

Living for the Lord's Return

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] This morning we are concluding our sermon series in the letter of 2nd Peter and our attention will be directed to verses 11 through 18 but what I want to do is I want to begin in verse 1 to just remind us of the context of these words of Peter as he concludes them in 2nd Peter chapter 3 verses 11 through 18.

This is now the second letter I am writing to you beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Knowing this first of all that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing following their own sinful desires. They will say where is the promise of his coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. For they deliberately overlooked this fact that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.

And that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire.

[1 : 45] Being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. Being kept until the day of God.

And then the heavens will pass away with a roar. And the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved. And the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

And now we come to the text that we will focus on this morning. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved. What sort of people. What you to be in lives of holiness and godliness.

Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God. Because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved.

And the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. But according to his promise. We are waiting for new heavens. And a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

[3 : 14] Therefore beloved. Since you are waiting for these. Be diligent to be found by him. Without spot or blemish.

And at peace. And count the patience of our Lord. As salvation. Just as our beloved brother Paul. Also wrote to you. According to the wisdom given him. As he does in all his letters. When he speaks in them. Of these matters.

There are some things in them. That are hard to understand. Which the ignorant and unstable twist. To their own destruction. As they do the other scriptures.

You therefore beloved. Knowing this beforehand. Take care. That you are not carried away. With the error of lawless people.

[4 : 11] And lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge. Of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory.

Both now. And to the day of eternity. Amen. Let's pray. Father we are grateful this morning. For your word. We are grateful to.

Have it. To hear it. And now Lord. Help us. To obey it. Would you speak to our hearts.

Lord. And raise only you can. God though we hear the same words. Help us to hear them. In the context of our. Own lives. And also collectively.

In the context of this local church. I pray. I pray. I pray that you would grant me grace. To. Proclaim your word this morning. Lord. No one is sufficient for this task. So I pray.

[5 : 09] For your help. We ask these things. In Jesus name. Amen. For the first of the month. The first of this month. In June. Began the.

Hurricane season. And it lasts. As many of you know. Until the end of November. And the forecasters. From Colorado State University. Have told us that. We are going to have a slightly above average.

Hurricane season. That's the forecast. They forecast. 14 named storms. Seven. Of which. They forecast. To develop into.

Hurricanes. And three. Of which they. Forecast. Will be major hurricanes. In 2017.

We had 17 named storms. Ten of them were hurricanes. And six of them. Were major hurricanes. And last year. The university's.

[6 : 09] Predictions were. Off. We had. They predicted. Not as active. A hurricane season. We had quite. An active one. And only time will tell. How these predictions.

For 2018. Will turn out. But the truth is. We shouldn't really. Look at them. So closely. Because. You really just need. One hurricane. Just one hurricane.

Could bring. Untold devastation. And damage. And so. We need to. Prepare. And for the next. Six months.

We need to live. Like those. Who really live. In a hurricane. Zone. In his concluding words. In 2nd Peter. The apostle. Peter shares.

A similar. But far more. Important message. Concerning. The day. Of judgment. What the forecast. Is from. The University. Of Colorado.

[7 : 04] Have given us. Is a forecast. And based on. The past. It could be right. Or could be wrong. But what the apostle.

Peter. Directs our attention. To in this letter. And in particular. As he closes. Is not a forecast. But. The very. Word.

Of God. Peter. Peter. Peter. That the day. Of judgment. And destruction. Will. Come. That's what he says to us. It will come. Notice how he says that.

In verse 10. He says. But the day. Of the Lord. Will come. He says. It will come.

The heavens. Will. Pass. Away. With a roar. The heavenly bodies. Will be burned up. And the earth. And the works. That are done. On them. Will be exposed.

[8 : 01] Or will be. Laid bare. That we see them. For what they. Really. Are. Now. When you read. The letter. Of second. Peter. You see. That Peter.

Could have concluded. His letter. Right at verse 10. Because he has said. All that he. Wanted to say. He's refuted. The false teachers. Who said. Christ is not going.

To return. He could have. Ended his letter. In verse 10. But he didn't. Instead. What we see. The apostle Peter. Doing.

Is he goes on. To help us. As the people of God. To see. How we ought. To be living. In light of. These predictions. About.

The Lord's return. The judgment. Of the world. And the destruction. Of all things.

[8 : 57] As we know them. And in a nutshell. Here's what the apostle Peter. Is saying. To us. He's saying.

That believers. Are called. To live lives. That reflect. Their belief. In Christ. From his return. And this world's. Coming. Destruction.

