

Make the Time Count

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[0:00] Now we're going to look at those remaining ones. Verse 1 of 1 Peter 4 says this, And that's what he talks about in verse 3.

For the time past our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. Or we just live like the world. We walked in lasciviousness and lust and excess of wine and revelings and banquetings and abominable idolatries.

He said, Wherein they think it's strange that you run not with them in the same excess of riot speaking evil of you. He said, Hey, when your life changes, people notice it, but maybe don't understand it.

But he reminds them in verse 5, Who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead? 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 our text this evening is going to come from verse 7 through 11. And we see this verse 7, But the end of all things is at hand. Kind of sounds very somber. Kind of sounds kind of like a start of a movie.

[1:24] But Peter's got a lot more truth that he wants us to get a hold of. And here's what he tells us. Be therefore sober and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Use hospitality one to another without grudging, as every man hath received the gift. Even so minister the same one to another as good stewards or managers of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. And so Peter's really kind of, as he's coming to the close of this letter, he's really driving these truths home. That time is short and life is difficult, but he wants us to get this truth here this evening.

We have limited time, so let's make the time count. So that's what we're going to look at here tonight. Let's go, Lord, and ask him for help tonight. Father, thank you for this time. Lord, thank you for the songs and just the encouragement that it is, that you are worthy of all the glory, all the praise, all the honor.

[2:40] We read it here in this text already. That every time we get a clear vision of you, every time we just stop and are reminded of what you've done for us, Lord, we can't help but worship. But at times, I'm sure we feel like the readers in Peter's letter, that life is hard and it's difficult, and we're wondering just how much longer we have to hold on.

But Peter reminds us you didn't call us to hold on. Lord, you called us to do some certain things while we have the time remaining. And I pray that we could take these truths, we could apply them to our life. Lord, please help me to say what needs to be said, Lord, that you would get the honor and the glory.

And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. May be seated. I'm sure you've noticed how productive your family can become when company out of the blue texts you and says, hey, we're about to be there.

I mean, your house may have been untouched for weeks, months. I mean, there's just laundry that you intended to fold, but now it's just kind of creating a mountain of laundry. And you get that text, though, and it says, hey, we're going to be there in 20 minutes.

Can't wait to see you. And the atmosphere goes from maybe just relax, and maybe your kids were watching the show, and you're just kind of being lazy in the afternoon or whatever it may be. And

now there's just absolute chaos.

[3:55] Somebody's vacuuming. Somebody's wiping down counters and throwing things in the closets, pushing things under beds. The mom may be running through, yelling, who left this here?

Well, 20 minutes ago it didn't matter that it was there, but now all of a sudden it's super important. Why? Company's coming. And we think about it. What changed? The house didn't change.

The people didn't change. What changed was the awareness of time. Time is of the essence now, and things that didn't seem that important all of a sudden are really important now, are really pressing now.

Because when you realize that your time is short, you start paying attention to what really matters. And that's really where Peter is bringing us as we read our text this evening and really these first 11 verses of 1 Peter chapter number 4.

We mentioned a little bit as we read through it, but in the first seven verses Peter gives us two categories for our life. The time that's already passed and the time that is remaining.

[5:03] And as we kind of walk through those first seven verses, we kind of honed in on this idea is that we can't change the past, but we can give God the time that we have left.

And so what Peter does is he's building on top of that. He's going to show us not just what we used to be and what we used to give our lives to, because that's what he showed us there in verse number 3 especially, but now he's going to say, okay, this is where it used to be, but this is what it should be now.

This is where you should give your lives and service for the Lord. And verse 7 is really just a sobering reminder when he says, but the end of all things is at hand.

We don't like to think about that often, but really the idea is we don't have forever. I would imagine most of us, kind of going back to the illustration that we opened up with, hey, we'll fold that laundry because we'll get to it one day.

We'll do that honey-do list because we're going to get to it one day. It's not that we're saying no, it's just we think we have unlimited time. And yet throughout the Bible we're reminded constantly our time is so minuscule.

[6:06] It's so limited. And because the end is near, we must live differently today. And that opening line there in verse 7, Peter's not trying to scare them.

I mean, they're already going through a difficult time. I mean, Nero's the emperor, so that's scary enough. He's not trying to frighten them, and he isn't telling them, hey, the end's coming, so get your timelines and your charts out, and let's figure this out together.

