12).
17. We are not saved by our good works. Ephesians 2:8, 9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
18. Then the next verse says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).
19. James 2:18 says, "I will shew thee my faith by my works."
20. Our Lord said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).
21. And Peter says, " Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:12).
22. The word "visitation" here is not a reference to judgment, but blessing. When these unbelievers see the good works performed by Christians, God will convict them and they will repent and be gloriously saved.
23. James uses the word this way in Acts 15:14, where he says, "Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

## **II. THE PILGRIM'S SUBMISSION (2:13)**

1. James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
2. If we are truly submissive to God, it will not be difficult to submit to those God has placed over us (2:13-18).
3. Government was instituted by God. God established government after the flood.
4. God instituted the family, the government, and the church. All three are under attack by the devil.
5. Way back in Genesis 9:6, we read, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

6. Therefore, God government was instituted by God for our protection. Many government programs today are unscriptural and unconstitutional.
7. Much of the anti-government rhetoric today is contrary to Scripture. I heard Glenn Beck (a Mormon) attack the government as evil, etc.
8. But Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (cf. Rom. 13:1-7).
9. When the apostle Paul wrote these words, Nero was the Roman emperor. By all accounts he was a psychopath.
10. One encyclopedia (Wikipedia) says, "Nero's rule is often associated with tyranny and extravagance. He is known for a number of executions, including those of his mother and stepbrother. He is also infamously known as the emperor who 'fiddled while Rome burned,' and as an early persecutor of Christians."
11. Bad leaders are better than no leaders. Bad government is better than no government. Order is better than chaos. No society can function under lawlessness and anarchy.
12. According to Scripture, even ungodly rulers are God's servants. Romans 13:4 says, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good."
13. "Honor the king" (I Peter 2:17b). This needs no explanation!
14. Christians are to obey "every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (I Peter 2:13). The only exception is when the government's laws are contrary to God's laws.
15. That is why Peter and the other apostles said to the high priest, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27).
16. Proverbs 24:21 says, "My son, fear thou the LORD and the king." The LORD must always come first.
17. God's will is for us to live honestly and righteously and in such a way that the unsaved will have no legitimate basis for accusation. By maintaining a good testimony Christians "may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 2:15).
18. It is inevitable that we will be false accused by the ungodly. The best defense is a holy life.
19. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). But our liberty in Christ must not be used "for a cloke of maliciousness" (I Peter 2:16).

20. Antinomianism (“against the law”) is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. This view is contrary to Scripture.
21. Romans 6:1, 2 says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"
22. First John 2:1 says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not."
23. After our Lord healed the impotent man, He said to him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).
24. Our Lord said to the adulterous woman, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).
25. Antinomianism has been around for a long time and unfortunately is still a problem today. Many professing Christians disregard their wedding vows, their obligations to pay their bills, and other responsibilities, etc.
26. Getting back to I Peter 2:16, the idea here is that their liberty in Christ did not mean they were free to disobey those who God had placed over them.
27. First Peter 2:18 reminds us that most people are "middle class." Most Christians are working people. There are some saints in Caesar's household, but most are working in shops and offices and hospitals and schools, etc.
28. Agur said, "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Pro. 30:8, 9).
29. We can substitute "employees" for "servants" (I Peter 2:18).
30. It is wise and it is good for employees to submit to their bosses.
31. They will be more likely to hold onto their job. Many workers get let go when they could have kept their job if they applied Biblical principles.
32. Their testimony is at stake. People are watching them.
33. The Word of God commands it (2:18).

### **III. THE PILGRIM'S PATIENCE (2:19, 20).**

1. If we Christians suffer wrongfully -- "this is thankworthy" (2:19).
2. If we Christians suffer wrongfully -- "this is acceptable with God" (2:20).

3. Twice we are instructed to take this "patiently" (2:20).
4. Peter could speak from experience. In Acts 12, we read that Peter and James the brother of John were put in jail by Herod. Furthermore, Herod killed James. He was about to kill Peter too but the Lord miraculously rescued him.
5. Many years later, Peter was killed, just as our Lord had predicted.
6. We can expect persecution (cf. I Peter 2:19-23).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Adoniram Judson, the great Baptist missionary to Burma, endured untold hardships trying to win the people of Burma to Christ.
2. For seventeen months he was in prison, where he was subject to horrible mistreatment. As a result, for the rest of his life he carried the ugly marks made by his chains and iron shackles.
3. Undaunted, upon his release he asked for permission to enter another province where he might resume preaching the Gospel.
4. The wicked ruler indignantly denied his request, saying, "My people are not fools enough to listen to anything a missionary might say, but I fear they might be impressed by your scars and convert to Christianity."