Peter. Is saying. To us. It's not enough. For us. To know. What's going. To happen. It's not enough. For us. To know. That the false. Teachers. Were false. When they denied.

That the Lord. Will return. He says. We need. To live. In light of that. The lives. We live. Need to reflect. Our true belief. In Christ's. Promised. Return.

And. This world's. Coming. Destruction. And. Our remaining time. This morning. I want us. To consider. Three.

[9 : 52] Compelling. Exhortations. That Peter. Gives us. From these. Concluding. Verses. In this. Letter. Where he. Tells us. About Christ's.

Promised. Return. He tells us. About the world's. Coming. Destruction. First. Peter. Says. That. Those who belong. To Christ. And believe. In his. Promised. Return.

And this. Was. Coming. Destruction. Should live. Lives. That are. Marked. By. Number one. Holiness. And godliness. Notice.

How he says that. In verses. Eleven. Through. Thirteen. Let's read that again. He writes. Since all. These. Things. Are. Thus.

To be. Dissolved. What. Sort. Of. People. Ought. You. To be. In. Lives. Of. Holiness. And. Godliness. Waiting. For. And. Hastling.

[10:44] The coming. Of. The day. Of. God. Because. Of. Which. The heavens. Will. Be set. On fire. And. Dissolved. And. The heavenly bodies. Will melt. As they burn. But.

According. To his promise. We. Are waiting. For. New heavens. And. A new earth. In which. Righteousness. Dwells. Notice.

That Peter's not asking. A question. Peter's not asking. Us. How we should live. In light. Of. The fact. That this world. Is going to be. Dissolved. That everything. Is going to be exposed. For what it really is. He's not asking a question. Instead. What he's doing. Is he's actually. Making. A statement. And he's doing it.

With exclamation. You see. The exclamation point. After. Verse. Verse 12. He's saying. In light.

[11:38] Of all of this. In light. Of the fact. This is. This is going to happen. What sort of people. Are we to be. In lives. Of holiness. And godliness. Waiting. For.

And hastening. The coming day. Of. The Lord. Peter's saying. That. Somehow. What we believe. About these things.

Has to be factored in. In our lives. And. In how. We live. Peter is saying. That if we accept. The promise.

Of Christ's return. If we accept. This prediction. Of the world's destruction. He says. Then. We. Should have.

These beliefs. Reflected. In how we live. And notice. And he says. In verse 12. He says. We are waiting. For the promise. Of a new heaven. Of new heavens.

[12:33] And a new earth. In which righteousness dwells. So. There is this sense. Where Peter is saying. We live. In this. In between. We live. In this. Time space world.

That he says. Is going to all be destroyed. And everything in it. Is going to be exposed. And made naked. For what it is. Because. The world. In many ways.

The things that we see. In the world. They are camouflaged. We tend to make more. Of some things. Than we should. And less of some things.

Than we should. And Peter says. On that day. Things are going to be exposed. For what they really are. But then he also says. We are waiting. For this promise.

That God has given to us. Of a new heaven. Of new heavens. And a new earth. In which righteousness dwells. And so those of us. Who belong to Christ.

[13:27] We live between. These two realities. The reality of this world. That is passing away. And will one day. Be fully dissolved. And this. New age. That is to come.

With new heavens. And with a new earth. Peter says. We are to live. With these realities. In mind. And what he says. Is that.

Because of these realities. Our lives. Should be marked. By holiness. And our lives. Should be marked. By godliness. Now when Peter talks.

About holiness here. He is not talking about. Holiness. In the. Sense of. What God declares. Over those. Who belong. To him. He is not talking about. The holiness. Of Jesus Christ. That God credits. To those.

[14:20] Who put their faith. In him. He is not talking about that. When we come to Christ. We receive. A righteous garment. We.

The Lord. Declares us. Righteous. Paul says it this way. In. In Romans 4. He says that. That God. Declares. The ungodly.

Righteous. That's a declaration. In and of ourselves. We are not. And no matter. To what degree. We attain. Righteousness. We will never be. Enough. Righteous. Righteous. For God. So God. Gives us.

The perfect. Righteousness. Of Jesus Christ. As a gift. That's not what. That's not what. Peter is talking about here. He's not talking about. That holiness. He is talking about. A practical holiness. He's talking about. The way. That we. Live. And in a. In a very. Biblical sense.

[15:15] What it means to be holy. Is to be separate. That's the first. Most basic definition. Of holy. It means to be set apart from.