No, that's not what Peter is pressing. And really, when you look at any prophecy in the Bible, God is not calling us to figure it all out, but he is calling us to live better today because of what is coming. And he's reminding them that history is moving toward an appointed end.

I think we look at our world sometimes, you turn the news on, and it seems so chaotic, and it is. And it seems like there's no control, but there is. God is still on the throne. Nothing that's taking place in our world right now has thrown him for a loop.

It has not taken his plan off track. It will happen. And we are marching towards the end. And we're going to see that here in this text today. And so, Peter wants them to understand this.

[7:14] We have to give ourselves to what matters most. And that's really the heart of this passage in verses 7 through 11. The big idea, if you're taking notes here this evening, is knowing that the end is near, that should make us more faithful to the time that God has given us.

We should be more faithful to what God has allowed us to have. So here's the question. How should we spend the time God has given us? I think the first answer is found in verse number 7.

We should pray seriously. We should pray seriously. But the end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober. Because it is. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

A little conjunction there, but it reminds us that Peter's still connected to everything he just said. The previous verses, as he's describing the previous life, a life that was controlled by sinful desires, a life that was just controlled by our appetites and what we want to do, sometimes a life of excess and a life spent with just running with the world and listening to the world's wisdom.

But Peter says, hey, that's not who you are anymore. He made that very clear in verse number 4 and verse number 5 that God has changed our life. But we need to understand exactly what he means when he says the end of all things is at hand.

[8:35] Because Peter wrote those words some 2,000 years ago, and we think to ourselves, and people will ask this question when they hear about the second coming of Christ, well, where is he? Is Peter mistaken?

Because he's writing to a group of believers, said, hey, the end's here. Well, was Peter mistaken? No, he was not. But here's what Peter understood, and the New Testament writers, and we would be good to be reminded of this, that with the death and the burial and the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ, God's redemptive plan had entered its final stages.

Because when you look at Scripture, there's only one thing remaining on God's calendar when it comes to that. It is him coming back. That's what's going to usher in everything else when you read the book of Revelation and you look at all the judgments and the bowls and the trumpets.

What's going to set that off is when Jesus Christ comes back again. In the New Testament, it repeatedly describes believers living in the last days. Hebrews 1, verse 2, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.

James 5, verse 8, the Bible says, The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Paul told the Thessalonians, hey, we which are alive and remain. I mean, Paul believed in such an imminent return of Christ, he thought he was still going to be alive.

[9:50] And that wasn't that long after Christ had ascended. So when we look at this opening sentence of verse number 7, Peter is not telling us to set a date.

We've kind of looked at this multiple times through this book. People start setting dates, run away from them. The Bible's pretty, it's not pretty clear, it's extremely clear that nobody knows the time of the day.

Now we can know the seasons. We can see those things, and we're going to get into that in the Gospel of Luke as we make our way towards the end of Luke's Gospel. But why would Peter say that?

Well, he just wants to make sure that our perspective is right. He wants to make sure we're looking at things correctly. Because when our perspective is right, it's going to help us live better. And he's just reminding of that imminent return of Christ and that history is moving towards a day when Jesus is going to make all things right.

And this is something that early readers would have really held on to. Because they're living in a time of suffering and injustice and persecution. But when our eyes are not on this world, and when our eyes are not on the circumstances of life, it's going to help us to live a lot better, and it's going to help us to live for things that actually matter.

[11:02] And I love that Peter doesn't say, hey, the end of all things is near. Panic! That's not what he says. Because the majority of this world, when they start thinking about the last days and the end times, you know, their theology comes from movies.

If your theology of the end times comes from movies, you should be super scared. But that's not what's going on in the Bible. Now, if we know Christ, I mean, the end times is going to be a horrific time.

There's going to be judgment that is poured out on this world. The wrath of God is going to be poured out. Praise the Lord that we that know Him as our Savior, we're not going to experience that. We cannot physically experience it.

Why? Because Jesus took that wrath on the cross for us. We cannot walk through that, and that's another time that we can really dive into that. But he doesn't say panic.

Here's what he actually says to do. Pray. Hey, the end is coming. The end, it's at hand. It's imminent. It could happen tonight. So what should we do?

[12:01] Peter says, you should pray. He says, be sober and watch unto prayer. The idea is, Peter is calling us as believers to be clear-minded, to be sensible, to be self-controlled, to be spiritually alert, not distracted, not asleep at the wheel, not just kind of just going through life.

