

A Snapshot of Strangeness

1 Peter 1:17-21

I. Scripture reading: 1 Peter 2

II. Review: This is now our third week of studying the reality of our being strangers in the world who are to live our lives as strangers here in reverent fear. A few weeks ago, in the message entitled “Redeemed Strangers”, we explored the impartial judgment of God which compels us to live like strangers here in reverent fear. Last week, in the message entitled “Just Call Me Rahab”, we explored the living parable of Rahab of Jericho, whose story shows us the difficulty and importance of choosing to be strangers in our familiar world. We found that the choice she made is the same choice we must make: salvation as a citizen of God’s unfamiliar kingdom or destruction as a citizen of this familiar world kingdom. She chose life and deliverance, and so must we.

III. A Snapshot of Strangeness: This morning we want to go from theory to practical obedience. What does it look like to live like strangers on this earth, in our society, within our culture?

IV. “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near!” This announcement by John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah marks the beginning of our strangeness. The call to repent because of the invading kingdom reality marks the beginning of the end of our relationship with the world. As soon as we hear the call to repent, if we have faith and humble obedience, then we will indeed repent (change our minds) and turn toward God’s ways. The primary decision to be strangers occurs here.

V. Jesus: Deciding to be estranged from the world and be united to God in Christ is one thing, but then that decision must be fleshed out in everyday living. We don’t live in the waters of baptism or in the perpetual company of our church family, so we must learn to *live as strangers*. If anyone is unclear about what it means to so live, let me offer a simple but full answer: Jesus. Just as we must look to Him in order to understand what holiness looks like, so we must look only to him to discover how strange living is meant to look.

Peter gives us some very clear examples of what strange living does not look like [1:14; 2:1; 2:24; 3:9; 4:2-4]. But we must also look *On The Positive Side* of things. Living as strangers is not just a matter of NOT doing what is evil, it is also a matter of doing what is good and right. All throughout this letter, we find that Peter is passing on the call to actively love which Jesus, His Master, issued (e.g. “be holy,” “love one another deeply”, “crave pure spiritual milk”, “submit”, “live such good lives among the pagans”, etc.).

VI. “You are the Light of the World”: Jesus is right, of course. We are the light of the world, just as He was the light while he was in the world. How can we be the light to this dark world if we are living darkly? The only way to be the light is to turn our backs on the dark and evil things and embrace the loving things of the kingdom of God. Now, let’s go live some strangely normal lives!