

A Life Without Jesus is a Wasted Life

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[0:00] 1 Peter 4, verse 1, the Bible says this, And we're going to get into that because sometimes you're like, Peter, what in the world are you talking about?

He says in verse 4, Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excessive riots speaking evil of you. Who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead?

For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to the men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

And verse 7 is not really part of our text, but it kind of ties in. He says this in verse 7, But the end of all things is at hand. Be there sober and watch unto prayer. So Peter is just reminding them, hey, we're moving towards the end.

Sometimes in life, and maybe you've been there, there's been weeks and there's been days, there's been hours where it feels like this is never going to end. Anybody else ever been there? It's like when you were in school. You remember maybe you did this little trick? I'm not going to look at the clock for the next 20 minutes.

[1:33] Because you're trying to make it to the end of school, and you feel like you're looking down for an hour, and you look up, it's been three minutes. Sometimes that's how life feels. But Peter's reminding us over and over, life's hard, but we are moving towards a time we're going to see Jesus.

And all the things we're living for, while we may be ridiculed for it now, that's kind of what he's saying, it's going to be worth it all when we see Jesus Christ. So I want to preach a message entitled this tonight to help us. Life without Jesus is a wasted life.

Life without Jesus is a wasted life. So let's go to him in prayer and ask him to help us this evening. Father, thank you so much for the wonderful time to be in your house again, and just the absolute privilege it is to open your word.

Lord, I'm so thankful that you use men like Peter, and we see even the transformation in his life from a fisherman to just an apostle, and how even his writings from so long ago still speak to us today.

And we're thankful the word of God still speaks, that it's alive. It's not an old antique book. No, it's a timeless book that we can apply. Lord, I pray you would help us tonight as we look at some difficult verses again, but some very helpful verses.

[2:41] I pray you'd give me clarity and just the ability to explain, and I pray you would allow the Holy Spirit just to speak to our hearts, that we would respond, and we ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Thank you so much for standing. May be seated. Speaking of time moving fast, there's moments in life, you know, when you're younger, you feel like it's never going to get here.

I remember praying all the time, and we'd hear a message about the Lord coming back, and I'm a teenager, and I'd be like, man, I really want the Lord to come back, and then I'd pray real quietly after I get my driver's license. You know, there's just things you want to do when you're younger. You're like, if I can just get a driver's license, that would be really cool, and then the Lord can come back. But then there's moments as you get a little bit older, you realize, man, life is moving super fast. That as a teenager, it may have felt like it's 10 years until I get that, but it's going to get here. And I'm kind of there right now as I get a little bit older, and now I have one almost about to drive, and all of these things coming down there, and I kind of look back and think, how did we get here? How did it get here so fast?

[3:46] And the older you get, the more you realize that you cannot get back yesterday. You can't relive it. You cannot rewrite it. And you really cannot recover the time that has already passed.

But really the idea and the thought that Peter wants to bring to the forefront of our minds this evening is why we may not be able to get some of the past back. And there's things in the past that we wish we would have never done, maybe decisions we wish we would have never made, and we'd love to go back and kind of rewrite those chapters of our life.

And he says, listen, that's gone. But what you can do is you can decide what you're going to do with the rest of the time that you have and how you're going to live your life from this point forward.

And that's really the question is, what am I going to do with the rest of my life? Because maybe even this week didn't go well, but the wonderful thing is we're here tonight and we have another day, and Lord willing we'll have another day tomorrow to serve him.

And just to give us a little bit of recap, Peter has just shown us from last week the victory of Jesus Christ. Because he's writing to these believers that are struggling and life is beating them down and persecution is a real thing and suffering is something they're facing maybe every single day.

[4:57] But he says, listen, suffering doesn't have the last word. Jesus Christ suffered, but he suffered for our sins, but he's not in the grave anymore. But he bore those sins on the cross and they buried him there.

But the third day he rose and he didn't just stand outside of the grave. No, he ascended and he's at the right hand of the Father to this day. And he reigns over all. And he's writing that truth to the believers to say, listen, just be reminded what Christ has done.

But what he wants to do and what he takes him here in chapter 4 is he's saying, don't just focus on what Christ has done for you. That's wonderful, but it also should change how you live your life today.

Really the big idea of our text this evening is because you belong to Jesus, if you know him as your savior, the rest of your life should be lived for the will of God.

