

The Manner of Missions
1 Peter 2:11-12

The few times that I've been up here you probably noticed there's been a theme, and that theme will continue today and that's the theme of missions - the theme of missions. Just to kind of, maybe, remind you of some of things we covered, we can shortly do a recap, and then that'll launch us into where we're going to be this morning in 1 Peter. But the first thing we looked at was what is the mission? Just generally speaking, what is the mission? And we found a perfect answer from Jesus, right? When we looked at the end of Matthew, in Matthew 28, the Great Commission, and Jesus made it very clear the mission is to make disciples - make disciples. Hopefully, that's something that you are about doing. That is what our church is about doing, and we all can be engaged in that. Right? Let's clear up the misconception that to be a part of missions you need to fly somewhere or go to another country; we can be a part of the mission right now, and hopefully, that's the case. So, that's the mission.

Then we looked at the motive of missions from Psalms 67, and we asked the question why? Why do we do missions? What's the point? Why? And the answer is worship. Worship, that was the simple one-word answer there because we have experienced this relationship with God where we are worshiping Him and enjoying Him; and we know that there are people who are not experiencing that. There are people that are still enslaved to their sin, and they're still living for themselves, and they don't have the joy of knowing the one true God. So, that motivates us; that drives us out to take this message of Jesus Christ in order that they may be brought into a relationship with the one true God.

Then we went to 1 Peter 2, the last time we got to talk about this, and we asked what's the method of missions? What's the method of missions? What's the procedure of all this? And it was simple. Once again, one word, proclaim - proclaim. That's what we saw in 1 Peter 2:9-10, very, very simple, that we need to open our mouth and speak. We need to speak and proclaim the message of the gospel, the good news, hopefully, the message that we have all received or heard at one point in time, taken to heart, All right, accepted, and now, we are basically making that the bedrock and the foundation of our life while we tell other people about that message, and we proclaim.

So, now we turn our attention to a different aspect today, the manner of missions. Right? What is the manner of missions, and in what way do we do this? How do we go about this? Right? How do we proclaim? What is the manner that accompanies it? You might, you know, recall when you were a child, and you had chores to do, and you could do it in a certain manner that your parents were pleased, and you could do it in another type of manner that your parents were not pleased. You could grumble and complain and do the chore, and that was, you know, you got it done; but normally your parents weren't too happy with that, and they would make you try it again and see if you could do it with a good attitude, right, one that actually honors God and your parents. And then, maybe, you're on the other end of it where you're now teaching your children that - how to actually obey and do it with the right manner, right, with the right attitude, one that is pleasing to God. So, that's what we're looking at - what is the manner of missions? What is the manner in which we're going about proclaiming this message and making disciples? And we find it in two more verses, the next two verses, actually, from where we left off last time in 1 Peter 2:11-12. So, follow along, and I'll read these two verses for us; "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

So, that's it, these two verses; and we are going to look at two main points that come out in these verses, one main point in verse 11, the second main point in verse 12. And it is that main point in verse 12 that will connect us directly to the manner of missions that we're going to look at today. But to understand this we need verse 11, and so, we will start with verse 11 and investigate what is the battle on the inside - the battle on the inside. In an internal look, if you look at verse 11 again; "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." That verse doesn't speak about other people or us engaging other people. It's pretty direct, and it's talking just to ourselves. It's talking to us as individuals and internally what's happening. And that's what we see, the battle on the inside, which must be understood before we can get to the external.

So, there's three parts that this is broken down into, just if we look and take it straight from the text and verse 11. And the first part we see is our identity as aliens - our identity as aliens. Peter, with a very endearing term, says, "Beloved..." All right? "Beloved..." He cares for these people. To remind you of the audience, these are Christians that are scattered throughout Asia, right, and he's writing to them saying "Beloved, I urge you..." I appeal. I beseech you. I beg of you. All right? "...I urge you as aliens and strangers..." So, that's the first thing we see, aliens and strangers. And this is probably a concept that we understand. The definition of an alien or a stranger isn't something that's too complex. Right? We understand it as one that's a foreigner that lives in another land or living alongside people in another land, that is they're not a citizen, and they're not enjoying the rights of a citizen. They're a foreigner. Right?

