

BIG IDEA: We're strangers in a strange land...our home is in heaven.**1) INTRO**

- Greetings & glad you're here this morning...though it's strange that you'd get up on a day off, clean up, dress-up & be here – could be hiking or gardening – but here with us singing, listening to me talk
 - Isn't it strange that you'd do that?
 - Do you ever get that?
- When you think about it, there's a ton of other things you could do
 - But you're here – to worship JC w/ each other...people you call/we call “brothers and sisters”
- This is strange to people who aren't Christians/our world...people think we're strange
- BIG IDEA

PRAY

2) TRANSITION FROM MATTHEW TO PETER

- Kingdom in Matthew
 - Big theme in Matthew is the kingdom of God
 - JC's coming to earth ushered in the kingdom of God
- Living in this present evil age...in this already-not yet time period
 - Peter shows us we're going to face struggles/trials
- His goal is to encourage us to stand fast while we endure suffering
 - To stand firm in faith in midst of trials/persecutions
 - Theme for the series: “Stand Firm in the True Grace of God”
- When we're trusting in JC, walking with JC, living for JC, we're gonna face persecutions and sufferings and trials
 - It will be of varying degrees
 - Last week in Sri Lanka – links to Islamic State group did so – attacked churches and hotels holding Easter services - 253
 - Two weeks ago in Salmon Arm – Gordon Parmenter
- Message in Peter is to trust the Lord, live obediently no matter what, keep your hope fixed on God's promise of deliverance
 - Suffering is expected, but it's temporary

- Be steadfast/stand firm in true grace of God
- And, this comes from Peter...who we pick on, but love
- Peter is author – little disagreement on this, v1
- Peter matured since Matthew...gives us hope/encouragement
- In Matthew
 - Peter tries walking on water & sinks
 - Peter tells JC he's not gonna die...JC calls him Satan
 - Peter says he'll even forgive 7x (when 3 was good)
 - Peter says he'll never abandon JC even though they may
 - Peter denies knowing JC 3x...and he wept/sorrow/conviction
- In Peter's writing
 - He's encouraging us to stand firm, to walk/live faithfully
 - He's matured a lot since his days as a fisherman...30 yrs after
 - Wrote in 62-64, before his death in 64
 - Early church trad Peter crucified Rome upside-down
 - We saw a Peter who's brash and messed up often in Matt, we see a mature & faithful Peter as he grows in grace of God
 - Encouraging to us – mess up often, say and do things regret
 - Praise God he matures us
- Peter writes this letter...name JC gives him – “rock”
 - Letter w/ typical greeting/opening, body, conclusion
 - Back when people wrote letters, not texts
 - Apostle – in this sense, an eyewitness of the resurr who was personally appointed by JC to teach w/ authority as one who'd rec'd special rev from God
 - He's 1 of the 12
 - He's a personal eyewitness of JC – his life, his sufferings, his resurrection...anointed to JC

3) ELECT EXILES

- Peter writes to those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia
 - These locations are modern-day Turkey
 - The order the provinces are listed is roughly a circle – the route a courier would have travelled in delivering this letter
- Historically, scholars believed the primary readers were Jewish
 - Technical term – diaspora – is Jews spread out in the world

- But, scholars now agree audience is primarily Gentiles
 - 1:14 & 18 point to readers' ignorance & pagan past
 - 4:3-4 – lays out how readers used to live in sensuality, drunkenness, & idolatry
- So, it's written to Christians scattered around the world
- Written to elect exiles...to us
 - Christians who're away from our home, away from our king
 - We're outside heaven...living in the kingdom of this world
 - We're chosen by God
 - Before foundation of the world
 - Chosen to be pilgrims/sojourner/strangers/exiles
 - Chosen for citizenship in heaven...not here
 - We're strangers in a strange land...don't belong here
 - We have principles & values our world doesn't have
 - We suffer for our faith in a world that finds us offensive and weird/strange b/c of our faith in JC, our risen Savior
 - Sin
 - Savior
 - Saving Faith
 - Diff values – value life, marriage
 - We live differently – diff activities...joy-filled, at peace
- B/c of that, we'll face sufferings/trials/persecutions of varying degrees
 - Knowing we're elect exiles helps us to prepare for difficulty/not be surprised
 - Election reminds us that we have status with God – not b/c we're worthy or able – but b/c of God's loving sov grace
 - Awareness of this keeps us humble
 - Awareness of this keeps us faithful to the God who's chosen us
 - And, knowing our Trinitarian God is at work

4) TRINITARIAN WORK OF GOD

- We see the Father, Son, and HS at work in us – his elect exiles
- “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father”
 - Peter continues to emphasize God's sovereignty & initiative in our salvation

- God's foreknowledge is not simply knowing beforehand of what would happen
 - GRK word for “foreknowledge” is also “predetermine”
 - Dr. Tom Schreiner points out that the word “know” in OT most often refers to God's cov love for his people
 - So, connection in NT is that God's foreknowledge carries forth the understanding that we're elect b/c God the Father has set his cov love upon his people
- As strangers/exiles who'll go through suffering & persecution, we ought not to forget who we are
 - We're saved by God's sov grace
- “In the sanctification of the Spirit”
 - Our sanctification is our growing of holiness
 - It's our continual running from sin & growth in holy living
 - It's seeing progress in our lives in this
 - And, it the HS doing this in our lives
 - We sin less b/c of the HS's work
 - He's the one who helps us in our walk
- “For obedience to JC and for sprinkling w/ his blood”
 - When God choses us and the HS works in us, we'll be living in obedience to JC
 - Following his commands, growing in Christ-likeness, and living in assurance as blood-bought believers
- The Father foreknows, the Spirit sanctifies, and the Son cleanses
- “May grace and peace be multiplied to you”
 - Grace – he's declaring God's favor toward those in JC
 - Peace – Peter's pronouncing God's blessing of peace upon the peace...like the Shalom greeting of the Hebrews
 - Our peace is sealed b/c of the work of JC on the cross

5) CONCL

- We don't know what the Lord has in store for us when it comes to suffering