To be separate from. And so when Peter is telling us that. We are to be in this world. Living lives of holiness. What he's saying to us. Is that as it relates to the world.

Our lives. Are to be separate. And distinct. From this world. Not participating. In this world's practices. Not. Not participating.

In this world's values. He says. We are to be living. Lives. Of holiness. If we truly believe. What the word of God says.

About this world. In which. We live. We are to be. Separate from it. Not participating. In its. Sinful values. Not participating. In.

[16:09] Its. Sinful. Practices. Peter is saying to us. This world has an expiry date. Doesn't matter how much.

It seems like it is fixed. And everything is so permanent. He says. This world is it. An expiry date. And it is destined for a fiery conclusion. And Peter says to us.

Don't be attached to it. Don't join in with it. Don't make much of it. In light of this world's future. We. Who belong to Christ. Must see this world. For what it is. In John 17. Jesus. Was praying. The. What is called. The high priestly prayers. He was getting ready to go back. To the father. To ascend into heaven. And the prayer of Jesus. Gives us some insight.

[17:06] About how we are to be living in this world. How we are to be relating to the world. Here's what Jesus prayed to the father. In John 17. Verses 14 through 16. He says.

I have given them your word. And the world has hated them. Because they are not of the world. Just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world.

But that you keep them from the evil one. Notice what he says in verse 16. They are not of the world. Just as I am not of the world.

We are in the world. But we are not to be of the world. Of its values. And of its practices. We are called to live separate. And apart.

From this world. In James chapter 4. The apostle James. Is rebuking his audience. Because their lives look no different.

[18:07] From the world around them. And in particular. In the area of quarreling. And fighting. Among themselves. And here is what he says. To them in.

James chapter 4. Verse 4. He writes. You adulterous people. Do you not know that friendship with the world. Is enmity with God.

Therefore whoever wishes. To be a friend of the world. Makes himself an enemy. Of God. It is a very strong statement. That Peter. That James makes.

James calls. The people of God. Adulterous. And the reason is. That scripture. Teaches us. That the relationship. Between God. And his people. Is like. That of a husband. And wife. In marriage. And so. When we are cozy. With the world. When we are friends. With the world.

[19:03] We are committing. Spiritual adultery. Because we belong to God. God. And James was telling them. He was saying. Your sinful conduct. Is evidence.

That you are friends. With the world. It's evidence. That you are not. Staying true to. Your husband. The Lord. You are. Friends with the world. And your behavior.

Is showing it. You are fighting. And quarreling. And you are no different. From the way. The world is. And so. He makes the charge. Of adultery.

And then. He says. That to be a friend. Of the world. Is to be. An enemy. Of God. And brothers and sisters.

The point could not be clearer. When our lives. Are marked. By holiness. We demonstrate. That we are not. Friends.

[19:58] Of the world. Or that we belong. To God. Listen to these words. From the apostle John. As he warns us.

About loving the world. And commands us. Not to love it. In 1 John 2. 15 through 17. He writes. Do not love the world. Or the things. In the world.

If anyone loves the world. The love of the father. Is not in him. For all that is in the world. The desires of the flesh. And the desires of the eyes.

And pride. And possessions. Is not from the father. But is from the world. And notice what he says. In verse 17. And the world.

Is passing away. Along with its desires. But whoever does. The will of God. Abides forever. Every single day. That goes by.

[20:53] This world is passing away. We come closer to that day. When it will all be dissolved. When it will all have. A fiery. Conclusion. And what we see.

Brothers and sisters. Is it impossible. To love the world. Or anything. Of the world. And live a life. Of holiness. To which we have been called.

John says it. In very. Strong words. If we love the world. The love of the father.

Is not in us. Matters not what we say. If we love the world. The love of the father. Is not in us. And so the truth is.

We are to be. Growing. In our love for God. And for the things of God. And our love for the world. And the things of the world. Will. Diminish. And we need to understand that.

[21 : 52] We need God's grace for this. We aren't able to. Muster up the spiritual strength. Or spiritual stamina. To do this. We need.

God's grace. To cause us. To love him more. And that's why. As I prayed for us this morning. As we sang. Only you are holy.

We have to pray. God make me holy. God would you. Cause the taste of the world. To be bitter in my mouth. Cause me to see the world.

For what it really is. That is gold. That's. Fool's gold. It is. It is glitter. But it is. It is not true gold. We need God's grace.

To help us. To do that. We cannot do it. On. Our own. So Peter says. Our lives should be marked. By holiness. Pointing to how we relate.

