

# The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 4:1-6

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[ 0:00 ] Amen. Amen. Good morning, friends. Good to be here. It's the right way for God's people to! To gather, to worship, to think about our Savior, to adore Him, and to exhort one another.

And so thankful for this church and just the privilege to be a part of what God's doing here. We have a new book for those of you that read. And you can audible, that counts. But we have a new book for our book club, our Dead Theologian Society. We read about four books a year. We just finished reading Johnny, which is the biography on Johnny Erickson Tada. And that was announced. We had a great discussion this week. But we're going to be doing a Frank Turek book. This is kind of his kind of book that he's known for, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Yes, it's another apologetic book that I'm assigning you in addition to the one that the class that I'm a part of is reading. But I wanted us to be familiar with this. I get a chance in April to serve at a conference that he will be speaking at on the west side. And I would love to bring some of you along with us to go and hear him. Greg Koka will also be at that conference. And I would love to take a group over to the Seattle area. And then it'll be fun to leave Seattle together. That'll be wonderful.

So at any rate, you know, I think Frank is, along with Greg, I think are two of my favorite apologists. I think they're the two leading apologists in our day and super helpful to train us to think about how do we converse with the unbeliever? How do we answer questions? How do we share the hope that we have in Christ in a way that is thoughtful? So go ahead and turn open to 1 Peter chapter 4. We're now in chapter 4. We're just cruising along. We're going to be looking at the first six verses together this morning. And I've entitled this message, A Whole New Trajectory. So you can write that in your notes if you like to title your sermons. But let me pray for a time and then see what the Lord has for us.

Let's pray. Lord, I think about what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 33 when he cried out, Let the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Lord, that doesn't reflect the planet we live on today. But we know there's a day coming when it will. And until that day, we want to be those that do stand in awe of You. Father, we want our reverence to increase because we have gathered together, because we have sung songs unto You, because we've been exposed and heard the proclamation of Your Word. Lord, we want to enter into this week feeling smaller and seeing You as bigger, because when that occurs, we walk in peace, we walk in joy.

[ 3:09 ] And so, Lord, we do use this morning to remind us of this calling on each of our lives as for those that have claimed Jesus, that have bowed their knee, that You now call us disciples.

And it's a complete 180. It's a different sort of life now. Would You remind us of who we are and whose we are in this time now? In Jesus' name and all God's people said, Amen.

Amen. So I was reflecting back. It's been a while. Back in, I think, 1991. It's been a long time. But that was the year that I decided to turn out and walk on to the Division I University of Washington Husky football team. Do they have one of those that? Never mind. Well, it's really not relevant. But I remember deciding I would turn out. And then I was talking to players, current players at the time, on what to expect, walking on to the spring football team.

And they were saying, man, you don't know what you just got yourself into because we have this thing called mat drills. I'm like, mat drills? That doesn't sound scary. And they're like, you should be afraid. And what mat drills consisted of was in the springtime, we had like two days, two weeks, and we would go into Heck Ed. And there was a wrestling room up in the second story with just like, you know, gymnastic mats. And part of the training was you would be up there for just half an hour at a time. And you would be running your brains out till you just wanted to die. You didn't care. You're like, my life's over. I just want to die. And if you didn't keep up, the coach would send you back and you have to do it all again. You'd have to do like these, you know, plant yourself down, you'd have to roll, tumble. I mean, it was, it lived up to the hype. I'm glad that I knew what was coming. There was no bait and switch. It wasn't easy. I knew it would be hard. And it turned out that it was just that. It was incredibly hard. But despite the challenge, it actually was a very gratifying experience after we were done with it. And I just think about that experience.

I knew what I was getting into because people told me. And I just wonder if when we, came to faith in Christ, if we really knew what we were getting into, sort of like parents for the first time, or some of you like not married, but you're thinking, man, I'm going to, marriage is going to be bliss. It's going to be wonderful. It's going to be like Scott and Wendy all the time.

[ 5 : 59 ] Right? And you're like, this is going to be wonderful. And then you're like, wow, Lord's doing, this is harder than I thought. Or children, you're just like, man, that'll be so great.