That's really what he's wanting us to see. So the question is, if you're taking notes, here's what we're going to answer. How should following Jesus change the way that I spend the rest of my life? How should following Jesus change the way I spend the rest of my life?

[6:02] And see, the first thing I think Peter wants us to see in verse number 1 is this. He begins with our attitude towards sin. Because we belong to Jesus, we are finished living for sin.

It is no longer our master. Verse number 1, I think we've seen this in Peter's little epistle here, is he keeps coming back to one thing over and over and over again, Jesus Christ.

He's wanting us to get our eyes off of life and the world and the difficulties, not to pretend like they're not there. He's not saying, hey, be an ostrich and bury your head in the sand. But he's saying, listen, these are reality.

But the way you're going to make it through is to focus on Christ and to remember what he's done. And we looked at that last week in verse number 18 of chapter 3, where he says, For Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

And so he's there and he's reminding us the same way just a few verses later. That Jesus didn't accidentally stumble into suffering. That the cross was not something that caught him by surprise.

[7:18] That he willingly embraced it. He did it in obedience to his Father. He did it, the Bible tells us in Hebrews, for the joy that was set before him. Part of that joy is this, us.

Living with him in perfect fellowship, the way that it was designed, the way that it was in the garden before sin entered in the world. And Peter is kind of bringing them to this realization once again.

I want you to arm yourself with that same mind. With that same attitude. When we look at suffering, we can look at it differently because Jesus is victorious.

Because he's already conquered the greatest thing that we're going to face when it comes to death. And that phrase, arm yourselves, I think probably maybe when you read it as well, it's a strong statement.

And it has the idea of preparing yourself for battle. We're not to just kind of walk through life thinking, well, whatever happens, happens. Sometimes we live that way.

[8:20] And I'm sure if you've lived that way and maybe decided, you know, I'll just decide when it happens. Generally doesn't go too well. You know, winging it is not really what God has called us to do. I mean, a soldier doesn't wait until the enemy prepares and says, oh, there's the enemy.

Let me get dressed and get my gun out. That's not how it happens. No, when you sign up in the military, they send you to boot camp and they do all this. And they train you way before you ever see a battle. So when the battle comes, you're prepared for it.

The soldier is ready to fight. What Peter is saying here in this opening verse of chapter 4 is that Christians need to have the same type of settled determination in their life.

That we know it's coming. We know the battle is here. We know it's going to be difficult, but we shouldn't be caught off guard by it. And the thing that kind of stuck out to me when I was looking at this verse initially is Peter doesn't address their circumstances.

If you've kind of noticed here in this book, he's writing it because of their circumstances, but he's never really addressing the circumstance. He's not saying, hey, hone in on all the problems in your life. No, he's saying this, hone in on Jesus.

[9:29] But one way that we do that is instead of worrying about circumstances, we worry about our mind. He begins there. See, following Jesus is going to require a mind that's already decided before the battle comes, I would rather suffer for obeying Christ than return to a life where it just was easy and maybe full of sin.

Because the reality is, is sometimes we're going to look at our life and we're going to try really hard and we're going to try to do what the Bible says and we're going to come to church and we think to ourselves, Lord, I'm doing all these things and life is still really hard.

And I got that coworker or I got that family member and I got that friend that cares nothing about God. They're living like the devil and it just seems like life's good. And sometimes we're going to get in our mind and in our life thinking, you know what, if I'm going to do all this and nothing's going to happen, I might as well just go do whatever I want to do.

And Peter says, you got to prepare way before that time comes because that's exactly how the devil works. He said, well, if the Lord really loved you, why would he let that happen? If the Lord really loved you, why would he lay you off?

If the Lord really loved you, then why would that health scare come up and all these things? You might as well just have fun because your time's real short. And Peter says, no, no, no, no, no. I want to remind you that you're living for much more than just today and tomorrow and a fun time next week.

[10:48] See, long before obedience shows up in our actions, it has to be a settled conviction in our heart and in our mind. That's why Paul tells us in the book of Romans that we're not to be conformed to this world.

How do we avoid that? By the transforming of our mind. By the renewing of our mind. Brother Colin preached a really great message about that about a month ago and just winning the battle within. It doesn't start with all these other things.

