

2 Peter 3:14-18

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[0:00] But we are in 2 Peter chapter 3, and we'll pick up in verse 14. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you as also in all his letters speaking in them of these things in which our sons, the untaught and the unstable distort as they do also the rest of the scriptures to their own destruction.

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 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 thank you for this day. We are so thankful for the opportunity of gathering together.

What a joy it is to fellowship with one another, to encourage one another by our presence. What a joy it is to lift our voice up in song. But what a grand privilege opportunity it is to be able to hear a word from you, to read your word, Lord, to listen to your word.

And we pray now that every hindrance, every cause for distraction would be removed from this place. And the only voice we hear, oh God, would be yours. Father, we long to hear what it is you have to say to us as your people.

[1:51] May it challenge us. May it mature us. Lord, may it conform and mold us to be more and more like you, for it is for your glory. And yours alone we ask these things and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amén. You may be seated. may it may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may either 2007 or 2012. But somewhere a little bit before 8 o'clock a.m., there was a young musician who took his place in the subway system near Washington, D.C. As he leaned against the wall, he opened up his violin case, and then after opening up the violin case, he took out the instrument and he threw a little bit of change down in there, kind of as bait for those that were walking by, and he began to play. In the course of an hour, he played six different masterpieces. Somewhere around 1,970 people passed by him while he played these six masterpieces. Of those 1,900-plus people, only seven stopped for more than 30 seconds. When he was done playing, he had accumulated a grand total of \$32.17. Only one person who stopped actually recognized the individual as being the one who had played the night before in the major concert hall and had been a headliner. His name escapes me, but I do know that at that time, his going great was \$10,000 a minute as an accomplished violinist. And yet nobody knew that he was there. Because nobody expected on a Monday morning as they were getting ready to get on the train to catch their commute to work to encounter someone of that caliber leaning against the wall playing their violin. No one was anticipating as they descended the steps going into the underground world to find someone of such caliber there. No one really had the time for it because it is what we anticipate that quite often it is what we notice.

And here as Peter is encouraging his letter in this letter in the closing of his letters and anticipation, a reverence of living with diligence. It is the diligence to stand guard. Much like he first letter of 1 Peter to the same group of individuals to be on their guard against Satan. Now he is encouraging them to be on guard because the Savior is coming. It is an admonition to live with an anticipation of the events that he has just described in the verses immediately before this. Those events would be the consummation of the ages. It would be the destruction of this world by fire. It would be the coming of the Savior. We can really split hairs and go back and forth of what the end times look like. And the reality of us is that none of us really know every detail. We can all have leanings or interpretations of scripture. And we can justify our interpretation through this verse or that verse.

And I can go either way with just about any concept of the return of Christ. But one thing that we know is certain is that there will be a day when he comes again. And then on that day when he comes again, it will be the end of the world as we know it. And on that day there will be the gathering together of God's people and of all men. And that at some point in time there will be the judgment that we will all stand before him. For the redeemed we will give an account of how we lived our lives since the redemption for our past sins have been washed as white as snow and thrown into the sea of forgetfulness. Though we may not be able to forget them, the Lord God Almighty indeed has. And we will be held accountable for the gifts and the talents that we have been entrusted with since the day of redemption. That which will endure the fire of his testing will be carried with us into eternity.

Will not, will be consumed and will be lost. And then we will live forevermore in his presence. For those who do not know him, they will bow the knee, proclaim the greatness and the sovereignty of Christ himself and declare that he is king of kings and lord of lords. And they will depart and be cast for eternity in the lake of fire. It is a day of certainty, but a day that is not lived with expectancy.

[6:31] It is the discussion of many people. It is the differing interpretations of individuals, but it is a reality in which we ought to live with anticipation. And as Peter has reminded us of that very fact in the verses immediately before this, he now shows us how to live with a diligent guard.

To be ever diligent, to be guarding our lives so that we may live acceptable. And he begins this passage with the therefore pointing back to what he has just declared. He is reminding us that these things will happen. And he reiterates within this passage two different times our most wondrous stance that we have as believers in Jesus Christ. Now this is for the redeemed, for those who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Those who have surrendered their lives to him, not those who know about him, but those who have given their lives to him. He says we are beloved. And as beloved children of God, there is a calling upon our lives to live with a diligent guard. Since we are looking for these things. Notice this, we are looking for these things. How many of God's children are not looking for, nor anticipating, nor expecting any of these things that has just been described. These things, as he said in verse 10, but the day of the

Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat. And the earth and its works will be burned up. These things, looking for these things. Therefore, as his beloved children, there is a word of caution. Notice it.

