

# Live like you know he keeps his promises

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[0:00] Good morning, everyone. Happy autumn. The dew point is 20.4 here today. So in Townsville, it sits around 24.

! So 20.4 is legit. If you're sweating, that's normal right now. So well done. I just have to make light of things because Luke was trying to make me cry before in the start of that song.

I don't know if you've noticed, but I don't take much to tear up. So let's pray and ask God to help us focus on this part of his word. Before we do, I don't know if you can remember what we've been talking about, but basically what I've done is dragged one talk out over three talks.

And the first part of the talk was really that God always keeps his promises. The second part is God's not slow in keeping his promises.

And the third part is live like you believe he keeps his promises. So that's what we're looking at today. Let's pray. Loving Father, thank you that you do keep your promises. It really is our hope.

[1:17] Father, your faithfulness, it holds us fast and we're very thankful for that. We pray as we look at your word now that it would actually continue to hold us and shape us into the men and women that you've made us in your goodness to be.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. When I was a kid, Christmas Day was huge, the anticipation of it. I've loved seeing these little, this gang of hoodlums out here in the foyer.

I don't know if you've noticed them. These kind of six to ten year old boys out there. And I just think you guys are, you know, you're like two dagger tattoos away from 20 years in prison.

Like they, they just look awesome. And I always liked that when I was a kid and so I've loved seeing them run around in their, in their gang. It's been fantastic. Anyway, I was a rat bag. Christmas Day was huge for me.

The anticipation of it would shape my life in the lead up. I'd become quite hyper with my planning and my movements, my deception. We lived in a small country town. The toy shop in our town was the chemist.

[2:23] I always, I always knew when mum and dad were buying the Christmas presents because we had to go and do a big shop in the bigger town. So we'd head over to Young and go to Grace Brothers or, you know, we'd head to Cootamundra, all the big cities around us.

Mum and dad were pretty good at hiding it all. They'd run decoys in the shops. You know, mum would take us grocery shopping and dad would duck off and go to the toy shop or whatever. And then they'd somehow get it into the boot. We knew there was something in the boot. But we didn't have any access to it. We wouldn't have seen a thing but we all knew it was there. And that's where I'd slip into my sneaky stealth mode at an opportune time when dad was at work and mum was glued to days of our lives.

Google it if you don't know what it is. I'd go into her, into their room and I'd climb up to the, you know how you've got the shelves in your built-ins, then you've got the big long bit at the top.

That's where they always kept the presents. Very predictable. I'd go up there and I'd always do a recon mission first because you don't know what you've got to do to look at the presents. So I'd go up there, do a recon mission, size up what needed to be opened and how complex it might be to open it.

[3:36] And then the next day I'd come back and I'd carefully peel off the sticky tape and have a look at what was inside. As I said, I was a bit of a jerk.

But each night I'd go to bed with a warm confidence that I knew exactly what was in store for me. And it just made me anticipate it so much more because I knew what I was going to get. Try it with your kids. I'd try to behave so I could avoid the threat that was raised in my childhood in the lead up to Christmas, which is, you know, if you do that again, Santa's not going to come. And I was like, well, I know what Santa's bringing, so I'm definitely going to try and behave. I couldn't wait for Christmas and just to get up at two in the morning and start playing with my toys. This part of 2 Peter we're looking at this morning, it's not about how Christmas Day should shape our lives, but it is about how the day of the Lord should shape all of our lives.

[4:34] In the passage we're looking at, Peter reminds us again what that day will be like. And he tells us what life should be like as we wait for it.

So if we believe that God always keeps his promises, that he's not slow in keeping his promises, how ought we to live in light of that? Luke asked some really great questions before. You know, our lives are often shaped by future things, like the Easter weekend, birthdays, anniversaries. They shape us, you know, because we're anticipating them and so we change, we do things differently. I guess the question this part of 2 Peter asks us is, how are our lives changed in light of the day of the Lord?

Well, let's look at this last part of the passage. The first section is basically saying, knowing everything will be destroyed, we can wait well by living holy and godly lives.