It starts with settled on the truth of the word of God. Because there's just things in life that you have to decide before the pressure comes. You can't say, well, when the temptation comes, I'll be ready. Well, if you're not preparing for it, you're not going to be ready for it. Because it's going to look nice. It's going to look fun. I mean, the Bible says that sin is pleasurable for a season. I mean, our flesh is bent towards that.

And if we're not prepared for the temptation, we're probably going to succumb to it. And if we wait until obedience becomes costly to decide whether following Christ is worth it, we're not ready for that.

[11:45] Because it's not going to feel like it's worth what we're being asked. And so Peter tells us here at the end of verse number one, he gives us a little phrase that can kind of be weird at first, kind of like we looked at last week when he said, baptism saves you, which it doesn't.

We parse that out a little bit. But he says this, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. I wish that when you got saved, when you trusted Christ as your Savior, you didn't deal with sin anymore.

And maybe, I don't know where you were when you came to Christ, but maybe you weren't super, super knowledgeable in the Word of God, but you knew this, that you were a sinner and Jesus died for you. You said, I want that and you trusted Him. And then you went out the next day and you realized, I still sin.

And it kind of shocked you. You're like, did I do something wrong? Did I mess up? He's not saying here, he certainly does not mean that once a Christian can reach a place of sinless perfection.

There are people that believe that. People that believe, and I'm not really sure where they get it in the Word of God, but you just start being really good and you just get to a place where you don't sin anymore. That is not what Peter is saying. But he isn't saying that once you suffer for Jesus, then as long as you put in the time, then everything's going to be good.

[13:03] That's not the idea. The rest of Scripture, and I would imagine your own experience, makes that really, really evident in your life. But see, here's what Peter is describing.

He's describing a divisive break with the rule of sin in your life. Here's the thought. Before you knew Christ as your Savior, you just lived life however you wanted to live it.

If you wanted to do that, you did that. If it felt good, sure, let's try that. Everybody else doing it, no big deal. There was nothing kind of restraining, but when a person comes to Christ, when they know Him as their Savior, and they realize those things that didn't seem like a big deal back then are actually the very things that put Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, it's going to change kind of how you live your life.

It's going to change what you really are involved in, and the person who is willing to suffer rather than return to the old life is demonstrating this, that sin is no longer the master.

It doesn't mean we're not going to deal with it. It doesn't mean that we're not going to have these random things. I'm sure you do, and I'm thinking, Lord, where did that come from? You know, I'm trying to serve the Lord, and you know, have you ever been praying, and maybe I'm the only one, been praying, and something out of left field that has no business being in your mind, that has no business being in your life, in the middle of your prayer, shows up.

[14:24] Listen, we're going to deal with sin, unfortunately, until we see Jesus Christ face to face, and I'm looking forward to that day. I'm looking forward to that day when Satan is there, and he throws him in the lake of fire, and sin is no longer, but we're not there yet, but what Peter is saying here at the end of this verse is because of what Christ has done, and if he's changed your life, and if you're trusting his finished work on the cross of Calvary, there should be a change of allegiance in your life, that sin is not the master anymore, that Jesus is the master.

See, before Christ, sin ruled your life. Your desires ruled what you want to do. We just lived according to what we wanted to do, but Jesus changed that. Jesus changed our desires.

Yes, we're going to still battle sin. Yes, you're going to face temptation this week. Yes, you're still going to stumble, but sin no longer has the right to rule over our life. Praise the Lord for that.

I mean, read Romans 6. That's exactly what Paul is saying. And really, while Peter says it in different ways that we may not use the same verbiage today, he's just simply reminding us, following Jesus doesn't mean I never struggle with sin, but it means that I can no longer be at peace with sin in my life.

You shouldn't be able to get to a place where you can just sin, and it doesn't even bother you. It should bother you. Sometimes, I mean, we should be able to, we should run to Christ because we realize that sin is what put him on the cross.

[15:59] And see, there's a difference. A believer can struggle with sin, and a believer, we may have to confess the same weakness over and over and over again. I get frustrated in my own life.

It's almost like, Lord, it's me again. I'm so sorry about that. Lord, would you forgive me? But the idea is, is there ought to be something inside of us that just every time that comes, thinking, I don't want to live there anymore.

And here's what Peter says, you don't have to. That's not your address anymore. Why? Because you belong to Christ. See, the wasted life of being enslaved to sin, it has been broken.

