

Different

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Preacher: Innes Macsween

[0 : 00] Please be seated. And if you can, please do open up your Bibles at 1 Peter and chapter 2. And as we go through these words, we're going to pause after specific points and we're going to sing again.

But I want you to open up your Bibles, keep them open if you can. We're going to keep our eyes in these two verses as much as possible. Let's read these verses again.

Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

There was once a man walking along the beach after a big storm. And he found the beach covered in starfish.

And in the distance he could see a small boy walking towards him. And every now and then this man could see the small boy stop, bend over, and pick up one of the starfish and throw it into the sea.

[1 : 23] The man, as he came up to him, asked him, what are you doing? And the boy said, I'm trying to save them before they die. And the man said, well, there are tens of thousands of starfish on this beach.

I'm afraid you can't really make a difference. To which the little boy bent down, picked up another, threw it into the sea, and said, maybe not.

But I can make a difference to that one. And then he kept on going. This morning, this evening, our lesson from God is that he has chosen to use the daily good conduct of ordinary Christians as the means by which he's going to change the world.

One soul at a time. The reason we're looking at just these two verses is that they are the key to the whole book of 1 Peter.

This is the introduction. This is the beginning of the second section of the letter. In the first section of the letter, which, if you know anything about 1 Peter as a letter, the first section runs from chapter 1, verse 3, all the way to chapter 2, verse 10.

[2 : 45] And in that section, Peter has been getting his scattered Christian readers to understand their identity. And so if you flick back over with me to chapter 1, you see in verse 1, as his introduction to the whole book, he says, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect exiles scattered throughout the provinces.

Peter wants his Christian readers to understand their identity. They are elect exiles. Born again into a living hope.

And as chapter 2 goes on to say, you are a chosen race. You are living stones. You are the place where God dwells.

When God's people gather together, they are the stones of the temple. They are the living stones. In the Old Testament, the temple was where God dwelt with his people.

It is where you met God. Where do we meet God now? In the gathering of his people. All the more reason to get back out to church.

[4 : 03] To get back out to the gathering. To be here again with each other. This is where we meet God. It's also where the world meets God.

In us. In us as we worship. In us as we live out our lives. And this is the start of a new section in the letter.

And these two verses help summarize the point of the whole thing. And the point of 1 Peter. Well, to borrow from others that have long studied this book.

It's this. It's this. God has made you different. So be different. Even when you suffer. To make a difference.

While you wait for glory. God has made you different. So be different. So be different. Even when you suffer.

[5 : 00] To make a difference. While you wait for glory. And that is really verses 11 and 12. So let's first of all tonight.

Look at that first part of that phrase. God has made you different. Now if you look. If you want to read the letter when you go home.

Fantastic. Read it all in one go. It will take you 5-10 minutes max. But if you read it through. There are two things. In this book. In this chapter.

In this letter. And two things that are here. In these opening words. Of verse 11. Two things in this verse. That mark out the believer.

As different. First. What makes the Christian different? What makes you different? Well first of all. It says you are loved. By God.

[6 : 00] See that phrase. Dear friends. It's not strong enough. In the Greek. The phrase. Is really closer to this idea of.

Beloved. Beloved. Beloved. It's actually the same word. That Peter uses in 2nd Peter. When he's talking about. When God spoke from heaven.

To Jesus. One of the three times. He spoke to Jesus. When Jesus was on earth. And he says. This is my beloved son. This is my son. Whom I love.

That same word. That Peter uses. When describing. That incident. In 2nd Peter. Is the same word. He uses in the opening here. Dear friends.

Doesn't quite go far enough. But it works. You're dear friends. Because you're loved by God.

[6 : 56] You are loved friends. You're beloved. He wants to remind them. That they are loved. By God. Himself. Friends.

And sons. And daughters. Loved. By God. What marks you out. As different. What marks out. The believer. What makes you different.

It's the fact. That you're loved. By God. God has chosen. To set his love. Upon you. He didn't choose.

To love you. Because. You're better. Than anyone else. What a relief. Because if we're honest. We know. We're not better. Than other people.

