

2 Peter 2:10-22

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 July 2026

Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0:00] So would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God. We're going to pick it up in the latter half of verse 10. It should be fairly simple to pick it up in your translation of scripture.

Some actually indent that verse, kind of break it apart. Others do not. But it is the beginning of a new sentence and that's where we will start. It says, Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

But these, like unreasoning animals born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong.

They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes reveling in their deceptions as they carouse with you. Having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children, forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey speaking with the voice of a man restrained the madness of the prophet.

These are springs without water and mist driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant words of vanity, they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of corruption.

[1:42] For by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, a dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow after washing returns to wallowing in the mire.

You may be seated. 2 Peter 2, verses 10 through 22. Peter here, as he is writing to the saints which are dispersed, those of the diaspora, as they would call it in the early church, has been encouraging the church to be the people of the word.

And a part of being a people of the word was also being those who defended the word. And one manner in defending the word would be holding on to the truth and resisting the lies.

As certain as the prophets spoke from long ago, and we have the written word of God recorded for us there in the verses at the end of chapter 1, so too are the rising up of the false prophets.

[3:04] Very early in church history, if you were to go back and read your church history, you would see that the moment there began to be a declaration of truth, there was also the declaration of the lie.

The moment that prophets and teachers and preachers and proclaimers of the gospel came on to scene, so too did the false teachers and false prophets proclaiming the lie.

And it would seem so close, so similar, but yet it had such catastrophic endings to them. And the church over and over again is admonished to be the guardians of the truth.

A multitude of letters found within the pages of the New Testament are encouraging the church to do the very thing, to resist the false teachers and the false prophets, and to cling to the truth that was being taught, not necessarily just by the apostles, but is revealed to them through the written and recorded word of God.

It is almost verbatim that we can find these same admonitions found for us in the short letter or the short epistle of Jude. Jude is also warning believers to guard against false prophets and false teachers.

[4:11] He gives almost a identical description of them as Peter. And the similarities in their descriptions are not a testimony to one using the other, but rather is a testimony to the vitality or the viability of the reality of what is going on.

That is, they knew who they were wrestling against. They knew the enemy that was opposing them. One of the great charges of being a guardian of the truth is to know who it is we are to guard it from. We ought to know the attributes of the false prophets so that we cannot be led astray by them, so that we cannot be carried away by them.

And we dare not have self-confidence. We dare not boast in our own abilities. And to say, well, yes, I would never be led astray in this way. Surely I would never fall victim to such things.

Surely I know enough and I understand enough. Because the moment, what does the word of God tell us? The moment we think we stand is the very moment in which we fall. But we need to know the attributes of the false prophets that exist among us.

[5:22] Peter was very clearly declaring that the moment the scripture came into being, so too did the false prophets. And he told them that this was not a new thing, but it also is not a past thing.

It is something that would continue to move forward throughout the ages. He says, as they will also among you. Brothers and sisters, be mindful of this reality.

The church will always, always be wrestling and fighting against false prophecy. Always. It is a certain reality. It is a settled fact.

It is the thing that has been going on since the Garden of Eden. And it will continue to go on until our day of final and full redemption. Until we see the truth personified in Jesus Christ face to face, and we stand in the truth of his glory and reality, we will be wrestling against the false.

And we need to know what it looks like. We don't need to know what it looks like so that we can only wag the finger and say, oh, well, there it is. We don't need to name drop and say, well, it's this person, this person, and this person.

[6:24] No, we need to know what it looks like so that we can be guarded in case we will fall under the influence of them, and so too, in case we would become one of them.

And so we must constantly be on guard, searching our own hearts and searching our own minds, and saying, oh, Lord, I do not want to be one who leads others astray. Help me to ever walk in truth. There are a multitude of people. I appreciate this. Some say, well, I don't ever want to teach. I don't ever want to be a teacher because the word of God tells us that teachers are held in a higher esteem, and teachers are held to a higher accountability.

And they say, so I'm not ever going to be a teacher because if I ever become a teacher, God's going to hold me accountable. Well, listen, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I've got news for you. You are held accountable.

For all of us as believers are called and charged to make disciples, and discipleship is done through teaching. Regardless if you call yourself a teacher or not, you are.

[7:23] You are discipling those around you by the influence and the impact of your life. And therefore, we are accountable for how we live in such a manner.

