

The Weathered Soldier Speaks: 2 Peter 1:1-2

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[0:00] Amen. You enjoy that church? Say amen. It was good.

! Well, we are helping you in your personal devotions, your personal abiding time, whatever you want! If you were not here for the ministry discipleship breakfast, we are helping you in your personal ministry. We are going to be gathering next week, 9 a.m., in our discipleship groups, and they are divided by zip code, and you can get the information out at the adult discipleship table in the foyer, but we're going to be doing the minor prophets. And so this week, we get to read Hosea chapters one through three. And so we are already going to be in the study before we gather next Sunday, so come prepared. If you have been doing something else for your devotions, hopefully you can add something in. And if you have not been in God's Word, who hasn't been reading? Should we raise our hands? No, we're not going to do that. But this is going to help us. Sometimes the hardest thing is what should I study? What should I read? That's why for me, I just keep going through the Bible every year. It just, it just, it makes sense. But this is what we're going to be doing, and this gives you something for you to order your week in terms of just time with the Lord by. So I want to encourage you to do that. Next week, we're going to hit the ground running, and in your discipleship groups for adults, our elders, we're going to be talking about Hosea chapter one through three. So this is what we're doing this week. Amen? All right. All right. That's, that's the only pep talk I'm giving you.

So, and you guys were, you guys were on time, like nobody got locked out. It was amazing. That was, that was from this morning. So at any rate, if you guys have a copy of the scripture to turn open to, second Peter, we were actually beginning a new sermon series. We're going to be going through second Peter. It'll take us up to the holidays. And so I'm looking forward to, to beginning this study with us this morning. But let me, let me begin our time asking the Lord's help and committing our, our time to him. So join me.

Lord, we love the, how the psalmist writes in Psalm 100, know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us and we are his. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture enter his gates with thanksgiving. His courts with praise. Give thanks to him. Bless his name. Father, we want to do that this morning. We have been doing that and we want to continue to do that.

All of this is worship, whether it's adoration or yielding our hearts to the proclamation of your word, all of its worship. And Lord, we pray that we would, that we would be here in a posture of worship. Lord, would you help us today? Would you help us this morning? Help us to have a, a clear vision of, of who you are and, and what, what this thing, the gospel is and the beauty that it is for those who have trusted in Christ. And Lord, I pray for those that are here that have never bowed their knee to you, Jesus, that you would do a work by your spirit and you would draw men and women, young people unto yourself. So Lord, we commit our time. We thank you for just our friend, Peter. Lord, what a gift he is, uh, that though dead, he still speaks and, and through his life and his faithfulness, uh, his labor will minister to us this morning, we believe. And so we commit our time.

[3:50] Would you each do us something we could leave with and, uh, think about, consider this week. So transform us more into the image of Jesus because we have met in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

So we are going to be looking at, uh, second Peter, um, just the first two verses and really, really the first verse. Um, and we'll, we'll get to the second, but really just the first verse this morning. It's really an introduction to the book and maybe to, uh, begin our thinking a little bit, um, kind of land us where, where is this, uh, book, uh, this letter emanating from, uh, it's July of, uh, of 64 AD and Nero Emperor Nero is credited with burning Rome. We get that. We learn that from the Roman historian Tacitus, who a few decades later, uh, said that the rumors point to Nero and, um, that he didn't like the city planning. He set portion of the city on fire so he could then start over. The city burned for 10