Those chains no longer have a hold on us, and Christ died to bring us to God, and he rose victorious, and now we belong to him. That's what he told us in chapter three, and he's saying, because of that, hey, you're a new person.

Paul said, all things are passed away, and behold, all things become new. And so here's what Peter's saying in this verse. First, arm yourself with that. Make sure that's settled in your mind, that you understand that you don't have to live this way anymore.

[17:07] It doesn't mean the battle's over, but here's what it does mean. You know what side you're on. I'm thankful that I'm on the winning side. I'm thankful for the day that when we see Christ in the air, we shall be like him, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

I know I'm on the winning side. And here's what Peter's saying. You don't have to wait to be on the winning side until heaven. I think sometimes Christianity, we think, oh, well, when we get to heaven

one day, it'll be all good.

No, it's gonna be perfect there, but we can live like we're citizens of heaven right now. Read the end of Philippians chapter three. Paul says, our citizenship, he's talking about how our life is, is in heaven.

So we're already there with Christ. Why don't we just live like it right now? And that's kind of the same idea that we find here. So here in verses two and three, Peter's about to take it one step further.

Because if we're finished living for sin, if sin no longer has control of our life, what am I gonna live for now? We see this number two. Because we belong to Jesus, we live the rest of our time for God.

[18:10] We live the rest of our time for God. Verse number two, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lust of men, but to the will of God.

I love how Peter kind of words that the rest of his time. And it really stops, it should stop us in our track and remind us something we're kind of prone to forget. That our time here is limited.

Because sometimes we do think it's never gonna end. I mean, it just seems like, I mean, the bills keep coming and these keep coming and all these things coming and it's just, you know, we just kind of can get, even as Christians, no one in heaven's our home, but we're just kind of living like this is always gonna be.

And Peter just says, hey, I just wanna remind you, you don't have much time. The older you get, you realize that it's just coming faster and faster and faster. And while our time is limited, he's saying, we need to make what time we have left matter.

Our life now, as opposed to living for self and living for sin, here's what we live for now, eternity. That God has placed people in your life. That he's given you a sphere of influence.

[19:19] He's given you that work. He's given you that family. He's given you people that you love, that you have relationships with. And it's not just to hang out all the time. I'm thankful we can just spend time together. I'm looking forward to happy sips and dip.

I just wanna eat ice cream with my friends. Come on. But that's not all that life's about. I'm thankful we can gather together and open the word of God and we can realize, hey, we're living for something much greater than ourself.

We're living for something much greater than Central Baptist Church, just this building. No, we're ambassadors for Christ. Christ. And our life should point others to him. And what Peter does here in verses two and three is he kinda draws a very clear line between how we used to live before we knew Christ and the way we're called to live now.

He says that we're no longer, we don't have, no longer do we have to live to the lust of men but to the will of God. He's saying, I just wanna remind you, priorities have changed in your life.

I mean, think about before you knew Christ. Think about before you knew that heaven was your home and it changed the way you lived. Here's the question that you usually just ask yourself, what do I wanna do? And we're not talking about just awful sinful things but that's just the question you ask.

[20:29] If you wanna do it, that's what you're gonna do. But the closer we get to Christ and the more that his word is working in our life, the question quickly becomes, God, what do you want me to do here?

God, how would you have me handle this situation? Lord, you know this is really bothering me and I don't know how to handle this. Lord, I need wisdom and it begins to push us that direction. And really, that's one of the fundamental changes that salvation brings to our life.

Before salvation, it was, I'm gonna live for whatever I wanna live for and now he says, here's what you live for, the will of God. That is what God has placed in your life. Peter doesn't say anything about recovering the wasted time.

We can't do that. We wish that we could. And listen, there may be years behind you that you wish you could have back. You thought, man, if I could go back to this moment in time and not make that decision, my life would be totally different.

But I just wanna encourage you, you're here tonight and God is working in your life and there might be, we've all made bad decisions and sometimes we had to pay the consequences but I'm so thankful that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to your purpose and God takes our awful decisions and terrible mistakes and can use them for the glory of God.

[21:48] I'm thankful for that. I mean, there's gonna be decisions no doubt that I would make differently. There's opportunities that I completely missed that I'd love to have back. There's people that I should've talked to when I was in school and shared the gospel with that I'll never see them again.