It says beloved, since you look for these things. Real quick question. Are you looking, I mean genuinely looking for these things? Looking with an expectation for these things? Or maybe discounting it. Now this is we ought to just live as a separated monastic life as if nothing in this world matters for whatever he has entrusted to us. All good gifts come from the Father above. We know that. But they are gifts for a moment. They are not the gift for eternity. They are gifts for the enjoyment of the moment to be used.

And we'll get to the usefulness of them here in just a few minutes. But since we're looking for these things, look at this, be diligent. It does not permit us to live with passivity. It says to be diligent.

[9:22] That means there has to be an intentional action in our life. You are not diligently doing nothing. Diligence implies activity. It implies a intentionality of living. It implies responsibility of actions.

It says be diligent. And notice what it says, to be found by him. To be found by him. Now we miss this in many of our translations. Even the New American Standard has kind of softened it a little bit because the wording doesn't seem to make a lot of sense to us. But this word here, to be found, is directly connected to the word at the end of verse 10. And at the end of verse 10, the literal reading would read this way, and the earth and its works will be found out. Now we, in our English language, don't understand that.

What do you mean to be found out? I mean, God already knows it's here. It's not like it's lost. He's not having to find it. But to be found out means to be tried, to be tested, to be burned up. And that is kind of the meaning and the fullness of the word. But Peter is an intentional, is an intentional writer being moved by the spirit of God as he pens the word of God. And even the words that he is using is intentional. I tell you this all the time, and we need to pay attention to it. The word of God is infallible in its original language.

Okay? Now it's not saying that the scripture you hold before you is full of mistakes. But it is our responsibility to study that it was penned in its original language. And each and one of each and every one of us, unless we are holding a Greek New Testament, are reading a translation of the

language by someone else or a committee of other individuals. I'm not against translations. I'm very for translations. I have reasons why I use the particular translation that I use. And I've tried to explain that to you. And I've tried to be clear in that. But understand that you are holding a translation of the original language. And so you want to be diligent to be found in studying it and trying to understand it. And you say, well, pastor, we're just splitting hairs here. Well, some hairs are worth splitting. Okay? And there are some that we need to look at. And when Peter was using the same word twice, he was pointing back to something. And so when he says that the earth will be found out, and then four verses later, he says, it's certain that you will be found. It's even more telling when you go read the book of 1 Peter, the letter written to the same people, in which he says in 1 Peter, may you be found by him. It is the repetition of this word. So what is he saying? Here's the word of caution. Since there will be a day when everything in this world will be tested by fire. Make sure that on that day, you pass the test. You are found worthy of the [12:30] Savior. You are found by him, living acceptable to him. What does the word say? It says that you are found by him in peace. Oh, I want peace. Peace that passes understanding. That you are found by him in peace, even when the chaos is shaken, even when the chaos is consuming it up, even when the heavens are being destroyed and the earth, and therefore everything in it, it be found by him in that day. May he find his people in peace. Well, peace is a consequence of our circumstances. And the circumstances are what follow this, spotless and blameless. If you are spotless and blameless, then you are living peace with the Savior. Anytime we have discord in our homes or discord in our lives or even discord with our heavenly Father, we know that it's because there is something between us and them. It is either something of our own fault or our own failures or something maybe of someone else's fault and failures.

And by the way, something that I have understood, and I understood this the longer I'm in ministry and understood this the longer I live, the blame is never with one person and one person alone. We understand that, right? There's always more than just one party. We all fail and we all make mistakes and we all mess up and we're all responsible. So anytime there's a lack of peace, it is because there is a discord and that discord is a highlight of a disruption, that things aren't spotless and we're not blameless, that there's a reason behind it. And we try to find the reason here when this word of God is telling us to be found by him in peace, being spotless and blameless and living before him with a certainty of our position. And we are blameless in his sight and we are spotless in his sight and therefore we're living peacefully with him, anticipating him coming. The overarching question is, how do we do it? How can we be spotless and blameless? The word of God tells us that these matters come to us in two different ways. First, it tells us, I believe it's in 1 Thessalonians, that this is entirely and completely the work of the Lord God Almighty, that through the presence of the Spirit in your life, he will render you spotless and blameless. He purifies you and cleanses you and sanctifies you. And we're like, glory, hallelujah, it's not my work, it's his. And we ought to say, glory, hallelujah, for he purges us of our sin. He cleanses us. But my friend, unless, as Paul would say, we use that grace as a crutch to do what we want, it is balanced on the other side. Not only is it solely the work of God or it is the work of the sanctifying presence of the Spirit, but it is also the work of ourselves. It says to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, laying aside every snare it would tell us in the book of Hebrews. There is the personal responsibility to examine what is going on in our life. Is there something that we need to give up? Is there something that we ought to surrender? Is there something that we must lay aside? Sure, it's the work of the Holy God, but he works quite often through the steps he's calling us to take. And we want to live with this caution. There will be a day where I will be found as I truly am. And may I be found in him on that day in peace.

