

EXILES

"Reason For Hope"

Sermon Recap

In this sixth message of the "Exiles" series, drawing from 1 Peter 3:8-22, Pastor Jared calls believers to embrace a countercultural life, marked by unity, humility, compassion, and a refusal to repay evil for evil. He emphasizes that as exiles in this world, our faith journey involves learning to stand firm not because life is easy, but because God is good. The central invitation is to continually ask, "Jesus, what's the one step you're asking me to take?" and "What's the one room today that I've been holding onto that I've been trying to control?"

This countercultural living begins with a commitment to unity and empathy, being like-minded in the gospel, sympathetic to others, and loving one another as family. A key component is **humility**, which Peter illustrates by urging us not to repay evil with evil or insult with insult. Instead, we are called to bless, following the example of Jesus who, though in the very nature of God, humbled Himself, taking the nature of a servant (Philippians 2). This humility means releasing our grip on control—whether of our reputation, career, relationships, or circumstances—and trusting in God's sovereignty. To hold onto control, the sermon explains, is to implicitly say, "God, I don't trust you." Making Jesus the Lord of every area of our lives, giving Him access to every "room of our heart," is the journey of spiritual growth and sanctification.

The sermon directly addresses the reality of **suffering**, acknowledging its various sources: our own sin, the sin of others, or simply living in a broken world. Regardless of the cause, Peter assures us that if we suffer for doing what is right, God sees us (Psalm 34:12) and will reward us. Our response to suffering, when marked by trust in God's sovereignty and a willingness to "play the long game," will cause an unbelieving world to take notice and ask questions.

This leads to the call for **brokenhearted boldness** (1 Peter 3:15-16). We must be ready to explain the hope we have with gentleness and respect. This isn't about having all the answers or winning debates, but about how our lives—especially how we handle pain and disappointment—bear witness to Christ. "Brokenhearted boldness" means being deeply grieved by the condition of sin in the world, yet boldly communicating that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. It's about maintaining the tension between grace and truth, remembering that Jesus loved first, then led.

Ultimately, our ability to stand firm in the face of suffering and live this countercultural life is grounded in **Christ's victory**. Jesus Himself suffered for our sins once for all time, dying for sinners to bring us safely home to God, and was victoriously raised to life in the Spirit. His triumph over the grave means we can have new life and stand firm, knowing that He has conquered. As a tangible next step of obedience and public declaration of faith, the sermon

encourages believers to be baptized—an outward expression of an inward commitment, identifying with Christ's death and resurrection.

We don't stand firm because life is good. We stand firm because God is good.

Discussion Questions

Releasing Control to God

Pastor Jared highlighted that our natural tendency to control circumstances or our reputation can reveal a deeper issue of not fully trusting God's sovereignty. What specific area of your life are you currently holding onto with a 'death grip,' and how might actively releasing this to God demonstrate your trust in His ability to defend and work on your behalf, as Peter encourages?

Suffering as a Witness

The sermon emphasized that how we respond to suffering, whether from our own sin, others' sin, or a fallen world, can prompt unbelievers to ask about our hope. Reflect on a time you faced suffering; how did your faith sustain you, and how would you articulate the 'hope that you have at the ready' (1 Peter 3:15) to someone observing your life with 'gentleness and respect'?

Countercultural Response to Evil

Peter calls us to a countercultural response: to 'not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but on the contrary, repay evil with blessing' (1 Peter 3:9). In what situations do you find it most challenging to adopt this Christ-like posture, and what practical steps can you take to respond with 'gentleness and respect' even when wronged, modeling Jesus' example?

Making Jesus Lord of Every 'Room'

The analogy of Jesus wanting access to every 'room of your heart' for renovation illustrates the journey of sanctification, making Him Lord of every area of your life. What specific 'room' or area of your life do you sense Jesus is currently inviting you to yield more fully to His lordship, and what 'one step' is He asking you to take in that area this week?

Prayer

- May we willingly release our grip on areas we try to control, trusting in God's perfect sovereignty and allowing Him to defend and guide our lives.
- May our response to suffering and unfairness be marked by a firm hope in God's goodness, enabling us to share our faith with gentleness and respect, and drawing others to inquire about the difference Christ makes.

- May we cultivate the countercultural humility of Christ, willingly placing ourselves under God's will and modeling His example in our relationships and responses to life's challenges.
- May we embody brokenhearted boldness, speaking truth about Jesus with clarity and compassion, always extending the same grace we have received, for the eternal good of others.