This is something that Israel was accustomed to; they definitely were familiar with this concept of being aliens and strangers. If you can recall their time in Egypt when they were in Egypt for about four hundred years, right, they had to live alongside the Egyptians as slaves, not as citizens of Egypt. So, they were aliens and strangers in Egypt. In fact, in Israel's Law that they received later on from Moses at Mt Sinai, they were told how to treat aliens and strangers in their own nation, the nation of Israel, and it helped them to be reminded of what it meant to be aliens and strangers. Listen to Exodus 23:9; "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt." They knew what it was like. They understood for four hundred years what it was like to be aliens and strangers, and so when aliens and foreigners and strangers came among them in the nation of Israel, they were to treat them with kindness and compassion. In fact, if you look at, really, the whole Old Testament, and you observe the lives of all those believers throughout the Old Testament, all the Old Testament saints, you'll find out that, basically, all of them were aliens and strangers. And you might be thinking, well, how is that so? How is that the case? Because eventually God led them out of Egypt. Eventually, God took Israel out of Egypt, and, eventually, He gave them the Promised Land. Right? I mean, isn't that the book of Joshua? Isn't that kind of what happened? They eventually got into the land, and they were no longer aliens and strangers.

Well, we need to zoom out and see a bigger perspective that the Scriptures give us. In Hebrews 11:13, speaking of the Old Testament saints it says this,

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“All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” “...they were strangers and exiles...” not because of where they’re living on the earth, but just the very fact that they were on the earth. The very fact that they were on the earth meant that they were an alien, a stranger, and in exile. So, then the question is, well then, where’s their home? If their home’s not on the earth, then where is it? And Scripture is helpful in giving us that answer. Philippians 3:20-21; “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” Very clear, very clearly spoken by Paul, “...our citizenship is in heaven...” This was the case for the people of Israel. This was the case for all the people in the Old Testament that were believers in Yahweh, the one true God. They were strangers and exiles on this earth because their home was in heaven; and this is the case for us as believers to this day.

This is how Peter referred to his audience, not just in the verse we’re looking at in verse 11, but also in verse 1 of the letter. Starting it off in chapter 1, he tells them in a greeting, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens...” He referred to them as aliens “...scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen...” Later on in 1 Peter 1:17, he also goes on to say, “If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;” All right, clearly communicating that you have a temporary time given to you, and that is your time on earth, and it is not your home. You are an alien. You are a stranger. Jesus also confirms this as well. In His high priestly prayer found in John 17, Jesus said in a couple places - John 17:16; “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” In John 17:18; “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” So, we see it clearly taught here that as believers, if we are anywhere on this earth, it doesn’t matter in terms of boundaries where we are or what country we are in. If we are on this earth, we are aliens, and we are strangers because our citizenship is in heaven; that is our home. We are on this earth, and we are just passing through until we go and are received by our Father in heaven.

Ephesians 2:19 gives us another twist and another angle on this. Paul says, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household...” He’s referring to the time before we were saved. Before we were saved, we were strangers and aliens, but now we belong to the household of God, and we are citizens. And so, really, the conclusion is this - every single person on this planet is a stranger and an alien. Every single person on this planet is a stranger and an alien. If you are a believer, you are a stranger and an alien to this planet and this earth and these ways because your citizenship is in heaven. If you are an unbeliever, you are a stranger, an alien to the heavenly kingdom, the citizenship and the kingdom of God, and this earth is your home. This earth is everything; this is all you care for. All right? This is the contrast that is made in Scripture, and so Peter is telling his readers, he’s saying, hey, let me remind you who you are again. All right? This is temporary, everything around you, where you are - you are an alien. You are a stranger because you have a heavenly citizenship, and you know that you belong to a Kingdom greater than any kingdom on this earth, right, the Kingdom of God.