I know heaven's my home, so nothing else really matters. No, we're supposed to do things here. We're supposed to occupy till He comes. And really, verse number seven is a complete contrast to verse number three.

That we used to live, before we knew Christ as our Savior, however we wanted to live. Now, maybe we weren't involved in some of the things that are listed here, but before you knew Christ as your Savior, you just did what you wanted to do.

You went where you wanted to go. You lived life like that, but now when Christ has moved in, and He's leading us, and He's guiding us, things change. Priorities change.

And the life that was characterized by giving yourself to whatever is no longer there. So Peter says, the opposite of that is to be true. You need to be alert. You need to be sober.

[13:12] You need to be clear-headed. Don't allow the pressures around you, or the desires within you, to control what you think. Well, why don't we want it to control what we think?

So we can pray. If we're allowing all of these outside influences, you know, we're going to get so busy, we're going to get so distracted, that we don't go to the Lord in prayer. You ever been so busy during the day that you forgot to eat?

Am I the only way? Usually I don't, but have you ever been working so long? You're like, why do I feel so weird? And you look at the clock, it's like three o'clock. You feel weird because you didn't eat. You got distracted, and you were focused on this, and you were focused on that, and you missed something.

But sometimes that can happen in our life spiritually. They were so worried about what's going on in the world, and we're watching the news, and we got these things going on, we got this appointment, we got that, and this, and that, and we don't even stop and slow down and pray.

Peter said, we got to make sure that we're clear-minded, that we're alert, that we need to get on our knees. See, if we were writing the next sentence that, hey, the end of all things is here, we would probably add something super dramatic.

[14:16] But Peter, he just says, hey, we need to pray, not speculate, not panic, not obsess over every single headline. Because the reality is that knowing Jesus is coming shouldn't make us frantic.

We shouldn't be scrambling all over the place like companies coming over. The Bible speaks of the second kingdom of Christ over and over and over and over again.

Here's what it should do. It should make us more faithful. It should make us more prayerful. Why would Peter put a verse about prayer when we're talking about the end times?

I think prayer has a way of putting things back into perspective. Because my prayers, maybe yours don't feel like this, my prayers feel a lot like David in the Psalms.

The beginning of the Psalms, you read David's Psalms especially, he comes and he just doesn't know what to do, and everybody's coming after him, and why do the heathen get things, and why is this going on? But by the end of the Psalm, he's like, I'm going to praise the Lord forever because he's good.

[15:20] That's what prayer does. God invites us. He says, bring your worries, bring your cares.

Peter's going to tell us in just the next chapter, cast all your cares on him. Why? Because he cares for you. God can handle those things, but prayer, the more we pray, and when we're worried about things, and we're looking at the world, and we're thinking, what's going to happen?

No, it reminds us of this. God's in control. Because prayer, we know we're not in control, but prayer, we remind ourselves that we are not in control.

Because we're going to pray things like, Lord, I need you. Lord, help me. Lord, give me wisdom. It reminds us that this world is not all there is. It reminds us that our strength is never going to be enough, and it keeps our hearts focused on the one we're going to see.

It really just kind of makes everything else melt away. So he tells us, hey, listen, the end is near, so we need to pray seriously. We should be praying more and more.

We should have that constant communication. Paul says, pray without ceasing. It doesn't mean we come to an altar, and we never get up all day, but we can be in constant communication with our Father. We can pray about things that bother us, and things that scare us, and things that we don't know how to handle.

[16:31] But if knowing the end is near, it changes the way we relate to God, and we see that he's in control, but it should also change the way we relate to one another.

That's what we see here in verses 8 and 9. Since our time is short, Peter says this, number two, we should love deeply. Yes, we should pray seriously, but we should also love deeply.

Verse number eight, and above all things. We've mentioned the setting already, but they're under pressure. They're facing opposition, and the pressure has a way of affecting relationships, doesn't it?

I'm sure you experience this just like I do, but sometimes when life gets difficult, when work is hard, when things are not going the way that we want to, patience becomes shorter and shorter. Anybody else experience that? And it's not that my kids did it, it's not that my wife did it, it's not that this situation did it, but my patience is so thin that it's just not going to last much longer, and here's what happens when we live that way.

[17:37] Little things can become big things, and we kind of lose our temper, or we have some anger issues, and if we're not careful, the pressure around us can create division among us.

