

War and Witness



1 Peter 2:11–12

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I love Paul, and one of the things that Paul does when he goes into Athens, in Acts chapter 17, is he quotes the poets and he quotes the singers in their culture. It's really exegete culture. I really believe if Paul lived around here, he would quote country music songs in a lot of sermons, because in a lot of ways country music just really exegetes a lot of bad theology. So, we're going to get to a song that I heard yesterday. It's by Blake Shelton and Brantley Gilbert and it's called Heaven by Then. I don't know if you have heard this, but the first verse says:

When number three is just a number and Hank is just a name

When trucks don't sound like thunder and nobody prays for rain

When you don't hear, yes sir, yes ma'am, or Jesus on FM

Well, I hope I'm in Heaven by then.

Now, they don't say "well," they say something else but I changed it for our purposes. Then, they sing the chorus:

No, I don't want to go today, but I don't want to live

Down here at a place that thinks that that don't exist

*If there comes a day this country's somewhere country don't fit in
Well, I hope I'm in Heaven by then.*

Now, I get the song...and I think it's going to be a hit because we have sort of a pull towards that. We can sort of feel like things are unraveling a little bit, things are going in certain directions, and if they go a certain way, I just hope that I'm in Heaven by then. There are a few assumptions in this song. Assumption number one is that country living and Christianity are the same thing. Yes, you can be a country person and be a Christian, but just because you're country person doesn't mean you are a Christian—so we need to separate those two. Assumption number two, for our purposes, is the world is supposed to share our values. It's an assumption that the culture around you, the world around you, should share your values. And if they don't share my values, if things spin out of control and the culture's values don't match my values, well then, I'm just hoping I'm in Heaven by the time that happens. So that is sort of the message or the idea this morning, and I had the thought as I was listening to that song...I wonder how the early church would have responded if you played that song to them. Imagine if the early church had a song that people sang that said, *"If Rome stops believing in Heaven, then I just want to leave. If Rome stops playing Jesus on the radio, then I would just as soon be in Heaven."* Can you imagine? The early church would be like what are you even talking about? Why would Rome play Jesus on the radio? Why would Rome believe in Heaven? Rome is not the Kingdom, this is the culture, and we as Christians are exiles in the culture. For the early church, Rome was not their home and Rome was not their hope, and so a song like that would not even make sense to the early church.

Perhaps you've noticed that biblical Christianity is getting a little bit weirder and weirder in the culture that we live in. We think how can that be? But the reality is that's how it's almost always been. What we have to notice is that when our beliefs come into contact with culture, what we need to ask is how do we actually live in that? How do we walk in that? How do we pursue in that? Peter is going to actually tell us how to do that in this text this morning and he's going to start off by saying remember who you are in the culture you live in. You're not at home—you're exiles, you're

sojourners. That's really hard for us to believe but that's the reality. The Kingdom is coming but it's not here in its fullness, so there's always going to be a clash between Christ and culture. We just have to realize that. So in this cultural moment that we find ourselves in, what do we do as exiles and sojourners? Well, Peter is going to tell us to war against sin and witness to sinners. Those are the two things he wants us to do. When we think war against sin, we probably interpret it as we're going to war against all the sins of culture. He's going to say no, what you need to war against is the sin inside of you, your own flesh, your own passions—you have to go to war with it. And as you do, you need to live such a life of love, compassion, generosity, and mercy towards the world that they would see your beauty, your actions, and it would be a witness to how good God is. So that's what we do in the culture we find ourselves in. We don't complain that the culture's not exactly like we want it to be. No. Instead, what we do is war against our sin and we witness to those around us.

Scripture

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

We are warring against sin, but notice Peter starts out with "Beloved" or dear friend. Really, this is a transition in the letter because in chapter 1 and then a lot of chapter 2, he's been giving us a lot of theology. Theology like who we are—we're born again to living hope, we've been cleansed by the blood of Christ, we are elect exiles and we are new people of God, we're the new priest of God, the new sacrifice who lives our lives to God. Now he's going to turn a corner and say now that you got all that the down, let's apply it to real life. And the first thing we're going to see is this urging to abstain from the passions of the flesh. So he addresses us as beloved, as friends, and so you have a guy who cares about the people he's writing to. He says, "I urge you..." That word, urge, can also be translated as beg. He's saying, I'm begging you because I love you. I mean, when's the last