So this is like the stick, right? There's always a carrot and a stick. This is the stick. Knowing everything will be destroyed, we can wait well by living holy and godly lives. So from verse 11, Peter says, So Peter just reminded us yesterday that the day of the Lord will come and the constituent parts of creation will be destroyed.

[6:07] They'll be laid bare. Everything in it, everything done in the heavens and the earth will be exposed before God. There'll be no escape. That's what we're waiting for. That's what's coming.

We looked at all those passages in the Bible that talked about how each of us will be called to give an account to God for the things that we've said and done. There's no escape. We'll all be exposed. There's no fig leaf to cover us on the last day.

Grace is set aside and judgment comes. That's what we're waiting for. The destruction of the ungodly. And the only way to avoid that destruction is to turn and put our faith in Jesus, to receive his forgiveness, to live with him as Lord.

How great's that, right? Best news I've ever heard in my life. It's a game changer. It's only through Jesus that we're able to avoid that destruction. So in light of that, our time now, what should it be like?

It ought to be holy. It ought to be set apart for Jesus. Since he's the only way that we'll make it through on that last day, the best way for us to live our lives now is set apart for him.

[7:16] Our lives ought to be lived according to his word. That's what godly means. Since we know that sin will be exposed and punished, we ought not to do it while we wait.

I don't know if I've mentioned this before, but I ran a marathon recently. You don't want to take weight with you on a marathon, right? Weight doesn't go well with you.

So you want to get rid of it before the race starts. Sin is not part of God's plan for his new creation. So we want to get rid of it. We want to live holy and godly lives while we wait.

It says here in verse 12, as you look forward, and I noticed that's on the slides as well, looking forward to that day. I don't think that's the best translation of this passage.

What are you guys with an ESV? What does it say instead of looking forward in the start of verse 12? Waiting for.

[8:15] Yeah, that's legit. That's the actual Greek translation. You're all feeling like, yeah, I know, that's why we used that version. I don't think it is saying we should look forward to the destruction.

I don't think that's what it's saying we should do. But we do know it's coming. And so while we're waiting for it, we ought to live perfectly good and just, holy lives.

It also says as we speed or hasten its coming. That's a complex idea. I think the idea there is because God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance, that's what

God wants and that's why he's held off the day.

I think the idea is if we live repentant lives today, if we live holy and godly lives, then in a sense, we bring on the day of the Lord.

We speed its coming. He wants repentance. That's what he's waiting to see. If we are repentant, we therefore bring on the day of its coming. Be careful though.

[9:27] In reality, we know from this same chapter that none of us have any control over God's timing. It'll come the day of the Lord like a thief in the night.

So Peter's not saying if we all get our act together well enough as a church, then God will come back. He's just saying as we get on with doing what he's asked us to do while we wait for that day, we speed its coming.

We know God wants us to repent and not perish. So we speed the day of the Lord by living for Jesus, living holy lives as we wait. The coming exposure and destruction of sin ought to shape us to be godly.

I don't think I'm telling you anything you don't already know. Sin's going to be killed. We don't want to be sin. We want to be godly. A long time ago, I worked for Byron Bay Shire Council in Finance and one of my jobs was auditing the council-owned caravan parks, making sure the managers weren't keeping the park fees for themselves.

They probably were. Making sure they weren't doing favours for their mates. They probably were. It was really hard to check all that stuff up. They were paid really well, caravan park managers.

Anyway, the thing is, it was council policy to tell the managers that we were coming for the audit before we arrived, which I always found really weird.

[10:52] Hey, we're coming to do a surprise check, just giving you some notice. And because they knew we were coming to expose dodgy stuff, they fixed everything before we got there every time.

Like they were literally waiting for us with their books to show us how they were doing everything right. Like one guy at one of the parks in Brunswick Heads, won't say which one, you can ask me afterwards, but he would bring like a bowl of king prawns out to greet us.

And they were great. They were just wanting to do everything right. They didn't want to lose the good wicket they were on. That's understandable, isn't it? So they're like, we know the judgment's coming.