You say, well, I would just be one. It's always sitting under the teaching and tutelage of another, and maybe I would never be held accountable to that esteem. Jesus says, you may never rise above your master who is Christ, but you ought to become like him.

You ought to be teaching, and you ought to be instructing. You ought to be equipping. Don't ever try to take the easy way out, and I'll show you why in just a moment. Don't be afraid of the calling, and don't be afraid.

One of the great tragedies that we have in the current day church, it is in the modern churches, is they say the pipeline is drawing up, that there is no longer a minister pipeline, that there are no men, are no longer being called out into the ministry, and people aren't going, and we have a number of churches in our own state.

I mean, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of churches that just have no pastor. There's no shepherd. There's no one that is there preaching the word, and the churches are staying open, and say, well, it's because the ministry pipeline is drying up.

[8:27] Well, the ministry pipeline is drying up is because the people of God aren't surrendering fully, because we feel like church has become something that we can attend and be entertained with rather than somewhere we go to be equipped and challenged by.

And the church is an equipping place. It is a moving place. It is a place calling us to service. It is a place that is calling us to push ourselves beyond our comfort, but rather we must constantly guard our own lives, and we must look to ourselves and say, well, where do the false teachers reside? What do they look like? And where am I? Do I am I becoming one such? And what are the attributes that I need to be on guard against from sitting under? And what are the attributes that I need to be on guard against on myself?

And as Peter is doing it, he speaks very quickly of the character of these individuals. And he uses two words there that really stand out to me. They've been standing out to me all week. He introduces them by the character attributes very quickly.

He says that these men, before he even starts talking about what they teach, before he even starts talking about how they live, he'll get to that in just a little bit, he introduces their character. Why? Because your character will always, friend, mark this, your character will always, always, always influence your conduct.

[9:51] You will do what you are. And the character you have will eventually become the conduct you display. He will speak of their conduct here in just a moment.

But before you can understand someone's conduct, you need to know what is their character. And this is why character absolutely matters. It is essential in our own lives.

It is essential to our own testimony. It is essential to our own walk. And notice what he says. He says they are daring and self-willed. Self-willed is only used, that phrase is only used two times in scripture.

It is used here. And it is used in the description of those who aspire to the office of an elder or a pastor found in the book of Titus. And it tells us in Titus that those who are overseers or pastors that you should never have a pastor who is self-willed.

And he says here that those false teachers are daring and self-willed. It just literally means to be arrogant, to be proud, to be full of self-confidence, to be bold in their self-assertions, to be one who is concerned about self.

[11:02] By the way, be careful how much self has control over you. And I know we speak about this quite often, and we start speaking about this in different circles.

And it's worth speaking about the free will of man or the sovereign will of God and all these realities. But whenever time we begin to focus on self-will, we are focusing on self.

And the very first character attribute that we find about them, and there's really no better way to say it, they love, this is really bad English, so don't get me on this, okay?

They love a lot of them. They love themselves. They love themselves. And everything about them. And everything that's going on around them. And everything in their life is focused on themselves. And everything in their world centers around how to please and appease self. And how to make self feel good. And how to make self work good. And how to fulfill self.

[12:03] And now we're not just pointing to others, we're looking at ourselves because what character attribute defines us? Do you know why surrender is so hard?

Do you know why surrender is so difficult? Do you know why we sing, I surrender all, with such a gloomy look on our face? It's because the reality is, is that we really don't want to surrender everything we have.

We love it. We hold on to it. It is something that we feel like we've earned, and we've worked for, and we've labored for, and that is ours. And by the sweat of our brow, and the blood that is spilt through our labor, that is mine.

I don't want to give it up. And all we're talking about there is self. But surrender is a beautiful reality. Because surrender gives up self.

And the dead man has no will. Paul says, I die daily. I have no will. I have no motivation.

[13:04] I have no desires. I have no ambitions. Nevertheless, I live, but it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives inside of me. Galatians 2.20. Right? He says, I am crucified with Christ.

I die daily. Why? Because each and every day, I have to say, Lord, I do not want my will, but rather your will be done. Even Jesus himself, in the Garden of Gethsemane, said, Father, Father, not my will, but your will be done.