So, he starts off with giving them their identity as a reminder. Who are you? You are aliens and strangers, temporary residents of this earth in order to abstain, which is what he goes on to say in verse 11, the instruction to abstain, “I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts...” is how he states it, “...to abstain from fleshly lusts...” So, when you see this, it, really, actually makes a lot of sense. This flows in the logic, in the thinking, in the argumentation, that Peter is using; because before we were saved by Christ, before we were enslaved to sin and that’s all we knew. Listen to how Paul describes it in Colossians 1:13, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...” At some point in your life when you got saved and became a Christian, there was a transfer that took place. You were in the domain of darkness. You were in your flesh, in your sin, and that’s what you did; that’s all you knew. And then, God picked you up, transferred you, and brought you into the kingdom, the domain of His Son, the kingdom of Light. Right? What a beautiful, glorious, glorious day that was when God transferred us, and we experienced salvation; and He was gracious to us in that. And that is what happened at some point; so this is why we are now aliens and strangers because we’ve been transferred. We’re no longer belonging to this world

that we walk in. Right? We know that heaven is our home, but we're still here. We're still not home.

So in the meantime, how're we to act? How're we to go about our lives? What are we to do? Paul says in Ephesians 5:8, "...for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light..." It makes sense. Right? Act in accordance with who you are, a citizen of heaven. You are no longer in the domain, in the kingdom of darkness; you are now in the domain and the Kingdom of Light of Christ, and we are to walk in Light. There's been a transfer that's taken place almost as if you had citizenship in one country on this earth, and now you changed, and you have citizenship in another country. Right? There's been a complete transfer. You no longer might be a citizen of the United States; you are now a citizen of some other country. And is that something that's going to happen overnight? Are you going to completely act differently? Are you going to be able to transfer from a culture like ours and a government like ours to a different country with a completely different government and a different culture? Is that something that's going to be an easy adjustment overnight? Not quite. It's a process. Right? It's a process.

For example - just throwing some ideas out to you - if you were even now to travel, say you were to travel today, and you were to go to some different countries, there are some rules that you might want to be aware of, lest you violate those rules and offend people greatly, or get yourself thrown in jail. For instance, if you were to go to France; you want to take a nice trip to France, rent a car, go around the country, see different places; sounds like a great time. Well, if you get pulled over, and you don't have a breathalyzer in your car, then you will be fined. So, you need to make sure you have that; just FYI. Maybe you and your spouse were thinking about a romantic getaway, and so you decide to go to the United Arab Emirates. So, you head out to the UAE. You go there, and you're on a nice little stroll in the park, and it's just so beautiful, and you're just walking, holding hands, and enjoying the view, and then someone comes up and arrests you. There's no public display of affection in the United Arab Emirates in parks. So, don't do that. Maybe you want to go to Kazakhstan. Maybe you're like, yeah, Kazakhstan would be a great place for some memories there. And I definitely want to document it and make sure I can prove it to all my friends. So, you're taking selfies everywhere you go, right, in front of every public building you see and government buildings, even in the airport; and then you

will be fined. You're not allowed to take pictures in airports or around public buildings. Maybe you want to go to Singapore, and so while you're making your way around Singapore on the public transportation, you're chewing some gum. You can get arrested for chewing gum. So, don't do that. Or maybe you're saying, you know, what I've always wanted to go to Spain, go to Barcelona, enjoy some time on some beaches, maybe, and so you're enjoying a day on the beach. And then, you decide to walk into the town, maybe go to a grocery store or buy something, and you're still in your bathing suit. You can get fined; you can only wear your bathing suit on the beach. Those things are things that would be nice to know, right, before that happens.

If you were to up and move right now to Spain or to France or some of these locations, you might not have known those things. Right? The process in which you would take for you to adapt to that whole new culture and government and style, takes some time. Right? You have to learn those things, but since you're born and raised in United States of America, or if you have been, you're aware. It's pretty easy, pretty self-explanatory. So in the same way, if all you've ever known for your life was a life of sin, right, rebellion against God, living in the domain of darkness as the Scriptures describes it, and then God yanks you out of that and transfers you into the Kingdom of His Son and of Light, and He tells you to walk in Light, is that something that you're going to get right away? No. It's progressive. It takes time. It's sanctification. It's this process of learning to say no to the old us, right, the old person we used to be and learning to take on the new and be patterned after the life of Christ. Right? So, this foreign nature - Peter's saying you are aliens and strangers here; your home is in heaven, and that should be a motivation for you to be holy. Right?