Let's get everything squared away. Now, to be very clear, we won't be able to cover up our sin on the day of the Lord with even the greatest bowl of king prawns. You know, we heard yesterday that everything is going to be exposed.

And there's a lot to expose, isn't there, in each of our lives. The only way we can make it through that day is through Christ. It's through faith in the Lord Jesus.

[11:59] But knowing that everything will be exposed and destroyed, we ought to still reshape our lives, trying to get rid of as much sin as we can, putting on holiness and godliness.

I've tried to get rid of sin through my Christian life, and I found it really hard. Even with the help of the Spirit working in me, sanctifying me, I constantly feel like it's two steps forward and one step backwards.

I went for a jog with a guy that I used to go to church with this morning who lives somewhere around here, and we were talking about just pornography and temptation and how we're going at being faithful to our wives, and he's heaps fitter than me, so I was just trying to get him to talk as much as possible while I was running.

But it's hard. But you know, one of the things that's helped me to say no to sin is this notion that one day Jesus will return and everything will be exposed before him.

I don't want to have my phone in my hand looking at pornography on the day the Lord comes to judge the living and the dead. Even if I know my sins washed away by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I don't want to be in that position.

[13:15] I don't want to be sitting around bagging out Matt Hand when I'm talking to the rest of you guys and Jesus turns up and he goes, what were you saying about Matt? I mean, that's humiliating for me.

I don't want to be sitting on my net bank account changing my giving so that I can afford to pay for my rental property on the day the Lord Jesus returns. I know I'm saved by grace.

I know I'm washed clean by the blood of Christ, but I actually want to live for the Lord. And he is coming back. And he is going to expose sin. Peter says, since everything associated with the sinful world is to be destroyed, we ought to wait for the day by living holy and godly lives.

So the coming judgment is the stick, but it's not just the destruction of sin that should shape us.

There's the carrot of dwelling with God. Have a look from verse 13.

Because we're going to dwell with God, we should be spotless and blameless. Verse 13 says, but in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

[14:27] On the one hand, we don't want to be sinning as we wait for the day. We don't want our sin to be exposed on that day. But on the other hand, on that day, we'll be dwelling with God himself forever.

Like, I actually find it helps me to live a godly life by coming here and living with you for these two days. It's bizarre.

But I actually think I'm more holy when I live in the presence of godly people than in the rest of my life. That's why Christian camps and conventions and conferences are so great, right?

That's living with a bunch of sinners. Imagine living in the home of righteousness, righteousness, in the place where God himself dwells.

Like Jesus rose from the dead in the fleshy physical body, we will also rise to be part of God's tangible physical creation, God's promise that for all who believe in Jesus, we'll be with him.

[15:34] We'll be with Jesus. We'll be with God. So when it says at the end of verse 13 where righteousness dwells, I don't think it's primarily talking about our righteousness, but it's talking about God, God's righteousness.

We'll actually be at home with God. We'll be dwelling where righteousness itself dwells. This is our future. Not just the destruction of the old, but the coming of the new.

Life with God himself. You know how you always feel a little bit cleaner after a church camp. We'll be living in some ways, not in others, but we'll be living with God himself for all eternity in the new creation.

And so Peter says in verse 14, the new life with God should shape our lives too. We ought to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him because this is our future.

Eternal peace with the righteousness of God. Knowing that that's what we're part of, we ought to be spotless and blameless today. It's a bit like when we decided to move from Townsville to Bathurst.

[16:45] We knew our new life was going to be different. We gave away all our tropical plants. My wife is, I don't want to talk out of school and be judgy, but she idolises plants.

There are more pot plants in our house than any other item. When we moved down, she had to get rid of all the tropical plants because they just wouldn't survive in Bathurst. We have frosts there. We got rid of our sweat-soaked shirts.

They carry a smell that just wouldn't be welcome in New South Wales. We bought puffer jackets. You don't even wear a hoodie in Townsville.

I'm not even kidding. You have no use for a hoodie. We bought puffer jackets. We got a fire pit as a gift from our church as a going-away present. We bought thermal underwear.