If there is anything that is disrupting your peace with the Holy God, may it be dealt with today. Since these things will happen someday.

And may we be diligent to be found by him in peace. That is, may we be intentionally coming to him over and over again, saying, Lord, search me.

[16:34] Understand my wicked ways. Lord, reveal them to me. Help me to know because he's sanctifying us. But he sanctifies us by what he calls us to leave behind. And what he calls us to give up. And what he calls us to hold on to.

We're not passive in this. We're passive in salvation. We're active in the sanctification. Because he's got matters that he wants us to do. It is a word of caution. After he gives this cautionary word, he gives them an encouragement of consistency.

Look at what the word of God says. And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. This is the second time that he has mentioned this. That God is not slow about his promises. But rather his delay is a display of his patience for salvation.

Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. Now, we say, well, yes, glory. Hallelujah. We want God to be patient. For we want more people saved. We want more people redeemed.

And we do. We ought to be crying and praying over the lost. Our hearts ought to be broken over the reality. That outside of the walls right now. Our men and women and boys and girls going to a Christless eternity.

[17 : 44] It ought to disturb us. And it ought to bring tears to our eyes. It ought to break our hearts. And we ought to cry out, Lord, redeem them and save them and set them free. And Lord, if you so choose, use me.

Use this church. But sometimes the salvation he's talking about is that work in our own lives. Your salvation is a past event. You are saved the day you gave your life to Jesus Christ.

Your salvation is a present event. You are being saved each and every day as you lean upon him more and more. And he is saving you more and more from who you once were.

And your salvation is a future event. That there will be a day where you will see him as he is. And these trials and tribulations called the flesh will no longer hold us within.

Sometimes the patience of our... He's still got work to do in me. He's got work to do in this world, but he's still got work to do in me.

[18 : 47] He hasn't called me home because I'm not fit for it yet. And may I look at this with the consistency that I regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Just as also our beloved brother Paul. And I love this. This is one of the words that we find in scripture that give weight to the writings of Paul. This is one of the things in which the early church fathers saw the canonization of scripture.

And they said, well, if Peter said that Paul was writing scripture as so were the others. Then we can affirm the reality that what Paul wrote was scripture. I'm currently in my personal study reading through the book of Romans.

And I also appreciate the fact that Peter says that Paul is hard to understand. Because the reality is that sometimes Paul is hard to understand. And if Peter said it, then I can agree with him, right?

You don't have to poke fun at me and, you know, look down upon me because I say I don't always understand Paul. I mean, Peter didn't even always understand him. And Peter walked with the Lord and cut off Malchus' ear and walked on the water.

[19 : 43] I mean, so we understand this. It is difficult to understand, but that doesn't excuse us because the difficulty implies consistency. Look at what it says.

It says there are people who distort these scriptures. It says in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and the unstable distort, as they do also the rest of scriptures.

So here's consistency. We must be growing. We don't want to be the unstable or the untaught. We want to be those who are constantly leaning in. You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, knowing that the word of God can be difficult.

It is written on the most elementary language. It is written for the level of elementary students to be able to read it. But that does not mean they always comprehend it. And we understand the difficulty therein.

And we understand it that it is here that we find a relationship with our Lord and Savior. So we must have a consistency. What does it say? Therefore, since you know this, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness.

[20 : 51] Friend, the call for the believer is a steadfast call. It is the longing to be consistent. That we ought to be ones who can walk in our understanding, in our knowledge of the word of God.

Do we have it all figured out? Absolutely not. Will we ever have it all figured out this out of glory? Absolutely not. I cannot wait until that day where I get to step in eternity and speak to the authors themselves.

I can speak to the author of it all. And I can go before my Lord and Savior and say, What in the world did this passage mean? I thought I had it right and then I would get confused.

