

Be Diligent to be Ready

by Anton Bosch

This sermon from 2 Peter chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of looking forward to a new heaven and earth, being diligent in peace and without spot or blame, and growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. It warns against falling from steadfastness due to false teachings and encourages glorifying Jesus both now and forever.

Scripture: 2 Peter 3:13, 2 Peter 3:14, 2 Peter 3:15, 2 Peter 3:16, 2 Peter 3:17, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Hope in Eternal Life", "Guarding Against False Teachings"

Description

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Transcript

We're in 2 Peter chapter 3, and we're winding down, and so I'm going to read—we finished 13 last week, but I'm going to start from verse 13 and read through the end of the chapter to verse 18. So 2 Peter chapter 3, reading from 13. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, without spot and blameless. And consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of scriptures.

You, therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever.

Amen. So last week we concluded with verse 13, the bottom line of the fact that God is going to destroy the present universe and create a new heaven and a new earth. And so the conclusion was, nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, because we are looking for a new heaven and a new earth, because our destiny is not here on this world, in this earth, or in this world, or in these systems of this world. Because we are looking beyond these things, looking forward to these things. So we've spoken about that, and really what he's doing is summing up everything that he said up to now.

And so I'm not going to re-preach all of these things, because we've spoken about them, but we're looking forward. We have this hope that is set before us. And so we're looking forward to these things.

What are we looking forward to? We're looking forward not to the streets of gold so much, but we're looking forward to a new heaven, a new earth, and righteousness. As there should really be, as we concluded last week, a cry from the bottom of our hearts for righteousness, as we see so much unrighteousness going on in the world around us. And so because we're looking for righteousness, because we're looking for a new heaven and a new earth, and obviously we're looking for the Lord, be diligent to be found in Him in peace.

Now you're going to see this evening how that Peter now concludes in the same way as he started the book. And so if you go back to chapter 1, you'll see in verse 5 of chapter 1, but also for this very reason, giving all diligence to your faith. So he begins, and he says, we need to be diligent.

And he is now concluding, and he's saying there's a need for diligence. And let me remind you that we said that diligence has to do with work. It is always used in a context of effort, of labor, of putting energy into it.

And so we need to be diligent. We need to be applying ourselves faithfully towards the goal of the new heaven and the new earth. There is a danger among some Christians to say, well, you know, Jesus is coming, and so let's just tune out, and let's just cruise our way to heaven.

No, Jesus said we need to occupy until He comes. We need to keep busy until He comes. And Peter is saying exactly the same thing.

Because the Lord is coming doesn't mean that we switch off. In the old days when we had the gas crisis here and everywhere else in the world, we devised all sorts of ways of saving gas. And one of the things that we—well, certainly in South Africa we did, because we had—we drove stick shift.

We did manual gearboxes, is that if you had half a chance, you would turn the engine off, take it out of gear, and you would cruise to the stop sign or cruise to wherever down the hill. And unfortunately, it seems that many Christians have sort of disengaged the gears, and they're just cruising, hoping to make it home. And I'm sure we've all seen people who run out of gas, and they're trying to cruise into the gas station, and they just don't quite make it.

Let's not be like those who run out of gas before the coming of the Lord. Let's not just try and cruise into heaven and say, well, let me just make it by the skin of my teeth. No, let's be diligent, and be diligent to be found in Him, in peace, without spot, and blameless.

First of all, in peace. And we can speak about what kind of peace is he talking about? And remember that the Bible speaks about peace in several different ways—peace between us and God, peace between us and our neighbor, and peace within ourselves. I believe what he is speaking about here is peace with God—peace with God.

And how do we have peace with God? Well, we have peace with Him when we are walking in truth, when we are walking in obedience, when we are fighting with God because we're wanting to do what we want to do, and we're not wanting to do what He wants us to do. There is no peace between us and God. But when we are surrendered to His will, we find ourselves at peace with Him.

And so we need to be surrendered to Him. We need to be walking in obedience. We need to be in His will, and that is where we will find peace.