[22 : 47] To the world. But that's not all he says. He also says. That our lives. Are to be marked. By godliness. And this points to.

Being shaped by. Love for God. And a desire. For. The new heavens. And the new earth. In which. Righteousness.

Dwells. In the same way. That holiness. Speaks about. How we relate. To the world. Godliness. Speaks about. How we relate. To God. And the promise.

Of the new heavens. And the new earth. God. I hope you see. The connection. Between the two. When you see the world. For what it is. I mean. Kind of. Come on. Imagine. Imagine you hear.

That a company. Is. Failing. This company. Doesn't have a future. The business. Is going to dwindle. And people.

[23 : 42] Are trying to offer you. Shares in that company. You wouldn't be wise. To buy it. Because that company. Is going to fail. That's this world. That we live in. When we invest. In this world.

We are. We are investing. In. A company. That is. Going. To fail. And so. Holiness. How are we to be. Relating to that. Compared to.

Godliness. In terms of. How are we to be. Relating to God. And this new heavens. A new earth. That God has promised. Will come. He has promised.

That he will. He will bring. This new heaven. And this. New earth. And since. Jesus. Is the revelation. Of God.

The way that we know. God is through. The Lord Jesus Christ. And this is why. When a person says. Well I want to know God. Well God revealed himself.

[24 : 39] In his son. He revealed himself. In Jesus Christ. Who is the. Express image. Of. God's. Divine. Person. And so. When we talk about.

Godliness. Another word we can use. For that is Christ likeness. We are called to. A life of holiness. And we are called to. A life of. Godliness. Or a life of.

Christ likeness. So. Peter is essentially saying. That our lives. Are to be marked. By being more. And more like. Jesus Christ. And this speaks about. Obedience to the word of God.

It speaks about living. In accordance with the values. Of. The kingdom of God. That are expressed in. The word of God. Brothers and sisters.

These. Three verses. Demand our contemplation. Those of us. Who belong to Christ. These three verses. That call us. To live lives. Of holiness.

[25 : 36] And godliness. These. Demand. Our. Contemplation. And what I ask. Us this morning.

To. Consider. Do these two words. Truly describe the lives. That we live. Holiness. Godliness. Godliness. And the contemplation. Only begins here. There is no way. That we can do. A faithful. And a worthy job.

Of. Contemplating. And evaluating. Our lives. As we sit here. For this brief moment. But we need to take. These words seriously. And since we belong.

To. Christ. Those of us. Who have put our faith. In Jesus Christ. And we see these words. Where Peter says. Come on. In light of this.

[26 : 31] In light of what is supposed to happen. In light of this world. That is going to pass away. And in light of this new age. That is going to come. How should we be living? How much should we be living lives.

That are marked by holiness. And godliness. And so we need to think about this. We need to think about it. Beyond just sitting.

Here for this brief moment. And there are many areas for us to consider. Many aspects. Our lives are broad and varied. And we need to consider.

What does this look like in my life? Is my life marked by holiness and godliness? In particular areas. And I want to suggest five areas.

That I know are common to all of us. That we should take some time and prayerfully consider. Is my life marked by holiness and godliness? In these areas.

[27 : 32] There are others. This is not an exhaustive list. This is to get us started. And the first area. Is the area of speech. Our speech. The second.

Is how we use our money. The third. Is our entertainment choices. The fourth. Is our relationships. And the fifth.

Is how we dress. And we want to take the time to ask. You know. Not limiting. Not limiting the evaluation.

To these five areas. But certainly including these five areas. Is my speech. Is my use of money. Are my entertainment choices.

How I handle relationships. How I dress. And carry myself. Are these reflective. Of this life of holiness. And godliness. That I'm called to.

[28 : 35] How different. Is my life. In these areas. From those. Who are. Unbelievers. Is my life.

More marked. By holiness. Than worldliness. And then. In the next area. In the area. Of godliness. I'll offer three areas. For us to consider. For us to consider. And as I thought about this. It was very convenient. To. Use the three areas.

Coming out of the habits of grace. The. Book that we have been. Reading. For our third discipleship class. And those of you who. Have done that. Would remember these. Quite readily.

God's word. God's word. God's word. God's word. Which is personal. Bible reading. And study. Meditation. Being faithful.

[29 : 36] To times like this. To sit under the preaching. Of God's word. And the third. Is God's air. Prayer. Both personal.

And corporate. And then. The third. Is God's body. How do we. Relate to. Brothers and sisters. Church attendance.

