

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

Title: Pedigree w/a Purpose – I Peter 2:9-12

Aim: Understanding who we are in Christ & what we are to do.

Intro: The Bible clearly tells us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. Pride is a sin that leads to downfall – so says the Proverbs: ***“Pride goes before destruction, & a haughty spirit before a fall”*** (16:18). We are to live humble lives, acknowledging our need of God & a Savior, confessing our sins & weakness & put others 1st. But at the same time, the Bible also urges those who are Christian, followers of Christ, to recognize who we are in Christ. The truth is, if we are in Christ by faith, we have quite a remarkable pedigree. Pedigree = “the background or history of a person or thing (often a pet), especially as conferring distinction or quality.” It is the “recorded ancestry, especially upper-class ancestry, of a person or family,” (or again, a pet). I am reportedly a descendant of Pocahontas’ uncle, so I do expect you to bow in my presence. But seriously, Christians have quite the pedigree (all because of Jesus) & God wants us to know it & live out of that knowledge. Theme: Faith in exile. We Christians, just like those to whom Peter wrote his epistles, are exiles in a world that’s not our home. We have pedigree which gives us purpose which calls us to purity. I Peter 2:9-12 [READ]. Having emphasized to them that they were living stones – building blocks for God’s house – aligned w/Christ the cornerstone, Peter reminded these exiles that those who reject that cornerstone (as they were being urged to do by their difficult circumstances & false teachers) will be put to shame in judgment, crushed by the One over which they stumbled. But then he said, in essence, “That’s not you!” Then he reminded them of I) **The pedigree of God’s People**. If we are in Christ, the same pedigree is ours. However, I can imagine that those exiles might have felt like nobodies, people w/out a country or identity. Maybe you think the same way –

nothing, nobody, insignificant. Peter was saying, "That's just not so!" **"You are a chosen race."** Those exiles had lost their Jewish identity because of their faith in Christ. Were they part of the "chosen ones" anymore? Yes! All who are in Christ are a chosen race – Jews & Gentiles together, a new race of all colors & ethnicities belonging to God. We belong to Him; we belong together. **"A royal priesthood."** Royalty! King's kids! A kingdom of priests! We talked about this last week, but if we are in Christ, we don't need anyone other than Him to be mediator between us & God. We, like the priests of old can enter the Holy Place & more than them the Most Holy Place. We can & are encouraged to enter into God's very presence at any time, at all times, to commune w/Him & call upon Him. We are washed in the blood & covered by the righteous robe of Christ. **"A holy nation..."** A nation set apart by God for Himself. **"A people for His own possession..."** God's plan all along was to have a people of His own, who would receive His love & love Him back. Just as He made the Jewish nation out of 70 who went to Egypt, & brought them out & gave them the Promised Land, so God has made a new nation of the Church & made us His own through the ransom price of the blood of Christ. "We are His people, the chosen of the Lord." He has **"brought us out of darkness"** (of ignorance & enslavement to sin) **"into His marvelous light."** That word "marvelous" means "passing human comprehension, causing amazement, extraordinary." How can it be that God would bring us out of slavery to sin & into the Sonlight of His love?! We who "once...not a people" – scattered w/out purpose; but now we "are God's people." **"Once [we] had not received mercy"** – w/no hope of escaping the wrath of God we deserve; **"but now [we] have received mercy."** II) **The purpose of God's People** – the same purpose those to whom Peter wrote had – **"That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."** The reason God has us where we are is so we can talk about Him

to those around us & point others to Him. We are Christ's ambassadors, sent to represent Him before the world. To proclaim is to "show forth, tell forth, declare abroad, make known by praising or proclaiming, to celebrate." The praise of God should always be on our lips. Telling about His excellence should flow from our mouths. The wonder & blessing of the gospel should be on the tips of our tongues, ever ready to share. Think about that! I confess I'm not always ready to tell of His excellencies. I'm too often caught up in my own selfish plans/thoughts. But as we go about our daily lives – work, school, store, neighborhood, we must remember who we are & who we represent & be ready to talk about our Lord, whom others desperately need. III) **Of necessity, our purpose in Christ comes w/a call to purity.** When we were in Israel last year, we were told a few times to be on our best behavior, remembering that we represented BICS & more so, Jesus. As "sojourners & exiles" we need to pay attention to our walk & not be given over to "passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." Whether we realize it or not, people are always watching us, especially as we name the name of Jesus. People expect (sometimes unrealistic expectations) us to be different. Certainly the enemy of God & of our souls wants to destroy our witness & cause others to stumble over failings. Purity is, in essence, single-mindedness. Our focus is to be on Christ & our unwavering commitment is to be to Christ, so that others will see His worth. Our conduct (manner of life) is to be honorable, so that even tho others may speak against us, they will find no fault w/our Christ. May others see the difference Christ has made in our lives, even tho we are not perfect. Who can argue w/genuine love? Integrity & consistency? Who can argue w/good deeds done in the name of Jesus? The aim of our Christian lives is to glorify God by pointing as many as we can to Him & living in such a way that others will glorify God "***on the day of visitation.***" I think what Peter means by "day of visitation" is the

day when Christ returns, when God makes known those who are His. God will be glorified by all on that day, but how much more He will be glorified by those who are His on that day, those who were drawn to Christ by what they saw in & heard from us. Yes, if we are in Christ we have a remarkable pedigree. But you must be in Christ. Come to Him today! Our remarkable pedigree comes w/a purpose – to be an ambassador for Christ, living our lives so that others will see Him in us & be drawn to Him. That purpose comes w/responsibility – to live (by the Holy Spirit's enabling) Christ-like lives that will enhance our witness, not deter from it. All of this requires faith – faith in exile.