He says abstain from fleshly lusts - abstain from fleshly lusts. The word abstain literally means to be holding yourselves from, to hold yourself back from engaging in these fleshly lusts that you used to know so well before you came to Christ. And there's a lot at stake. Right? There's a lot coming and pressing on us. Romans 13:14 says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." So, there's just the very fact that we've been so used to doing sin, engaging in whatever our flesh wants; we've been used to living for ourselves, being mastered by that. Well, it's time to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and no longer be mastered by our sinful flesh.

There's also the world. 1 John 2:15-17; "Do not love the world nor 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 and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." So not only do we have our old way of living, our flesh still pulling at us, we also have the world around us that is tempting us. Right? The world around us is not encouraging us to live according to Christ. The world around us is trying to bring us down and suck us back into our old way of living according to our flesh. Why? Because the world is under the domain of Satan. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." So there is a lot pulling at us, thus this'll not be an overnight change for us to abstain from fleshly lusts. We have our old self pulling at us. We have the world around us enticing us, and we have Satan himself engaged in this process of wanting all of us to stumble and not press on towards sanctification and righteousness. But this is what we're commanded to do, and a helpful thing to remember in this process is that this is not our home. We are aliens and strangers. We are citizens of heaven, and so that is what Peter tells his audience, and that's what we need to hear as well.

And we see, in order to understand that this is a big deal, the way that he describes it helps us get a picture of what's happening. He says to "...abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." So we find that it is an incessant attack - the incessant attack. It does not stop. It does not cease. It does not give you a break, and say you want to time out? We'll give you a time out, and you can get some water and kind of get, you know, get your stuff together and then we'll come back at it and keep fighting. It does not stop. It does not rest. I like that Peter uses the term, "...which wage war against the soul." It's very clear. That term is not an ambiguous term or something. It is not talking about a little hand to hand combat. It's not talking about a tiny skirmish. It's not talking about something small. It's talking about all-out war. Well, think about it. What does war look like? Well it is you throw all your resources that you can at something and you strategize. Right? There is strategy in how you are even attacking the enemy, and that's exactly what is happening. Right? We just talked about our flesh is still pulling us away. The world that we live in is pulling us away, and

then Satan himself. It is all-out war inside of us. It is war. It's a battleground. It is a military campaign. It's a military campaign that we are engaged in, and this is all going on inside of us. And think about it. Right? Satan's smart. He's not dumb. Your flesh is relentless; every day your flesh pulls on you. It doesn't give you a break, and the world is not going anywhere. We still live in this world. So, all these things are at play as we're trying to remember that we are aliens and strangers and really citizens of heaven which should be representing Christ well. James 4:1 states this, "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?"

Scripture reminds us that it is a war in several places. Romans chapter 7 - you could really look at the entire chapter, and you would see the struggle, the battle, that Paul is in. He wants to do good, but at the same time, there is something pulling him away to do bad; and he is just struggling and going back and forth, and you can read it, the whole chapter. Then at the end, here's what he says, Romans 7:23-25; "...but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" So, he struggled, and he knew the struggle and the battle; but at the same time, he knew there was victory. He knew that there was victory, and that it was found in Christ. He knew that at the cross, Christ had punished and done away with sin. Sin and the penalty that it brought, which is death, is gone, but sin is still powerful, and we are still trying to deal with it. And that's what Paul's talking about in Romans 7, the power of sin and how it's a battle; but he knew that there was victory in the fight, and one day, ultimately, we do look forward to that day when the presence of sin will be completely gone. All right? We anticipate that day as heavenly citizens.

Galatians 5:16-17 says this, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." So, once again we see it. It's a clear opposition of what the Holy Spirit that indwells us wants and what our old selves want. Right? The old Cody wants to sin and please the flesh, but the Holy Spirit inside of me wants me to walk in righteousness and what Christ would desire; and so, there is opposition. But praise God, we have the

remedy. Right? To give you hope, we have the answer. We know how to fight. It's simple. Galatians 5:1; "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Spend your time, become obsessed with doing the will of God; just be consumed with doing what God would have, and as you are, as you are overwhelmed with this desire and passion to please God in all things and to produce the fruit of the Spirit, love and joy and peace and patience, as you go about that, you will find that there is no room for sin. There is no room to do these old things you used to do. The old self is no longer appealing because you have found joy and satisfaction in living for God. You have found joy and satisfaction in walking by the Spirit. So we do have power over sin. It's the Holy Spirit. It's nothing we possess. It's everything that God possesses. And so this incessant attack, this military campaign, is something that we actually can fight in because of the Holy Spirit within us and our willingness to say no to our flesh and submit to the Spirit as He fills us.