And in the flesh, you had to surrender the will of the flesh. But notice, their character, their daring, self-willed. They do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties. That's really a strange terminology here, but it is they're speaking against, most people believe, and I agree with them here, biblical scholars when they look at it, they're speaking against demonic spirits and angelic majesties, those demons.

And Peter very quickly dives into the spiritual realm and starts talking about, but now remember his example that he gave just prior to this, those angels who left their proper abode during the days of Noah and the sons of God saw the daughters of men and intermingled with them in judgment and all those other things, okay?

And so what he is saying here is, he said, they're speaking against demons and fallen angels and they're speaking against this when even the angels who are more powerful than them, that is, than the false teachers would not even bring an accusation against them.

[14:18] So here's another character attribute you find and they're prideful. They're prideful. They feel like they don't have to submit to any rulership and they can speak against things and talk against things and I've been asked this and I was asked this, I think this past week, yeah, it may surprise you as a Baptist pastor, I've been asked to do things that most Baptist pastors that I know have never been asked to do and so in preacher circles, you get to talking and some of them look at me a little sideways and you can look at me a little sideways if you want to and I've been in houses where people say, man, there's just a demonic spirit here, would you pray over our house and I've had people call me and ask me to pray over people that, you know, and I've really dealt with that world and kind of interacted with that world a lot but never did I walk in there with just some prideful thing and this reality of thinking, yeah, I'm greater than this.

There was one time I probably shouldn't have done it but anyway, it was a chance encounter in the street and a man told me he was God and I told him he wasn't and anyway, it was really strange. Your pastor's wife got on to me later and she said, you shouldn't have said all that and I said, well, greater is he that's in me than he that is in him. That man's crazy. I really think he was, I really think he was indwelt too.

It's really, full story on this, really cool. I had this encounter with this guy and he told me he was God and I kind of, I hate to say this, I mocked him a little bit and I said, well, if you're God, then make me something and he said, I said, but don't use that dirt because that's God's dirt.

Don't use anything around here because that all belongs to him. Find something of your own. Ex Nilo. Make me something. Fashion me something. Then I may believe you. He said, I got the power to kill you. I said, no, you don't. You're crazy. You can't kill me. You can't touch me. You can't do anything and he was like all in my face and all I was trying to do is go check the mail.

[16:09] That's all I was doing. It's a church and when I was pastoring before, I would just walk to the post office and this man was like, he's like, I got the power to kill you. I said, no, you're crazy, man. You don't have no power over me whatsoever. That's the last thing I told him.

You want me to tell you something? Like for the years that followed after that, I would see him walking because he walked to the post office every day to check his mail. So being the good pastor that I am, I started going to the post office at the same time he did to go check the church's mail to try to run into him.

Now this man, there's no offense to any of you guys, okay, he was in his upper 60s. At that time, I was in my early 30s and so I would see him. He was double my age and I would see him going out of his house and I would start walking too and I knew we would intersect each other and Brother Jerry lives across the street in Normandy.

I know exactly where his house is. This man would catch me out of the corner of his eye and break off in a sprint and run and cross the railroad tracks and go behind where Brother Jerry's house is now and go all the way around just to avoid being in my presence.

He couldn't stand being near me and I know why. It's because there was a spiritual battle going on and it was a battleground that was happening there but I was honestly seeking, we would go minister to this man.

[17:26] We would try to, we'd send our kids to his house to try to minister to him and he would take whatever the kids gave him and would hold it as far away from his body as he could and go in a full sprint and run through town and find the nearest dumpster to throw it away.

And yes, I would send my kids to his door to knock on his door and we would try to minister to him. Never once did we call it out or anything of that nature. It wasn't a proud thing.

It's just, I had confidence that the man is no longer with us, okay? Sad to say, he's no longer with us. But, I knew that greater is he that was in me than he that was in him and it was a demonic influence.

I know that beyond a shadow of a doubt and I know that's not a very baptistic thing to say but I just know that. But I also know I didn't have authority, I had authority in Christ over that, not authority in self.

And so what we find in these false teachers is they feel like they have self-authority and they're prideful and they're reviling it where they have no knowledge.

[18:33] They don't know what they're talking about and they have this false sense of authoritative power of naming things that aren't theirs to name. And this is why, friend, listen, you need to be in the word of God because these encounters with me would happen as I left the study and I was not standing in self-confidence but rather standing in, well, I just read this morning and so you would see these truths being lived out for you.