And really, Peter is writing, I hope you notice as we read through it, he's writing to a church. These are to brethren that are in Galatia, so this letter would have been going to all the churches in Galatia.

And they would have faced maybe a rough work week, and maybe somebody they know was thrown into jail because of their commitment to Christ, because that was a real thing. And that pressure around them could have crept into the church and started causing division.

Well, how do we guard against that? Because listen, we're going to face it this week. You're going to face it tomorrow. You're going to face it sometime soon in your life where all of the world seems to be against you, and if we don't handle it, we're just going to explode.

Well, Peter tells us, here's what we need to do. We need to love persistently. He said, but above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves.

[18:48] That word fervent has the idea of being earnest, of being persistent. This isn't some casual type of love. It's just, hey, if it's there, it's there.

If it's not, it's not. No, this isn't a love where only when people are easy to love. The idea, it's a love that just keeps going. And Peter's emphasized this throughout this little epistle.

Chapter 1, verse 22, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently. We need to be able to come in, and I'm so thankful we can come into this church, and we can gather as a church family. And yes, work may be hard, life may be hard, but you should feel the love within this local body.

Why? Because we're all on the same team. We all are in the same family.

And Peter knew that if these believers were going to stand faithfully against a hostile world, they needed to love one another deeply. We need each other. We need to be on the same page.

[19:47] See, the harder the world becomes, the more important a church family becomes. We need to be reminded of that. I say it all the time, and I see people walk through difficulty, and I don't know how they do it, number one, without the Lord.

And I don't know how they do it, number two, without a church family that can be behind them. That, yes, we celebrate together, and we rejoice in the blessings of others, but also we hurt with each other.

We cry with one another. We pray for one another. Those are things that just characterize a deep love. That we're committed, not just to each other, but we're committed because we're committed to Christ.

And then he tells us one of the ways that love shows itself. There at the end of verse number eight. For charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Now, this is one of those verses that people take, and I'm not really sure where they go with it.

Peter isn't saying that our love can atone for somebody else's sin. Nobody's love can do that, except Jesus. Jesus' blood is the only thing that can do that. But Peter is kind of drawing this from Proverbs 10, verse 12, where it says, Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins.

[21:01] See, the idea that he's kind of showing here at the end of this verse is that genuine love doesn't look for an opportunity to expose every single fault. We're already going to experience this outside of these walls.

He's not talking about covering things up and moving on and acting like it doesn't happen, but here's what he's saying. As the day is approaching, the time is at hand, the time is short, you're not supposed to keep a running scoreboard of every wrong you've been done to.

That's really what he's saying. It doesn't take somebody else's failure and use it against them. You may have experienced that in the workplace. You may have experienced it in certain relationships, but Peter's saying that doesn't belong in the family of God.

That's not how a believer should operate. Yes, there are sins that must be confronted. We live in a world where the church, and you see it on the news all the time, and it's just not a great situation.

We are not to cover anything up. That is not what God has called us to do. There are things that need to be confronted. There are issues that simply cannot be ignored. But not every irritation requires confrontation.

[22:10] That's what Peter's saying. That's what he wants us to say. Not every wrong needs to become a conflict. Sometimes as human beings, we're professionals taking an anthill and making it a mountain.

Peter says that has no place here. That we need to love fervently. We need to understand that maybe they had a bad day, and maybe they shouldn't have said that, but you don't have to get on Facebook and say, we need to pray for so-and-so because they said this.

That's not a prayer request. That's gossip. Peter's saying that doesn't need to be here. See, some things love simply just chooses to forgive and move on.

Because sometimes the person doesn't even mean it that way, but we received it that way. You ever had to forgive somebody or vice versa, and you said, I'm so sorry I did, and you said, I didn't even think about that, but you've been thinking about it for three weeks.

Sometimes we just got to move on and just forgive one another. I mean, do we really want to spend the time we have left keeping score against one another? I don't think so. I don't think it's the best use of our time.

[23:14] Peter said that there's a lot more pressing things that need to be accomplished. See, there's enough things that try to divide God's people from the outside. We don't need to help it from the inside.

And that's what Peter's saying. It's what he's reminding him of this great truth. So we need to love persistently, but he also shows us in verse number nine, we can also just love each other practically. See, Peter takes love from something we feel to something we do.

Look what verse number nine says. Use hospitality one to another. Okay, I agree with that. Without grudging. Don't you love, sometimes I'm just like, when they write those little words at the end, I'm like, did you have to put that on there?