So this is the battle that's taking place on the inside. And there's a reason for this - that Peter starts with this and then moves to our next main point in verse 12 where we find the behavior on the outside - the behavior on the outside. So, he set it all up. Right? He's talked about everything that's happened on the inside, and how the key to fighting and understanding, how we abstain from fleshly lusts, is realizing that earth is not our home. Heaven is our home, and we need to say no to the old ways - because we are citizens of heaven and the Kingdom of Light - and understand that this is a war and, as a result, it will show on the outside. Right? He says, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles..." in verse 12.

So, you might ask why the order? Why are we talking about the inside first then the outside? What's the connection? Is there a connection? Is it random? Right? Why the order? What's going on here? Well, I think Peter is just affirming something that Scripture affirms in other places, that is, whatever is happening on the inside is going to happen on the outside out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Right? What is happening in your heart is bound to manifest itself and is bound to be shown. Listen to what Jesus says in Luke 6:45, "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart." So, the very things we do, the very things we say, they don't come out of nowhere. They don't come out of left field. They aren't something

that someone made you do. They're coming from your heart. It's coming from inside you. Proverbs 4:23 provides a good warning on this as well; "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." Once again, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it [the heart] flow the springs of life." This is what Peter's recognizing. All right? This is something that is taught all throughout Scripture. It is simple. If you take care of the battle on the inside, guess what's going to happen on the outside? Transformation. If you are willing to fight and wage war against your fleshly lusts on the inside, it will show on the outside; that is what Peter's transitioning to say in verse 12.

So, let's break this down a little bit more. The first thing we turn our attention to is the enemies of God's people. He says, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers..." There's slandering taking place here. Right? Peter understood where his audience was coming from. He knew what they were engaged in. He knew their life. He knew what they were going through. It was not easy times for them. They were being persecuted. They were being slandered. They're going through tough times, and he's willing to address that right here. In fact, this is not just the case in Asia where these believers are; this is the case, really, all throughout the region of and the nation of Rome in the first century AD. All right? If you look ahead in the book of Acts and you kind of see how Paul's missionaries go, as he goes from city to city, it's not like every city is warmly embracing Paul and his message. In fact, most of the cities are pretty antagonistic, All right, and they aren't, really, enthralled with what Paul has to say. In fact, there's lots of persecution.

You might recall in Thessalonica, when Paul and his companions went to Thessalonica, they accused him of being enemies of Caesar by preaching Jesus as King. When he went to Philippi, he was accused of introducing unlawful customs into the people's lives. And all throughout Acts, you keep seeing it, and every time, what's mixed with it is lies, right, these accusations against Paul and missionaries, as well as lies to try and bring them down and slander them. This is what the church was going through at that time. This is what the church still goes through. In fact, more pertinently to the audience here in 1 Peter, we learn of a pretty evil emperor of Rome at that time; his name was Nero. And we learn of a fire that broke out in the city of Rome and consumed quite a bit of the city, and so Emperor Nero

needed to blame someone for the fire, so he said, I got it, we'll blame the Christians, their fault, and so that's what he did. And so, how did people respond? They hated the Christians. They persecuted the Christians. They killed more Christians. This is what you find in history, and this is what continues to happen even today, maybe not as visible or tangible in a country like ours, but definitely in this world. We know these things are happening. All right?

There are always going to be enemies of God's people. There are going to be enemies of the Kingdom; this is what Jesus said. Matthew 5:10-12; "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." John 15:19, at the end of Jesus's life, He kind of restates it and says it again, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." So hopefully, it's not surprise to us, and that's what Peter's trying to convey to his audience here. This is what's happening. I know this. I understand this is what's happening. In fact, all the apostles and all the followers of Christ, they experienced their own persecution, and basically, all of them got martyred for their faith. So Peter knew this; he definitely knew what was going on. He understood that there were enemies. He understood that they were going through tough times, but he still called them to keep their behavior excellent.