I don't know that he's really emphasizing here peace in the world in the context of the turmoil and everything. Obviously, that's part of the Scriptures, but I think the point that he is making here is my relationship with the Lord. And then he says, without spot and blameless.

So obviously, if he is saying, I need to be diligent. I need to work hard at being at peace with God. I need to be working hard to be without spot and blameless.

Clearly, then, there are those who are with spot and who are to be blamed, who are not blameless. Now, these are words also that Peter has used before. If we go to chapter 2, verse 13.

Chapter 2 deals with these false teachers who say Jesus is not coming. And verse 13, he says, And they will receive the wages of unrighteousness as those who counted pleasures to carousing daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you.

So when you come to communion, he says they are present, and they are spots and blemishes. But he says we need to be without spot and without blemish or blameless. Now, you should also remember that this is a concept that is used by Paul.

And Peter is going to speak about Paul and says that Paul is confirming what I am saying, what Peter is saying. And so, sorry, there I've got it, verse 13. Then in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 27, that he may present her, speaking about the churches of the bride of Christ, that he may present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

And so, I believe that Peter has both these things in mind. He has in mind that he has warned them that those who are false teachers are spots and blemishes on the Lord's Supper. But he is also reminding us that Paul spoke about the fact that when Jesus comes, he's coming for his bride, and he doesn't want a bride that has mud and dirt all over her wedding garments, but he wants a bride that is spotless and perfect, without wrinkle, without blemish.

And so, we need to work hard at that. I think that we've all witnessed weddings, if not our own, other people's, and the amount of trouble that the bride goes through to make sure that her dress is absolutely perfect, that everything is in its right place. And you can just imagine the disaster if somehow on the way to the church she fell and fell in a mud puddle and there's mud all over.

That would be a terrible, terrible disaster. And yet as Christians, we are often just quite happy to look to the coming of the Lord and to the marriage of the Lamb with garments that are not clean, that are dirty, that have spots and blemishes. Now, it doesn't mean that we are not the bride.

There is another warning concerning that a little later on. We may still be the bride, but we're not as attractive as we ought to be. And of course, it's a disappointment to the Lord.

I mean, can you imagine on your wedding day if your bride had a white dress and she starts coming down the aisle in a traditional wedding, and you look back and there she's coming down the aisle, but she's got grease and oil and mud and all sorts of stuff all over her dress. I mean, that would be terrible. And yet Jesus is receiving us as His bride, and obviously He wants a bride that is spotless and that is perfect.

And obviously it's an expression of our love for Him. I guess there are some brides, bridezillas, who are more interested about how she looks to everybody else, and it's not really driven by a love for her husband. You say, well, is that possible? Yeah, it's very possible.

We've seen it all. But really it should be driven and motivated that I want to look the best for my husband. It's not for everybody else.

It's not about the pictures. It's not about the family. It's about my husband, that he will find me attractive and that he will find me looking good on that particular day.

Ladies, if you're trying to make yourself look good even after the wedding for your own sake, there's a little problem with that. It has to do with pride and all sorts of other stuff. But you should want to be looking good because you love your husband, and it's for him.

It's not for other men. It's not for anyone else. It's for your husband.

And we want to look good for our husband, the Lord Jesus. And so we want to work hard, and we want to be diligent that we may be found in him. And I didn't want to get sidetracked on the in him, but that we may be found by him, sorry, in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Without spot and blameless. All right, now, did I miss verse 14 now? No, that was verse 14. Sorry, verse 15.

And consider that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation. Now, that's the point he's just been making, that many count the Lord's delay as slackness, and Peter's just told us it's not because he is slack, but that he's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And so we need to consider that his long suffering of our Lord is salvation.

It's not delay, it's not because he doesn't care, it's not because he doesn't want to come, but it is because he wants people to be saved. And so what does that got to do with us? If we are saved, and Peter's writing to those who are saved, he's writing to the bride, so why do we worry about salvation? We've got salvation. Well, remember what he's just said.