And the clarity will be. And as a matter of fact, the questions will all be dismissed. For I will see him as he is and I will be before him. And all these doubts and all these concerns will be done away with.

But my inability to understand it all does not excuse my laziness in studying it. Since I know they're difficult.

[21:55] I ought to live with the consistency constantly leaning and pushing into it. One thing I hear quite often and I understand it. Pastor, it's just so hard to understand the word.

And I say, Yes, it is. Especially if we don't read it. But what I have found is when you cry out to the author.

And you say, Lord, I'm about to open up your word. And what I need is for you to speak to my heart. And I need you to show me what it's teaching me. Because, Lord, I'm here and I'm listening. God has never once said, Well, if you're listening, I'm not speaking. We ought to live with consistency. Sometimes he gives us a word.

Sometimes he gives us a verse. Sometimes there are entire passages opened up. But whatever it is that he wants to give us in that moment, we say, Glory. Thank you, Lord, for giving it to me. Thank you for speaking to my heart.

[22:57] And, Lord, help me to live with a consistent, steadfast devotion to knowing more and more of you. For that is, by the way, friend, our calling.

In this passage, we see a reminder of our calling. Verse 18 says, But grow. But grow. There's no such thing as a stalemate in the believer's life or a stagnation.

We ought to be growing. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Here is the calling for every believer. To be growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. We need greater grace each and every day. If we ever come to a moment where we do not feel like we need his grace, then we ought to beat our chest and say, Woe is me, for I am a sinner condemned unclean.

We've said it before and it bears repeating. The longer Paul wrote those difficult letters, the longer Paul was used of the Lord to pen letters, the less he saw of himself and the greater grace he needed.

[24:10] He started out as the apostle born out of due season. And then, by the time he got done writing, he was the chief of all sinners.

The longer he walked with Christ, the more grace he needed. We don't just need grace at salvation. We need grace more and more each and every day. We ought to grow in the grace of Christ. Friend, don't ever get over grace. Oh, you need grace at salvation. You'll need it later today. You'll need it tonight. You'll need it each and every day. Don't ever stop growing in the grace of Jesus Christ. For it is a fountain that never runs dry, and it is the very desire of our own life. For the greater we see of his holiness, the more we see of our lowliness. And when we understand our own miserable condition, we need his grace more and more each and every day. We grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

[25:20] Here's the calling to know more of Christ today than you knew of him yesterday. Peter opens up this letter, the first chapter of this very book, and he says that according to his divine power, he has given to us everything that is needed for godliness.

That is, all that we have, all that we will ever need to live godly, has been given to us by the divine power of Jesus Christ.

But how? The rest of that verse says, through the true knowledge of who he is. Through the true knowledge of Jesus.

We are not given all that is needed for godliness, apart from knowledge, but we are given all that is needed for godliness through the true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

And if we're not growing in that knowledge, then we do not tap into the well that has been provided to us. Oh, just as the word of God is a mind which will never be plunged to the depths thereof and understood, so too is our Lord and Savior.

[26:41] The moment we think we have him figured out, we look again and we say, there's something new, I didn't understand this. Wow, notice this, he is a multifaceted individual. And he is so much more wonderful than we could ever imagine.

The word of God tells us that as people of God walked in relationship with him, he would reveal a new name and they would go a little further and he'd reveal a new name and he'd reveal a new name and those revelations of a new name are more revelations of his character, of who he is. He was growing their understanding and their knowledge of who it is that was the Lord their God. And so too with Christ, may we live with the reminder of the calling that it is our calling to grow in the

grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and may we never, ever stop growing. Because there will be a day where we will see him face to face. But why? Why must we ever be diligent and be on our guard and why must we have this word of caution and live with such consistency that we fulfill our calling of understanding who he is?

The entirety of this book is wrapped up, I believe, in that final half of that last verse. And that is the focus of our concern.

[28 : 14] What is your focus? If these things are to be consumed with fire, if there will come a day where we will see him face to face, if eternity is our home, what is the focus of our life?

We meet people at times and we talk to them and they say, well, I just hope I make it. And the focus seems to be on self-preservation. And the focus seems to be on self-motivation.

They seem to be concerned that they are doing the right thing and salvation seems to be focused upon self. Friend, I want to go ahead and tell you, and I say this in all loving kindness that I have. You and I are not the focus of salvation. We are the benefactors of it, but we're not the focus of it. Because notice what the word says here. To him be the glory. To him be the glory, both now and in the day of eternity.