And that's exactly what we see as we keep looking at this verse and what he says next, the example of good deeds - the example of good deeds. "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." Because that's the question, right? Okay, we have enemies. Okay, there's people that give you a hard time, and this is happening. This is happening for these people that are receiving this letter. It's happening for us, maybe, and how do we respond? What options do we have? Well, we could fight, right? Let's stand up and fight back. Yeah, that's an option. Right? That's a tangible option. Or how about another one; we could we could just run away. Let's just flee - kind of form our own little underground movement that no one knows about

and, we'll keep the message of Christ and the gospel to ourselves, and we just won't really tell people about it. Right? We'll just keep it to ourselves. We'll keep it very secretive. It's like a secret little club, and you can only get in if you know the password or something like that. All right?

We have options, but Peter gives us the answer; it's not to fight, and it's not to run and hide. The answer is to "Keep your behavior excellent..." All right, to live holy lives and let good deeds be shown. Titus 2:7-8, this is what Paul even told aspiring pastors like Titus and Timothy. Titus 2:7-8. Paul says, "...in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us." Isn't that perfect? That's it. Right? That is what is expected of us, and that is what will happen. The opponent will be put to shame, and they will have nothing bad to say about us if we are engaged in good deeds like Paul told Titus, like Peter is telling this audience. And if you think about it, this is the key. This is really where we draw in, and we see the manner of missions here because proclamation needs to take place; we need to open our mouth. We need to give the message of Jesus Christ and how He forgives us of our sins. We need to get that message out there. That's not an option. That's the method of missions.

But now, we're starting to see the manner, even in the midst of opposition. How do we do this? What's our attitude? How do we go about this? It's simple, with good deeds with excellent behavior; and this is exactly what Jesus did. He made some bold claims. Right? He taught some very heavy things. He said I'm the Son of God. Jesus said I'm the Messiah. All right? He made very bold statements, and He backed it all up. He backed it all up with the way that He lived. He actually did show compassion for people. He actually did care about people. He did get involved in people's lives; and He was willing to go to the point of death, even death on the cross. Or how about Paul, the guy who was, you know, raised Jewish and a Pharisee of Pharisees; and he really didn't like Christianity at all, and he really didn't like Gentiles at all. And God takes this man and uses him to be an apostle to the Gentiles; and that's what Paul did. He loved the Gentiles. He went to not just Jews, he went to non-Jews also, and he was willing to love them, associate with them, be friends with them. Right? He shared his life with these people. He backed up his message by what he did. Right? His deeds were in accord with what he said. And so, this is the point today, do we back

up our message? That's the question. We, hopefully, are proclaiming. Hopefully, we open our mouth and we speak the truth of the gospel, but quite frankly, if we don't back it up by our lives and we don't live it out, that proclamation is worthless. It means nothing. It might as well just fall on its face and get laughed at and mocked because that's the point, a proclamation that's not actually lived out means nothing.

You might be proclaiming to people, I'm a new creation. Right? God has made me a new creation, but if you still indulge in your flesh, and you continue to walk in sin and you love it, then how are people going to believe that? How are people really going to believe you're a new creation? It's completely hypocritical. Is it really believable if you say I have joy; God has given me absolute joy, joy beyond anything this life could ever offer, yet you are the first one to engage with other people and complain, and you instigate the conversation and complain about everything? Right? Aw, it's raining. We haven't had rain in forever, but I hate it when it rains. Aw, what the heck, it's not raining, aw, man! And you find something to complain about, and that is you. How are you saying you have fullness of joy, yet at the same time, you're walking in your sin and complaining just like everyone else? Or is it believable if you say I'm satisfied; God has given me everything I need and I am content, yet there you are longing for worldly desires. You're longing for every new thing the world is throwing at you, and you're eating it up, and you're telling yourself the lie that if only I had this, then I'd be happy. People aren't going to believe that. They're not going to believe that you're truly satisfied if that's the way you live. Or what if you say and you make this claim, I have peace; I really can lay my head down to rest every night and just be at peace. You can tell people that, but then here you are tossing and turning in reality about the trials in your life financially, physically, etc., whatever is going on, and you have anxiety, and you let it overwhelm you. That's not very believable that God has really given you peace if you live that way. Or you make the simple claim of I have been forgiven of my sins. Halleluiah! That's a great message to reclaim, yet how terrible would it be if we turn around and we fail to forgive others? That is an absolute just complete and tremendous failure on our part.