If you're here. Thinking that you're a Christian. Because you are better. Than anyone else. You are well mistaken. About the depth of sin. In your heart. And you are well mistaken. About what.

[7 : 51] Has saved you. It's not you. It's not how wonderful you are. It's not how faithful you are. It is all about. The faithfulness of Jesus. You are loved by God.

And chapter one. Really digs into this. Especially those opening two verses. You are loved by God. Out of his. Free will. Election. Choice.

On you. It's all on him. It's based on him. It was while we were still sinners. That Christ died for us. You are a sinner. I am a sinner. But Christ died for sinners. Like us. Maybe you need to hear this simple reminder.

Again. Tonight. God. Offers you. The love. He has. For Jesus. It's the same word. He used. About his beloved.

[8 : 49] Son. He uses for his people. Tonight. Dear friends. I love you. With the same love.

He has for Jesus. We need to hear this every day actually. And that's in part. Because of the other way.

We're different. God has made you different. Because. He loves you. But we need to hear that. Because. The other way that we're different.

Is that we're exiles. Look at those opening words. Dear friends. I urge you. And what are you? Foreigners. And exiles.

Again. This is the theme he introduced. Back in chapter one. Precisely. Because. God. Has chosen to love us.

[9 : 48] We're now foreigners. Irish. And exiles. A foreigner. Is someone. Living. In a foreign land. Seems simple enough. And an exile. Is.

A temporary. Resident. Or even a refugee. Put the two ideas together. And that's the Christian. In the world.

That's any one of you. Loved by Jesus. Loved by God. Any one of you. That follow. Christ. As your savior. You are. A foreigner. And an exile.

Because we belong to God. We're citizens. Of heaven. And therefore. This world. Isn't. Our home. Not our true home. And the people of this world. Aren't our true people. And the ways. Of this world. Aren't our ways. Either.

[10:47] A Christian. Won't. Feel. Fully. Comfortable. And fully. At home. And will often. Feel a bit. Out of place. Sometimes.

Disconnected. From the stuff. Of this world. I remember. Speaking to someone. Who moved. Houses. Fairly often. Once a year.

For one reason. Or another. And the key lesson. That they had. The key lesson. That they learned. From all their moving. Was to get used. To traveling light. Any of you.

That have gone through. A big move. In recent years. You know. How much of a nightmare. It's one of the top. Stresses. They say. Of any person's life. Because of the sheer. Amount of things. You've got to pack. And got to get into vans.

And everything. These people. Got used to. Traveling light. Because they knew. That the home. That they were in now. Was not going to be. Their final destination. And they would have to move again.

[11:44] But all of this. Lays ground. For the appeal. That's going to follow. And so. In these opening words. He's just reminding them. God has made you different.

You're loved. You have a privilege. And a gift. That people seek after. All their lives. A love. That is unconditional.

A love. That transcends. What we've done. But it also marks us out.

As different. Because we're not going to feel at home. Here. We're passing through. This isn't our final home.

This isn't our final destination. And with that thought in mind. Keep it there. Keep it there. As we look at the rest of these words. You are different.

[12:41] You are loved. You are foreigners. That don't belong. And so he says. Therefore. If he's made you different. Be different. We're going to pause there.

We're going to sing again. Singing this time from Psalm 16. Psalm 16 verses 8 to 11. God has made you different.

And afterwards. We're going to look at. Be different. Let's sing God's words. Words. Psalm 16. Psalm 16. Psalm 17.

Psalm 18. Psalm 17. Psalm 16. Lord. You are ■■■■■■■■. Pleasure. You are ■ your life.

Here. My tongue with joy will sing My body too will rest secure In hope unwavering For you will not allow My soul in death to stay Nor will you lead your Holy One To see the tombs decay

[14:58] You have made known to me The power of life divine Lest shall I know At your bright hand Joy from your face will shine God has made you different So be different That is our second major heading All of our growth in character Godliness is the work of God's Holy Spirit within us

He's the one as we listen to Jesus God promises that as we listen to Jesus And do as he says That he will grow the fruit of the Spirit within us He will make us more and more like his son Jesus But that doesn't mean that we have no part to play You don't just sit back And hope to become more godly You don't just sit back and watch As God works in your life One of the great enduring pictures of the Euros this year Will be the image of the Danish players Forming a barrier around their collapsed teammate And it may have been the medical staff That saved the life of Christian Eriksen But his teammates didn't just stand and watch Their captain even Simon Kiar He put Christian Eriksen into the recovery position