Last week we spoke about the fact that he said, Peter says that we need to hasten the coming of the Lord. How do we hasten the coming of the Lord? By the preaching of the gospel, because that's the reason he's delaying his coming, because he's waiting for people to be saved. And so Peter's reminding us that we need to be diligent to be found in peace, without spot, blameless, and preaching the gospel.

That's effectively what the beginning of the verse says. As also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. Now let's go back to the beginning again, and chapter 1 and 19.

Remember what Peter's been saying. He's saying that we have a sure word of prophecy, but chapter 2, there are false teachers who make up their own prophecies and their own version. But it's all based on the fact that we have a sure word.

And so verse 19 of chapter 1, and so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place. And then he says in verse 21, prophecy never came by the will of man. Sorry, verse 20, knowing this first that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation.

In other words, you can't make up your own prophecy. Prophecy must be confirmed. And what he is saying is that the Old Testament prophets confirmed the message.

Prophets speaking at different times, at different contexts, saying the same thing, confirming the message. And then the Lord Jesus comes, and he confirms the prophets. And then the apostles come, and they confirm both Jesus and the prophets.

And so the issue of confirmation is central to this letter, because we have a sure word which is confirmed. Remember the principle from the Old Testament, by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be confirmed. And so what is Peter doing here? He's saying, I'm writing you this letter.

But what I'm writing to you is confirmed, not just by the Old Testament, but confirmed by Paul. And so that's the most important part of this verse. So he's saying, this is not just my ideas that I'm writing, but these ideas are confirmed by Paul.

And then he's saying something else also, for our benefit. I'm not sure how much it was relevant to them at that time, but there is a tendency among Christians and some scholars to believe that Peter and Paul didn't get on very well. And it's based on the incident in Galatians.

Remember when Paul comes there, and Peter was eating with Gentiles, but when Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem, Paul would stop eating with the Gentiles, and he would only eat with the Jews. And remember, Paul abrades him, and he says, you're being a hypocrite, because you're quite happy to eat with Gentiles, which is correct, because we're not under the law, when there are no other Jews present. But when there are other Jews present, you sing a different tune.

And so Paul publicly corrected him, and that's what Paul says in Galatians. He says, I rebuked him publicly, because this was a serious, serious thing. Peter was a leader, and he was doing something that was not right.

And remember that Paul says that elders that sin must be rebuked publicly, so that the others may learn. When leaders sin, it's a very, very serious thing. They are held to a higher standard than believers.

Sometimes I get the impression that leaders think that they're held to a lower standard, that they have some license when it comes to living holy lives and doing the right things. No, we have a higher standard. And so, because of that incident, and obviously because there was friction between Paul and the people in Jerusalem over the law, and over circumcision, and you remember all of those events, some people have this idea then that Peter and Paul didn't get along.

Well, I believe what Peter is doing here is he's dispelling all of those notions, because he is saying he is our beloved brother. Our beloved brother. So he's saying there is no difference between me and Paul.

There's no emotional difference, and there is no doctrinal difference. What Paul has written and what I'm writing, he says, is the same thing. And he is my or our beloved brother.

So the fact that they had a difference doesn't mean that they parted ways, but that they obviously found ways to resolve those differences and to move on. And obviously that's very important for us. You remember Paul had the same problem with John Mark.

He had a fallout with Barnabas over John Mark, who had deserted them in the field, and yet at a later stage he says, send John Mark to me, because he is valuable, he's useful to me in the gospel. And so clearly Paul had resolved his difference with John Mark. John Mark had obviously repented, and Paul receives him.

And so this verse is very important on two points. The first is that Paul confirms Peter, Peter confirms Paul, and the second is that we don't have two different gospels, and we don't have two different sects in the early church. While Peter focused on preaching to the Jews, Paul focused on preaching to the Gentiles.

It was the same gospel, it was the same work, it was the same kingdom, it was the same church, and they were brothers, and so there was no animosity, there was no division as we have in churches or between different churches today. And so as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. So Paul, he says, is wise, and he is writing according to wisdom that was given to him.

