

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

¹⁸ *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,*

¹⁹ *but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

²⁰ *He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*

²¹ *Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

FAITH IS REFLECTED IN OUR LIVING

- I. We are strangers here
- II. Heaven is our home

Dearly Beloved of the Lord Christ,

An image is a likeness of the reality of the object that is casting the image. If you walk by a quiet pool, you will see your image in the water. The image would not be there if you would not be standing by the pool. The same is true as you look in the mirror every morning. The image you see there can be cast by only one person, you.

Using this analogy, the manner and attitude with which you carry on your life as a Christian is a reflection of your inner faith in Jesus Christ - at least this is the way Peter was inspired to describe it here. Wherever you are and wherever you go this image that you cast should follow you around. It should be part and parcel of who you are and whom you represent. I am not thinking of any kind of badge or necklace you wear. I am talking about the faith that is alive within you and expresses itself in the impression you make on those around you.

It is a matter of accountability. Faith does not remove accountability. It makes accountability possible with peace of heart. In Christ God has made us perfect and our accountability before Him is fixed in Christ's perfection. The question is, "How are we showing this in our living?"

Our faith is reflected in our living. The imprint of Christ is pressed into our communications, our relationships, our conduct, yes, into everything that we do. Joseph gives us a good example of this when Potiphar's wife tried to entice him into her bedroom. Listen to Joseph's answer. *How can I do such great wickedness and sin against God.* His faith in God and His devotion to God were such that they circumscribed his conduct and God was honored as a result.

Peter says here in the text that one such meaningful impression we should be leaving in our wake as we walk through our lives is our attitude toward this world and the things in it. Listen. *Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.* ¹⁸ *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.* Live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. Wow! This is a powerful statement, isn't it? The comparison can be made to Israel traveling through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. They lived in tents as they journeyed for 40 years. God did not want them to settle down anywhere along the way. They had a destination and accumulating things would only burden them down in their journey.

Peter is saying the same thing to us. Live as strangers here on earth. We are not going to stay here. We can get all torqued out over money, material possessions, over ownership of some things, over wanting but not having, over someone else having and we not having; but in the final analysis it all gets left behind. This is not our home.

However, the important question is what kind of image are we pressing upon people, if our attitude is materialistic? Jesus certainly was not materialistic. Does the image of Christ in us get reflected in our attitude toward our neighbor? Does the reflection of Christ take a beating to the point that even the casual passer-by would have no clue we are Christ's and He is ours?

The thought that should lift our mind and heart is the true level of value which God has placed on our soul and life. God establishes this value on the basis of what He willingly paid to redeem us from the disastrous results of our sins. The rare and precious metals of this earth could not have served as the ransomed price of our salvation. Any attempt on our part to purchase our freedom from sin and guilt would have ended in judgment pure and simple. But we were not redeemed with gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God.

This did not all come about by chance. Our God planned this from the beginning of time.

Listen. ²⁰ *He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*

²¹ *Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.* The plan was laid out before the creation of the world. The person of the God-Head to carry out the plan was also designated before time began. Then when just the right moment occurred in time, *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that are under Law that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

God knew you personally in eternity. God loved you in eternity. God chose you in eternity to be His own. Your heavenly Father wants you to be with Him in heaven and He did something about it.

Jesus' coming and living and dying and rising again show you the heart of your heavenly Father. Through Jesus you have come to know God and have come to love and trust in Him. And you know that you have a destiny that exceeds anything that this world has to offer. Heaven is your home.

When you know all this, what kind of imprint are you going to want to leave on your children? What kind of imprint or image do you want to press onto the world around you? How will this knowledge govern your attitude toward those with whom you are in contact? Will you only be cordial to those who are cordial to you? Will you only have a regard for those who treat you well? Will you be selective in your choice of people for whom you will show respect? Will you snub those with whom you have had issues?

Peter suggests that this is not the way we should show our respect for God nor is it any way to live. We have been redeemed and our redemption has been sealed by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We know our destiny because Jesus has gone ahead to prepare our mansion in the realms of glory. This is the image of God we should be reflecting in our life.

The story is told of a young man from rural America who was drafted into the army. He was a quiet, pious young man and his family and friends were concerned about what would happen to him when he found himself in the barracks society of the Army. He came home after his six weeks of basic training and immediately he was asked how he was treated by his fellow GIs. He said everything went alright. What did they say when they found out you are a Christian? They never found out, he replied.

That is a sad story, isn't it? He was neither salt nor light for those in his surroundings. He left no reflection of Christ upon those men in his unit.

Let your faith be reflected in your living. Christ's resurrection gives you the reason. Amen.