He made sure he didn't swallow his tongue He started CPR while the medical staff made their way over And then they all purposefully stood in unison To give him and the medical staff the privacy they deserved They did what they could They played a part We have a part to play in God's work And here Peter in these words gives us a negative And then a positive As he urges us I urge you As loved people As my dear friends I urge you as foreigners and exiles Who don't feel at home Who don't belong here I urge you First in the negative Verse 11 To abstain from sinful desires Which wage war against your soul Notice first of all

He says desires Rather than deeds Sinful desires Rather than sinful deeds Because the battle begins with our desires And in our affections We will ultimately Live what we love We will do

tomorrow What we dream about today But the way Peter describes it It's harder Than you might think Picture yourself in a moment of temptation You've read an article Or a tweet And you want to comment back with force You've heard some juicy gossip And you're desperate to share it There's a purchase you don't need But you can feel yourself start to covet it Maybe you've had enough to drink But there's a bit of you that wants that extra glass

Whatever it is At that moment of temptation As your desires begin to make you promises Of the pleasures that they're going to deliver As you begin to rationalize it in your mind You begin to tell yourself It's not so bad I'm just telling someone else something It's not so bad What these people are doing are so much worse And I'm trying to fight back With the words that I'm writing It's not so bad It's just a little drink At that moment I wonder how aware we are That our misplaced desires Are actually waging war Against your soul I confess that far too often That's not what I'm thinking But that's the reality One of my best mates in university Spent a number of years Working with a Christian organization

[20 : 07] As a bodyguard in South Sudan Working in security During its recent civil war And he would tell me stories Of having to help evacuate whole villages As war devastated their lives Now if he were to share this verse That we've just read With the people that he worked with They would have a far deeper sense Of what war is really like War had taken their loved ones War had taken their children Either in death or as child soldiers War had left them with physical scars And wounds And for many more of them If not all of them War had left them with far deeper scars Of trauma War is not a video game that you play With an option to restart

If you get killed War is not a film that you watch With popcorn War destroys people It destroys families It will destroy you It will destroy me And so does sin I know it doesn't feel like that In the heat of the moment But that's because sin lies to us Tricking us Into thinking This will satisfy you It's fine Nobody's watching Who cares It'll trick you into thinking It'll satisfy you When it actually seeks To send your soul Into hell That's why Peter says I urge you To abstain Look you are different He says You are loved

You are chosen And you were chosen To be an exile Someone not quite at home here So be different Put serious distance Between yourself And the sinful desires The passions Of your former ignorance Flee from those things Like you would If there was a ticking Time bomb In front of you It's waging war Against your soul What are you doing?

Faffing around With sin and temptation Run I urge you to flee It'll destroy you It'll leave you With trauma It'll destroy your family It'll destroy your loved ones You think sin Won't leave consequences?

Look around you Look at the world It's a domino effect Of consequences It's war Sin will wage war Against your souls It already does So Peter urges us Run Abstain Put distance Between yourself And anything else And he says Alongside that In that negative He gives a positive Be different By not Giving in To the temptations Which wage war Against your soul And be different In the positive Peter says Verse 12 Live such good lives Among the pagans That though they may Accus you of doing wrong They may see your good deeds And glorify God On the day he visits us

[23 : 57] Peter is talking about A life of good works A life that is noble Praise worthy And blameless Now first of all Can you see Where Peter Where Peter wants us To live it Where does he want us To live this life Among the pagans He says Which really just means It hits like a Quite a harsh word to use What that means Is among the people Who do not yet know God If God's only purpose Was to save you And protect And to protect you From sinful desires He would have taken us Straight to heaven When he saved us But he didn't God has a deeper Purpose For his church God has a deeper purpose For you That we commit Ourselves To living lives

Of attractive Public Godliness And there are two dangers To protect against here Because you get that Common phrase Be in the world Not of it The Christian Who fails To invest In any kinds Of friendships With people Who don't yet Know Christ We can't meaningfully Be said To be in the world Live such good lives Among the pagans If you're not among People who don't yet Know God If you don't have True and real Friendships with people Then you're not Fulfilling the positive Command and appeal That Peter is giving us And we can't change The world by hiding From it Or by locking Our children up So that they never Have to come into Contact with the Outside world And The Christian Whose life And priorities Are indistinguishable

From the people Of the world Can't be said To be not Of the world We won't change The world By adopting Its ways What are we Changing it to If we just Look identical To everyone else And think

the way Everyone else thinks There's a famous Phrase It's not the ship In the water That's the danger It's when the water Is in the ship It's not the Christian In the world It's the world In the Christian That's the danger And we know that There's few things More disappointing When you see someone Who calls himself A Christian Living a life Of total hypocrisy Hiding Realms of abuse God's message

Here instead Is that Christians Should be known For living good Attractive Godly Lives Think about this week In your life What good deeds In Christ's name Can you do How to be The best teacher In the school That you're in And it's not just Praying for them It's also about Caring for your pupils And your colleagues The general principle is Are you the kind Of employee That others Want to work with If you're a Christian And you're in school Or you're at university Or you're in The workplace What good deeds Can you be doing For your friends What can you do For your neighbours How can you go The extra mile

What can you do For people In your care homes Represent Christ Well In the place He has you You are different So be different And finally Be different To make A difference Before we come To our third point We are going to sing Again We're going to sing This time From the song Facing a task Unfinished Let's stand And sing these words To God's praise Label Others Logic M he Eh m [29 : 03] Moon H Y M ly We do rejoice to know you, Revere before your cross.

The solemn pledge we owe you, To know and make you know. The Lord beside you, O there on anglers pray, Where forces that defy you, Defy you still today.

With country there crying, For life and love and light, And now the souls are dying, And last into the night.

We call to all the world, With kingdom full and world, No honor in that heart to save, But Jesus Christ the Lord.

We rejoice to know you, And all the hands of those, Who will give their lives proclaiming, That Jesus died and rose.

[30 : 49] Our taste is the same commission, The same that this, dear judge, And by the same ambition, To you we have heard.

We go to all the world, With kingdom full and world, No honor in that heart to save, But Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Lord. O God. O God. O God. O God. O God. O God. The Savior, whose spirit is high, Savior, whose purpose is taken to toil with him on time, Of the earnest in vain, Of liberty of vain, For the pure and saviors, To live and for the sake, We go to all the world, With faith upon the world, The mother in the cross to save, For Jesus Christ the Lord.

Take a seat. God has made you different, So be different, To make a difference. That's the third major heading this evening.

Because God's glorious purpose Is to use our lives of quiet and mundane godliness To change the world.

[32 : 46] Look at verse 12 again. Live such good lives among the pagans, That though they accuse you of doing wrong, They may see your good deeds, And what?

And glorify God On the day he visits us. The day he visits us is a phrase Borrowed from Isaiah To talk about the day of judgment, The final day, That last day When Christ returns.

Now the verse begins, As there are pagans speaking against you, Accusing you of being evil, And it ends with that same group of people Now glorifying God.

Peter is speaking here about nothing less Than conversion. That they start off as enemies of God, And they end up as worshippers of God.

But look at how God will bring about That massive transformation in their lives. Through the daily, Honorable conduct Of abstaining from sin, And through living good lives In this world.

[34 : 03] Now we know That the efficient, The efficient cause Of someone becoming a Christian Is always through the word of God.

And you actually see that At the end of chapter 1 In verse 23. For you have been born again Not of perishable seeds, But of imperishable Through the living and enduring word of God.

They need to hear the gospel. The world needs to hear the gospel. Don't get me wrong on that. And the efficient cause Of someone becoming a Christian Is the word of God.

It's God himself. And yet, still, Peter is saying that Your life can be the primary cause Of bringing someone To the word of God.

The primary cause Of bringing someone To the efficient cause Of saving their soul. And we know that to be true.

[35 : 03] Very often when you hear Somebody share their Christian story, When they're explaining What attracted them to Jesus, They actually very rarely say, You know this, I was blown away By an amazing sermon.

More often than not, What they say Is that there was this person, This friend, A parent, A grandparent, A youth leader, Someone, And there was something different About them. We saw their lives. We saw their good deeds. We saw how their words And their life matched up. And we wanted to know What was the hope That drove them. Our godliness will be like a magnet. And by that I mean, For some, They will be attracted, And for others They will be repelled. It is fairly standard For people to speak Against Christians.

[36 : 14] For Christians to be Branded as evildoers. And you know, As I do, That sometimes the church Has given people Plenty of reason To brand us as evil.

The criticism Can be very valid. But even when it's not valid, Even when it's unfair, You can be labelled As all sorts of things.

Back then, In Peter's day, It was, Oh, you Christians, You're anti-Caesar. You're anti-authority. Today, Today, You Christians are transphobes.

You Christians are bigots. You Christians are judgmental, And unloving, And boring, And narrow, And prudish, Whatever. The clothing might look different, But it's the same.

And when it happens, The temptation for us, If you're a Christian, The temptation is to live down To the slander. To get on social media, And to fight back With strong words And a harsh tone.

[37 : 27] To repay insult with insult, Evil with evil. And instead, Peter says, Even so, Even though they may accuse you Of doing wrong, We are to persevere With a life of good deeds.

Remember who you are. He made you different. You are loved by God. Your security, When people attack you, Isn't in what they think of you.

It's in God's love. You're safe. You're his friend. A dear friend of God. Loved. And don't try and Fit in with the world as such.

You're a foreigner. You're an exile. He's made you different. Expect to be different And to feel different. But he says, Be different. When people brand you, When people attack you, When people go for you In whatever way, Live such a good life As your response.

So maybe, Just maybe, As a practical application, Don't rant on Facebook.

[38 : 46] Don't comment harshly On something. One of the most frustrating things As a Christian Is when you go on And you see someone else On Twitter, On Facebook, Or something else. And in the name of God, They are lambasting people.

And you just think, Come on. This verse Tells you to respond With good deeds. Don't comment harshly On somebody else's tweets As if this will change Anyone's lives.

Live so well. Be so kind. Be so surprisingly gracious. Because just think about How God might use you. God may use your faithfulness To light a candle of interest In someone else.

That will lead them To ultimately one day Glorifying God On the day he returns. These words have proven To be so encouraging To Christians over the years.

Some of you Are the only Christians That are in somebody else's Life. Some of you have been Trying to live a godly life For many years Without any sense Of obvious impact On the people around you.

[40 : 02] And yet, Just, Maybe, On that final day You'll bump into someone You used to know. A colleague.

An old friend. Maybe the last person That you expected to see. And they'll say to you, You know this, I never told you at the time. But the way you were Always gracious When we teased you About being a Christian.

The way you were kind When we had a go at you Time and time again About this or that. The way you humbly And honestly Walked through suffering. The way you were there When I was suffering. Years later, Well after we used to know each other, It led to me becoming a Christian. Because God chooses In his own time, In his own way, He chooses to use The daily good conduct Of ordinary Christians As the means By which he's going To change the world.

Start with the one starfish. Start with that one soul. The one person You can talk to.

[41 : 19] The one colleague You can do something good for. The one neighbor You can go out on your limb for. And walk the extra mile with them.

That one person in your family. Start with the one. Live such a good life. Abstain from sinful desires. And God May Use You. And instead of us Feeling like the burden Is all on us. Feeling like it's on us To change the world And to change the nation And to change Aberdeen.

How are we going to change What Scotland is going through? How is it? How are we going to Bring things back? And how are we going to do this? The burden is not on you. The whole glorious purpose Of how to change the world Is not on your shoulders.

It's on God. Leave it with God. And for you and me Live such good lives. That God may use you To make a difference.

[42 : 25] Even with one. This is God revealing His glorious purpose. Every word. Every day.

Is an opportunity To adorn The glorious gospel Of God our saviour. And then who knows How God may use Our godly deeds. God has made us different.

So let's be different. To make a difference. Amen. We're going to sing We're going to sing zusammen Bye.

Thank you.