Fellowship. Serving. In the context of. The local church. These are. Three critical areas. I believe. That we can use. To evaluate.

How are we. Doing. In the area. Of godliness. Are our lives. Marked by. Growing godliness. As we consider.

These. Three areas. Of god's word. God's air. And god's. Body. And here's what I would say to us. If we are healthy. In these areas.

[30 : 33] Our lives. Will be marked by godliness. By growing godliness. Not perfection. Not perfection. But.

It is to be marked. By. Growth. In both godliness. And. In holiness. And the clear implication is. Wherever we are this morning. We all have room to grow. Every single one of us. Wherever we find ourselves this morning. We. Have room. To grow. And that is what we should be pursuing.

We should be pursuing. Growth. We should be allowing the spirit to convict us. And. And. Being sensitive to that conviction. And then. Seeking to change.

As he. Convicts us. And I think we should remember that. The opposite of these two. Marks. That the apostle Peter.

[31 : 29] Holds out to us. Holiness. And godliness. Will be unholiness. And ungodliness. In our words. In our deeds. In our values.

In verse 12. The apostle Peter says. That we have to be waiting. And hastening. The coming day. Of God. Now I'm sure we all know what it means to wait.

Generally speaking. When we're waiting. It's a good indication that we don't control the agenda. We don't control. The schedule. We are subject to.

Somebody. Else's. But what does it mean to hasten the coming of the day of the Lord? And I think what Peter is doing is.

Peter is telling us two truths. That we need to hold in tension. On the one hand. He is calling us to wait. Wait for the coming of the day of the Lord.

[32 : 27] A time that God ultimately controls. But then on the other hand. He is saying to us. That by living lives of holiness and godliness. We can hasten the coming of the day of God.

And so while God already knows. And has set the day of the Lord's return. And the end of this world. And the ushering in of new heavens and a new earth.

He has done all of that. He has factored in. Our response. And how we live. Into that timing. As well. And so when we pray for the kingdom to come. When we share the gospel with people. When we disciple others. We are actually. Working towards.

Bringing about. The day of the return. Of the Lord. We are hastening it. In a sense. When we are functioning as salt and light. As we ought to. We are hastening.

[33 : 26] The coming. Of the day. Of the Lord. So in a way. That doesn't compromise. The sovereignty of God. And the responsibility of man. Peter is saying these two things.

So he is saying. Wait for the day. And then he also tells us. Hasten the day. And this is a great example of. Divine sovereignty.

And human responsibility. Working. Together. And so I think the point for us should be. The lives we live matter. How we live our lives. Actually. Matter.

God has so. Ordained it. Now. Not only does Peter tell us. That our lives. Would be marked by holiness. And godliness.

But he also tells us. That our lives. Are to be marked. With patience. And diligence. And that's my second point.

[34 : 25] Three times in eight verses. Peter uses the word. Waiting. He does so in verse 12. He does so in verse 13. And he does so in verse 14.

And then in verse 15. He tells us. How we are to live. In view of. The. Seeming delay. In the Lord's return. In this long period of time.

That has. Elapsed. The false teachers. Took the view. He has not come back yet. He is not coming at all. Peter says.

No. Don't. Don't do that. He says. You need to be patient. He is saying to us. We are to. We are to wait. And notice what he says to us. Specifically. In verse 15.

He says. Here is what you are to do. With this delay. You are to count it. As patience. The patience of the Lord. As salvation. He says.

[35 : 23] Count the patience of the Lord. As salvation. Count this delay. In the Lord. Fulfilling his promise. As an opportunity. For salvation. As an opportunity.

To share the gospel. As an opportunity. To reach the lost. That is the way. We are supposed to view it. We are not to fall in the error. Of. The false.

Teachers. Remember. When he told us earlier. He said. A day with the Lord. Is like a thousand years. And a thousand years. Is like. A day. So we should not focus. On the length. Of.

Time. That has elapsed. Since Jesus Christ. Ascended. Back into heaven. We should recognize. That we have gospel opportunities. To help the lost.

To come. To Christ. And Peter was not alone. In what he was saying. He. He. Was in the company of Paul. And he points this out. Again.

[36 : 22] Look at what he says. In verse 15. And count the patience. Of our Lord. As salvation. Just. As our beloved brother. Paul. Also wrote you. So he is saying.

What I am telling you to do. Concerning the Lord's delay. Paul said the same thing. Paul says. The very. Same. Same. Thing.

And then he goes on. To. Tell us. That. Some people. Who don't understand. What Paul. Actually wrote. Because what Paul wrote. Was somewhat difficult. He says. What they are doing.