Notice he's not saying because of his education. Paul had a great education, no question about that, but the gift of God, the wisdom that God gave him to understand the things of the Spirit superseded his education. And Peter doesn't emphasize his education, and certainly in comparison to Peter, Peter had virtually no education.

He could read and write, and that was about it. Paul had this very elevated education at one of the best teachers at the time. Peter does not emphasize that, but the gift of God, the wisdom given to him has written to you.

Now, this verse 16, we've spoken about this verse many, many times, and it's a very important verse because it is fundamental to our understanding of the inspiration of Scripture. So, as also in all his epistles, his letters, all his letters, not just some, speaking in them of these things. So he's confirming that Paul, while Paul deals with many issues in his epistles, speaks about the coming of the Lord, and he speaks about the coming of the Lord in all of his epistles.

And so that's important. Then he says, which are some things hard to understand. Paul is not easy to understand.

Peter, if anyone should have understood Paul, Peter should have, because they came from the same Jewish background. They had grown up in the synagogues. They had the same traditions and teachings from the Old Testament.

They lived at the same time, and yet Peter says some of Paul's stuff is hard to understand. Now, remember, it's not Paul's stuff. It's the wisdom that was given to him by the Lord.

And so Paul is still difficult to understand today. Peter is not that easy to understand, and yet Paul is probably the most difficult to understand. And I have books in my study which interpret certain people who are trying to interpret Paul.

So the guys who are trying to explain Paul are impossible to understand sometimes. And so you need somebody to say, no, that's what he says. But we thank God for the Spirit who opens the word to us, and while everything is not clear, there are definitely things we don't fully understand.

But what we need to know is easy to understand. And remember, the problem is not what we don't understand. The problem is what we do understand and don't do.

We worry so much about the things we don't know and the things we don't understand from the Scripture. Don't worry about those things. Worry about what you know, and do what you know.

But the chasing after knowledge is a dangerous thing and is often an excuse to avoid the real issues of our own disobedience on the things that we already know. So some things are hard to understand. But then there's another problem.

It's one thing to not understand, and there's no condemnation on not understanding if we are being faithful and diligent and all of those things. So he is not saying that if you don't understand, you're stupid. But the problem is when we take the Scriptures and we twist them.

That's where the problem is. So he's dealing with two things here. First of all, there are things that are hard to understand, and that's fine.

But then he says, untaught and unstable people twist them to their own destruction. That's where the problem lies. When we don't understand and we admit, I don't understand, and you've heard me say many times, I don't quite understand this.

I have limited insight into this particular verse or this particular passage. That's one thing. But to take the Scripture and to twist it is another problem.

And so he says, first of all, that they are untaught. Does he mean they're uneducated? No. Remember, Peter was uneducated, but Peter was taught.

There's a difference between being educated and being taught from a scriptural, biblical point of view. When we are taught, we are taught by a teacher. And that's one of the problems we have today, is there are myriads of people running around all over the Internet—Facebook and YouTube and everywhere else—who try to be teachers, but they're untaught.

And I hear them all the time. I read them all the time. They're in your face all the time.

And you look at what this guy is writing, or you listen to what he is saying, and you say, this guy is untaught. He may even have degrees in theology, but he's never been taught the Scriptures. He doesn't understand what he's talking about.

Remember, in Paul's day even, there were—and in Jesus, Jesus is dealing with these Pharisees and these scribes, and they have the education, but they're untaught, because they're not willing to be taught by the Lord Jesus. Yes, they're taught by unsaved leaders, if you will. They're taught by rabbis who don't know God.

And so all they have is head knowledge, but they don't know the Word. They don't know how to interpret the Word. And that's one of the problems we have today, is people who are untaught.

Any Tom, Dick, and Harry can register a YouTube, open a YouTube channel, whatever the language is, and sit in his motor car or in his living room or wherever, and make a YouTube and spout off whatever rubbish he wishes to do. And people do it by—there are thousands of videos of this kind of thing. And it's not just for as far as Christianity is concerned.