Peter, come on, man. Like, that's the first part's really easy sometimes, but that second part's a lot, very difficult. And see, hospitality, we would think maybe the hospitality business and, you know, food service and hotels and different things like that.

But hospitality in the first century was an extremely important thing. See, believers were really under the kind of the help and the mercy of other believers.

[24:28] You couldn't travel to a place and just say, well, just book a hotel on Expedia. That's not how it works. There wasn't a lot of things available, and many of them were extremely poor and unable to do that.

So believers passing through an area would need a place to stay, and Christians would be the ones that would step up and help. And Christians facing these hardships, and they need to help, they just need a practical care.

Just give me a place to lay my head tonight. And the churches in these days were most likely house churches. It wasn't big buildings. If there was enough people in the city and there was funds, they would be able to build a building.

So not only would the church function as a church, but it's probably somebody's house. And the idea is this, that opening your home, whether it was in the church or not, would require genuine sacrifice, just like it does today.

You know, if you're going to open your home for somebody to stay in it, you're going to have to do some things. You're going to have to clean some things up. You know, for you it's not a big deal, but you don't want to be a horrible host kind of situation. But here's what Peter, he doesn't say, use hospitality and that's all you've got to do.

[25:34] Just have a place to stay. But he says, without grudging. Without grudging. Because I'm sure you've been told this by your parents growing up like I did. You can do the right thing with the wrong attitude.

Well, I did it. Well, I know you did it. But we heard you doing it the whole time. You know, when you go and clean up your room. Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! And you hear the doors close. I'm like, well, he's cleaning up his room because he loves us.

No, that's not how it is. See, you can serve somebody while resenting them. You can give while complaining how much it costs you.

You can open your door to your home wishing nobody is going to walk through it. Peter says we can't have that mentality. We've got to be hospitable.

We've got to open up some things in our life. But we need to do it with the right attitude. He's telling us in verse 9, don't just practice hospitality. Do it willingly. With a cheerful attitude.

[26:40] And while we're here, I just want to mention this. That hospitality isn't about having a perfect home. Or preparing some impressive meal. Or entertaining people. That's kind of what we think it might be. Maybe in our culture.

But biblical hospitality. The hospitality Peter is talking about here in verse 9. Is not just about opening your door. And having somebody lay their head on a pillow at night. Here's what it's really about. Opening your life.

And that's a difficult thing. That's the thing that we want to kind of keep to ourselves. It's making room for people in your life. It's seeing a need and responding to it.

That you have the ability to meet it. It's sharing what God has given us. Because he's been so generous to us. Because every good gift. And every perfect gift is from him. And he doesn't give us those things.

And gifts and things in our life. So we can hoard it for ourselves. Now here's what he says. Serve one another. Love deeply. And we see that. And that's what love does.

[27:41] Real, deep, biblical love does not remain theoretical. Peter says if you have real love in your life. It becomes very, very practical. So we have to love deeply.

And Peter continues this same kind of one another emphasis in verse number 10. Because he says this. Love doesn't only make room for people. Love serves people.

So what should we do with our remaining time? We should serve faithfully. We should serve faithfully. Look at verse 10 again. As every man hath received the gift.

Even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.

See, there's a lot we could say about spiritual gifts. We could kind of go on a sideways rabbit hole right here and look at all about the New Testament. There's multiple places. About four places, including this one, where the New Testament discusses spiritual gifts.

[28:49] And he lists them all out. Paul lists them out. We see he lists them out in Titus there as well. And Romans. But Peter doesn't give us a long list. His concern is much simpler.

He said, God has given you something. Use that something to serve somebody. That's really the idea here. The language that he uses is, as every man hath received the gift.

So Peter's not saying, hey, only the talented people in the church body. Only the people with noticeable outward gifts. No, he assumes and knows based on the word of God. Every single person here tonight, you know what you have?

If the Lord is your Savior, a gift he's given you. If you're a member of Central Baptist Church, he has placed you in this body with your gift for that sole purpose of using it and ministering it to other people.

To the edifying of the church. To the building up of the church body. Not the building per se. Maybe that is your gift though. If your gift is building things, come on now, let's go.

[29:51] It's not mine. Definitely in Brother Garrett's. But we need to use it for the Lord. So really, here's what it means. That there's no insignificant members of the body of Christ.