It's dead serious, and that's the key. If you move to a cold place, thermals are key. We bought jeans. I have not worn jeans for 12 years, and you feel weird wearing jeans in Townsville.

[17:48] You feel like you're from the 80s or something. I've got three pairs of jeans now. We changed all this stuff because we knew we were going to live. It reshaped our lives.

That's what Peter's saying, living with righteousness, dwelling with God in glory, ought to do today.

We ought to be spotless and blameless because that's our future. If our faith is in Jesus, we need to ask ourselves, well, if I know where I'm going because of that, what do I need to take?

What do I need to get rid of? I think we'll need hearts that love Jesus and depend on him, hearts that find joy in living his way, that know that God's good.

I think that's a great thing for us to work on, acquiring now before we get to live with righteousness and glory forever. And I don't think we'll need stuff. If we thought this life on earth was all that we had in store for our future, then we would try and accrue as much stuff as we could.

We'd be constantly trying to have the latest iPhone. We'd be constantly trying to build our investment portfolio. We'd be constantly trying to accrue as much worldly popularity as we could. But none of that stuff is in the home of righteousness.

[19:03] And so we don't need to be accruing that. It'd be like taking tropical plants to Bathurst. There's no purpose in it. If we know we're going to be part of the new creation, we're already rich.

We have a secure, great, abundant inheritance. And so we can show we're looking forward to that day by shedding ourselves of stuff quite willingly and freely today.

We can be generous today with our worldly wealth because we know we have eternal wealth in the home of righteousness. I wonder how much your life today is shaped by the promise of being part of God's new creation.

Your legacy isn't on this earth. It's in glory in Christ. My dad was always obsessed with leaving a significant legacy behind here on earth, but he didn't have faith in the Lord Jesus.

And I reckon the greatest legacy that we have and can leave our children is to have faith in the Lord Jesus and to be with him in glory.

[20:19] Live your life like you know where you're going and get rid of everything that won't help you to get there. Work out what you think needs to go and what you think needs to stay.

So the coming destruction, the coming home of righteousness, those things should shape us today. But also the third thing is the knowledge of the timing behind the day of the Lord.

That should shape us today. And this is a bit of a revision of yesterday. Knowing the only reason God hasn't brought on that day is because he doesn't want any to perish. That should shape our lives today as well.

Have a look at verse 15. This is where Peter's, he's repeating what he said basically previously.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

This time we have, in case you didn't pick this up yesterday, is time God's given us to repent and it's time God's given others to repent that should absolutely shape our lives, right?

[21:23] If you haven't turned your life to put your faith in Jesus, God's given you this time to do that. That's a really important thing for you to get your head around.

Sometimes if people make it through cancer or make it through some kind of illness, they might think to themselves, oh, God's given me this opportunity now, I really have to turn my life around. But the reality is every breath you're given is an opportunity to turn and put your faith in the Lord Jesus that God's given you. This could be that opportunity for you right now, the time to take off your crown and put yourself under the crown of King Jesus.

And if you have put your faith in Jesus, as we said yesterday, God's given you this time to help others to turn to him. So we want to live holy and godly lives.

We want to be spotless and blameless. But we want to be all of that, knowing that God's left us here to help others to turn and believe. Bearing that in mind is key to living for God in light of the day.

[22:30] God's patience means salvation. You know that song? Strong as a mighty rock, a refuge in the... That's as much as I'm going to do. This is a big reason why we try to live differently.

I don't know if you're familiar with Peter's first letter, but this isn't a novel idea for Peter, this notion that living today is to help people turn to Jesus. One of my favourite verses in 1 Peter, and one of the reasons why I think 2 Peter is also written by Peter, is where he says, we ought to live such good lives among the pagans, that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

So Peter's saying in 1 Peter, yeah, live holy and godly and spotless and blameless lives. In order that, people might turn and give glory to God. That's why we're here.