[29 : 28] Amen. Why does God redeem and save? So that he may be glorified. Why are we left to live out after our salvation the remainder of our days?

So that he may be glorified in our lives. If the focus of our salvation was solely our eternal preservation, it would have been so much more loving for my father the moment he redeemed me to call me home.

Because there's so much heartache and sorrow that I never would have experienced. If eternity fails in comparison to this momentary light affliction which we walk through in this world called life. And if the focus was my comfort and my ease and even my prosperity, if the focus was on giving me my best life now, then my best life is going to be lived in his presence where there is no death, no sorrow, no sickness, no mourning.

If the focus was about me, then he should have called me home the moment he saved me.

[30 : 47] But if the focus of my salvation is about his glory, then I have been given a responsibility to live out the remainder of my days for his glory and his glory alone. So therefore, how I endure the trials and tribulations and struggles and the pain and the misery do not bring glory to me, but they bring glory to him.

How I maintain my walk in prosperity and even in difficulty are for his glory and not just for my comfort. The life that I have been given gives praise and glory to my Savior, not to my salvation. For the nation of Israel was called to be a distinct people with a distinct God and their animals would not fail to give birth and the rain would not fail to fall and the crops would not fail to bear seed and the land would flow with milk and honey.

Why? So that all the world would know not who they were, but who their God was so that it would be for his glory. And if we do not believe that when we read the word of God, the moment they forsook his glory and the glory has departed, so too did the blessings.

Remember, the focus of our concern is that he gets the glory.

[32 : 09] We live diligently, not just so that on the day when he shows up, we get our reward, so that on the day when he shows up, he gets more glory.

He says, on the day when he shows up and we are found to be in peace, those looking on when it's all falling apart say, how do they have it all together?

Well, I know the prince of peace and to him be the glory. Not so long today when this world is passed by and I'm called into his presence, nobody in heaven is going to throw anything at my feet and offer praise to my name.

For we will cast our crowns at the feet of but one and we will eternally give praise to his name. It is for his glory. Why do we want to live faithfully and obediently?

No, so that we would not lose our rewards. The rewards are grand and great and they're there. I understand it. But not so that we get the greater rewards, but so that he gets the greater glory.

[33 : 26] When we fail and we stumble, his mercies are new every morning. But you know the one thing we can't go back and undo is the shame that we brought to him today.

For today is an opportunity to live for his glory. When we make our concern about self-preservation, all we think about are ourselves.

But when our concern is about Christ's glorification, now we begin to examine ourselves and say, Lord, are you getting the glory through what I'm doing now?

I believe too many of us, including me, have walked out our salvation with fear and trembling for the entire time being concerned about the wrong thing.

you know why I love the doctrine of the security of the saints? You know why I love the reality that once saved, always saved?

[34 : 38] Not because it just gives me a sense to go. It's because I know that those who are truly his, he will lose none. And therefore, I don't have to spend my days trying to hold on to what I didn't attain to, attain on my own in the first place.

I don't have to spend the remainder of my time trying to make sure I stay there because he's got me. I don't have him. It's not like I'm holding on to Christ and trying to hold on with all of my might. No, he's holding on to me and all he says is give me glory. Look at the book of Revelation. Where are the stars that John sees? They're in the hand of the Savior.

The stars, by the way, they're the preachers. They're in the hand of the Savior. They don't have him in their hand. He has the preachers and the pastors in his hand. I believe in the priesthood of the believer.

That means he has you all in his hand for his glory. Yet we spend so much of our concern just trying to stay where he's already put us.

[35 : 50] And all we think about is ourselves and ourselves and ourselves and ourselves because what if he gets the greatest glory through our most unwelcomed circumstances?

What if he gets the greatest glory through our most undesirable opportunities? What if he gets the glory there and then he gets the glory even when it all goes the way we want it to?

See, if the concern is for his glory, then the situation really doesn't matter. Because in the end, it's got the same goal.

To the glory. To him be the glory. Both now and to the day of eternity. And to that, Peter said, Amen.

Amen. Amen. May it be so in my life today. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. We praise you for your faithfulness and your goodness.

[37 : 06] And we praise you for the reality that you hold all of this world in the sway of your hand.

There are truths that are declared for us in Scripture and we want to live with certainty and to be diligent to be found in that day for your glory.

May you make it so, oh Lord, however you must. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.