That we all have something we can serve faithfully with. And Peter says this. We kind of looked at it this morning. When it comes to salvation. But it's not just salvation. He says, we've received it. You think, well, that's just my disposition.

That's just, I've always been good at this thing. This has always been my personality. Maybe you're an encourager. Maybe you're this or that. Yes, that might be your personality. Guess where it came from? The Lord.

And he's used it. He's developed it in your life. You didn't create it. You didn't earn it. God simply gave it. And so what that means when it comes to our gifts. Is they should never become a source of pride.

They are expressions of the grace of God. And they are for other people to see. And other people to benefit from. That's why Peter says there in verse number 10. And even so minister the same one to another.

[30:54] Why did God give it to you? For others. Spiritual. I read this in a book. Spiritual gifts are not trophies to display. That's not what they are.

Well, look at all my spiritual gifts. I got this and I'm this. And I'm working on this one. No. He says, use them. They're not something we're just going to keep on a shelf. It doesn't matter if you have this talent.

Or you have this gift. If you don't use it, what's the point of it? And that's what Peter is saying. That every member is a minister. A minister is not just somebody that stands behind a pulpit. If you have a spiritual gift, you are a minister.

God has called you to serve. He's called you to give everything you have. And I know that sometimes we come to a church. And maybe before you joined a church. Or whatever it might be. You think to yourself, what am I getting out of this? And that's an understandable question. You don't want to go to a church where you get nothing out of it. But sometimes we even coming to church all our life.

[31:51] And you may have been a member of Central forever. And you can leave a service and say, well, was I encouraged? Did I like the music today? I really wish we wouldn't sing that hymn. Why don't we always sing that hymn?

Did the sermon help me? I really wish the preacher was better. Can't help you there. And certainly we should receive something from the body of Christ. I mean, our goal in prayer that when you come in on a Sunday morning, Sunday night, or Wednesday, or whenever we have a service, that you do get something out of it.

I hope you understand there is some intentionality to what God has called us to do. I think we should do everything with excellence. We should do everything for the service of the Lord. But Peter reminds us here, there's another question we ought to be asking.

Who am I serving? How am I helping? Was the fact that I was at church today, did that help somebody else out? Did I speak to somebody that maybe encouraged them?

See, God didn't place you here just to merely receive. He placed you here to minister. That's what Peter's reminding them. Hey, life is hard enough. And when it's going difficult, you don't just come in and sit down.

[32:58] Sometimes there are seasons where that is. But you know what? Sometimes just being here is a good ministry. I mean, your greatest gift to me, just to be really honest, is the gift of attendance.

Not so I can count numbers. But I can just know that you're here. And know that God can work in your life just like he can work in mine. It's just an encouragement to me to look out and to preach to a church that's alive.

And just being here. I sat back there before church started this morning. And just all the hustle and bustle. I love that. It just screams to me, hey, this church has some life to it.

Being here is important. But you shouldn't be able to just come for weeks and months and years and just really not be super involved. No, we have to minister. Somebody in this church needs what God has entrusted to you.

Because God doesn't say, hey, use your gift that you're the owner of. No, he says, as good stewards. You don't own your gift. A steward is a manager.

[33:59] God has given you that gift to manage wisely. To use resourcefully. A steward manages what belongs to somebody else.

And that really should change the way we view what God has given us. That ability, that opportunity, those resources, that gift that you have ultimately belong to him. Are we using it for him?

And Peter calls his grace, God's grace, manifold. What does that mean? It means diverse. It means many. Not everybody serves the same way. Not everybody has the same abilities.

Not everybody fills the same role. And that's the point. When you look at the church, you look at the body of Christ, not everybody can be the same part. But we all have to be working together in unison. And God has chosen to display his grace through a varied body of believers.

And he brings us all together and it makes a beautiful picture. And so don't spend your life wishing you had somebody else's gift. Just faithfully use what God has given you.

[35:03] That's what Peter tells us. And he says when you use that gift, you need to speak, you need to serve in God's strength. Because that's really the two categories he gives.

He doesn't go down administration and encouragement and prophecy and all of these things. He said here's a couple things you can use it for. Speaking and serving. See, the idea is if God gives you the opportunity to speak his truth, handle it faithfully.

I mean this really would apply to people that stand up and they teach in the church. They stand behind the pulpit and they open the word of God. God, the authority that I have as your pastor is not in me. The authority that I have is solely in the word of God.