you begged, or urged, somebody not to do something? I can't even remember the last time I begged somebody not to do something. I might suggest it. I might say, "Well, you probably shouldn't," but I don't like impose on their likes or whatever, but Peter is begging. He is urging...*Please! With everything I have, with everything in me, don't do this!* Don't do what? Don't indulge in the passions of your flesh. Now, notice that before he gives the command, before he begs them to abstain, he says something first—he says I beg you or I urge you—as sojourners and exiles. He's appealing to who we are in relation to where we live. He is saying...Early Christians who are spread out around Rome, Galatia, and other places like Asia Minor; I know living in this area that you're living in a culture and you belong to a country you are citizens of, but because you're now in Christ you are also citizens of a heavenly Kingdom, which makes you exiles and sojourners in the land that you occupy. In other words, he's trying to say remember you're not home yet, and we need to remember that. See, that's the problem with the song—Blake Shelton doesn't quite know that this isn't supposed to be home. There is supposed to be a little bit of tension here because the Kingdom has not come yet in its fullness. So we have to remember as a church that we are exiles and that we are sojourners, we're passing through and we don't completely belong to the country and culture that we find ourselves in. We can love our country, we need to be good citizens, we can be proud to be Americans, but we've got to know that's not our first identity. We are not home we are exiles, and we're passing through. We are children of the Kingdom of God and Christ is our King; that's our first allegiance, that is home, and that's what is familiar and perfect to us.

So, what does Peter call us to? As exiles and sojourners, what does he want us to do? He wants us to abstain from the passions of the flesh. That's the command. That's what we're going to try to work through this morning, how do you abstain from the passions of the flesh. That's what Peter wants to do; he's begging us, urging us, so how do we do that? First of all, what exactly are the passions of the flesh? I'll give you just a really easy definition that I thought would be very helpful. Passions of the flesh are things you want to do that Jesus says no to. You can write that down and just write, "By Kory." That's a great definition, right? It's things you

want to do that Jesus says no to. It's things you want to do that actually breaks commandments when you do those things. That is passions of the flesh. They're pretty easy to see and feel because if you think...*I want to do this, I know that the Word of God forbids it and that God says no to this, but I want to do it*...that would be a passion of the flesh. There is a war going on between the passion of the flesh and the passion of the Spirit, so there's this war for your very soul. Peter would say abstain from these passions of your flesh.

Now, we've got to realize our cultural moment, because sometimes we don't exegete our culture. We don't really realize, just subtly, what we believe. It's like telling a fish that the fish is wet. A fish doesn't know what's wet because all it knows is water. Sometimes we don't really know what our culture believes because we're in the culture and we just assume everything culture believes. Here is what our culture would say about desires, passions: your desires define you. Whatever you want, whatever you desire, that is who you are. We have an expressive individualism. We're all individuals, and so the goal of your life is find who you are, the real you deep on the inside, and then bring it out, express it, and then find everybody to cheer and applaud because that's who you are, that's the most true thing about you. So we have desires or passions that Peter's going to say stay away from, but we live in a culture that says no, your passions and desires are actually who you are. The most extreme example would be transgenderism, which would say if you feel or desire something inside that doesn't match with reality or biology, your feelings win. In other words, your feelings are who you truly are; therefore, we need to rearrange biology and reality to match who you're on the inside because that is you truly are.

But we come to the Bible and we get a different perspective of who we are. We're not defined by our feelings and desires; we're defined by the divine. We're defined by God. God defines us. God tells us who we are, what we should desire, and how we should behave. We are defined by God...so what's the problem? Well, there was a fall that happened. Sin has entered the world. We are image bearers of God but we're broken image bearers of God; therefore, our desires are often wrong and that is

absolutely counter to culture. Trevin Wax would say that in our culture “the greatest commandment is to be yourself and the second is like it: to affirm and applaud whatever self your neighbor chooses to be.” That's the greatest command of our culture. Be yourself, affirm whatever your neighbor decides their self is, and applaud and cheer it. So if that's the greatest commandment of our culture, then the greatest sin of our culture would be to deny yourself or question your neighbor's view of their self. But that's exactly what the Bible tells us to do—literally, the gospel says deny yourself. That's step one. We live in a culture where the absolute greatest sin is the beginning to coming to the gospel, which is deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow the Lord. Let me just summarize it. We live in a culture that says whatever you desire is right, good, and true, and it defines who you are. Peter comes along and says there are a lot of desires and passions you have that are not right and are not good, and your responsibility is to abstain from those things. This is very countercultural. It is unpopular and it's going to be a war even in your own soul because we assume things about our desires, like the passions of the flesh are just pleasures we enjoy...nobody knows about them, they're secret, it's just my pleasure, and it's fine. What we don't realize is the pleasure is poison if it's passions of the flesh. They're warring against our soul; they're going to lead us to death, so Peter says you have to abstain from them.