days, thousands perished in the fire. And to get the attention off himself, Nero blamed the Christians. They are the problem. Friends, that's not a new phenomenon. It's been going on since the beginning of the church. That was a spirit of the age to which Peter had to minister and, uh, describing some of the difficulties that Christians were facing. We believe that Peter was in Rome, uh, when he wrote this, uh, church history records that he's there towards the end of his ministry at his death. Um, he also makes a reference to being in Rome in his first letter where he talks about this greeting that he's bringing. And he says in first Peter 5:13 from Babylon. And, uh, most scholars believe that is a metaphor that he uses to describe Rome, this, this, this, this city of moral, of loose moral, uh, principles, uh, of living, um, and perhaps using Babylon as a metaphor to conceal his location, uh, if the letter falls into wrong hands due to the persecution. In our study for the next several months, we are now considering his second letter that he writes. Um, how do we know this is his second letter? Well, I love what Billy Graham says. He says, the Bible is its own best commentary. And so actually we, we learned that this is his second letter, not because, uh, it's, it's the chapter title and, and the chapter reference there, but actually because Peter writes this in second Peter three one, he says, now this is now the second letter that I am writing to you. Beloved in both of them, I am stirring you up your sincere mind by way of reminder. So actually Peter tells us, how do we know it's a second letter? Because Peter tells us so. And I want us to notice something here that this second letter is actually going to the same folks that he wrote to in first Peter. Um, those that he called elect exiles scattered throughout Asia Minor, Turkey. We know the audience is the same because the Bible is its own best commentary. This is now the second letter I'm writing to you. Same audience. Second Peter is a book actually that some question in the early churches to its inclusion, um, in the New Testament canon. Uh, what is a canon? Uh, just means measuring rod standard. Those books that, that, that are decided that, that, that they have identified the, this is the word of God. And, and why was second Peter in question? It's because in second Peter, there are a number of words, um, that are unique to second Peter. That sounds very unlike first Peter. In fact, there's like 57 of them, uh, in second Peter can compare to the rest of the new Testament. This is just a fisherman. Um, and yet he's using this vocabulary that's, that, that seems to be a bit unique. Um, in Greek, this is, this is for your next dinner party. You want to impress. You can say, yeah, we heard Jay said in, in, in second Peter, there's like 57 hopoxlegomenas.

[8:16] And you're like, whoa, hopoxlegomena, which basically just means said once. There are these unique words used once. Um, and it may be that Peter is utilizing a secretary here to transcribe the letter.

Um, or perhaps there's something unusual occurring in Peter's mind and his heart as he writes. And we will maybe consider that in a few moments. The thing that I want us to be assured of is second Peter was recognized as part of the new Testament canon in the fourth century, uh, both at the, the councils of Hippo and Carthage, they recognize this, but of course the early church had already come to recognize this, uh, centuries, uh, leading up to that point. Now, when did Peter write this final letter? History tells us Peter was eventually executed for his faith in Rome, um, somewhere in the vicinity of 64 to 67 AD. The earliest external testimony of Peter's death comes from an individual by the name of Clement of Rome in 80-96. And in his, uh, letter, first Clement, he writes from Rome to Corinth about Peter's martyrdom. And he writes this because of jealousy and envy, the greatest and most righteous pillars were persecuted and contended unto death. Peter, who through unjust envy endured not one, but two or two, but many labors and thus having born his testimony went to the place of glory that was due him. So church history tells us Peter was martyred for his faith. And then Eusebius in his book entitled Ecclesiastical History in 325 says this Nero publicly announced himself as the chief enemy of God was led on in his fury to slaughter the apostles. Paul is therefore said to have been beheaded at Rome and Peter to have been crucified under him. And this account is confirmed by the fact that the names of Peter and Paul still remain in the cemeteries of that city, even to this day. So let me suggest to us the penning of this letter. Peter is approaching the end. In fact, listen to what he writes here in 2 Peter 1, 13 to 15, he says this, I think it right as long as I am in this body to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon. As our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me, and I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. I want us to sort of feel the gravity of this letter.

Some have even suggested that this letter could have been scribed. We have no evidence, we don't know this, but some have suggested that he writes this even in the evening before his execution. And I believe that this should actually change the way that we study this book, the way that we read this letter.

This is a soldier, a faithful soldier of Christ facing his final moments on earth. And he's penning a final word to those most precious to him. There's a somberness. There's a sobering spirit.