And anybody that opens the word of God in this church should have that same mentality. That we speak as the oracles of God. Not that we have some vision and prophecy nobody else has. No, we just are speaking, thus saith the Lord.

That is the idea. If you serve, don't just serve as though everything depends on your own strength. Serve with the strength that God supplies.

[36:08] It doesn't matter what you do. It doesn't matter if you make coffee, if you're in the nursery. Brother Kevin, it seems, yeah, it may seem easy. Brother Kevin just pushes some buttons in the sound booth. But listen, that's the strength that God gives him.

Hey, the greeters that are at the door, yeah, we can all open a door. But the idea is where you serve, do it for the Lord. Use the strength of the Lord. Be thankful that you have an opportunity. Be thankful you have a ministry that you can just use for the glorification of God.

If God gave you the ability and he supplied you the strength, you can't take credit for it. Peter says that's what it's about. That whatever you're doing, do it to the Lord. Paul tells us earlier, for whatever you eat, whatever you drink, do it for the glory of God.

That everything in our life is for that. So why do we pray seriously? Why do we love deeply? Why should we serve faithfully? What's the purpose behind that? Well, Peter closes this section by reminding us at the end of verse 11, we do that because we live for God's glory.

Look at the very end of verse number 11. That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever.

[37:21] Amen. We see there at the end of verse 11, in the middle actually, in all things. See, when we pray with clear minds and we're focused on God, he gets the glory.

When we love one another fervently and persistently and practically, God gets the glory for that.

When we forgive one another instead of keeping score, God gets the glory.

When we open our lives to people and we minister to them, when we use the gift and the strength that God gives us, he gets the glory. And Peter's just saying, in all things, that's the purpose behind it.

The purpose why we do these things, the purpose why we have greeters and we do these things, is not to grow the numbers of this church. Here's the reason, to give God the glory. We sang the song, to God be the glory, great things he hath done.

Listen, we look out and we see what God is doing at Central Baptist Church. I'm thankful, but that's the key. He's doing it. This is the Lord's work and it's marvelous in our eyes. And that's the goal.

[38:28] And when you think about it, he's the only one that deserves the glory. It's his gift. It's his opportunity. It's his strength. He's the one that provides the grace. The goal is not to make much of our lives.

And for people to walk in these doors and say, yeah, look at us at Central Baptist Church. We got it going on. No, here's what we want to see. Jesus. We're just here serving Jesus because he loves us so much.

It's to use our lives to make much of him. That's what life is all about. To know him and to make him known. The end of the chief end of man is this, to glorify God.

And Peter becomes so overwhelmed with that truth that the instruction that he's giving, it just turns into worship. To whom be praise and dominion and forever and ever.

Amen. He doesn't know what else to say. He just says, Lord, thank you so much. I can't believe I get to worship you. I can't believe I get to serve you. And see, Peter began this passage by reminding us that the end is coming.

[39:29] But by the time we come to verse 11, he's just pointing to the one who's worthy of the glory, who's worthy of the dominion, and his dominion will never end. And he's saying, yes, it might look scary, but let me just point you to the person that actually knows what's going on.

You keep your eyes on Jesus. Life's going to be hard, but trust him. Do these things. Keep this in your mind.

See, we don't know when Jesus is going to return. We don't know how much time any of us have left. Some of us, the Lord may call us home before he comes back. Peter doesn't seem to be concerned that we know when he's coming or when our time is going to come to end. But he is concerned with what we do until that happens. How we live until he comes back. And I love the word of God because some people think, well, it's super difficult. I think the word of God is super practical. And here's the instructions. Pray seriously. Love deeply. Serve faithfully. And live for God's glory.

[40 : 36] The end of all things is at hand. But let's do that. Because one day, time will be no more. One day, all things are going to be made right.

God is keeping a scoreboard, and God is just, and he is right. He will handle it. But Peter reminds us, until then, make the time count. Whatever time you have left, just live it for him. See, you don't have to know how much time you have left to know what to do with the time that you do have left. He's laid it out. He said, this is what it looks like. Would we be a church that lives this way?

Would we be moms and dads that live this way? Would we be teenagers that live this way? Would we be friends and neighbors that live this way? Because when we live this way, it's going to affect other people.

And they're going to realize, I want what they have. Peter knew that if the readers would, if his readers would really take root of this, it would change not just their life, but those around them.

[41 : 35] That our life should be a sign that just points to Jesus constantly. Would God help us make the time count? Would you stand?