Now, the question is, how in the world do we abstain from the passions of our flesh? It's the things we want to do. It's the things we desire to do because we're exiles, we're sojourners, but we live in a culture where it looks all shiny and good and we like those things, so how can we abstain from those things? What exactly are some of these things? Because my desires or passions of the flesh are going to be different than yours and yours are probably different than mine. My struggles are probably different than your struggles. Maybe yours is sexual immorality. Maybe it's pride, gossip, slander, worry, lying, coveting, praise of man, anger, vanity, maybe it's social media, internet, TV, work, luxury, apathy, laziness. I mean, there can be a list of things that are draws to your flesh. The flesh can mean body, but when the Bible uses flesh in this way it's talking about that unredeemed part of you that still has a desire for sin. You still desire things

Jesus says no to, and we're called to war against them. We're called to abstain from them. How do we do this? Some of you're in this room are like, man, I want to do it. So how do we practically abstain from the passions of the flesh? I want to give six practical steps to abstain from the passions of the flesh.

1. Remember your identity.

What has Peter just told us in verses 9 and 10? Who we are in Christ. I'll just read it, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." So based on that, now he says I beg you to abstain from the passions of the flesh. He doesn't start here; he doesn't say you should avoid sin because if you do God will love you. He just gave us two chapters of the gospel—God loves you, He redeems you, He made you new people. You're not a priest; you're a Kingdom priest. You now have been brought out of darkness into light. You are this new gospel people, born again to a living hope. Now, based on that, based on who you are in Christ, abstain from the things God hates, abstain from the passions of the flesh. This is not try hard and God will love you; it's God has loved you and saved you, and because of that, now walk in His light and flee from what He calls darkness. So, remember who you are.

2. Enlist in the war.

Peter says the passions of the flesh war against your soul. Why does he tell them that? He wants them to realize there is actually a war going on. Some of you don't even know that. Some of you really believe the Christian life is you are just at peace with the world and the world is at peace with you. Everything is great and everything is cozy. What he's trying to say is if you're a Christian there is a war with sin and you, a real battle, and you have to actually know that if you're going to enlist in that and start fighting. See, some of you aren't fighting the desires of your flesh at all. You assume it's got to be good if I want it, so there's not even a battle.

You're at peace and everything is great. You have to realize there's a war and you have to enlist in it. You have to start fighting in that war.

When we go to Crossings camp, one of my favorite things to play is laser tag. It's just great. You get in this really cool environment and you get a gun, and you have a marker and they've got markers. Your marker will be green and their marker is red. The music starts playing and they say go. Here I am this 40-year-old adult who gets to go around and shoot like middle schoolers. It's just great; it's just really fun. In the game, I'm green and they are red. So clearly we have an enemy—there's opposition, we're fighting against each other. There are these things called power-ups, and in the game, your marker will get a power-up and one of the power-ups is called spy mode. When spy mode happens, my green gun turns red, and now it looks like I'm on the other team. So as soon as it turns red, I take off running towards enemy line. Do you know what they do? They welcome me as a friend. They're like, "Come on over and help us!" So I just get in there, sitting there with all these little middle schools around me. They don't know I'm opposition; they think I'm a friend, so I'm just sitting there behind them. All of a sudden, I start shooting a guy in the back, "UHH-UH-UHH-UH-UUH-UHH" and they start looking around like what's happening, "Who's shooting me?" And I'm like, "I don't know, I'm your friend!" I'm just going to town on them because it looks like I'm on their team and they don't know that I'm the enemy. They assume I'm a friend, so they just keep on turning around and I just keep shooting the guy in the back, "UH-UHH-UH-UHH." It's the best! I love spy mode; it's why I play laser tag.