It's in all sorts of areas. I'm sure you look at YouTube sometimes to know how to do something, how to fix something, and you say, well, you know, here's—and you watch the guy, and you can realize, but he doesn't know what he's doing! You know, I don't know how to do it, but I know more than he does. So everybody thinks he's an expert, but it's even worse when it comes to the faith.

So they're untaught, and they're unstable. Why are they unstable? Remember, they're unstable because they are not mature. Ephesians chapter 4, that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro.

The hallmark of a child is that they are unstable. One moment they're laughing, and the next moment they're crying. Teenage is the same thing.

When we become grown up, one of the things that should come with maturity is stability. Unfortunately, some people get older, and they're still unstable. The same in Christianity.

As we mature in the faith, we should become stable, because our faith is no longer built on emotions, but our faith is built on the Word of God. Our faith is no longer built on circumstances, but our faith is built on the sure promises of God. So they are untaught, untaught, and they are unstable because they're immature.

And what they do is they twist the Scriptures to their own destruction, and obviously to the destruction of those who follow them. Now the word twist here is a terrible word. We speak about being put on the rack.

It's a term that deals with torture. When a person, a man generally, would be stretched out on the rack, and they would have winches on both sides, and they would literally pull him limb from limb. Calvin in Geneva would put people who opposed him on the rack.

One of the reasons I can never accept his teachings. It's the most terrible way of torture. But that's the word that he is using here.

They are torturing the Word of God. They are twisting it. They are pulling it apart.

They are breaking it. They're destroying it. They're killing it.

On Monday night, I was in my shop, and I was listening, as I always do, to a message on the channel that hosts my stuff. I'd never heard of this guy before, and the subject caught my eye, and I decided to listen to him. I can't tell you how angry and frustrated I became.

This is a man who has a large following. He is a member of a mega church in Texas, but he was twisting the Word of God. He was pulling it apart in the most ungodly way, making it say whatever he wants it to say, and yet thousands of people follow him.

I can't remember how many subscribers he has to his own channel, but he's literally doing this. He's taking the Word of God, and he's torturing it, and he's torturing anyone who knows anything listening to him, and he's literally ripping the Word of God. Instead of putting the Word of God together, he's ripping it apart, and he's destroying it, and breaking it up, and destroying the witness.

Remember that when martyrs are tortured, the reason they are being tortured is so that their witness could be destroyed, and they're destroying the witness of the Word of God. Now, this is just one example just this week, and yet there are many, many, many examples of that going on all the time. So they're untaught, unstable, and they're twisting, resting, I think is the King James translation, to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Here's the other very important part of this verse, and we've spoken about this before, so hopefully this is not, you'll be able to follow the argument. So what Peter is saying is, Paul wrote epistles, people are, or letters, people are twisting those letters as they do the rest of the Scripture. What is the rest of the Scripture? The Old Testament.

Remember when Peter is writing, there is no what we call canon yet. They hadn't established the 27 books of the New Testament, and said, these are, this is Scripture. This is the first time there is any idea that what was written in the New Testament actually becomes Scripture.

As far as they were concerned up to this point, the only Scripture was the books of the Old Testament. There was no New Testament. And yes, Paul had written his letters, Peter was writing his letters, John had written some letters, the Gospels had probably been written by this time, but they were not necessarily recognized generally as Scripture, the same way as we do today.

But here Peter is saying, Paul's letters are the same in authority, they are the same in that they are Scripture as much as the Old Testament is Scripture. Now that's important on two levels. The first is that Peter is confirming that Paul's epistles are Scripture.

Peter is writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and God is telling us, and this is important because it is only Paul's letters that we have this direct confirmation of. We don't have the same confirmation concerning the other works, and yet we accept them and we know that they are Scripture as much as Paul's letters are Scripture. But the second important thing that we need to pick up from this statement is that many people will tell you that the canon was only formed about 300 years after Christ.

In other words, only then did they establish the books of the New Testament. Now that is partially true. It was only then that they had finally closed what we call closed the canon.

In other words, at that point they had said, these 27 books, no more, no less. And obviously there were the apocryphal books, which is another story, we're not going to deal with that. But that does not mean that they did not have New Testament books that they regarded as Scripture for those 300 years before.