I mean, the time maybe that we spent pursuing things that now we look at our life and they weren't bad things but they really don't matter in the grand scheme of eternity. But Peter doesn't tell us, hey, you know what, you just need to kind of look backwards and think on those things.

No, he says, stop looking back and why don't you live for the rest of the time? Why don't you make a decision right now? Here's a line in the sand, let's live for the Lord right now.

Look at verse number three, he says, for the time past of our life may suffice us to rot the will of the Gentiles. Here's kind of what he's saying. Peter, what does that mean?

I'll tell you what it means, enough. That's what it means. He said, you lived that life before, sin was your master, you kind of live for your selfish desires, enough.

[22:53] There's no reason to live that way anymore. That's not how God wants you to live. We've given sin enough of our lives already, we've spent enough of our lives living for ourselves, we've wasted enough time chasing things that cannot satisfy.

The only thing that's ever going to satisfy your life is Jesus Christ. And that's what Peter's bringing to the forefront. And I don't think we really need to say much more than what Peter is saying here, but the idea is he's saying there comes a point in our lives where we have to look at the old life and when it tries to creep back up just say, enough, I'm done with that.

I don't have to live there anymore. Not because sin hasn't stopped becoming appealing, I wish it did. I wish it was like vegetables and it's just like, ugh, I don't want that at all.

You know, there's certain things you could put on a plate and it wouldn't entice you at all. But that's not how sin operates. But the closer we get to Christ, it starts feeling that way. Those things that just, I mean, it was just, it was a habit, it was second nature.

Now it comes up and we're thinking, ugh, that's growth. That's moving towards Christ. And it's not that temptation disappears. I mean, it shows up, it shows up in random places all the time.

[24:06] But we're not drawn to it anymore. Why? Because Jesus is worthy of whatever time I have left. And the things that he describes here in verse number three, he characterizes what the old life looks like.

We walked in lasciviousness, lust, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, abominable idolatries. We're going to take time to go into these, but here's basically what he's saying.

These sins, they describe a life that is controlled by just a sinful appetite. Paul says that the world is given into the lust of their belly.

They just want and want and want whatever they feel like. These things are saying, hey, before you knew Christ, your life was governed by the flesh. And just like here in this room tonight, some of Peter's first readers would have said, you know what, that's what my life used to be.

But praise the Lord, he saved me from that. Praise the Lord, he changed my life. And he's reminding there's no reason to go back. That's what he's saying here in verse number three.

[25:14] His point is they got to stop thinking, you know what, what could have been? Well, if I wouldn't have done that, then maybe my life would be better today. And if I wouldn't have done that back then, then maybe I wouldn't have this issue.

He's saying, listen, you can't change that, but you can make sure you don't go back there. You can make sure that when sin rears its ugly head that you're not trying to run back to it.

He's just saying that there's nothing back there. There's nothing that Jesus Christ saved you from that's worth trading your life again. It's not.

It's not. It's a horrible deal. And that's a great reminder to us, I think, today, because the enemy has a great way of making the old life look much better from a distance than it ever did when you were actually living in it.

And we, I'm sure you deal with it and you see something, you see an advertisement, you see something and it kind of triggers something in your mind and you're thinking, man, you know, that wasn't that bad. But Peter's saying, no, no, it was worse than you realize it because you know what it did?

[26:19] It brought death in your life. It brought guilt. It brought shame. It brought all of these things and kind of the thought, I loved how one commentator said it. He says, don't romanticize what

Jesus rescued from.

Man, I love that. Because the world has a really good way of making everything looking appealing. The Bible says that the devil can even come as an angel of light and everything looks great and everything looks like, hey, it's all that's cracked up to be.

It's not. Sin always promises you more than it gives and it takes much more than you ever intended to lose. And Peter's just telling us here in verse 3, don't go back.

It's not worth it. And so Peter says, leave the past where it belongs and give God the time that you have left. It doesn't matter if you wasted your teen years or your 20s or your 30s.

You're here. Go forward for Christ and that's what Peter's saying. But when you stop living the way that you used to live, when you stop living the way the world wants you to live and expects you to live, Peter wants us to understand this.

[27 : 23] Don't expect everybody to understand that. And here's what he reminds us in verse number 4, that because we belong to Christ, we don't need the world's approval. We don't need their approval.

