

“SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS”

1ST Peter 2:11-12 *“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

I. “SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS”

A. **Hebrews 11:8-16** *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, **not knowing where he was going**. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a **foreign country**, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the **city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God**. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude — innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and **confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth**. For those who say such things **declare plainly that they seek a homeland**. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now **they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **He has prepared a city for them**.”*

Our best example for sojourning pilgrims are Abraham and Sarah who went where God sent without even knowing the destination in advance. Following their lead, we need to:

1. Confess our pilgrimage! Acknowledge we do not fit in here.

2. Declare the homeland we seek! We don't belong here, but that does not make us tourists, seeing the sights and sampling the flavors.
3. Desire the better country in heaven! Long for it the way every homesick traveler wants to kiss his wife and children, sleep in his own bed, bathe in his own shower, and eat home-cooking.

B. *Philippians 3:20* "For our ***citizenship is in heaven***, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

We are not simply resident aliens. We serve a higher King in His eternal kingdom.

C. *Acts 7:6* "God spoke in this way: that his descendants would ***dwell in a foreign land***, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress ***them four hundred years.***"

Abraham's offspring sojourned in Egypt four centuries, under oppression, before they received the inheritance. Our pilgrimage lasts the entirety of this lifetime, however long that may be, but it is still temporary.

D. *2nd Corinthians 4:16-18* "We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For ***the things which are seen are temporary***, but ***the things which are not seen are eternal.***"

Everything about in present universe will expire someday. We need to be focused on what lasts.

II. "ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS"

A. *1st John 2:15-17* "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For ***all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of***

*the Father but is of the world. And **the world is passing away**, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

We citizens of the heavenly kingdom who desire a better country cannot afford to love fleshly lusts nor anything in the world because it is fading out and will not endure.

B. 1st Thessalonians 5:22 *“Abstain from every form of evil.”*

Abstinence may be ridiculed by those given to indulgence, but it is commanded in a very straightforward way and more than once. Declining what is available to the flesh requires relying on the strength of Christ, but it can be done and He expects it of us.

C. Romans 13:14 *“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”*

Do more than abstain; make no provision! That means changing habits, ending friendships, cancelling subscriptions; it might mean changing employment or even residence. Keep temptation away!

D. Galatians 5:16-24 *“**Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.** For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”*

The opposite of the works of the flesh is the fruit of the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit prevents us from fulfilling the works of the flesh. Get to work on the

spiritual fruit, and stay busy with that, so there will be little opportunity for the alternative.

III. "WAR AGAINST THE SOUL"

- A. **1st Timothy 1:18** *"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may **wage the good warfare.**"*

Make no mistake. We are at war.

- B. **2nd Timothy 2:3-4** *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good **soldier** of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in **warfare** entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a **soldier.**"*

Abstinence from fleshly lusts is a lot like boot camp or deployment. The soldier needs to be undistracted.

- C. **2nd Corinthians 10:3-5** *"Though we walk in the flesh, we do not **war** according to the flesh. For the **weapons of our warfare are not carnal** but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down **arguments** and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every **thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ."*

The struggle is not about shedding blood and occupying territory on this globe. It is spiritual combat, thwarting arguments and subjugating thoughts.

- D. **Ephesians 6:10-18** *"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with*

which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Satan is the enemy and the warriors of God must be fully outfitted for every battle, starting with the belt of truth which holds together the rest of the armor. Next, we protect our hearts with righteousness as our breastplate. Then, we pull our gospel boots on because preaching that word requires some movement. After that, we take cover behind faith as our shield. We guard our minds with salvation as our helmet. Finally, our only offensive weapon is God's word, the Spirit's sword. And never forget to communicate with headquarters via prayer.

IV. "CONDUCT HONORABLE AMONG THE GENTILES"

- A. **Matthew 5:13-16** *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

Christ intends for Christians to wield influence as such. Just as a lamp is meant to illuminate and salt is meant to add flavor, so disciples of Jesus ought to be seen and heard following our Lord's example.

- B. **Romans 2:21-24** *"You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor*

God through breaking the law? For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' as it is written."

The most substantial risk of hypocrisy is that outsiders will observe the inconsistency and conclude Christians are liars, Christ is not worth, and hell is nothing to fear.

- C. **1st Timothy 6:1** *"Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed."*

Titus 2:3-5 *"Older women... admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."*

Whatever one's particular role may be – whether bondservant, young woman, or otherwise – fulfilling the duty given from God is essential. Otherwise, outsiders may notice and think less of the Lord or even despise Him.