Peter is writing towards the end, the third quarter of the first century, A.D. 60, 70, thereabouts, 30 years after Jesus ascended. And already at this point, it is accepted that Paul's letters are Scripture. So the idea that this only happened 300 years or 230 years later is not true.

All right, so let's move on. Verse 17. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, in other words, I'm not telling you anything new.

Remember that Peter says, I'm reminding you, and it's good for me to remind you. So you know this. Beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness or your own surety.

So the warning about falling, if we go back to chapter 1, again you'll see how that chapter 1 and chapter 2 are the bookends to this book. Verse 10. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make, as they were

diligent, make your calling and election sure.

For if you do these things, you will never stumble. Did I put it on the screen? No, I didn't. You will never stumble.

He's now concluding. So in the first, in the 10th verse at the beginning, he's warning about the fact that if you, obviously inferring that if you don't do these things, you will stumble, or you can stumble. Now he's coming to the end, and he's saying we need to be make sure that we are not going to fall or stumble from our own steadfastness.

In other words, press towards the mark, as Paul said, or the book of Hebrews says. Be diligent to be found in him in peace without spot and blemish. Don't come short.

Don't not make it to the end. Being led away with the error of the wicked. There is one, there are many dangers that Christians face.

There is the temptations of the flesh. There is the drawing of the world. But one of the big dangers, particularly today, is false teaching.

Paul's day, it was a problem. Peter's day, it was a problem. But you were not confronted with false teaching all the time, because these false teachers would travel around, and they would come, and they would preach their false teaching, and they would move on to the next town, and go and make some money there, and then they'd move on to the next one.

So they did not necessarily have false teachers in their face all the time, as we have today. Every one of us has access to thousands of false teachers on the internet, on our own cell phones, except those who choose not to have smartphones, and I think it's sometimes a smart idea. But at the click of a couple of buttons, just the same way as every one of us carries around in our pockets a catalog of pornography, we carry around in our pocket a library of false teaching, and it's literally a couple of clicks away.

And Christians click, and they think, oh, well, this is interesting, this topic looks interesting, the same way as I did on Monday. And they listen to it, and they are caught by that deception. And so, be careful, he says then, beware, lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.

Clearly the wicked here is not the unbelievers so much, but the wicked that he has spoken about in chapter 2, these false teachers who deny the coming of the Lord. Verse 18, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Again, he is reminding us, let's go back to chapter 1, verse 5, but also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue to virtue, knowledge to knowledge, self-control.

And so, he's speaking about the fact that we need to add these things that we might be able to grow. And then verse 10, therefore be even more diligent to make your call and election sure. So, there's a need for growth.

He begins by saying, don't, chapter 1 begins, don't just have knowledge, but add to your knowledge, faith, add to your faith, virtue. Grow in grace, not just in knowledge, but grow in grace, grow in the image and the stature of the Lord Jesus. And he's concluding with exactly the same idea.

But the problem here is that to be stagnant, in other words, to stand still, means to go backward. You cannot, I've said this many times, you cannot stand still and not go backwards. And I've used the illustration of this building, and one of the things that I have a strange fascination with is buildings that have fallen down in the jungle somewhere.

There are buildings that have been built sometimes in the Second World War or for some other purpose, and they've been just left alone. And it's not long before the jungle begins to grow into and out of the building, and the building begins to fall apart. You don't have to bring a wrecking ball.

You don't have to bring a bulldozer to knock this building down. Just let it be. We just vacate the building, we leave the building, and we just let it stand here.

And guaranteed, come back in five years, you'll see decay, ten years' time, more decay. Who knows, in 50 years, there'll be a heap of rubble. That's just the way it is.

If you're not going to be moving forward, you're going to be falling back. And that's the same in our Christian faith. The moment we say, well, now I'm just, you know, I'm fine.

I've reached a level of spiritual growth, and I'm cool here. No, the moment you stand still, decay will set in, and you will begin to go backward. That is just the nature of life.