But be careful of your character. Be careful of the confidence you put in flesh because I've seen people who thought they could hold it together get in those moments and fall apart.

I've seen people who wrestle and I tell you this, not to get crazy, but I tell you this because if the church is to push back the gates of hell, then the church has to go into dark places and the church, the implication there is Matthew 16 is the church is on the offensive.

We're getting into dark places and we're pushing back and hell's gonna resist but we're not going there in our own name. Jesus says, upon this rock, what is that rock?

The confession of Christ. Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not be able to resist it. That is the church will be on the offensive in Christ, in the name of Christ, not in our own ability.

[19:58] We have no power or authority or ability on our own but in Christ we do. I've been in places and instances where I knew we were fighting a spiritual battle and everything would go well until you named the name of Christ and then man, it would turn on a dime and the wrestlings would be real.

But it's Christ who has the, alone who has the authority to break the power of darkness, not us. So the moment someone tells you that they have the authority to break that, they do not but Christ does.

So many false prophets are built upon false assumptions of authority and releasing and exercising demons in your own life and most of the time all they're doing is exercising them out and getting them more active and getting them more prevalent in your life rather than letting Christ impact the life.

So be careful of the character because that character will always influence the conduct and notice what the conduct says. It says that because of this they are unreasoning animals born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed.

That is, they're not thinking clearly, they're not reasoning intellectually, they're reviling where they have no knowledge and will and destruction of these creatures also be destroyed. He says their destruction is imminent, He's already told us that.

[21:19] They are suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. Here's their conduct. This is what they do. They do wrong. Why? Because they counted a pleasure to revel in the daytime. Their stains and blemishes reveling in the deceptions they have, as they carouse with you.

One of the most disheartening realities that has ever been witnessed by me as a pastor and again, I don't mean this judgmental, okay? And I hope you don't accept it as that, but the truth is the truth. It's when we have such a generation of pastors who in my mind use the freedoms in Christ as an excuse to revel in the daytime.

That they believe they can live as they want to live because in Christ they are free. In Christ you are free, but you are free with the precious blood of Jesus Christ and you belong to him.

This is not legalism. This is love. This is a demonstration of appreciation for the price that was paid for your redemption. This is a surrender saying he is worthy of your utmost devotion and you would forsake and you would forsake it all because he gave all for you.

[22:41] But there are multitudes and multitudes and multitudes of pastors that I've seen just living in such a life. I'm like, man, your life should look different.

But how should we be so surprised because the pulpit never caused the pew to look different either. You should be set apart. Holy.

Sanctified. Sanctified means what? To be set apart for holy service. In Christ you are sanctified. Set apart for holy service. I always use this example.

I know it stresses some of you out. I would never do this, but I use it as an example. We were going to have lunch here in just a moment. After this we'll have lunch and then we'll set up.

Some of you would have a hard time if I grabbed one of the offering plates and took it back there and made my lunch on that offering plate. And you say, what are you doing? I said, well, I found a plate and I'm going to use it and I'm going to put my lunch on this and I'm going to eat my lunch out of this plate because a plate is a plate.

[23:41] And you say, no, no, no, no, no, that's an offering plate. That's supposed to be up there. And you're right because it is set apart. It's something else. Right? It's for the collection of the saints, for the giving and giving of the church.

It has a different purpose. In Christ, so too do you. You are sanctified, set apart. Your conduct should be different. My conduct should be different. Christ changes our life.

It says, there are stains and blemishes reveling in their deception as they carouse among you, having eyes full of adultery and never cease from sin. One of the things that Peter keeps bringing up and Jude does it as well is how much the flesh appeals to the false teacher.

They are justifying their actions, their sensual actions, their adulterous actions in their freedoms, supposed freedoms in Christ and how much the flesh drives every decision they make and they're carousing around and they have these eyes full of adultery.

They're never ceasing from sin. They're enticing unstable souls. They're leading them astray.

Notice their conduct. They forsake the right way. They've gone astray like Balaam did.

[24:51] Their conduct is so marked. But in the midst of that conduct, they offer a very unique claim. They say something that seems so right. Have you ever noticed this?

That to false teachers and false preachers, their claim, what they proclaim, seems so good. And it tells us right here, there are springs without water, mistridden by the wind.