So be shaped by the coming destruction, be shaped by the new home we have with the Lord, but also be shaped by the timing, knowing God is leaving us here, desiring that none will perish, but

everyone will repent.

You know, before we moved down to New South Wales, and this is a confession, this is not a brag, we decided we wanted to invite as many of our non-Christian friends to our last church service as we could.

[23:52] We just thought we'd go to town with it, because this is our last chance. And so we just invited everyone in as many awkward conversations as we could from every sphere of our life that we were involved in.

We knew it could be our last chance to help them. But how dumb is that, right? To live somewhere for 12 years, like that's at least 600 Sundays, and then to wait until the last one to ask everybody to come.

Every day could be our friend's last chance to hear the gospel. That's the only reason God has left us here and not yet returned. How does that reality shape the way we live and speak today?

You know, I know that there'll be some people in this room who are great at talking to people about Jesus. There are always people like that. They always make me feel like half a Christian, but I also love having them in my church, because some people are just really great.

Like, you'll be in a conversation with them, and you'll be sitting there thinking, how can I keep this conversation going? I might talk about sport. Next thing you know, they'll go, oh, so have you ever been to church before? And you're like, oh my goodness, this conversation just went next level.

[25:11] And they'll start talking about Christianity, and I'm sitting there thinking, hang on, I'm the minister here. There are some people who are really gifted evangelists. I think the Bible speaks like that.

But don't be mistaken, the reason God has left all of us here is in order that we might live lives that actually help people to turn and glorify God. All of us.

And I don't think I've ever said to anybody, hey, do you want to come to church this weekend? I know it's, and they've been offended. I don't think it's a special gift to ask somebody that question. Or to say to somebody on Monday, I went to church this weekend, and it was great. You ever been to church? I don't think they're radical conversations, right?

For some reason, we're terrified to have them. But I don't think when the Bible talks about gifts in evangelism, those two questions are what he has in mind. It's such a big thing, the coming day of the Lord.

[26:14] It will be the end of this life. It'll be the full stop. And it'll be the beginning of eternity. It's bigger than Christmas for an eight-year-old.

It's bigger than anything coming that's shaping our lives. Peter finishes his letter by saying, that's pretty much why he's written this letter. He says in verse 17, we've been forewarned about this day. And rather than falling from our secure position, rather than jeopardizing our place in the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness dwells, we ought to constantly be reshaping our lives towards it, growing, as he says in verse 18, in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, becoming more and more dependent on him.

Can I encourage you as we finish up this weekend to do something that I find harder and harder to do as I get older? And that's just to lean into growing in your faith.

I know God keeps us. I did my final college year thesis on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. I know that he'll hold us to that day. But do you know one of the things that he holds us with is the scriptures.

[27:31] He actually speaks to us through them and he tells us to hold on. Lean into growth. As you go through life, you accrue more baggage.

Physically, I've accrued more baggage. Financially, I've accrued more baggage. Relationally, I've accrued more baggage. Mentally, I've accrued more baggage. Continuing to take one step after the other in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, leaning into the wind instead of letting it carry you because it feels so nice to be carried for a while, leaning into the wind.

It's the most important thing because the day of the Lord is coming and we all want to be standing firm on that day because that's where righteousness dwells and if our faith is in Christ, we'll be there with our creator.

So whatever else you feel squeezed by your life in at the moment, don't let it be your faith. Let that push everything else to the side and continue to stand firm until the day of the Lord.

May it be today that it'd make that easier. I'm going to pray. Our Heavenly Father, these truths that you speak to us in your word, most of us here, we've heard them many times.

[28:52] We know that you always keep your promises. We've sung songs about it for years. We know that you're not slow in keeping your promises. We know that we ought to live holy and upright lives while we wait for the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Father, take that head knowledge and move our hearts by your spirit. Father, help us to stand firm. Father, help us to put off sin and to put on righteousness.

Father, help us to live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse us of doing wrong, they see our good deeds and turn and glorify you.

Lord, we know you've kept us here for a time. Help us to use it well while we wait. We need your help with this by your spirit because we are weak in the flesh.

So we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.