



**A PLAN A PERSON
IN A PLAN B WORLD**

1 Peter 3:8-22

Pastor Mike Chapman

Peter wrote his letters to small churches scattered throughout the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago. They were massively outnumbered and facing hostility because they followed Jesus. They did not seem to have any potential to engage and shape the secular/pagan culture around them.

Sociologist Rodney Stark has written a book called **The Rise of Christianity**. Its subtitle is *How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*. This is an important question for those of us who follow Christ in the 21st Century. How do we not only live in an increasing hostile culture but actually think about transforming it?

HOW SHOULD WE INTERACT WITH THE WORLD?

Christians typically think about this in two ways:

1. **Withdraw**
2. **Accommodate**

Peter offers another view:

Engage in a positive way.

1 Peter 3:8, *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.* (NIV)

1 Peter 3:14-15, But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (NIV)

The words of Jeremiah to his people in exile are good words to us.

Psalm 137:1-4, Beside the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept as we thought of Jerusalem. We put away our harps, hanging them on the branches of poplar trees. For our captors demanded a song from us. Our tormentors insisted on a joyful hymn: "Sing us one of those songs of Jerusalem!" But how can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a pagan land? (NLT)

Jeremiah 29:5-7, Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare. (NLT)

ARE WE PREPARED FOR THE COST?

If you do not withdraw and do not assimilate, it's likely to **cost** you.

In verse 14, Peter says that it will be likely that you may "suffer for what is right."

In verse 16, he writes about "those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ."

Jesus spoke of the two responses to our living as Plan A People in a Plan B World

Matthew 5:16, They will see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven. (NIV)

Matthew 5:11, They will persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. (NIV)

To live this way, the church must stop being a building where we **gather** and be a true **community** of faith.

1 Peter 3:8, All of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. (NLT)

Philippians 2:14, Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night. (Msg)