In verse 18, it says, for speaking out of the arrogant words of vanity. So the first thing you notice is their mode of persuasion is through their manner of speech. Paul said that he was intentional not to be persuasive in his words.

Now, Paul was a highly intelligent man. Paul was educated in the greatest courts. He sat under the greatest halls of educational institutions in those days. Paul sat under the feet of Gamaliel.

He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He knew the law inside and out. He understood it. He was probably the most educated man in the room, every room in which he walked into.

[25:56] But Paul said he was intentional not to be one who used persuasive speech, but rather wanted just to name the name of Christ. And Paul's arguments are very simple.

Some of them, sure, can get very deep. They can get as deep as you want to get. You can read the book of Romans over and over and over and over again and never dive to the depths of it. But yet we understand that also someone with a sixth grade education or the equivalent thereof can read it and understand that you're saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, not by the works of man, lest anyone should boast.

And it's very simple, profound teachings. And Paul said, I didn't want to persuade you with the power of my speech. Why? Because one of the marks of them is their persuasive words.

Be careful of those who try to persuade you to believe things that are contrary. Be careful of those who use excessive amounts of persuasive speech. It is a fine line as pastor that I try to speak on and I realize I'm constantly, listen, I am a simple guy from a simple home.

I always say that, you know, I am Billy Joe, born in Belbuckle and lives in Wartre, so you don't get any more simple than that. You know, two named guys are pretty basic guys. So you get pretty simple in that nature, but you also understand you have to push yourself to learn and to study and to grow and to attain knowledge and you have to be able to speak to a varying background of individuals.

[27:24] But you don't ever want to be one who is persuasive in speech alone. I love one of the accounts of Billy Graham. When Billy Graham and Ira Sankey first went on one of the great crusades into Europe, they went there and of course Ira Sankey would sing Just As I Am and you're wrong, Billy Joe, that was, Ira Sankey was with D.L. Moody, George Beverly Shea was with Billy Graham.

You should have caught that. Some of you caught that, right? So each of them had one. So George Beverly Shea would sing Just As I Am as they went and the first night they had, I can't remember the location they were at, the auditorium was full, the stadium was full and people were coming and people were coming and people were coming and the next morning the newspaper reports put out there that the whole reason there were so many response was a persuasion by George Beverly Shea's voice.

I could get that. I mean, the man could sing. I mean, come on, he could sing. And so his voice really was what compelled them or pulled them to come in. And so the next night Billy Graham told Beverly Shea, you're not singing tonight and they did the invitation and thousands and thousands and thousands of people came.

So the newspaper said, well the reason it came was the rhythm of the music being played during the invitation. So Billy Graham said, okay, the next night we're not even playing music and thousands more people came that night when there was no music, no singing, no anything. Why? Because it was just the word of God. Man is always trying to find what is persuading and what is leading. But you need to understand it needs to be this simple teaching of the word of God which changes the hearts and minds of both you and those you speak to.

[29:01] I don't ever try to persuade anyone to come to Christ. You say, what? Pastor, that's wrong. I will point everyone to Christ.

I will teach the word of God to them. I will show them what the word of God says. But friend, I'm not going to persuade any for that's the work of the Spirit.

Because if I can talk you into it, you know the rest of it, someone else can talk you out of it. But if you come as a matter of conviction that the Holy Spirit grabs your heart and grabs your mind and all of a sudden these truths take root in your life, then that is something that is the work of the Spirit and no man can undo.

So when you share the gospel, this is a good tool to have in your belt. It is not your job to save nor to persuade. It is your job to proclaim. Just share it.

And trust the Lord to do it. For we do not want to be the false teachers who are persuading with the eloquence of our words. That is their conduct and their claim is this.

[30:12] They are offering freedom. They're offering freedom. How many of you have heard this and how many of us have even said this? If you'll just come to Christ, everything will be better.

when Jesus says that those who follow me will suffer, they'll be persecuted and hated and mistreated in my name.

That in this life there will be all these trials and tribulations. Don't offer claims that Scripture never makes. If you give your life to Christ, eternity will be changed forever.

Absolutely. Your eternity will be secured. You will be with the one who loves you more than any other. Your life will be given over to him. You can expect trials and tribulations and difficulties in this life.

You can expect sufferings and mishaps and all those rest of the things that happen in a fallen world. You can anticipate those things even more so because the spiritual battle will increase. But in Christ you'll have a peace that passes understanding.

