

# Sojourners and Pilgrims

by Erlo Stegen

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*As sojourners and pilgrims in this world, we must depart from fleshly lusts and live honest lives, doing good works, to glorify God in the day of visitation.*

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 2:9

**Topics:** "Christian Identity", "Living for Eternity"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes that as Christians, we are sojourners and pilgrims in this world, called to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against our souls. He reminds us that our true citizenship is in heaven, and we should not become too attached to worldly possessions or comforts, as life is fleeting. Stegen illustrates this with examples from the lives of Martin Luther and Abraham, who both recognized the importance of living for eternity rather than earthly gains. He warns against the destructive nature of fleshly desires and encourages believers to live righteously, demonstrating good works that glorify God. Ultimately, he calls for preparation for the day of visitation when we will stand before God and give account of our lives.

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## Transcript

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10).

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1Peter 2:11-12).

These words contain so much that we can only touch on these points.

The text starts with "my beloved". Why are they "beloved"? In v. 9 we read "but you are a chosen generation". What kind of people were these?

God is speaking to us, as sojourners and pilgrims, "to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul".

A sojourner is not a citizen, and doesn't have a permanent abode. So we are sojourners and pilgrims in this world.

Satan is called the ruler of this world.

It's through sin that we have been displaced and have become strangers on the earth.

By God's grace, being born again we've been taken out of the kingdom of satan and darkness and have been translated into His kingdom of light.

Our life is 70 or 80 years, if we are strong, according to the Bible. Life is short and fleeting. The older you get, the more one realises how short life is.

What is the life of a stranger like? Such a person doesn't have his own home. He is just a traveller. He is there on a temporary basis, and maybe works and is faithful. He might enjoy his work, or maybe he doesn't enjoy it. But then the time comes that he has to stop working. Maybe he loses his job, or something else happens. He might rent a house in that place and stay there for a while, but he doesn't have any property there he can call his own.

Even if we have our own homes, we stay strangers. Never forget this. Never put your roots down to settle. You might even have a comfortable lifestyle with a beautiful car, but that very car could be your grave.

Even if God has blessed you richly, you still need to remember that you are just a pilgrim and stranger in this world.

You may say that you have everything you need in this life, wife and children, beautiful house and car; but remember always that there is a day God only knows, that you will have to part with all of these things and stand before God and give account to Him of your life.

Martin Luther was an intellectual, and studied law to become a judge. He was from a poor family, so his parents were happy that he studied to become a judge. Sometimes he would be hungry and go out on the street, play with his instrument and so earn a little money for food. Once he was travelling, and lightning struck a tree they were passing under and his friend was killed. He was shocked, and realised how fleeting life was. So he decided to become a priest. Becoming a priest was despised by many, but he decided to do it when he realised how short life was. So he said he would rather live this life in preparation for eternity. When his father heard he wanted to become a priest he was angry, but Luther did not change his mind.

Those who are not citizens of heaven fear death. But a true Christian look forward to the day he will meet his Lord and go to his eternal home.

Abraham was an extremely wealthy man, but he never built himself a house, but lived in tents. He looked forward to that city whose maker and builder is God Himself. So he kept reminding himself of that fact that he was just a stranger and pilgrim in this world.

If we look at the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man had nothing to look forward to.

Now God says to us who are citizens of heaven, "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul".

Fleshly lusts destroy the body. But they don't just destroy the body but also the soul. The soul is worth much more than the body. If your body is sick you try and get help and take medicine to get well again. But your soul is worth much more than your body. You should take better care of your soul than of your body.

So the lusts of the flesh don't just destroy the body, but war against the soul to destroy it.

The lusts of the flesh are immorality. You may have your own wife, yet lust after other women, and even other depraved practices - it destroys your body and soul.

Another lust of the flesh is the tongue, which speak rotten things. These things have a terrible smell.

It could also be music that is not from God that destroy the soul.

You've heard of the value of the soul. Yet some go about with it recklessly.

Children are born out of wedlock, and often the mothers of these children don't want them, abort them, dump them or give them up for adoption. They act worse than animals, because with animals the mother will still look after and care for the young.

The characteristics of the soul is your mind, will, feelings and desires, and knowledge.

Another lust of the flesh is the lust after alcohol and drugs, where such a person would even go without food to get drugs and alcohol. A certain white alcoholic boasted that he had seven farms and all of them he poured down his throat through alcohol.

These lusts of alcohol, drugs, smoking, immorality etc binds a person so that such a person cannot even sleep at night until he has fulfilled that lust.

So we pilgrims in this world must depart from these lusts of the flesh.

Another lust of the flesh is anger and fighting, always being at odds with everyone around you, so much so that others avoid you, unless they are also given to this lust. Then they will also fight with you.

So depart from evil and overcome evil with good. When others speak evil of you do not revile back but bless and do good to them so that whereas they speak evil of you, their mouths will be stopped when they see your good works.

Look at Jesus on the cross. See how He bore the mocking and injustices patiently, so that the one thief on the cross who also mocked Jesus, changed and repented and begged Jesus to remember him when He entered His kingdom.

Paul said that, that which was gain to him he counted loss for the sake of Christ. He was an exemplary Jew, yet he counted it as nothing compared to the glory of knowing Christ, and his only aim was to lay hold of Christ and know Him.

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12).

This day of visitation is coming on every one of us. Let us be prepared.

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