They'll be the best behaved. And then you're like, wow, the idea seems so, you know, just bubble gum and rainbows. And it just, and then you got into it. And I don't know how you guys felt when you were thinking about when you came to faith in Christ for the first time. Because salvation's free. But here's the thing, discipleship's costly. And when you begin to realize, like, Jesus gave everything, and then he wants us to give everything. Not for our salvation, but in response, in terms of worship. And so now all of a sudden, we're growing. We have, there's a, there's a selflessness cost. The world can't orbit around me any longer. There's a generosity cost.

There's a courage cost, a holiness cost. I think for Christian men, men that come to faith in Christ, they don't realize, yeah, God really wants you to be a spiritual leader in your home.

To be strong and yet gentle. To be engaged emotionally. To be willing to sacrifice for your family. That type of spiritual leader. And so Peter today, he actually mentally prepares us for the life of discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple? Now, if you're in Christ, it's too late to pull out. You're in. Okay? But I think let's make sure that we're aware of what lies ahead for us. And so this morning, we're really going to seek to align our expectations with God's related to this new trajectory that he has called us to. So let's just read the passage together and then go through it a bit at a time. First Peter 4, 1 through 6. And Peter writes, since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.

For whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for human passions, but for the will of God. For the time has passed.

[ 8 : 15 ] Suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to these, with respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you.

But they will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead, for this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. Now the first thing that Peter does is he points out to us that Jesus has really remapped our lives, and he's wanting us to remap our expectations related to this new life. What does it mean to be a disciple? And so Peter began in verse 1, since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.

It sounds very Philippians 2-esque, right? Have the same mindset as Jesus. Arm yourself in the same way of thinking. What was the mindset of Jesus? Well, he existed in the form of God, but he didn't regard equality with God as something that he would grip and that he would grasp and try to hang on to.

He became a servant. Jesus was a servant, so arm yourself in the same way of thinking. So if Jesus was a servant, he's called his followers also to be servants. And here Peter states, Jesus endured suffering, so in turn we should expect to suffer as well. Jesus didn't live to gratify the flesh, but rather for the will of God. And so hence for us, we have been called to carry out his will, his mission in this life. And you have to wonder, as Peter is reminding the believers, here about this new trajectory for their lives, what it means to be a disciple, you have to wonder if there were Christians within the churches that Peter is addressing that were demonstrating very little transformation. And so he's having to remind them, arm yourselves, this is the way you need to think. Perhaps you haven't been thinking this way. And we've seen churches like this in Scripture. We know the church in Corinth. Very little transformation in many of the lives of those that claim the name of Christ. They started life living without restraint, and then they met Jesus, and they continue to live life without restraint. And in fact, in Corinth, it wasn't that they were just living this duplicitous life. They were one way when they gathered and different when they scattered.

They actually brought their vices and their flesh into the gathering of the church. It says in 1 Corinthians 11, just one example, verse 20, when you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. So there was this worldly leaven within that particular, within the Corinthian local assembly. And Peter is, he's reminding people, you've been changed. You're new. You have a different story.

[12:03] I get concerned when I hear this sort of verbiage from Christians where, say, you know what, I'm not about religion. I'm not about rules. I'm about Jesus.

Now, at first blush, it sounds kind of good. Kind of like that bumper sticker maybe you've seen from time to time, the coexist bumper sticker with all the religious symbols on it. And you see that in all the, at initial blush, you're like, oh, I guess that could be good, right? Let's live peaceably with all men. Let's not force any sort of belief system on anyone. That's a good thing. But that bumper sticker, at first blush, may look good, but ultimately, that's not the aim of that message there. The aim of that slogan is asserting something entirely different. In fact, that slogan is asserting like all these faith systems, they're all the same.

There's not one that stands above any of the others. In fact, they're all equally valid. And if you're the best sort of human, you just take all of them together and believe them all.

Become the religious pluralist. Problem with that is Jesus is very narrow in offering peace with God. I'm the way. That's it. I'm the door. There's one door. It's me.

There's one mediator between God and man. It's Jesus. Related to the assertion I mentioned before, like, I'm not about religion or rules.

[13:46] I'm about Jesus. I mean, that's great if what one means is that they're yielding their life to Jesus, to his word, to his spirit.

Or is that just an assertion and it's really code for, I say I'm about Jesus so that I can just dismiss all the parts of the Bible that cost me something.

And I would just suggest to us this morning that the essence of discipleship, which is what Peter's talking about here, it means that you are a learner.