So there needs to be a constant moving forward. We need to be constantly fixing the building, painting it, patching the leaks, fixing the things that break, so that we can keep it in good shape. The same way in our Christian faith.

We need to be growing. If we're not growing, we are regressing. There is something wrong.

The same is true of our children. If you don't see your child growing, both physically and emotionally and intellectually and spiritually, if the child is the same as it was a year ago, there's something seriously wrong. And we would get all the help we can get to get the doctors and to get the experts to help us understand what's wrong.

Why is the child not growing? Why is it standing still? And yet in our spiritual lives, we're quite happy to stand still, sometimes for years and years and years. No, we need to be growing, and we need to be growing in the grace and the knowledge, these two parts, the doing and the knowing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory.

Folks, it's all about Him. Why do we want to grow? That we might glorify Him. Why do we want to be without spot and blemish? That we might glorify Him.

Why do we want to preach the gospel? That He might be glorified. Why do we want to be ready when He comes? That He might be glorified. The purpose of everything is to glorify Him.

Here's one of the problems we have in the modern—and I'm almost through, this is the last verse—but here's one of the problems we have in modern preaching, is that it all revolves around me. Why do you want to believe in the second coming? Well, because there are benefits for you, because you're going to walk on streets of gold, and you're going to have a crown, and it's going to be—no, it's not about us, it's about Him. Yeah, we're the beneficiaries, and we get the blessings that come with being part of Him, but it's about Him.

Heaven is not about us. You know, unfortunately, the church very often is about us, but heaven's not going to be about us. It's going to be about Him.

We're not going to be walking around and saying, you know, my crown's bigger than your crown. No, He's going to be the focus of our attention. We're not going to be singing one another's praises, and I suppose there's a sense in which we'll be able to sit and maybe talk to Paul and hear the great stories of the great men of faith and the martyrs and all of these men, but it's really not about them.

It's about the Lord Jesus. To Him be the glory, both now and forever. Is He being glorified now in our church? Is He being glorified in your family? Is He being glorified in you? Is He being glorified in your mind, in your body, in your emotions? Is He being glorified in every part of who you are now? We say, well, Lord, you know, we'll sing your praises on Sunday when we come and we sing the hymns.

No, it's not about Sunday. It's about glorifying Him now. When is now? Now.

Now. And tomorrow morning when you get up and you feel like the train went over you, let's glorify Him now and forevermore. You see, if we can't glorify Him now, and if we don't give Him glory now, how will we give Him glory in eternity? And so this is just a preliminary—this is just a warm-up for heaven.

Why is it important that we sing the hymns with all of our hearts? Because we're practicing. We're practicing for heaven. And I'm glad that when I get to heaven, I'm going to be able to sing in tune.

But really, all we're doing now is a practice run for them. He needs to be glorified now, and He needs to be glorified forever. Amen.

Some people say that Peter didn't add the amen. I don't know where they got that idea from, and it doesn't really matter. But there really is no other response to Peter's letter, and that is to say amen.

May it be so. May it be true. May these things be true of us individually and of us as a body.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You, Lord, for these men who wrote as the Spirit inspired them and bore them along to write the very things that are in the heart of God. Thank You, Lord, for the confirmation of Your Word, Lord, that there's nothing in Peter's writings or John's writings or any other writings in the Scriptures that is not confirmed by the rest of Scripture.

And so, Lord, we thank You that we have a more sure word of prophecy, Lord. Our hearts go out to people who have books written by men, and yet they follow them and believe them to be the Word of God. And yet they're unconfirmed.

In fact, they are contradicted many times by Your Word. And so, Lord, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the surety that we have of the Scriptures and of the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Lord, we pray that we may be those who may be found in Him, in peace, and that we may be found without spot, without blemish, that we may be found occupying and persevering and enduring to the end. Lord, we pray that this may, again, not just be a book that we have studied, but Lord, that these may be realities that grip our hearts and lives, that as Jesus comes, we may be those who find ourselves being diligent to the end. We ask this in Jesus' name.

I pray that You'd go with us, keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely on Sunday, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qNzxPnkDIts.mp4>
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