Is. They are twisting. What Paul has written. They are twisting it. To their own. Destruction. And obviously. The point here. The point here.

In verse 16. Is that. These are individuals. Who are prideful. These are individuals. Who are proud. And who. Have not submitted. Themselves.

[37 : 19] To. To. Receive help. In understanding. These. More difficult. Aspects. Of. The writings. Of the apostle Paul. And so they.

They twisted. What he said. And. Peter tells us. That they were doing it. To their own. Destruction. As they do.

The other scriptures. scriptures. And essentially. What he was doing. Was he was saying. To us. The writings of Paul. Are holy scripture. That's important to see. Because.

Offentimes. People would try. To minimize. The words of Paul. Or minimize. The new testament. But what he was doing here. The other scriptures. Would have been. The old testament.

Scriptures. Which would have been. Established. From. Genesis. To Malachi. At that particular point. Those are the only. Scriptures they had. These letters. That we have.

[38 : 34] These were just being. Written. At that time. And certainly. He included. Paul's. Writings. Along with the old. Testament scriptures. I say that in passing. But that's a very important. Point. To actually.

Make. But we shouldn't get. Lost in the point. That Peter is making. Peter's not trying. To jab Paul. He just said.

That in passing. The point. That Peter is making. As we should not. Get lost. In all of these. Details. About the timing. Of the Lord's return. And the length of time. That is. That is transpired.

He says. Instead. We need to be focused. On souls. We need to be focused. On saying. That this is an opportunity. For salvation. That every day.

That the Lord. Delays his return. Is an opportunity. For us. To share the gospel. And for. Men. Women. Boys and girls. To come. To faith. In Jesus Christ.

[39 : 31] There should not be. Any greater priority. Than this. Priority. Of sharing. The gospel. And clearly.

We should avoid. Any kind. Of speculation. About. The date. Of the Lord's. Return. As some people. Are prone.

To give themselves to. But Peter. Also. Is. Telling us. Not only. Are we to be patient. And how we need to relate.

To the Lord's. Delay. He's also saying. That we need to. Be. Diligent. Our lives. Are to be marked. By spiritual. Diligence. As we. As we.

Await. The Lord's. Return. And what he says. Is that. We. Are to. Be diligent. So as to ensure. That we are.

[40 : 25] Without spot. Or blemish. Now again. Peter. Is not talking about. The. The view.

Of us. That God has. The view of us. That God has. All of us. Who put our trust. In Jesus Christ. He sees us. Without spot. Without blemish. Because he sees us. In the righteousness. Of Jesus Christ. That has been a gift. That he's given to us. But what he's talking about here. Is. Practical. Dealing with sin.

In our lives. And notice how he. He addresses it. He says to us. That we are to be diligent. That we. Will not be found.

With spot. Or blemish. A spot. Or a blemish. And you know. They.

[41 : 17] They do this with fruit. When they're grating fruit. Putting them in. A grade. And B grade. And whatever other grades. They have. They inspect them. And there's just a spot.

Or blemish. That shouldn't be on it. They put it to the side. Because they're looking for. What appears to be. A perfect. Looking. Fruit. Or. A vegetable.

What Peter is saying to us. He's saying to us. This world is passing away. The new heavens. And the new earth. Are being ushered in. He says. You need to be diligent. With sin. In your life.

And you need to be addressing. Even the smallest sin. The spot. The blemish. And see.

When you think about that. That has far reaching implications. Because if he's saying to us. That we need to be diligent. With the small sins. What about the big sins? It is a given. That if he calls us.

[42 : 14] To be diligent. About the small things. That we must. Not even. Have a thought. About having. The big sins. In our lives. And. I'm sure you've heard people say.

Oh. Sin is sin. Not true. People say that all the time. Sin is not sin. We. See this from the Old Testament. When you read the Old Testament.

The Lord classified sins. There were some sins. That you could be stoned for. There were other sins. You had to bring a sacrifice for. And the sacrifice. Was determined.

Based on the sin. There were some sacrifices. That required. There were some sins. That required a huge sacrifice. Bulls. Many bulls. And goats. And then there were other sins.

That just would require. A dove. Or. A lamb. And we see this distinction. Between sins. And our own law. Reflects.

[43 : 10] This. Difference. In. In recognizing. Wrongs. And. And sins. Which we got it from the Old Testament. We got it from the law of Moses. And so there are some sins.

That can land us in prison. There are other sins. That won't land us in prison. And there are some sins. That would bring us before the courts. And the courts deal with those sins differently.

So for example. You go before the courts for stealing. They don't give you the death penalty. Or they don't send you to jail for life. And so we should never say that sin is sin.

As a matter of fact. One of the best examples of it. Is. When Jesus stood before Pilate. And. He said to Pilate. The one who betrayed me to you.

Has committed the greatest sin. And so don't let anyone. Sell you the lie. That sin is sin. Sin is not sin. And there are some sins.

[44 : 07] That are far more serious than others. But the apostle Peter's point is this. We. Who believe.

That this world is coming to an end. We who believe. That there is a new heaven. And a new earth. That is being ushered in. We must be diligent with our lives. We must be.

Diligent with the spots. We must be diligent with. The blemishes. We must take. Sin. Seriously. Is what he's really saying to us.

We don't pass them over. Because they're small. And say. I'll only deal with the big sins. No. He says. You deal. With those small sins. And one of the. Reasons for that. Is that.

Is the little. Little foxes. That spoil the vine. And little sins. Lead to big sins. If we begin to allow.

[45 : 03] Our consciences. To be seared. And our consciences. To be numbed. Where we're not convicted. By small sins. Eventually. We will be unconvicted. By even bigger sins. And so.

Peter says to us. We need to be diligent. We need to be diligent. With. Even the small spots. And the blemishes.

We're not to be indulging in sin. Instead. We have to be. Mortifying sin. It's because of what Jesus Christ has done and continues to do to preserve us to the end.

Those of us who hold that view, we need to be aware that there's also a temptation and a danger that could come our way where we could take the view that, oh, well, since ultimately it depends on Christ, I don't need to be as careful.

I don't need to be as diligent. Peter says no. Peter was more persuaded and convinced that it is Christ who will cause us to finish the race of salvation.

[46 : 38] Yet he calls us to be diligent in dealing with sin in our lives, the smallest sin, the smallest spot, the smallest blemish.

Brothers and sisters, a growing love for God is evidenced by a growing hatred for sin and a growing love for righteousness.

And truly, the Bible teaches us these are evidences of genuine conversion. These are evidences of genuine conversion that we are loving God more, that we are hating sin more.

We are loving sin less. And one of the most encouraging experiences a Christian can have is to be faced with temptations to sin in ways they used to sin and find a desire in their heart that they no longer want to go that way.

Even if it presents as a temptation and it's a tug at your heart that you're to the place where you could recognize, you know what? There was a time when I didn't even fight this.

[47 : 59] I just yielded to it. That is an evidence of the grace of God. And Peter says this needs to be happening in our lives in an ongoing way.

We need to be diligent. Brothers and sisters, we are no match for sin. We can't place sin closely. It'll eat our lunch every single time. And so we need to take heed to what the Word says.

We need to be diligent that we will be found by Him without spot or blemish and at peace, meaning that our consciences are at peace with God.

We don't get a peaceful conscience with God because we are perfect in and of ourselves. We don't. But we get a peaceful conscience with God when we know we are walking in the light.

We are renouncing sin. We are mortifying sin. Our conscience grows in a more peaceful way with God.

[49 : 04] Puritan pastor John Owen famously said, Be killing sin or it will be killing you. Be killing sin or it will be killing you.

And the whole point is that we need to be actively seeking to mortify sin in our lives. Otherwise, sin is eroding and just chipping away in our lives.

What this calls for is it calls for spiritual diligence. It calls us to be spiritually diligent. So Peter tells us in light of Christ's return, in light of the coming destruction of this world, we who belong to Christ are to live lives marked by holiness and godliness and we are to live lives marked by patience and diligence.

And third and finally, he tells us that we are to live lives that are marked by stability and growth. Notice how he says that in verse 17.

He writes, You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

[50 : 32] In verse 18, he says, But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In contrast to those who twist the scriptures to their own destruction, we are called not to be carried away with the error of lawless men and run the risk of losing our own stability.

And again, the issue here for those who were twisting the scriptures in this way is that they were a law unto themselves. No one could tell them anything.

They felt they understood the scriptures just as well as Peter, just as well as Paul, and no one needed to tell them anything. And so they were self-destructing by taking that approach.

The clear point that Peter is making is that stability comes from doing the opposite. Stability comes, spiritual stability comes through rightly relating to God through his word, through prayer, through his body, and godly pastors are a part of God's provision for stability.

The Lord doesn't call his people sheep for any reason. It is an indication of neediness. It is an indication of a need for a shepherd. You don't need shepherds for lions and for other kinds of beasts of prey that could make their own way.

[52 : 10] They don't need shepherds. Sheep need shepherds. And as each day goes by, we need to be seeking to increase and grow in our spiritual stability.

And the point is that we need to take care to ensure that this happens. But not only are we to be stable, we are to also be growing. Our lives are to be marked by growth.

He says we have to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Bible likens us when we come to Christ as babes.

We are to, as Scripture says, we are to desire the sincere milk of the word so that we may grow. But we are not to stay that way. We are to grow over time. We are to mature over time.

And so what he is addressing here is our salvation experience. And you would remember those of you who were here for the first sermon in this series, Peter has come full circle.

[53 : 16] He has come right back to where he started. Turn to the beginning of the letter in chapter 1 where Peter is opening the letter and he is addressing his audience, people who were being bombarded by false teachers who were telling them that their faith was not a sufficient faith.

They needed other things and it just wasn't enough. Peter says to them in verse 3, his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.

By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them we may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Then he says for this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith. You have to add to it. He says you must add to it virtue. And then with virtue you to add knowledge and knowledge self-control and self-control steadfastness and steadfastness godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

He says in verse 8, for if these qualities are yours and are increasing they will keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[55 : 05] For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore brothers be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

For if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom.

Peter ends where he started. And he is urging us to grow. He is urging us to grow in our salvation.

He is urging us to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And again we must not hear this as a command to us away from the help of the Spirit.

We need God's help through his Holy Spirit. We would even have no desire to do this except the Spirit helps us.

[56 : 14] The Spirit needs to both give us the desire and the Spirit needs to also enable us to do these things. Peter closes his letter with a doxology to Christ.

And he says to him, be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. And I'll close just with these few words.

people often talk about, oh, you know, I don't know this thing, I don't know about Jesus and God being equal.

We sang this morning about the Godhead, the three in one. We sang about the blessed Trinity this morning. And they will say things, they will find me a scripture that says that, that teaches that.

And see, we don't have a scripture that teaches us in exact way what we talk about our understanding of the Godhead.

[57 : 19] God has revealed himself in his word. And it is as we read God's word, we see how God has revealed himself. And so one of the things we know that scripture teaches is that God, glory belongs to God alone and he shares it with no one.

And so here's what we know. Anyone to whom glory is given is therefore God. And what we teach about the Godhead, about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is we say all that scripture says.

Scripture says God is one. So we say yes, God is one. He is God alone. Scripture says that, we say that as well. But what we also see scripture saying is that we see scripture ascribing the same divine qualities of God to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in this case, to the Son.

And Peter is not referring to God the Father here, he's referring to God the Son here, because in verse 18 it says, we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.

Amen. If God the Father, which is what we see in the Old Testament, he says, I won't share my glory with another. And yet, we see in the Holy Scripture, glory is being ascribed to Jesus Christ.

[58 : 51] Jesus is not God the Father, he is God the Son. But the same glory that is given to God the Father is given to God the Son. And therefore, we are able to speak in terms of God the Father and the Son in this particular case to say they are co-equal.

And they share in the same divine glory. Though distinct persons. And yet, we accept that God is also one. And we see this in Scripture, and so we have to say both.

We can't choose one or the other. We say both. God is one. God is three. God the Father is God, and God the Son is God.

And we don't see this in perfect understanding. We don't know this perfectly. When you talk about God, comprehending God is an impossibility for finite creatures.

Because what we are seeking to do, when we study God as he has revealed himself in Scriptures, we finite beings are trying to understand an infinite being, and we can't. The day we can fully understand God is the day we'll be God.

[60 : 04] We can say, well, you know, God, back over, let me be God now, I understand you. We don't. God has sufficiently revealed himself in Scripture that we may know him.

We don't know him perfectly, but we know him sufficiently. And we know him because he has revealed himself to us in his word. And so, Peter concludes this letter with this doxology to God the Son.

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. What's the day of eternity? The day of eternity is the day that Jesus returns, and that day will usher in eternity.

We now live in time. When Christ returns, when he returns, eternity will be ushered in. And Peter says, to him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.

Brothers and sisters, let us take time. I would even encourage you today to fit into your afternoon contemplating these words of 2nd Peter, these concluding words.

[61 : 20] What kind of people are we to be? What kind of people ought we to be in lives of holiness and godliness? Lives marked with diligence and patience. Lives marked with stability and growth.

If we truly believe that this world, as we know it, is passing away. And we believe that God is going to usher in a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Let's pray.