You know, I think for some of us that's how passions of the flesh are. We assume, they are in us, it's what we want, it's what we desire, so it's got to be good, it's got to be right, it's got to be true. We don't realize the enemy is changing colors. Yeah, it looks like it's green, but he is not on the green team. It is an enemy, a foe who is acting like a friend who is no friend. Peter would say those passions of your flesh, not passion of the Spirit, passions of your flesh which are against Jesus, against the Word—know that that's not a friend, it's a foe. It's a war against your soul and if you don't watch it, he is going to kill you. That's why Peter is begging us to

abstain, to fight, to get in this war, because the enemy wants to kill and destroy us. We have to enlist in the war. We have to realize the opposition.

3. Minimize temptation.

I want to read from Proverbs chapter 7. It's this vivid illustration of a dad telling his sons what a fool does. Just listen to this vivid story of a man who goes to the wrong place at the wrong time and then ends up doing the wrong thing, and we can trace it and say this is what often happens to us. Verses 6–9 say, "For at the window of my house I looked out through the lattice, and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a man lacking sense, [Here is a fool. Notice what the fool does.] passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness." He's really laying it on that this guy is in not only in the wrong place but also at the wrong time. He's going down the street near her corner and it's dark. It's night. It's not the time he should be there. He is wandering towards temptation.

Now, notice what happens in verses 10–15, "And behold [like shock!], the woman meets him dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay home; now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, 'I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows; so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.'" So he's going in the wrong place, wrong time, and all of a sudden, BOOM...temptation right there. And what are her words? I just made a sacrifice, I'm all good and it's all good, and what we're going to do is good. This is a right and good thing to do and I desire it; you are special, you are unique. And then she continues...verses 16–20 say, "I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens of Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has taken a long journey; he has taken a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home." She's saying it's all good. It's going to feel good and nobody's going to find out. My husband's gone. This is a secret that no one is going to know. It's just you and me.

And then, verses 21–23 say this, “With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to slaughter, or a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.” It's this vivid picture of a fool who ends up committing sin that's going to lead him to death.

So what happened in this scenario? What did he do wrong? Well, he walked down a road that he knew was leading to a corner—he's in the wrong place at the wrong time—and then boom, temptation came and it was too much. It overcame him because temptation said all the right things...it's going to feel good, it is good, nobody's going to know, it's all secret. This is just about you, you're so unique, you're so good...and it led him to a place to do things that are going to lead him to death. So, I have to ask the question, what would a wise person do? If that's what fools do, then what would a wise person do? How could you abstain from that encounter? Well, you just reverse engineer. What did the guy do wrong? He walked down the wrong road towards the wrong corner at the wrong time of day. He let himself get as close to temptation as he could. He knows where she's at, and I'm sure he was thinking...*I can resist. I'm just going to go and see if she's still there.* And when he gets there, temptation overtakes him and he can't stand up. What *could* he have done? He could've cut off the road. He should have stayed off the road, not gone to the corner at dark, at midnight. He knew what he was doing. He was flirting with temptation. What we have to do is minimize temptation. We have to cut the roads off that lead to our temptation.

I want you to think about what the passions of your flesh are. Yours are different than mine. What are the passions of your flesh? What are those things you easily give into and easily sin? I want think about what usually happens before that. What is the corner and what's the road that you usually track down, and then when you get there, is it that certain person that you're around? Is that certain thing that you're watching? Is it a certain thing that you're reading? Is it that certain thing that you're thinking? What is the road that leads you to the corner that when temptation comes, it overcomes you? What we have to do is be wise and

to abstain from the passion of our flesh we have to cut off the road. We can't walk towards that temptation. I don't know what it is for you, maybe for you it's social media. I mean, there's some good, but if you're honest, when you get there it can lead to bad and you see things, you hear things, and you end up going to certain places. There's a whole range of different apps and different ways we interact with one another and there are ones that are a lot more toxic than others. You see that video and it leads you to this thing and...well. If you get on cable news and then you always end up sinning, always coveting, always envy, always angry, always mad, and you become mean spirited towards everybody—cut off the road! If there's a road you go down that always leads you to sin, what do you do? You cut off the road. For you, maybe it's Safari on your phone. It's instant access to everything on the internet and you always start with I'm going to look at this and look at this and look at this, and all of a sudden you're looking at *that...* What do you do? Cut off the road. "*But I've got to have the internet on my phone.*" Really? People will survive without it. We have to cut off the road, fill in whatever is tempting us, and there is a plethora of things, these are just a couple of examples. You have all sorts of different ways that you are tempted, things that draw you in. How can you separate yourself and distant yourself to say you are going to fill in that road so I stop going to that corner, because when I get there I know I cannot say no? Well, don't go to the corner and don't go down the road. Abstain because it's war and it wants to kill your soul. We have to minimize temptation.

4. Put on Jesus.

Romans 13:14 says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ." So, this is something you can do that is positive. You're going to put on the Lord Jesus. When you're pursuing Jesus, when you're walking in Jesus and He is consuming your mind, and you're worshiping Him, walking Him, and praying in Him, do you know what? It's a lot easier to say no to the passion of your flesh because you're enthralled with Him in the Spirit. So, positively you put on the Lord Jesus. Work on your relationship with Him. Pursue holiness and light and you'll find that darkness is not as attractive. So we have to put on the Lord Jesus.

5. Starve the flesh.

This is very similar we just talked about. The rest of verse 14 of Romans 13 says, "...and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." We were planting corn this week, so I was in a tractor for five days disking. Every day when I get to the tractor, I had my Yeti cooler lunchbox. I can pack whatever I want in there. I can put chips and ding dongs, soda, Mike & Ike's, whatever I want to put in there. So when I get in the tractor, that's what I have to eat all day long. Now, if I do that, I'm going to feel really terrible about 9:30 in the morning eating Skittles. What I can do is pack healthy things, like fruit and nuts and protein and water. See, when I get in the tractor, I've only got what's in the box, so I can pack my lunch to serve me or to kill me. It's my choice. What Paul is saying is put on Jesus, fill it with good stuff, and starve the flesh. Those things that your flesh wants, that's like sugar and junk food. It's sin that feeds your soul but it's leading you to death. Leave it out of the lunchbox. Don't pack your lunch, don't give yourself all the temptations and things that are so easy just to grab. No, starve your flesh. Don't have anything to grab; put on Jesus. The more you starve your flesh, the less you will desire the things that your flesh wants.

6. Walk by the Spirit

Galatians 5:16 says this, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." I think what's really key here is that when it comes to saying no to your passions of your flesh, it has to be relationship not rules. You can't just hold up rules and commandments and say, okay flesh, I'm not doing those things. It's not going to work. It's like having a fire you want to put out, and you grab the red can of gasoline and you pour it on the fire. That's not going to put it out. That's only going to make it worse. That's what rules are. That's what law is to our flesh. What we need is not gasoline; we need water. Water is relationship. Water is the Spirit of God. As we walk in the Spirit, as we pursue a relationship with the God of the universe, all of a sudden our sin is less appealing because we have something better. We have Christ. We have His Kingdom. He's the treasure of the universe. So we walk in the Spirit. We focus on the relationship.

So, the first thing we see is in the culture we live in as sojourners and exiles, we have to war against our sin. There are passions of our flesh that are not good for us, and we have to abstain from those. Then secondly, as we abstain, we should be a witness to sinners around us. Notice verse 12, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." Now he's talking about, not just their desires, but their actions. Act in an honorable way among Gentiles. That's code word for unbelievers, people who don't know the Lord. You need to act honorable among them so that when they interact with you they see who God is and that will give glory to God. So, he's dealing with our actions among unbelievers, and he says it's so that when they call you evildoers, they may see your good works and glorify God.

See, here's the reality. There are a lot of unbelievers who are going to assume you are evil. You just got to know that. Rewind to twenty-five years ago and if an unbeliever was on the side of the road, they were hoping a Christian passes by because they really hope a Christian will come and change a flat tire. Now, there are certain unbelievers that if they were on the side of the road, the last person they would want to stop is a Christian. Because they assume Christians are the worst people on the planet—they are hateful, they are narrow minded, they've got these crazy beliefs, they are harmful, they are hurtful. So in our culture, people assume that you are evil. Now, we are not at a unique spot in church history. This is kind of how it's always been. Why is Peter addressing this? Because everybody in their culture assumed Christian meant evil. If you're a Christian, you're an evil person. Well, how could that be? Well, in their culture, they were assumed to be atheist. The early Christians were called atheist. We think how could that be, they believed in God. Yeah, but they only believe in one God, the Romans believed in many gods. If you only believed in one, you might as well have believed in none, they were thought to be an atheist. So whenever Rome didn't get water, or when there was a fire, it was the Christians who didn't believe in the fire god and the water God that was the problem. They thought they were evil because they were not worshiping all the gods they were worshiping. And then, they thought they were cannibals because they eat flesh and blood (they

were not, they were doing the Lord's Supper), their reputation was they are evil. The Romans said... *We can't do things with our bodies that we want to do. When we go to worship the temple, it looks a whole lot different and a lot less clothes and they're saying that's not okay! What do you mean? See, these Christians are evil!*

See, Peter knew that the world was going to call you evil, but here's the key—when they call you evil, make sure you're not actually evil. That's the big thing I want you to take from this verse. The world is going to call you evil at some point. You will meet someone who disagrees with what you believe and what you say, and they will interpret that your belief and what you say is not just different, it's evil. When you come in contact with people who assume because you're a Christian you're evil, here's the main thing; don't actually be evil when they come in contact with you. Your reputation is you're a hateful person, so when they come in contact with you, what will they see? Will they see a person who is hateful, or will they see a person who loves them more than anybody on the planet has ever loved them? See, we have a reputation that precedes us, so when people bump into us we need to change their minds with a different perspective of what Christianity is about. It is about generosity, love, mercy, compassion, and gospel. We need to be the most loving, generous people on the planet so that when unbelievers come in contact with us, though they might hear we hate everyone, we actually love everyone more than anyone. They should see that and feel that, Peter says, "by your good deeds." It can also be translated 'beautiful' deeds.

People think we have crazy beliefs. We do. We believe a guy is going to come back on a horse and carry us off to Heaven. That's weird beliefs. We are kind of crazy people! Though we have some weird beliefs, may they see our lives and be so compelled at what we act and do that they are drawn to the gospel. What is the purpose? Peter says, "...so that they will glorify God on the day of visitation." Now, this could be on the Day of Judgment, like in the end when God comes back, those unbelievers are actually going to be in a right relationship with God so they're going to glorify Him because of our life and our witness. Or, it could be like at that moment God's going to reveal Himself and give His Holy Spirit to them

now, and they're going to live a life that glorifies God. So, what he's saying is your purpose is to live a life, a beautiful life that compels people towards the gospel, not just so they'll say, wow, you're really good, you're a great neighbor, you just mowed my yard. No, it's so they would say God is good, that God would get glory. I think this is Peter getting this from Jesus when Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light shine before men so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven." See, your good works, your generous life, your life lived correctly is to not bring glory to you it is to bring glory to God.

So, what do we do? In the moment we find ourselves in, where we are exiles and we're sojourners, what do we do when we find ourselves living in a culture that doesn't share all of the values that we have? Peter's going to say that's how it was with us, that's how it is with you, and it's probably going to be like that in the next generation because the world and Christ are always at odds with one another. Jesus said the world hated me, and they're going to hate you. It's just part of the deal. But in that moment, what do we do in response to a world that hates us? We love the world that hates us. But I'm afraid what we are doing that is so damaging as Christians is we love our sin while hating our enemies. There's nothing more damaging than that. We love our sin and hate our enemies, and what we should do is hate our sin and love our enemies. That's what Peter wants us to do. That's what the gospel compels us to do. And that's how we, as people, as we war against sin and we witness to sinners, we live a life where we are hating our sin and we are loving our enemies in a way that shows the glory of God to people around us. They might not agree with us, but they can't disagree with the way we love them, and are for them, and go after them, and serve them. They are compelled by our love. As was the early church, who when they got burn at the stake for being atheist, they prayed for the people that were setting them on fire. Do you know what that did to Rome? It turned it upside down, because the Romans who hated them couldn't get over their lives. Their lives compelled them to see that what they were saying about Christ and His death and His resurrection was true. It's all true...and it changed their world.

So, I get that song. It makes sense. And do you know what? If I'm honest, I'm right there with Blake. I would love a culture and a world that agrees with everything I agree with. That would be great but that's not how life is. And honestly, that's not how it's ever been. There's always been opposition. So, what do we do in this moment? We war against our sin, and by our lives, we witness to sinners around us.