Look what he says in verse 4. Wherein they think it's strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. Peter was saying, listen, you're probably dealing with some of this right now.

He said, because the way you live, there's going to be people that are surprised. You know why? Because they used to know you. You ran in the same circles. You went to the same places.

You were involved in the same lifestyle. And because you're a Christian now, you're not running with them anymore and they're thinking, hey, what happened to you, man? Why are you so much different?

And Peter in verse number 4, he's not describing that every time somebody becomes a Christian, you just stand on a street corner and condemn everybody else for how you're living. That's not the idea that we find in verse number 4.

[28 : 27] Really, the idea is this. A changed life, it just creates the contrast by itself. That when Jesus changes you and you don't run with the crowd, when you don't participate, people are going to notice.

Because they're going to realize that every time they call you, you say, no, I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to go there. And sometimes, the people that knew the old version of you are going to have a very hard time understanding the new version of you.

Because they don't understand that you were dead, but now you're alive. That you were on your way to hell and now you're on your way to heaven. They're not going to understand that and they'll say things like, what happened to you?

Why don't you come anymore? Why don't you come, after work, why don't you come to the restaurant with us? Why don't you come the bar with us? Why don't you just loosen up a little bit, man? You used to do all this stuff with us.

Are you better than us now? That's exactly what Peter is saying. Because not only are they going to be surprised, but they're surprised once they realize you're not going to do those things anymore.

[29 : 32] It turns to something much stronger. The Bible says this, that they begin speaking evil of you. They begin to criticize and to slander.

Because a changed life many times is going to make people uncomfortable because it confronts them without ever saying a word. I read a story from R.C. Sproul.

He's a commentator and he was telling a story about Billy Graham. And Billy Graham got invited to play golf with President Ford and a couple professional golfers. And so he goes out there and they play this round of golf and after the round one of the professional golfers stormed away.

And he went into the locker room and he was complaining that Billy Graham, he doesn't need him and he's just stuffing religion down his throat the whole time. And another golfer that was there on the property walked in and said, hey, what did Pastor Graham say?

Was he preaching to you the whole time? And the embarrassed golfer kind of said, you know what, he didn't talk one thing about religion. He was just there. He didn't preach to him, he didn't confront him.

[30 : 42] But the idea was this, and this is what R.C. Sproul said, that his presence was enough to make the man uncomfortable. That Billy Graham was so associated with the Bible and with God and the gospel, just him being there on the tee box with him made this man feel uncomfortable.

And that's kind of what the thought that Peter is saying right here. He said, you don't have to preach to him. You don't have to, every time you see him, like, hey, let me read a Bible verse to you. No, you just live faithfully for Christ. People are going to notice. And they may not like it.

But we're not living for their approval, and that's what happens even still today. We talked about it this morning. God doesn't call us to be self-righteous. We're not trying to be some holy roller that's holier-than-thou kind of person.

No, we just need to be consistently living for Christ. And when we live faithfully for him, the contrast is going to speak for itself. That's what Peter says. And when it does, they're going to speak evil of you.

And that hurts. That hurts a lot. I'm sure you've dealt with it. I remember when the Lord really got a hold of my life and youth camp between my junior and senior year and I made some decisions.

[31:50] You know what? Some guys that I used to run with and play basketball with, I mean, it was so much, the Lord got a hold of my life and I just quit basketball. And I love basketball. But I just knew that it was not where God wanted me to be.

And you know what? They weren't real happy about it. And every time they saw me, they'd make fun of me. And they'd do that and they'd call me the preacher. And I used to think that was like an insult. Now I'm like, I like that.

I like when people call me the preacher because that's what I am. But it was one of those things. They meant it to be mean and it was people that I was very, very close with. And it hurt.

I mean, even thinking of it today, it still kind of hurts. I wish they would have understood and I tried to explain to them. I tried to invite them to our Wednesday night programs that we had at our church and our youth group and different things like that.

But the thing is, is we have to understand that their approval cannot determine how we live our life. Because I made a decision at camp that year, I'm going to obey God and here's what God wants me to do.

[32:46] He wants me to live for Him and it might cost me some friendships. But if we need the world's applause, eventually we're going to have to compromise to get it. And Peter is saying, you don't need that anymore.