These are the things we proclaim, but how does our life look? We proclaim that we're a new creation. We proclaim that we have joy. We proclaim we're satisfied. We proclaim that we have peace in Christ. We proclaim forgiveness of sins. But do we live it? That's the manner of missions - do we

live it? Do we have the good deeds? Do we have the excellent behavior, as Peter's calling his readers to and us to today, the excellent behavior to back up the proclamation? I can guarantee you this, if we do, if we have the excellent behavior, if we have the good deeds to back up this message, two things will happen for sure. One thing - critics will be silenced. I mean, this is just a reminder of what we saw Paul saying to Titus in chapter 2:8. He said, "...the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us." So, if we do actually live sincere and honest, authentic lives, right, good deeds that back up this message, the critics will be silenced.

And secondly, which gets into our final point, we will see unbelievers converted. We will see unbelievers saved and coming to know salvation, and that's what we see in the rest of our verse here - the exultation of God's name - the exultation of God's name. Lastly, he says that "...they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." Honestly, you can think of, maybe, the centurion that was there when Jesus was crucified. Remember after Jesus went through everything He went through when He was beaten and mocked and tormented, and then eventually put on the cross, and lots of people witnessed it? But remember the centurion that witnessed it, specifically? The non-Jewish guy who had, really, no concept or awareness of a Jewish Messiah, well, after he sees Jesus breathe His last, he makes a pretty bold statement in Mark 15:39, "When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him [Jesus], saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" Jesus went through all His suffering, right, all His ridicule and slander. He went through all of it in such a way that people noticed, and they gave glory to God. Other people's deeds have probably impacted or influenced us. Maybe, at some point, you can recall Christians that claim to be Christians and actually lived it out, and it had a positive impact on you. But vice versa, there's probably people who called themselves Christians, and they didn't live it out; and you thought that's hypocrisy, and it really was negative and hopefully, stands as an example for you and us to realize that what we do behind what we proclaim is essential. All right?

And so, when Peter says that these people, these Gentiles, that are slandering this audience, when they see the good deeds of Peter's audience, they will then observe the good deeds and glorify God in the day of visitation. So, what is that exactly referring to, the day of visitation? It's referring to the day of salvation, the day when they do get saved, when they do finally come

to submission to Christ. And then, they can glorify God and recall your good deeds as a helpful means by which they were brought to Christ. Not just the proclamation, but also the good deeds - this is exactly what we see in Scripture. Sometimes the visitation of God can be negative, like judgment and the second coming. Sometimes it can be positive, like the offer of salvation. And I think this is an instance where it's a positive offer of salvation. This is what Jesus says in Luke 19:44, He says He weeps and laments for the Jews who didn't recognize their time of visitation; Jesus came to bring blessing, but they didn't recognize it. Really, I mean, you could also just look at this passage, and it's got a very evangelistic tone to it. If you just look at verses 9-10 before it, we're called to proclaim, "the excellencies of Him who has called [us] out of darkness into ... light..." We want people to hear this message, and so in the same way, he's making the point here that good deeds with this proclamation will be the means by which people will glorify God and the day that God grants them salvation.

And then, finally, probably the best argument is Matthew 5:16. Another verse that we remember from the Sermon on the Mount that really is, probably, Peter recalling what Jesus Himself said Matthew 5:16; "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." That's it. That's simple. That is what Peter is doing here; he's recalling what Jesus said that our good works will actually make an impact on this world in such a way that they will turn and glorify God. So, that's the hope here. The hope is that there will be exaltation to God's name because we have proclaimed the truth of Christ and we've actually backed it up; we've lived a life of authentic Christian living.

So, I would just beg you, if you're playing a game, or if you're thinking that, you know, this church thing's really nice, but I don't know if I'm all in, then please, don't call yourself a Christian. Because we are at this task; we desperately care about not only proclaiming this message but living it out, and it makes it incredibly difficult when there are people calling themselves Christians and yet not living it out. That's hypocrisy that we have to fight against, so please, take this seriously. If you are living for Christ, if you are engaged in the mission of making disciples and calling yourself a Christian – Amen! Live it out. Live it out. Battle on the inside, so that way it shows itself on the outside.