

Theme: Faith in Exile – I Peter 1:17-19

Title: Therefore – I Peter 1:13-16

Aim: Consider what the “therefore” is there for.

Intro: Therefore is an interesting word. The dictionary defines it simply as “for that reason” or “consequently.” The word always comes after a statement of fact & before an exhortation or reasoning of what should follow said fact. For instance, we could say, “Worshipping God is important for the believer; THEREFORE every believer should be a worshiper of God.” I’m sure you’ve heard it said that whenever you read/hear a “therefore” you should always ask, “What’s the THEREFORE there for?” That’s an important practice when reading/studying Scripture. Theme: Faith in exile. We who are believers are exiles in this world that’s not our own. How should we live as exiles in this world? Text: I Peter 1:13-16 [READ] We notice right away that this passage begins w/the word THEREFORE. So we have to ask right away to what is the THEREFORE referring? We know as we have noted before that Peter is writing to exiled Jewish Christians dispersed by persecution throughout Asia Minor. But Peter reminded them they were not forsaken by God. He was their Father, had given them His Spirit & had called them to obedience to Jesus Christ their living Lord. God had caused them to be “born again to a living hope.” Tho they were exiles they had an imperishable, undefiled & unfading inheritance, secured by God in heaven, just as He was guarding them thru their faith for eternal salvation. Yes, they were being “grieved by various trials,” but they could rejoice even in those trials, knowing that God was at work in them to refine & prove their faith as genuine, knowing that He will be glorified by their faith & they would share in His glory. They had never seen Christ, but loved Him who 1st loved them. They could not visibly see Him in their present lives/situations, but they believed & could rejoice w/joy, knowing it will be worth it all when they would

indeed see Jesus. This salvation caused the prophets to inquire, was announced to them by the Holy Spirit through the apostles & piqued the angels' curiosity. They were exiles, yes; their being in exile was grievously difficult, yes; but they were children of God w/God on their side, the Holy Spirit w/in, Jesus as their Lord & Captain & a sure hope. Someone said just this week, "You know, I never really thought about being an exile." I would have to agree. For most of my life as a Christian I have not really thought of myself in this way. But I believe God wants us to think this way. We are exiles, dispersed by God into this part of the world, just as other believers are dispersed by God throughout the world. But we have hope; we have God! THEREFORE! How should we then live? In the rest of this epistle (& the 2nd epistle & John's 1st epistle) we believe that question is addressed. I) **Prepare your minds for action**. Remember when teachers used to say, "Put on your thinking caps," especially when there was a pop quiz or major test? I actually used to hate that but that's just what Peter is saying here. "Think about these truths & think about how you need to live." In the Greek this phrase is literally, "Gird up the loins of your mind." In Peter's day the men wore cloaks – outer robes, if you will. If they needed to run, they would have to gather up their cloaks & tuck them into their belts to free their legs for running. Peter is saying, "prepare mentally for what you need to do." Think about it! In doing so, they were to be "sober-minded." That doesn't mean being somber or cast down, but "calm & collected in spirit; temperate, dispassionate, circumspect. I think it means seeing things the way they really are. "Yes you are exiles, but you are God's children. Yes, you are persecuted, but you have a sure hope & inheritance. Don't give up, but press on in Christ. God is w/us & we have a life to live; we have a work to do. Let's get to it!" Every sin in our lives but also every act of service to God begins in the mind. What are we thinking? Paul gave this exhortation in Philippians 4:8 – "**Finally,**

brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” Then he said, “Whatever you’ve been taught by me, put those things in practice.” What that says to me is that we can, by the Holy Spirit’s enabling, set our minds on right things & prepare to do what we should. II) **Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.** Not only can we set our minds on right things but we can also set our hope on Christ. I think what this means is that we can & should remember who we are in Christ & what we have in Christ & what awaits us in Christ & live out of that perspective. We have grace now – Romans 5:2 – ***“Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand...”*** & grace for the future: ***“...and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*** All of God’s movement toward His children is an act of grace/favor. And the grace that awaits us in Christ is the greatest grace – His favor & presence forever. That being so, we ought not “be conformed to the passions of [our] former ignorance.” We’re not who we used to be; therefore we should not live like we used to live. God calls us higher, to be more like Christ. We represent Him. Rather, Peter urged his readers III) **Be holy in all your conduct.** The aim of our lives should be not to be better than those around us – family, neighbor, co-workers. As I recently read, the aim is not to be better (think ourselves better) but different. We should compare ourselves to God. He’s the standard. As He is holy, so we’re to be holy. That’s impossible, you say. Well, we need to understand 2 things: the meaning of holiness & the provision of God. The primary meaning of holy is set apart/other. God is set apart from all His creation. There is none like Him. He is set apart, transcendent in every way, including righteousness. God is perfectly righteous. As God’s redeemed children we have been set apart by God

for Himself, & we must, in thinking & practice, set ourselves apart unto God. As far as righteous conduct, God has made 2 vital provisions. We are justified by faith in Christ – considered & declared by God to be not guilty, because Jesus paid for our sin, & righteous in His sight because He credits us w/the righteousness of Christ. Then He has given us His Holy Spirit to be w/in us to work in us to make us, little by little, line upon line, more like Christ. This is a process which will continue until Jesus comes & completes the task. What Peter was saying to these exiles & what God thru Peter is saying to us today is that we who are believers, followers of Christ, exiles in this world, are to cooperate w/the Holy Spirit working in us. Instead of looking at others & thinking, “I’m better than you,” we should look to Jesus, yield to the Spirit & live differently. We won’t have to say to others, “look at me.” Others will see the difference Jesus makes & be drawn to Him. Prepare your minds for action, set your hope on God & His grace, set yourself apart for God as He has set you apart for Himself. That will take faith – faith in exile.