That's not the life that God has called you to live. Following Jesus means that you would rather have God's approval than the world's acceptance. You can't have both. Peter is saying, which one do you want?

Which one really makes a difference in your life? Because sometimes the people that applaud you the very next day, they're going to say, crucify Him. We already saw that. Jesus is our example. As we come to verse 5 and 6, our closing verses here, Peter tells us why we can and should live the way that he calls us to, that we should live for Christ.

See, the people that speak evil of you, the people that ridicule you and criticize you for following Christ, here's what they don't get, the last word. You know who gets the last word? God.

Everybody's going to stand before Him. They're not going to be able to plead their case. No, He has the last word. God. And He's the final judge and that changes everything. And because we belong to Christ, lastly, we live in the light of the final judgment.

[34:00] Peter's brought this up over and over again, but look at verse 5. We'll read verse 5 and 6 again. Who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead? For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

So really, Peter's kind of shifting our attention from what people are saying about us to what ultimately God will say about everyone. That the world may look at us as Christians and those that follow Christ and those that refuse to run with the world anymore and they'll think this, man, what a waste.

They are wasting their life. I mean, they bought into this fairy tale. I mean, this is a crutch for the weak-minded. I mean, we used to have so much fun and now look at them. I mean, they're going to church on a Sunday night.

What a weirdo. You may have heard that. But Peter reminds us, not only they will, but you will.

We're all going to stand before God and that everybody's going to have an account.

And God's ready. He's not going to throw God off. No, everything in this world is working on his timetable. And the Bible says he is ready to judge the quick and the dead. I mean, the idea is this.

[35 : 15] Nobody escapes it. It's all-encompassing. The living will give an account. The dead will give an account. Those who follow Christ will stand before him. Those who reject Christ, at some point, we are all going to stand before the Lord.

In the book of Revelation, there's different judgments. There's one where Christians stand and give an account for how we lived. But there's also the great white throne judgment where everybody's going to stand before the Lord and give an account and realize it.

And really, the idea in verse number five is this life is not all there is. We're not living for the here and now. Because the ones that run and do all these things and maybe the things we used to do, here's the mindset.

Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. We've already seen that in Luke's gospel. And here's what God says, thou fool. There's much more to life than just the 75, 80, 90 years that we might have.

See, the world can look at us and think, I can't believe they would do that. But Peter says, why don't we just wait until eternity before you decide whose life was wasted?

[36 : 20] Because at times, it does. Even as Christians, even knowing it, we look around and we think, am I doing the right thing? I mean, read the book of Psalms. I mean, if you've had those thoughts, it's okay. Because the psalmist says, I look around and how long is the heathen going to rage?

How long are they going to have everything they want? I'm over here trying to serve the Lord and David's living in a cave. He's supposed to be the king of Israel and he's on the run for his life. How long are the wicked going to prosper, Lord?

And we begin to look at the same thing. Peter's saying, I know it feels like that sometimes, but just settle in your mind. Arm yourselves with the truth that God is coming again and that we are going to stand before him.

And because a life lived for pleasure and acceptance and possessions and self, it might look super successful right now. It might look like they got the whole world at their hands, but if it's lived without Christ, what happens to that person when he stands before God?

Jesus said it like this, what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? I mean, it's not he with the most toys wins when they die.

[37 : 26] No, it's who knows Jesus Christ. And then we come to verse number six and Peter just, I guess he just likes, he's going to throw these verses in for the rest of this book. We look at it and we're like, what is he talking about?

For this cause was the gospel also preached to them that are dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh but live according to God in the spirit. We kind of mentioned a little bit of this, he dealt with a little bit last week.

Peter is not teaching that people receive another opportunity to hear the gospel and to repent after they die. We already saw that with the rich man and Lazarus.

That Jesus was there but there was a great goal fixed. The time has passed. But what he is saying is the gospel, it was preached. It was preached to these people while they were alive and they heard the gospel and particularly in this one, they believed the gospel and since then they've died. And that raised a very real question for these suffering believers. You have to remember the New Testament, the Bible has not been completed at this point. They don't have all these books in the New Testament to cross reference and they're hearing all of these things.

[38 : 33] Well, if you die before Jesus comes back then you're going to miss them. That's why Paul had to write in 1 Thessalonians that he didn't want us to be ignorant of those that were asleep. Those that are asleep they're not going to miss when Jesus comes back.