[11:58] I think some of us sort of can connect it a bit with sort of the last few days as we've had like the 25th anniversary of 9-11. And if you have been on social media at all or read the news, and maybe you've heard some of the final phone calls, right? Folks on airplanes, folks stuck in in the World Trade Center and those final, and they have the recording. And I find my, I found myself this past Friday just listening to, to these phone calls home. And I was just like, it got to the point where I'm like, I just hit that threshold of like, it was just, it was almost too much. Because you're hearing final words of somebody sharing with somebody most precious to them. Like there's no, there is just, it's like, I'm just going to be completely transparent. Like you're a treasure. I love you.

This may be the last conversation that we have, the last, the last words you hear from me. That's this letter, friends. This is Peter's goodbye note. And I want us to feel just the intensity and the soberness of the words that he shares with us.

There are raw emotions we will find in Peter's words. So make no mistake, this is his farewell note. And you hear the concern and you hear the urgency that he has to those that he loves, these believers in Christ. Many scattered, some experiencing persecution. And what is he saying? You'll hear it in the words as we study it in the coming weeks where he says, hey, verse one, or chapter one, verse 10, I don't want you to fall away from Jesus. I have a few things I can say. I don't want you to fall away. He says that again then in chapter three, verse 17. I don't want you to lose stability. I don't want you to fall in your face. Peter fell.

He knows what it's like to fall. He's like, I don't want you to fall. We've already heard him. I want to stir up your faith. He says that in chapter one, verse 13, and in chapter three, verse one. I want to stir your faith up. I want to stir it up. What does it mean to stir? It means to, what do you, I want to wake you up. Stay awake, Christians.

[14:05] And there's an urgency that we hear in Peter's voice. I don't want anybody to shipwreck your faith.

And actually, as we read through this letter, there's warning in it. In fact, all of chapter two is basically given to don't believe the false teachers that are out there.

These are individuals given to greed, feeding their flesh. He says in chapter two, 14, they have eyes full of adultery. They're going to shipwreck your faith. These false teachers, they're, and then he says in chapter two, verse 17, they're waterless springs promising life.

They're not going to give. Friends, church, those that we give airtime to in our minds and our hearts, they, that matters profoundly.

Those that we allow to influence us, it matters profoundly. I was reading the webpage of a former pastor, spiritual leader. He still considers himself a spiritual influencer. Shipwrecked his faith. Denied the faith at one point. And on his webpage, this is his assertion now. And I have, if I look, I have friends still continuing to follow this individual. And his big declaration is this, I am happily uncertain. Don't let that individual influence you influence you. I'm happily uncertain as though it's so noble to be so open-minded and to know nothing. You would not be happily uncertain if you were going to a physician and you're hearing him say, well, it could be this, could be that. I'm not sure, but there's a lot of things you could try.

[16:09] I don't know. What do you think? You'd be finding a new doctor. And yet somehow spiritual leaders, it's like a noble thing to just be happily uncertain. Oh, I'm just like, that's not noble.

There's nothing like, like, it's not authentic. It's really, it's cowardice. We need to be certain. There are some things we need to be certain about.

Essentially, the gospel. Now, is Jesus going to arrive at this time? Or is he going to return at this time? Or is he going to return at this time? We can be a little bit more open-handed.

But on the gospel, the salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, non-negotiable. Let's not be happily uncertain there. So those that we listen to, that we give voice to in our lives, man, it matters profoundly. And Peter is like, stop buying into, there's nothing new.

And then chapter three, he goes after those that are just denying that the Lord's going to return. Those that are saying, it's fairy tale. Friends, that's our culture.

[17:24] We're glib, we're sarcastic, everything's a meme. Oh, Jesus is returning? It's not a new, it's not a new, like, challenge to the faith. And there are many that believe it's just never going to happen. Life's just going to go on the way it always has. So just live for your appetites. I still remember the conversation I had with one of my passengers. They're asking what I believe. And then I said, yeah, and I believe Jesus is going to return to planet earth. And they're like, what? It was so foreign, this idea. Like, yeah. And we need to be ready because he's the maker of heaven and earth. He's coming back for his place. And I think it was like shocking. But I think the person was so shocked by the fact that I was, there was a seriousness and there was an earnestness.

I was like, yeah, that's what I believe. And I didn't apologize. I was not happily uncertain. Peter's going to go after those because he knows better. He's not believing fairy tale.

I mean, in his final breath, he's fighting for the faith of those who already believe. And in fact, he says in 2 Peter 1:16, hey, we did not follow cleverly devised myth when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Peter's like, it's not a fairy tale. I'm going to be very certain it's not a fairy tale because I was there at the transfiguration. I saw it with my own eyes. Jesus is God. He will return. So friends, stand strong. That's this letter. And this letter, friends, is actually Peter's like final letter here is how I, it's one of the lenses that I use as I think about preaching. It's what we do when we gather every Sunday. As he's laboring for our belief in this letter, that's what Scott does. That's what I do. That's what Noah does. When we're up here proclaiming the word, we're laboring. We're fighting for your belief. We want to strengthen your belief for another day, for another week, for another month, for another year. This is the narrative that defines us. And we want you to be convinced of that because it will fuel then the life you live of worship. And so I see preaching as we're laboring for belief. And we borrow courage and we borrow faith. And I think that's why when we come together, sometimes it's even good for somebody to say amen. Amen. Because then somebody is like, whoa, they believe that. Man, that stirs me up. It's a participation. Like, let's not get crazy.

I need to say some things. Don't just say amen the whole time. But I think we stir one another up because we're like, yes, that's true. That's true. Feel the weight. Feel the emotion. This is a weather.

[20:27] This is the end of Peter's life. And he's speaking to us, church. He's speaking to us. I think as he penned these words, he had others in mind that were yet to come to faith, those that had yet even to be born. So let's listen. And maybe because of the urgency of the occasion, Peter's becoming more eloquent than he typically is. He's like, I'm going to pour it all out here. So that's our introduction.

You guys ready? You guys ready? Let's do this thing. All right. Second Peter chapter one, verses one and two. Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and savior, Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The first thing that we observe here, and we're going to camp on for a bit, it's really the way that the author describes himself. And he does it in a couple of ways.

He does it both by the names that he signs this letter with, along with the titles that he uses to describe himself. And we'll consider both. First, what are the names that he lists himself as? He says, Simeon Peter. Simeon, Hebrew, Shimon in the Hebrew, but the more Greek pronunciation is Simon.

Simon. This is his birth name. This is what his parents named him when he was born. And then he says, Simeon Peter. Peter, or Cephas. You've heard that in the Aramaic, what they spoke. But this is the name that Jesus gives him upon his great confession at Caesarea Philippi. Jesus says, hey, Simon, Simeon, I'm going to name you Peter. Petros.

[22:33] Petros. Rock. Little rock, but it's a rock nonetheless. I mean, recall in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus actually uses a play on words. Peter, you are a Petros. You are a little rock.

My church, however, will be built upon the Petra, which is the boulder. Your profession of faith in the Gospel. That's the boulder. And Peter knew this because Peter even says in 1 Peter 2:7, Jesus is the boulder. He's the cornerstone. So Matthew 16:18 is not this ecclesiastical charter to set up Peter as the first pope. I think that is a massive exegetical leap.

But I want us to ponder here. It's interesting to me. Peter signs this letter with both of his names. He didn't do that in letter number one. In fact, 1 Peter 1:1, he just writes, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Is this stylistic? Maybe. I actually believe something more is going on here, knowing the

occasion of his writing. That Peter is writing just days, hours before his death. He's in a state of great honesty, transparency. Think about some of those conversations maybe some of you heard from 9-11. Those final phone calls. Just, it's all there.

I haven't told you in a while. I just love you. Like every, it's just, and I think Peter's in that state. These names, they're not used just to draw together the Jewish and the Greek audience. I think these names actually describe the great paradox and the journey of sanctification in Peter's life. It's almost as if Peter's saying, I don't always behave like Peter the rock. I once was, and some days I continue to act like Simeon, like Simon.

[24:44] The mercurial, the unstable, the one that often falls. And so what we're observing here, church, is this weathered soldier looking back upon his life, and I believe recognizing that he is the paradox, a paradox of two men.

And yet, within it all, within it all, God's grace is present. Peter, Simon, he had significant failings. And they're recorded for us. He denied Jesus to two different servant girls outside of Caiaphas' house, and then to a group of servants. And it's interesting, in John 18, 26, it says, one of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, did I not see you in the garden with him?

Peter, Peter again denied it. At once, the rooster crowed. It's like this guy is a paradox. He's a juxtaposition of these two men.

Earlier in the evening, there's like this violent allegiance that Peter has to Jesus. And then by later in the night, he is aggressively denying that he knows him.

[26:06] Some days, I don't act like Peter. Or recall the faith that faltered. He's out walking on the water, and he cries out in Matthew 14, Lord, save me! And Jesus is like, well, you have little faith.

Or how about when he's rebuked by Paul, after buckling under pressure of the Jewish believers demanding that Gentile believers obey the Mosaic law. In Galatians 2, 11, it says, but when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him, this is what Paul says, to his face, because he stood condemned. And you just have to wonder if Peter, if he's just like internally, like what's going on? It's like, is he, as he's writing this, oh man, I was so dumb at times. I was so foolish at times. Some days of just behaving like I was the man that I used to be.

Still a combination on some days of the two. Because we see in Peter's life, there's also these incredible moments. These rock-like, these Peter moments.

His testimony after being flogged in Jerusalem, it says in Acts 5, 41, then they left the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. Like, Peter's like, we got to suffer for Jesus?

[27:32] And there's this courage. He's like, he's lion-like in these moments. Or even the way that at the end of his life, there's this courage as he's encouraging his bride.

Church history doesn't give us Peter's, like, his wife's name. We know he's married. Paul remarks in 1 Corinthians 9, 7, we, you know, hey, do we not have a right to take a believing wife as other apostles and the brother of our Lord and Cephas?

Peter had a wife. Jesus did a miracle. Heals his mother-in-law in Matthew 8. So we know that Peter was married. And we don't often think about Peter being part of, like, this ministry couple, but he was.

And we love at the end of his days, like, when she is being executed, she's being led away. In the second century, there's a church father record that when Peter saw his wife being led away to execution, he calls to her, he calls her by name, and he encourages her.

And what does he say? He says, sweetheart, we don't know our names, sweetheart. Remember the Lord. Remember the Lord. There's great courage. And so really, maybe the key question for us this morning is, the paradox of this man is, how did Simon become Peter?

[28:50] And I would just simply say this, Peter was only Peter because of who? Because of Jesus. I think this first description at the end of Peter's life is this.

The man that I am today is because of and solely and only because of grace. That's it. I am who I am because of God's grace.

And I'm laying it out there. I'm both Simon and Peter. And some days I'm a juxtaposition of both. But God's grace is everything.

And I think at the end of his life, he sees it so clearly. It really is about God's wonderful, ridiculous grace. Simon got a chance in this lifetime to be Peter only because of Jesus.

Amen? That's your story if you're in Christ this morning. Amen? Amen? It's fascinating to think about the fact that many of us met one another here and not in the bar or at some other sort of thing that we were doing.

[30:01] Or, you know, it's like we met one another here. Like we are different people today because of God's grace. And there's some days we behave more like we're Simon.

And yet God's grace is still good and everything. And maybe you're here this morning having had a very Simon-esque week. Maybe a Simon-esque month.

Maybe it's been a year or a decade. I just want to remind us this morning, you're Peter. The Lord's given you a new name if you're in Christ.

So stop swallowing the lies that you are beyond grace. I was talking with Scott earlier this week and it was like we were talking about like what is it?

What is it about grace? And it seems to me that those that struggle with grace, it's often not those sins that we committed before we knew Christ. It's those that we committed once we profess Christ. And that's where the enemy knows how to like, mmm.

[31:06] You're still Peter. You're still Peter. It's remarkable to me that Jesus told all of his men, all of the apostles, every single one of you is going to fall away.

The night, the night when he was being led to be crucified the next day. And he didn't condemn him. Isn't that cool? It says Jesus saying, you know what, you're all going to fall, but you're still my A team. What? We're not like that. But God is. The writer of Hebrews 4 says, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need. Let us draw near to the throne of effort.

To the throne of anger. To the throne of shame. What does it say?

[32:21] The throne of grace. So unlike this world. Peter was Peter only because of Jesus.

And so are you and so am I. Well let's consider these titles that he used to describe himself. He says, hey, verse 1, Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.

A servant and an apostle. There's a giant gap between those two. Like a CEO and a janitor.

If you're thinking maybe an organization. Servant, the lowest class in society, an apostle. It's the highest authority in the early church.

Jesus says in Matthew 10, 40, whoever receives you receives me. Whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. So they had this authority of God. And yet, very different strata of importance between the names.

[33:32] But Peter, he mentions something here in this final letter. He just says, hey, I'm a servant. I'm a servant. He didn't do that actually in his first letter. He just said, Peter, an apostle.

At the end, he's like, you guys, you need to understand and be sober on this. I'm a servant of Jesus. Yeah, I function in the role of apostle. But I am a servant of Jesus. At the end of his life, he understands.

Great, I've accomplished things for the Lord. But you know what? First and foremost, I'm just a servant of Jesus. I'm a Christian first.

I'm a man saved by grace first. He's facing death. And I think he kind of says, hey, for your status, it doesn't mean anything.

You know what means something? Being connected to Jesus. He wasn't accepted by Jesus because of that which he accomplished, friends.

[34:29] And I think Peter is sober-minded. He has a humble view of himself, thinking soberly about himself. And he just recognizes everything that I am, who I am.

It's because of Jesus. Because of his extravagant, ridiculous, confounding grace over my life. And he's just happy. He's content. I can be nobody.

And I still got it all. Because I have the Lord. And I think, friends, if we would just somehow get here sooner versus later, I believe there would be greater joy in our souls.

In the way that we live. Right? We wouldn't be stressing, fretting over trying to achieve significance, accomplishments, titles. I think we would still work heartily as unto the Lord in our task.

It would just that we would be doing it out of worship. And mission. And just the joy of, like, I belong to Jesus, you belong to Jesus? Well, let's just serve them together.

[35 : 31] The most important thing about you, if you're in Christ today, number one, that you are created in the image of God. But secondly, through Jesus, he's made you his own.

You're actually loved by God. You're forgiven by God. You are his exquisite workmanship, even on your Simon days.

The theologian Karl Barth in 1962, he was asked this question when he visited America.

How would he summarize, like, the essence of all the things that he wrote? He wrote millions of words and published a ton. It's like, how would you summarize the essence of all these words that you've published?

This guy was just brighter than bright. And he replied this. Well, Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so.

[36 : 34] His intellect didn't give him value. It was Jesus in his life. He was like, I'm cool to be a servant of Jesus. It's enough. And I would say, hopefully, it doesn't take us to getting to the end of our lives and looking back to finally see, like, oh, yeah.

God's fingerprints, his patience, his kindness is everywhere. And then finally to get grace. Like, get it now. Get it now. God's grace in your life is power.

God's grace in your life is freedom. It allows us just to actually be our true selves. God's grace in your life is power. Well, on that note, how does Peter then describe those that he sends this letter to?

He says this in the second part of verse 1. He says, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, before we get to how he describes the recipients of this letter, I want us to note something here. How does Jesus describe, or how does Peter describe Jesus?

[37 : 44] This is like, this is like a serious deity, like, verse. And I want you to know this. Because he says here, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, in the Greek, it doesn't say, and our God and our Savior, as though they're two different individuals. There's one article, two nouns. So, God and Savior, they actually are describing the person of Jesus Christ.

This is a massive deity passage. So, just know that. It's so cool. He's God. He's Savior. That's Jesus. Well, Peter, how does he address them?

Even as a servant leader, an apostle, a church planner, a pastor teacher, what I want us to see is he recognize that he's just on equal footing with those that he's writing to. To all the other Christians, we're actually the same.

You actually have a faith of equal standing with ours. I'm no better than you. And I actually believe that. I actually believe that.

[38 : 52] You ever had an occasion, like, as a child, maybe you can think back, or maybe you're a parent and you have kids and you've noticed, like, adults on occasion that, like, get down on that level and will talk to a kid and they'll just be like, hey, I want to talk to you.

And they're, like, down here and the kid's like, whoa. You know, I mean, if it's Scott, like, he's a tall dude, so it's, like, it's a long way down. But, like, and the kid's like, whoa, you're talking to me like we're the same.

And I think that's what Peter's doing here. Yeah, we're actually the same. We're the same. We're on equal footing. We both are saved the same way.

We've obtained the same faith, like, we're equal. I'm not superior. And Peter gets this. He gets grace. He's added nothing to his salvation.

I mean, except his sin. It's all of us. We've contributed. That's what we've brought. That's why it's such a humbling thing to yield one's life to Jesus. Everything else in life, we're, like, feeling pretty good, like, I've accomplished something.

[40 : 04] But your salvation, the most important thing about you, this was all God. Whew. And I just love that Peter is just, he's marked by grace.

He gets it. There's something that just, and I think it just continued to just grow over his lifetime. I mean, every good sermon, I mean, at least according to my wife, has to have a horse illustration.

A movie reference to a horse movie. And so this is that time. In Seabiscuit, there's an argument between the owner and the trainer of the horse and who their jockey is going to be.

And what happens is the jockey just confesses that he is blind in one eye. Like, that's not a good thing to be, like, a one-eyed, you know, capable jockey. But the trainer's like, you've got to fire this

guy.

And then the owner, who's played by Jeff Bridges, who, in this film, he's just humbled. He's broken. He's, you see character. He's softening.

[41:12] Grace actually forming in his soul from kind of a worldly lens and through trial and failure. And you see a different spirit come out of him. And I love the line that he makes.

He's like, we're not going to throw our jockey away. And he says this, you don't throw a whole life away just because he's banged up a little bit. Like, no, he's our jockey. I think Peter's like that.

He's like, yeah, we're the same. We're the same. Not better. Friends, how did we obtain this salvation? Not through our works. Not through our charm.

Not through our charm. And it's interesting because it says, hey, you've obtained something. You've obtained a faith. This word obtain, it's used three other times in the New Testament.

But the thing I want us to see here is every time it's used, the person receiving an item actually did not earn it. They didn't just one day decide, I'm going to take that.

[42:09] All of the times it's used, it's given to them by casting lots. Okay? Just one example from Luke 1, 9, Zechariah, priest, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

So you get this priestly duty and it's chosen to you by lot. You didn't choose it. God essentially chose you. God sovereignly chose you through that mechanism. By the way, we don't cast lots today.

Last time we saw that was when they instilled the final apostle. But then what happened, right? Book of Acts, Holy Spirit comes. The Lord leads us through his spirit, not through the rolling of dice today. The Proverbs 16, 33, the lot is cast a lot.

Every decision from the Lord. But this word is like, you didn't decide it, God decided it. And that tells us actually, as Peter uses this word, I think it's a technical word here, salvation's a gift.

