

Family TableTalk

Conversation 18

Living as an Alien and a Stranger: Weird or Godly?

read

Hebrews 11:13

think

They were discouraged, distraught, and on the verge of despair. That explains why this unidentified author penned the book of Hebrews as a sermon to exhort his brothers and sisters in Christ. To encourage his flock, this 'preacher' parades members of the Gallery of Faith, culminating with the perfect faith keeper, Jesus Christ, who endured the excruciating pain of crucifixion (Heb 11:1-12:3). After commending the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, the preacher writes, "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were *aliens and strangers* on earth" (Heb 11:13).

"Aliens" and "strangers" -- while they may appear to be the same -- are not. To live as an "alien" -- for the Christian -- means having no other allegiances but to God alone. And identifying as a "stranger" means exemplary virtuous living. Living as an alien and a stranger are signposts of the godly life. Abraham and the others lived as aliens and strangers because they trusted our God who made and kept promises. For Abraham, God promised a son, and Isaac was born. God promised Father Abraham that he would birth innumerable descendants (Gen 13:16). However, Abraham did not witness the fulfillment of this promise, but we have. We, and countless others, are Abraham's descendants (Rom 4). God is worthy of our trust, our praise, and our commitment to live as aliens and strangers.

apply

- Which of God's promises are you leaning on during this pandemic?
- We are prone to wander away from God and pledge our allegiance to other foreign deities (or idols). Name and discuss ways to demolish and bury these idols.
- What are you doing to cultivate Christian virtues such as love for God and love for neighbor?

pray

Dear Lord, we love you. Abraham and the others lived faithfully because God is trustworthy. Father Abraham and the others lived as aliens and strangers because they were sold out to God. Lord, help us, by your Spirit, to live faithfully unto death. Lord, help us, by your Spirit, to live faithfully as aliens and strangers now as we await the new heavenly city. And Lord, help us, by your Spirit, to bring what will be true of our everyday reality in the new heavenly city into the present. In Jesus' sweet, powerful, and majestic name, we pray, Amen.

by Luke Bobo

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