You are a pupil. You are a follower. A disciple is a follower. And it's not just a simple transfer of information to help us out, but rather it's this resolve to emulate the life of our instructor.

And so the image of discipleship is the instructor, the rabbi, he's got a rope, he's thrown over his shoulder, and then his followers, his disciples, they've grabbed on, and they're like, we're not letting go.

[14:51] We're with you. Even if, like in John 6, where the food ran out, Jesus says, you're with me because I'm feeding you. And then later in John 6, I think it's verse 66, it's like it said many left.

He was saying difficult things, and they're like, I'm not with you anymore. But the disciples are like, I'm in it, through thick and thin. And so Peter's point here is, don't start life in a particular direction.

Add Jesus on, and then just keep going in that same direction. Discipleship is altering our original course, and then following a new course, in the spirit, in the power of God's spirit.

And friends, we've been empowered. We can actually live this new trajectory. God's in this business of sanctifying us. I love what the psalmist writes in Psalm 18, 29.

It says, for by my God, I can take on a troop. I can climb over a wall. Like we have capacity because God's spirit dwells in us.

[16:02] We're changing. The ways that we respond to people should be different today than they were even last year. I shared this story, I think, with our young adults a couple weeks ago, where it was after Christmas.

Everybody's returning stuff. I pull our vehicle. I'm taking Julie around. We hit the UPS store. It was like, it was a madhouse. And so I just dropped her off. And then I pulled up, not in front, but I pulled up a ways just to sort of get out of the way of people going in and out.

But I was on the curbside because I'm like, oh, she's going to be done, and then we'll go on to our next errand. And I'm just sitting there. I'm minding my own business. I'm not doing anything inflammatory. There's no bumper stickers on my vehicle.

It's just I'm just in my own space. And then somebody comes up and just starts rapping on the window. And I'm like, oh, okay. So I just, you know, I... But I, you know, I was, I didn't go...

Like, come on. Like, let's be smarter than that. Just, you know, so you can... Just halfway. And this guy just laid into me. And he was just so upset that I was parked on the curbside while he had to park in the parking lot.

[17:11] And I didn't want to go into this explanation of, well, you know, I'm in my vehicle, but you're not. I didn't... It was... He was just... He just wanted to fight. And I can tell you there would have been a day where I would have taken that and said something that I would have had to apologize for or been a little bit cheeky.

And it was just... I was so pleased. I was channeling my inner Scott Liddell, I think, because I was just... He just laid into me and I just said... I said, sir...

I said, you have a great day. And then I just... Very quickly. But I didn't say it to be like... I mean, it was just like, sir, have a great day.

And I was like, I don't even know where that came from. It was like, you know... And then, of course, I mean, that's when he just really shared words that you'll never hear from the pulpit. And...

But I was like, oh. But I was like, thank you, Lord. I didn't have that prepared. But I think in the moment, I was yielded to God's Spirit. And it was like, oh, I...

[18:14] You know, when you have those moments, God's at work in us, friends. And we should take note of those moments where we're like, oh. Man, I chose righteousness over sin here. I chose compassion.

Or I chose selflessness. You know, I didn't want to do this thing, but I gave of myself in an act of worship to you, Lord. That's a new trajectory. And it's good. It's so good.

And I think Peter's point here about, man, you're willing to suffer, and then you're not sinning. In fact, he says it this way.

Get my notes here. He says, arm yourself in the same way of thinking. For he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. I think we cease from sin when we have the mindset of, I'm going to serve you, Lord, and I'm even willing to suffer.

I think it's like we're putting a death blow to just that nerve center of sin in our life. And I think that's Peter's point here. Now, let's notice something else that Peter says here in verse 1.

[19:20] Because he says this. He says, hey, arm yourself with the same way of thinking. Arm yourself. When does an individual need to arm themselves?

That's rhetorical. Don't say anything. Okay? Because I know this crowd. I know my friends. Because I know some of you all the time, Jay. Right? Like, you're going on vacation.

Do you really need to? Yeah, definitely. It's like Christmas morning. I mean, you're opening gifts with your family. You're like, do you know my family? I am packing still, Jay. But in the context of what Peter's, like, using as a metaphor here, when do we arm ourselves?

Right? We arm ourselves when we're heading out into battle. It would be absurd if Scott Liddell and Jason Turner came to work on Tuesday.

And we decided we got a heavy week. So we're wearing, you know, we got our military kit, vest. You know, we've got all our clips for our, you know, things that we are going to carry in other pockets.

[20:36] And then we've got our night vision. And then we've got our helmets. Could you imagine us? And I'm just in my office in Scottsdale. And we're just geared out. We're just armed. And we're just, I'm like, hey, how's it working for you?

And I was like, oh man, Jay. I'm crushing it. I sent three emails this morning. I'm so glad I got my night vision. Like, it would be so absurd. And what I want us to see is Peter's using this term, arm yourself, because he wants us to think differently about the life of discipleship.

Scripture sees discipleship and the proclamation of the gospel in terms of warfare. Arm yourself. Let me give you a couple instances.

Philippians 2.25. Paul says, I have thought it necessary to send to you, Epaphroditus, my brother, and fellow worker, and fellow what? Fellow soldier.

2 Timothy 2.3. Share in the suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Peter's already alluded to this in chapter 2 in 1 Timothy 2.11.

[21:46] He says, Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. So we have in Scripture this now, this new sort of metaphor, image of discipleship.

Like, it's real. It's hard. It is a battle. And we're actually in a real war. And I think sometimes the stuff we see around, we're like, oh, this is the real.

And the invisible's the pretend. This is the real. The invisible is the really real. It's been a few years since I've seen this miniseries, but I remember, man, ages now.

But when Band of Brothers came out, there was like the companion series, the Pacific, and I remember watching that and seeing these guys on these small islands during World War II and what they experienced, and some of them just losing it mentally.

And it was just apparent to me that some of those individuals, they were not mentally prepared. They were not prepared for the thirst, just the physical thirst, for the bloodshed, for the living conditions, and some of them went a little crazy.

[ 23 : 04 ] They weren't ready for what they were to encounter. Peter's helping us to be prepared. We're actually in a very real battle.

Do we have the proper mindset related to the life as a follower of Jesus? There is a cost. It's war in our fight against sin.

I mean, abiding is mandatory for survival. Satan never takes a holiday. Your flesh never takes a holiday.

And so do we understand, like, man, maybe some of us have to be a little bit more thoughtful that we can't just go, oh, we're kind of, you know, sanctification's happening.

It's not. We have to be diligent, not legalistic, but like, man, I know. I have to, like, draw near to the Lord every day.

[ 24 : 11 ] And I had a friend who, he actually spent six months, he had a bad pornography addiction, and he spent six months praying, crying out to the Lord every day to deal with that and to destroy that piece of sin in his life.

Do we think like soldiers? It's so interesting, and there's lots of books written on why did Rome fall? I don't have a concise answer, but I will say this.

I think amongst other things, it didn't help that you had soldiers who began to take up farming and living the domestic life, and I think many of them forgot they were soldiers. Our new trajectory as disciples of Jesus, we've entered a battlefield in fighting against sin.

And it's not, not hard. It's hard. It's never easy. Hopefully you have that lens, and you realize, man, and I think it's wonderful that we're at the beginning of a year, and for some of you who are not connected in discipleship, you've got to.

Because if you're not, you're probably not just standing stationary. You're probably taking steps backwards. I'm really not trying to guilt you into showing up at 9, but 9 a.m. is pretty late.

[ 25 : 52 ] We can all do that. Let's continue. Verse 3. Peter writes, For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatries.

How do I end up with these passages, Scott? What? I don't, I don't, I don't know. Peter here is again showing that alignment with Jesus actually means that there's radical change in the trajectory of our lives.

You begin life, and maybe some of you who are very adept and skilled, you know, at pursuing evil, maybe you spent a portion of your life before Christ, just perfecting some of those skills, seeking darkness, feeding the flesh, living for sin, dreaming about sin, experimenting with sin.

That's no longer the case. You're new. You have a different identity, a different name, a different story.

And Peter's exhortation here is, hey, for the time has passed. You can't get it back, but that's over. The time's passed enough.

[ 27:07 ] Be done with it. Stop living, if you're there in two worlds, living a divided life, just being lukewarm.

I love the word given to that church in Revelation 3, the church of Laodicea. Jesus says to them in Revelation 3, 15, I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot.

Would that you were either cold or hot. For because you are lukewarm and neither hotter nor cold, I'm just going to spit you out of my mouth.

And if you don't understand the illustration there, in Laodicea, their water was piped in.

They had this incredible aqueduct system to get water from neighboring towns. And so if you wanted hot water, it came from six miles north from Hierapolis.

[ 28:12 ] They had hot springs there. And so the water just trickled down from Hierapolis and then if you wanted cold water, 11 miles to the east, you had Colossae. It was known for their pure cold water.

So that was piped in 11 miles from the east. Here's the problem. Water travels that far. By the time it gets to you, is that hot spring water hot?

No. Is that cold water still cold? No. And so like you're in Laodicea and you're just stuck with lukewarm water. That's good for nothing. You want to take a bath?

You want hot water. You need to quench your thirst? You want cold water. But all they had was lukewarm, blah, water. And Jesus says, that's what your life is like?

Just spit you out of my mouth. So Peter says, arm yourself to think like Jesus. What does that mean, Jay?

[ 29:12 ] Well, if called upon, just like Jesus was willing to suffer, are we willing to suffer? Are we resolved today not to walk in sin?

I love the example of Daniel. It says in Daniel 1 that he resolved that he would not defile himself when he was there in exile with the food from the court.

He's like, I resolved. I'm not partaking in that which steals glory from God in my life. I'm resolving. That's such a good word.

So maybe the practical question for all of us this morning, have we made any wartime, sin-busting decisions for our lives? Is there any that we've resolved? Let me give you an easy one.

It needs to be mainly for men, but it's for everyone. Job says in Job 31, here's one of his wartime decisions, one of his resolves in life.

[ 30:20 ] I have made a covenant with my eyes. How then could I gaze at a virgin? Very practical. Because for Job, he's like, I have resolved not to be the lust guy.

Our large screens down to our smallest screens, they give us access and opportunity to be the lust guy every single day. And it's those little foxes that spoil the vineyard.

You begin to dabble. Steals your joy. For men, it steals your courage. Steals your leadership. Proverbs 28.1, the righteous are bold as a lion.

When you're compromised, you're not bold as a lion. And it steals that. And the enemy loves it. We discussed the biography of Johnny Eric Satata this last week, Thursday night.

And I loved hearing her share at the end of the book now in her early 70s reflecting back. And she had an instance where as an older adult, somebody was cleaning out her house, they went into the closet, and they saw the stack of old records that she had.

[ 31:51 ] And many of them were records that were beloved to her, but they were songs that had anthems that were just antithetical to the Christian life. And they were like, I'm going to be in charge of my life.

I'm the captain of my ship. That kind of stuff. And she had forgotten that they were there and the person cleaning asked, hey, you know, Johnny, should we take these to goodwill?

She said, no. I don't want you to take those to goodwill. You need to trash those. And it was kind of a convicting moment for her to realize, I have kept these things. You know? And I think for all of us, like, man, she's a quadriplegic.

Like, she's, like, and she's like, she's doing ministry. But there was this thing. It just, it was still there. And she's like, no. Trash them. I don't want some other unsuspecting 20-year-old to make those the anthems of their life.

I just, I love that picture. We can resolve not to be that guy or that gal today through the power of God's spirit.

[ 32:52 ] And if we don't take the mindset of Jesus resolving to live for his glory, for God's glory, not for the flesh, at some point, we're going to step on a landmine.

Like, if obedience to the Lord is passive, we're not actually living biblically. What's occurred in our lives is we just have not stumbled upon the opportunity to sin in a particular way.

passive obedience. Jesus actually exhorts us, Peter exhorts us, resolve, right? Resolve. Resolve ahead of time.

What does that mean? I don't know if this is a sin issue. Probably is. I'll talk to Scott. He'll tell me. But, I am a fast driver. I've always been a fast driver and I need to not be a fast driver.

And, if I don't resolve to use my cruise control when I'm on the north-south freeway, I will speed. It's inevitable.

[ 34:00 ] So, for the past year, I hit the freeway and I just click on the cruise control. And it's like, my car's not even moving. Like, what is this, people? But I already know I'm not going to, like, get in a situation where I'm going to start getting with the flow and then I'm like, it's kind of fun to pass and then all of a sudden there's sirens.

So, I'm just like, I know. So, I've already resolved. I'm cruise control guy. That's what I am. But it's a decision because I know my weakness.

And I love this. Resolve ahead of time. Jesus said it this way in Matthew 10, 16. Behold, I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. This is to the twelve as they're sent out.

Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Jesus, dare you tell me to act like a serpent? Yes. Okay? Yes. And in this instance, the way it is used contextually is serpents are, they're crafty, right?

They're wise. They're, you know, they're good at hunting. They're strategic. And here we're told, hey, be wise as serpents.

[ 35:12 ] Be crafty as you battle against sin. Or as Scott likes to say, be draconian in your fight against sin. Take it seriously. So if there's media that's blowing you up, remove it.

Maybe it's a relationship that influences you to be worldly that you need to end. But, hey, man, that's my mission field. Really?

I mean, but is it? Or are you their mission field? I think a key resolve in this, if there's one thing I could give you today and say, man, take this, if you want to resolve in some way, resolve to not walk alone.

Resolve to walk in Christian community this year. Resolve. Be vision. Say, I'm going to be there. I'm going to get to know others.

The claim to love Jesus. I need those people in my life. You can't do it alone. That's one of the most strategic things we can do as disciples with this new trajectory is making sure we have others in our life that are on that same trajectory.

[ 36 : 35 ] Even if that community is just not quite as sophisticated as you, right? We're fun. Like, you're the fun guy. You know? Guys, think about who I work with.

I mean, one of us has to be the fun guy, right? And we take turns. They're not as, they're just not as hip as me, right?

They're not as cool as me as we sort of have a false estimation of ourselves of how, like, savvy and sophisticated we are. Resolve.

Some of you who are youth who have bowed your knee to Jesus, Peter says, for the time is past for living in sensuality. So be shrewd as serpents if you intend to live this life for God's glory and for the joy of others.

Here's a very practical one. I think this is PG-13, but you never know. I think it's, it's, it's suitable for most. Song of Solomon, 8-4.

[ 37 : 41 ] I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. Don't stir up love! Essentially what, that's all I'm saying, is before it's time.

Don't stir that, right? What are, what are you doing to stir passions that you cannot act upon until you're married, young people? Resolve.

Maybe it's reading material that's like, causing you to struggle. Where are you indulging your imagination? Is it a steady diet of, you know, I mean, so much of the teen fiction is just, it's veiled just very not PG-13 romance.

A lot of lust in a lot of the teen fiction. And I can say that as a father of six daughters, I have read much teen fiction in my life, material that my girls wanted to read.

I have read things that I didn't really care to read so that I knew what they would be reading. I know what moves the heartstrings of a young woman, and so I was like, that's how I can be a good father.

[ 38 : 50 ] In my former life, I worked with teenagers and college students. I did that for about 20 years. I did it in a large church.

We've had 300 students in our youth ministry. And that wasn't a reflection of like, wow, do you agree with this? No, it was like, it was just a large church. But what it meant is I have actually worked with thousands of students over the years, and I would say anecdotally, I have seen zero benefit from exclusive dating relationships while students are still in high school.

Period. That's from 20 years of youth ministry, and I'm not like the authority, but anecdotally, I've seen zero benefit. What I have seen are many students weeping in my office for choices they wish they could undo.

So we all, whether we are young or old, can resolve something even this morning in terms of how we will be draconian in fighting against sin. We have a new trajectory, and it's actually good.

God's not anti-stuff. He's like, I'm pro-stuff in the right context. So my charge for young people? Pursue friendships. And you know, if you're like, I'm going to go on a date.

[ 40 : 16 ] Redefine that. What is dating? Redefine it into something that eliminates physical intimacy from the equation. Because that secret, sacred garden of your sexuality was meant for you to invite only one other into in this life.

And yes, for some of you, you're like, man, I'm getting blown up this morning. Our God redeems. Our God forgives. He makes beautiful things that have been broken.

He makes them new. That's the gospel. But that said, there is still often great pain associated with that journey, friends. Now you're hearing from an old youth pastor.

brother. And it just bums me out. Scripture's clear. Don't defraud your brother. 1 Thessalonians 4.

Don't defraud yourself. Don't defraud your future spouse. Now, I have today, I don't normally do this, I have gifts.

[ 41 : 26 ] I have five. I already gave one out this morning. Because I promised this to somebody who was like, ooh, I want that, Jay. It was a guy. So I already gave. I only have five left. But I picked up Elizabeth Elliot's classic, *Passion and Purity*.

Okay? And it's got a new forward. It's all, I mean, this is the story of her and Jim Elliot and kind of how they were like, man, how are we going to honor the Lord in this romantic relationship? It's a throwback, but man, it's timeless.

It's timeless. It's so good. These are for the first five young people that are at least 15. I don't know, let's go up to like 30. Okay?

And if you're single and you're older, you can have one too. But I only have five. But the first five that come up and say, Jay, I'd like one of those. I'm going to give it to you. That's free. So we're going to, it's like a door buster this morning.

Scott, I don't know. I'll probably order more, but if you want a copy, I would suggest that would be wonderful. Have courage. Come up. I'm not going to be like, oh, what do you want this for? I'm not. No, we've already had the awkward moment of me giving this book out and it's not this morning.

[ 42 : 29 ] Okay? That was like 15 years ago when I gave it to my daughter for her birthday and she was opening presents and everything was wonderful.

A new outfit, a record, da, da, da, da. And then, oh, dad? What? So what happens when your dad's a youth pastor?

It's like, you're going to, you need this now on your birthday. That was classic memory. It's classic. I think dad just gave me a book about sex and it's my birthday.

What am I supposed to do? And all the sisters are like, what's that? You know, it's just, man, that was, that brings a lot of joy, a lot of laughter. But seriously, it's a wonderful book and this would be a great book to read, you know?

Talk to Scott. Talk to Jay. Young women, talk to Melissa. We'd love to, you know, exhort you, encourage you if you need that. Okay? Great story.

[ 43 : 33 ] Resolve. And I think we have to believe too that the world's lying to us. Because it is. Proverbs 23, 17, let your, not your heart envy sinners. I mean, culture says some dumb things.

You just got to experiment. Experiment with sin. And, and, and I think culture had it for so many years. You got to experiment so that you can be good at marriage. Like, look at culture. How's that worked out?

I'm just saying, like, divorce is out of control. Infidelity, off the charts. It's insane. It's a lie. It breaks my heart. I have a daughter married to a soldier who often will go and do training in different parts of the U.S.

and he will go with many married guys. And a number of them, when they're gone from their wife, they pretend they're not married in all sorts of ways. And it's heartbreaking. And it's defiling.

And it's just, it's just then the deceit that's present in those relationships. It's the worst. Peter says, the time is past.

[ 44 : 37 ] The time is past. But Jay, I don't have this crazy story of experimenting with sin. Well, you're blessed. You are so blessed.

Blessed doesn't mean easy. Blessed has its own sort of heart. In fact, here's one of the costs on this new trajectory. Look at verse 4. Peter says, with respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you.

A few years back, I ran into a former football player that I had coached in high school. And we were talking. He's like, oh, Coach Turner, are you not going to coach anymore? I'm like, well, you know, I'm actually a full-time pastor. I don't have the time to be able to devote.

He's like, oh, man, sorry about that. I don't know if he's saying sorry like you're a pastor or you can't. I mean, I was an average coach. But then I said, you know what? There's a coach that you knew who actually now goes to church with me.

He's like, really? Who's that? Well, that's Coach Hauser. He's like, what? He couldn't believe it. I've shared with you about my friend Kip. Man, he could cuss better than anybody I've ever known.

[ 45 : 42 ] Just a very worldly life. And this kid was floored. He's like, he was just gobsmacked. What? He goes, that can't, that, Coach Hauser would never be in church.

Now, I wasn't maligned in that instance. But I think sometimes people are so shocked. You've changed. You've changed the game.

You've changed the rules of the game. And folks will malign you. You may not be invited to a gathering anymore. Or you may have to choose not to attend a particular gathering because you know the substance of that gathering.

And it's hard. There's a cost. I think sometimes we get angry at God. Like, God, why do I have to be that guy? Why do I have to be the spiritual one, the mature one? I don't want my friends calling me the mom or the dad.

It's hard. And you change the rules of the game. You're like, I'm going to live for Christ and His righteousness. And now your friends, when you're around them, they kind of don't feel so great because they feel a little bit guilty because they know their conscience is bearing witness.

[ 46 : 47 ] Hey, you should be doing this. And so sometimes you just don't even get invited anymore. One of the costs is that the Christian life, discipleship, can be lonely.

I've even seen this in marriages where a partner gets serious about the Lord and it breaks, it actually breaks the marriage. I had a very good friend on the west side who I did the wedding for and his wife, they were both professing believers but they were pretty compromised.

They were pretty lukewarm. and this young husband, he spent just about every night smoking pot and amongst other things just to deal with life and it was just, it was the ritual and the routine and addiction was in a lot of different places in his life and then the Lord just crushed him.

Just, it was like, it was a miraculous sort of like God moment in his life where he's like, I want to live for the Lord. I have been pretending for so many years. He got serious about the Lord.

He left his addictions. He began to read his Bible daily. He began to serve his wife in a way that he had never served her. He began to spend time with his daughters in a way they had never spent with them.

[ 48:01 ] He became the best version of himself and his wife hated it. She ultimately left him, because she didn't want to go out with this guy because he no longer wanted to go out with her and party like they used to.

It's tragic. That was a big cost in his life. When you change the rules and live above the status quo of a godless culture, they will malign you.

They'll malign you. I still think about all those interviews with Tim Tebow who anytime a broadcaster got onto his Christian faith and his commitment to remain a virgin until he got married, they never celebrated it.

It was never said in a positive way. It was always seen as kind of weird. He was chided, made fun of. Yeah.

Yeah. All of this, friends, highlights to me the critical role of the local church in our lives. We've got to be connected with other brothers and sisters that are like, I'm on the same new trajectory.

[ 49:14 ] I want to take my life and submit it to Christ. I want to live for his glory. I actually want him to be glorified. Let's finish. Verse 5 and 6. But they will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For this is why the gospel is preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. So Peter ends this section on our new trajectory as disciples with a warning to the unbeliever and an encouragement to Christians.

The warning to the unbeliever, they, from verse 5, the unbeliever who lives according to the flesh, he says, we'll give an account. We'll give an account.

Everybody's going to give an account of their life. And I think this Corinthian ideal of eat, drink, for tomorrow we die, it's a bad way to carry out this life. Like in the context of eternity, it's actually insanity.

Do you guys realize that the smallest portion of our life is this right now? Dale, I stole this from your office. I'm so sorry.

[ 50:20 ] I will replace it on Tuesday. I just ripped it right out of the calculator machine. But I love this illustration. C.S. Lewis does this. He's like, you know what? This right here, this, I know, I'm so sorry, Dale.

This is eternity. And he actually says, imagine this was like wrapping around the earth. And then, I'm just going to put it, there it is. That's today.

That's our life. That's in our 70, 80, 90 years. Like, it's this dot. It's the smallest part of our actual life in terms of eternity.

And so yet, what a bad trade to say, man, I'm just going to just live for myself, be self-oriented in all the ways, and miss out on the beauty of all this.

So, Jesus warned the unbeliever. You're going to give an account. But I think there's encouragement for us because it says, you know what? For this is why the gospel is preached even to those who are dead.

[ 51:23 ] Believers, I believe, who are now physically dead, that though judge in the flesh the way people are, how is everybody judge in the flesh? All people are judge in the flesh and that everyone physically dies. That's going to be true for all of us, but yet, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

So as we respond to the gospel in this life, guess what? We have an amazing eternity ahead. An ever-increasing, compounding joy in eternity.

And I think that joy starts now. Hope you have something that you can take this morning and maybe it's just, I need to resolve and I need help. I can't do this alone. Father, thank you for just time together.

Thank you that you love us. Thank you that you tell us the truth. Thank you for just the opportunity to consider this new trajectory that we are on in this life.

And Lord, I know that there are seasons where we compromise. I've had them in my life and Lord, I pray that we would have courage and conviction to decide, I'm not going to do this alone anymore.

[ 52 : 25 ] I'm going to trust this brother, this sister. I'm going to ask for prayer. I'm going to ask for encouragement. Lord, this is a team sport. We're in a battle together. And we're not doing better because we're somehow being more holy than the next guy or gal here.

We're needing to consider our brothers and sisters. So help us to know how we can exhort one another daily. And Lord, we look forward to the day where we'll see you face to face. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Amen.