[31:13] In Christ you'll have a love that fills your heart. In Christ the fruit of the Spirit will begin to take root in your life and be able to be displayed. It does not necessarily make life better. It doesn't.

But he redeems us and restores us. Christ I hate to say this and it sounds so bad. Christ is not concerned about making your life better. He's concerned about making you more like him.

And fashioning us and forming us. Christ is not and they offer freedom because who does not want freedom from all the trials and tribulations of this life? You'll never find them my friend.

You won't. It just won't happen. Which gives us a holy longing for the life to come. It gives us a desire to be with him.

It gives us a desire to be in his presence where there are no tears and there are no suffering and there is no shame. He gives us a desire to really be with him and it is a holy ambition.

[32:21] Because if this world was easy and this world was not difficult then what desire would we have to be in his presence? But their claim is to offer you freedom. But pay attention to the condition that they find themselves in.

Offering freedom while they themselves are enslaved. While they themselves are enslaved. And here is a great word that could be underlined in every scripture.

Here is a great teaching that needs to be known in every reality. It says that they offer freedom while they themselves are in bondage of slavery. While they themselves are being held captive. They are promising freedom but they don't even have it. They are slaves of corruption. And here it is found in verse 19. For by what a man is overcome by this he is enslaved. For by what a man is overcome by this he is enslaved.

Let me ask you a question if I can. What overwhelms you? I mean what overwhelms you? What is so amazing and so magnificent that you can't control it?

[33 : 35] What has so much power and sway over you that you can't lay it aside? What overwhelms you? Are you overwhelmed by self and self-concern and desire to attain this, this, this, and this?

Are you overwhelmed by self-pleasure and wanting to make life easier? Are you overwhelmed by all the joys and pleasures and concerns of this life? We'll find that in the parable of the soul. Are you overwhelmed by the presence of Christ and the love of Christ and the reality that he's called you to be his children?

Are you overwhelmed by his compassion and his mercy and all these realities that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us? Are you overwhelmed by his goodness? No, are you overwhelmed by the reality that he loves you and he loves me and that he calls us to be used by him?

Whatever overwhelms you has enslaved you. Whatever holds you has got you captive.

And this is why we have to be careful of what we let overwhelm us because there are things and concerns in this life, I promise, that constantly want to be in our mind and constantly overwhelming us, constantly overcoming us and constantly overdoing us and so what do we do?

[34 : 50] Well, we combat that not with self-focus. We combat that by going back to Christ and reading his word and seeing this. Lord, you said, your word says this and this and this and look at all these promises and God, you are so gracious and you're so kind and you're so loving and your loving kindness, your hesed, is new every day.

Your mercies are found every morning and Lord, I praise you for who you are. Not because of what I'm experiencing, not because of what's going on, but I want to be overwhelmed with you.

This is why every parent, I've had to start doing this in my own life, just to be honest with you, one of the struggles your pastor has and this is a discipline I'm beginning to have to build in my life and this may be a shock to you, is I'm having to build the discipline of prayer.

I'm just being honest. I love study. I haven't always loved study. God put a love for study in my heart the moment he called me to preach. So I love study. So if you say, pastor, I just want you to study the Bible, I say, oh, amen, great, I can do that eight hours a day and I love to do that.

If you say, pastor, I want you to do all this office work, I don't want to do that. I hate administration, I just hate it. Some of you have the gift of that. I praise God that you have the gift of that. I hate it. But, you know, anyway, I love to study and I love to prepare and I love to see how the things come together.

[36 : 06] But in that, sometimes I will study so much I forget to pray. Just being honest. Right? So I've had to start building the discipline of prayer and using helps for that.

And I always, not that I don't pray about things. I have a lot of things in my life. I'm like, Paul, pray without ceasing. There are a lot of things, Lord, help with this, help with this, help with this. But I mean, really prayer. And so recently, I've been really building this because God's put me in a situation where I've had to deal with this.

And so I have been intentional about beginning every one of my prayer times with praise. So that I am first and foremost overwhelmed with who God is before I ever go to Him with what I need.

Now I know that seems so basic. I'm saying, yeah, we ought to be doing that. But it is because I usually come in a posture of prayer which I'm overwhelmed with a burden that's too big for me to carry. And so what I have to do is intentionally overwhelm myself with the reality that it is not too big for Him.