The faith that you have is a gift. It's all grace. And I think Peter at the end, he's this weary soldier, he understands. Especially as he recalls his own failings as a disciple.

[43:21] And he wants us to get it. Our salvation's a gift. And friends, it has very, very potent and practical implications then on our lives.

Grace is a gift. We're on equal footing with Peter.

Well, what does that mean for us? We're on equal footing with each other. I think it forms in us humility.

It forms in us graciousness, charity towards one another. It will impact the way we are married. How we behave towards our spouses.

It will impact the way that we parent. The way that we interact with our children. All relationships are improved.

[44:23] How we relate to the unbeliever even. If salvation's this gift, I'm on equal footing with one another. I'm not better. I didn't just, oh, get it. I'm going to. So, I'm not better than that guy that I'm going to drive by at some point this week with a sign.

Maybe he looks like he's disheveled and probably doesn't smell great. I'm not better. You're not better. We're not better. Well, here's the conclusion, friends.

Peter's spirit at the end, I think, is, do you just see, it's one of humility. It's one of great humility. And I think that humility, that charity, the graciousness, it emanates from what?

I think he understands it. He gets it at the end. He gets the gospel. He gets that it's grace. And I think that's why he's laboring for us. I want you to understand it.

It's freedom. It's freedom. It's joy. And in fact, he says that in verse 2. He says, may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

[45:33] May grace. I want you to get it. Understand it. He wants that for us. Jesus wants that for us. And I believe Peter is burdened for Christians here at the end.

At the end of his life, he wants us to get it at a heart level. This is the thing that ought to liberate you. That you are saved by God's merciful, unbelievable, beautiful, confounding grace.

We didn't deserve it. We didn't deserve it. We didn't earn it. And it's the most powerful force on planet Earth, friends. God's grace for sinful people.

I'll end with this. I drove a woman two weeks ago. And as we were conversing, she shared with me kind of struggling with the idea of she'd gone to churches and wasn't attending one.

But just like God's grace and mercy. And some of it was wrapped up into some emotional doubt. Her son two years ago drowned in the Spokane River.

[46:51] And it was a bully situation. And just still struggling over that. And I just made the comment. I said, you know what? God understands that. Because God gave up his son willingly.

And it kind of floored her. Because she was like, she's grieving the loss of her son. She knows the pain. She's like, I know that pain. That God would do that? And she had this connection with that's who God is? And it was like, I could follow that God.

I'll follow that God. But it was this picture of grace. Of like that God was willing to enter into pain and to suffering for her good. And it ministered profoundly to her.

That's just gospel truth. And I want us to live with that church today. Because it's joy. Amen?

Father, we love you. We're so thankful that you are unlike us.

That we live in this world of ungrace. And yet you are so different. Lord, it's remarkable to me that your guys, all of them to a man, would deny you.

[47:53] And you even told them they would. So that they could understand on the backside of that. That you were still there. That you were still good. In fact, you were better than they thought. So Lord, I pray for your people this morning.

If there are some here that maybe the enemy has been beating them up. Because of maybe just behaving a lot like Simon. And this week, this year.

Lord, I pray that this would be a call to approach the throne of grace boldly. And Lord, that we would also do it not alone. But we would decide in our hearts to be known.

To do this together. That we could stir one another up towards you. This is a group thing. It's a team event. Like we're a family. And I pray, God, your blessing on our discipleship gatherings that happen every Sunday and all through the week.

In every strata of age. Every demographic. Lord, I pray that we would be conformed in the image of Christ. And Lord, I pray that you would be doing work in us. So that you could do mighty work through us.

[49:00] And Lord, we would love to baptize people. This year. Next year. To come to faith. Lord, we're here. Your people. You use your church. You advance your kingdom. And so we just say, Lord, use us.

We love you, Jesus. It's in your name we pray. Amen.