And here's what he's saying essentially in verse number 6. If they believed the gospel and they still died, the thought of the day was what did the gospel accomplish? If they lived their whole life and they didn't live in sin and wickedness and they still died then what's the point of it?

What's going to happen? And Peter's just saying this in verse number 6. Death didn't win. Because when we see death even today, even knowing it sometimes, we look and think death won.

Well, death thought it won until somebody walked out of a grave after three days. And death lost.

That's why in the book of Revelation he says I have the keys to death, hell, and the grave. That our greatest enemy is no longer an enemy.

It's under the subjection of Jesus Christ. And because of his victory, if we know him and we're in Christ, we have that victory in our life. And he's saying, listen, I know you have loved ones that have gone on before and it seems like, man, they just wasted their life.

[39:41] They didn't. They're going to stand before the Lord one day and they're going to be rewarded for that. And there's a crown of life for those that are looking for that. And they may have been judged according to men in the flesh. But here's what they are.

They're alive to God in the spirit. The world looked at them and looked at their suffering and even in their death and they concluded, see, I told you, Jesus wasn't worth it. I mean, that poor person, they didn't do anything.

They didn't have any fun in life and now they're dead. What a waste of a life. But God says right here, no, that's a life well lived. God says otherwise.

And this would have been deeply encouraging to Peter's readers. many of them would have been suffering. Probably many or more would suffer even more.

The Roman government is only increasing its persecution on the Christians at this time. And some that might have read this letter in the early church might have died just because they belong to Jesus.

[40:40] And he says, listen, I just want to remind you, if that happens, it's still worth it. Your life's not wasted. The death doesn't get the last word.

The world doesn't get the last word. Your critics don't get the last word. God gets the last word.

That's what he's saying here in verse number six. And for the person who belongs to Jesus Christ, that means we have nothing to fear.

We don't have to fear death. That's why Jesus says, don't fear them that can kill the body. Fear him that can kill the soul. Fear him that has the last word.

That's what Jesus is talking about. But because Jesus suffered and he's risen and he's conquered and we belong to him, our story doesn't end in a grave. It doesn't end in a casket. No, no, we're going home to our heavenly father.

And if he's gone to prepare a place for us, he will come again. Let not your heart be troubled. That's what Peter is saying. That's what he's reminding them. And Peter began this passage by saying, hey, arm yourselves with this truth.

[41:45] Because following Jesus, you know what it's going to cost you? It's going to cost you greatly. Living differently is going to cause people to misunderstand you.

I'd imagine most of us have had that in some form or fashion. They don't understand why we take it so seriously. Obedience to Jesus, it might mean leaving behind things you once enjoyed.

It might be separating from people that you once ran with. And it's going to be hard because that was your life. But none of that changes the fact, the question Peter puts before us, what are you doing with the rest of your time?

Because you're not a slave to sin anymore. You don't have to stop looking back and wishing you made better decisions. Live for Christ today. Decide tonight that, hey, tomorrow at school I'm taking a stand for Christ.

Tomorrow at school when they're talking about things in the locker room and they're using the language they shouldn't, I'm going to take a stand for Christ instead of just shrinking to the background. And that's not just in the locker room. I imagine it's at your workplace too.

[42:52] That we're around people all the time. It doesn't mean that we're just pushing the gospel down everybody's throat. No, but we're living a life that shows, hey, I belong to Christ. Christ. And it's going to create some situations in our life.

Because there's just two parts of everybody's life. The time in the past and the time remaining.

That's really what Peter draws out in these verses. Maybe there are things that you wish you could change but you can't.

Times that you wish you could have back but you're not going to get them back. I mean, maybe sin took more of your life than you ever intended to give it. But praise the Lord as the book of Lamentations tells us, His mercies are new every morning.

That you have today. And if you wake up tomorrow breathing, you have tomorrow. That we need to make the most of the time that we have remaining.

Leave you with this thought. You can't change the past but you can give God the rest. And a life lived for Christ is never wasted.

[43 : 59] Would we get a hold of that truth and take it home with us, take it to school with us, take it to work with us and realize, I'm living for Christ. I'm not living for the world's applause or their approval.

I'm not trying to meet their standards. No, I'm just pressing towards the mark that's Jesus Christ. And would He help us to live that way? Would we stand with our heads bowed in? Thank you.