And I want to be overwhelmed and overcome by who He is. And then I can say, and by the way, Father, here's this. I just need you to take this. Because something is enslaving me when I come to prayer before Him in that manner.

[37 : 20] Where do we find ourselves? For by what a man has overcome that he is enslaved. Men and women, what overcomes us?

And then here's the word of caution found in verse 24. If after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. By the way, if you go back to the first verse and the opening pages of this book, the first chapter, and the first few verses, I believe it's like verse 4 of chapter 1, Peter says there that we overcome the defilements of this world by the true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

So we overcome the world by our knowledge of Jesus Christ. And then he says here again, if they had escaped the defilements, it doesn't say they overcame it, but they escaped, temporary, temporal escape, like they were able to get away from the defilements of this world by hearing and knowing a little bit about Jesus Christ.

This is what's so possible. It is possible to attend church. It is possible to be in the company of believers and to get a momentary escape from the defilements of the world.

That is, for your life to look a little bit better. It is absolutely possible to do that and not be saved.

Because these that Peter are writing to are not genuine believers.

[38:33] And the reason we know they're not genuine believers is because he says there in verse 20, yet they again, they again are entangled in them and overcome again.

You say, Pastor, how is it possible to experience a little bit of freedom? Because here's what's so awesome about church. When two or more gather together, Christ is there as well.

And so if you're sitting beside a believer, Christ is there and the presence of Christ is having an impact on your life whether or not he's a reality in your life or not. One of the joys of the gathering together of the saints is Christ fills the place and the spirit on them is influencing the spirit on you and it is possible to be in a fellowship of believers and to experience a temporary reprieve from the things you deal with.

That is, for your life to look a little bit better and for you to clean up a little bit of your mess because you surrounded yourself with a company of believers and you're hearing about Christ and you're hearing about it. But here's the danger.

The danger is for that thing to be so, you to be so comfortable in it like, man, I got what I needed because I started going to church. I got what I needed because I started hanging around the people of God.

[39:41] No, you don't get that. What you need is you need Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. That's what you need. What you're experiencing is what He can do but that's not what you need.

And the reason I can say that is because I experienced that for about two years before I fully surrendered my life. But it is when we surrender our life and we give our lives wholeheartedly to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior then we are no longer once again entangled by those things that used to hold us captive.

And this is why we see so many people show up and life looks good for just a moment and we go how did that happen? How did they fall away? It is because they never genuinely gave their life to Jesus Christ.

Never genuinely did. They hung around the people of God and they even sat under the word of God and God's word does not return void and it had an influence and an impact on our life. But here's the reality. This is why you have to be careful.

This is why you have to be careful attending church and this is why you have to be careful inviting other people that attend the church because after hearing the truth they once again return back the last state is worse than the first and it would have been better.

[40:47] I wouldn't say this if Peter didn't. It would have been better for them if they had never heard. If you hear the gospel over and over and over again yet you never surrender your life to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior the word of God says it would have been better for you if you had never even heard.

Because you've had the opportunity but yet you chose in your concern with self to say I don't need that I've got it under control. And it may be a moment of reprieve but it will always go back to this because their condition hasn't changed.

Their condition hasn't changed. Friend we need to be careful of the false prophets that arise among us but we also must be careful that we do not rise up as a false prophet.

So may the first people we look at in connection to the sincerity of scripture be ourselves. And may we say oh Lord where do I stand? What is my character and conduct and what am I claiming and how am I living but what condition do I find myself in?

And what about those that I listen to and read? You have more access today to more teachers and more information than at any other time in history. I've been pastoring now for 20 years.

[42:16] Very young in the ministry compared to some older than others. I get questions today 20 years later in the ministry that I was not getting in 2006.

Why? Because more information more teaching more teachers are accessible to more people and there's more false teaching going out than ever before.

Be careful guard yourselves about who you put around you. Let's pray. Father we thank you for this day we thank you for your faithfulness to us and we thank you for your word we know your word challenges us and it calls us to be your people for your glory and Lord that reality is that what overcomes us has enslaved us.

May we look honestly at our lives and say oh Father what are we overwhelmed by? May we be overwhelmed by you and may you forgive us for where we let other things overcome us and we ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen.