

Living Like He Is Coming Back

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[0 : 00] Three weeks ago when we were last in 2 Peter, Peter took on one of the most common lies of false teachers and other opponents of Christianity.

! They deny that Jesus is coming back. And after reminding his readers in 2 Peter 3.3 that they should expect this opposition, Peter summarized the lie that these false teachers and opponents tell.

And that lie is in verse 4. Peter wrote, They will say, where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. Most people in Peter's day and ours follow false teachers and consider biblical beliefs, especially belief in the second coming, to be foolish. As far as they could see, the world was going on just as it always had.

The people lived and died, but nothing ever really changed. Then in 2 Peter 3.5-7, Peter debunked the lie that nothing ever changes.

[1 : 13] Verses 5-7 said, We know that God intervenes in his creation whenever he wants.

And he evidenced that several times in both the Old and the New Testament. Peter cited two obvious occasions of God's intervention. The first one was when he acted at creation to form the earth.

And he formed it out of water and through water. And of course, that's in Genesis 1, verses 6-10. And then he also acted decisively in history when he destroyed the earth by means of the flood in the days of Noah.

And that is in Genesis 7, verses 17-24. The scoffers had purposely shut their eyes to the truth. They willfully ignored the historical evidence and chose to disregard the biblical accounts of divine retribution.

And they did that because they loved their sin and they wanted to live as they pleased. They made conscious decisions to ignore the final consequences of what they did. And we know that God has proven his power and his faithfulness to his promises time and time again throughout history.

[2 : 40] And we ended our last 2 Peter study by touching on verse 10 of chapter 3. We'll pick up with that verse tonight and then cover the final verses of this letter.

And verse 10 summarized the future. Verse 10 said, In Scripture, the day of the Lord signifies the extraordinary miraculous interventions of God in human history for the purpose of judgment.

And that will culminate in his final judgment of the wicked on earth and his destruction of the present universe. The Old Testament prophets viewed the final day of the Lord as a day of unparalleled judgment, darkness, and damnation.

A day in which the Lord would completely destroy his enemies. The New Testament writers also foresaw that day as an awesome and fearful event. The day of the Lord has 19 indisputable Old Testament references and 4 indisputable ones in the New Testament.

And Peter says that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. And listen to the similarity between Peter's writings and Paul's. And here are Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verses 2 through 5.

[4 : 05] Paul wrote, Peter and Paul borrowed the thief of the night illustration from David's book.

And Jesus, listen to Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 24 verses 42 through 44. Jesus said, Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

In 2 Peter 3.10, Peter really is even more emphatic than what we can see from the English translation. That's because the verb translated will come is first in the Greek text. And that emphasizes that the day will certainly come. False teachers may have scorned the notion of a sudden change in history. The day of the Lord, however, will arrive suddenly and no definite signs of its coming can be trumpeted.

[5 : 36] The signs that precede it, apparently, are ambiguous enough to lead to other conclusions. And so the false teachers will be humiliated and judged when the day of the Lord comes.

But Peter is imploring his readers to be ready. And of course, that includes us. We need to be ready for the day of the Lord as well. Peter says that three things will occur when the day arrives.

All of them together indicate that the physical world as we know it will be destroyed. First, we're told that the heavens will disappear with a roar. And the heavens refers back to verses 5 and 7, where in tandem with the earth, it refers to all that God has created in the universe.

The second part of the picture is that the heavenly bodies, or it also could be translated elements, will be destroyed by fire. And third, the earth and the works done on it will be exposed.

So with that as background, let's look at the new material we'll cover tonight. So we'll look at verses 11 through 18 of chapter 3. And here are those verses.

[6 : 46] Starting with verse 11 of chapter 3, Peter said, Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish and at peace.

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.

There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures. You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. For God's enemies, the future judgment will be an inescapable nightmare.

[8 : 11] But for God's children, it will mean the fulfillment of the Christian's hope. It will literally be a dream come true that ushers in the dawn of Christ's rule on earth, followed by the creation of a new heavens and a new earth.

And for God himself, it will mark his total triumph over all who oppose him, including the final destruction of death and the complete eradication of sin. So even before we get into the verses themselves, here's Peter's main idea in these last eight verses.

And that main idea is this. Once again, the final destiny of the universe ought to motivate followers of Jesus Christ to live lives that honor and reflect well upon the person of Jesus Christ.

In other words, last time we talked about Jesus coming back. In fact, we titled the lesson, He is coming back. Now we see how we are to live knowing that He is coming back.

So we're going to break tonight's text into four sections. The first section will remind us of what we already know. Then the last three sections will show us how we should live given what we already know.

[9 : 31] So the first section of tonight's passage comes from verses 11 through 13. And in these verses, Peter tells us to have the proper perspective. The perspective is what fills in your first blank.

And we'll hear that perspective as we listen to verses 11 through 13 again. Here they are one more time. Peter wrote, Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

But according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Verses 11 and 12 are one sentence.

When we look at it in English, this sentence sounds like a question, but it actually is an exclamation of astonishment. The phrase, what sort of people, actually translates a unique Greek term, which also could be rendered, how astonishingly excellent you ought to be.

Because of God's promised judgment, Peter's challenging his readers to live in keeping with their Christian hope, and that will allow their anticipation of Christ's return to impact their daily behavior.

[10:55] Believers are to live in view of the eternal blessings they will receive when Jesus Christ is finally revealed in all of His glory. Going all the way back to the beginning of our study in 2 Peter, remember what Peter wrote in chapter 1, verse 3.

Peter said, Now at the end of the letter, Peter is reminding us that our lives should reflect that holiness and godliness.

So God enables believers to fulfill this demand and to receive still further encouragement as they look forward to Christ's return. And that's why, as Peter says in verse 12, we should be waiting for and hastening the coming day of God.

Understanding what Peter means by waiting for the day of God is easy. The word translated waiting for by the ESV also could be translated looking forward to the day of God.

So we should never fear the coming of Christ because for all the talk of destruction and judgment, the Christian can look forward to the day without fear because through acceptance and faith in Christ and repentance of sins, the believer can be assured of salvation from the horrors of the day of judgment.

[12:25] Understanding what Peter meant by hastening the coming day is a little more difficult because the phrase suggests that by living holy lives, Christians can actually affect the time of the Lord's return.

And when God set that day, he also ordained that it would happen after all of his purposes for saving believers and building his kingdom in this present age had been accomplished. Those purposes are accomplished when he works through his human agents to bring them about.

So from a human perspective, when Christians share the gospel with others and pray and advance the kingdom of God in other ways, in a sense, we do hasten the fulfillment of God's purposes, including Christ's return.

But of course, we need to be careful here. Peter's not implying that Christ's return is dependent upon the people of God coming to repentance because the coming is entirely in the sovereign hands of the Heavenly Father.

But still, from our perspective, repentance and godly lives among God's people should provide us with an even greater reason for having a confident expectation that his return can come any time.

[13:32] So rather than fearing the world's impending demise, Christians long for it, knowing that they have everything to hope for and nothing to fear from the Father who loves them.

Some commentators actually equate the day of God with the day of the Lord, but the meanings really are different. The day of God refers to the eternal state when God will have permanently subdued all of his enemies.

However, the day of the Lord, as we talked about earlier, refers to the final tumultuous events that accompany the last judgment of unbelievers.

And while we're certainly eager for the day of God, Christians' attitude toward the turmoil that precedes it should be a lot more sober. Think about John's vision experience in which he ate the little book and found it sweet to taste, but bitter to swallow.

And of course, that comes from Revelation 10, verses 9 through 10. And John's statement there in Revelation 10, 9 through 10, really illustrates the dual feelings that we should have.

[14:34] The little book illustrated the coming judgment and represented that judgment. And it's sweet to believers because the day of God will be good for us, but it will be bitter to unbelievers because of the day of the Lord.

And we should never be happy about people perishing. That actually should motivate us to be even more active in taking the gospel to other people. Peter reiterates the believer's hope, though, in verse 13 when he says, but according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The word that's translated new there actually means new in quality or unlike anything else previously known. The new heavens and earth will be far more than merely new in time or chronology.

They'll also be new in character. Peter says they're a realm in which righteousness dwells. And dwells means to settle down and be at home or to take up permanent, comfortable residence. Do you think we have righteousness dwelling on the earth today? It doesn't have to take long to watch the news to realize that we will have something new and different than what we have today. [15:49] We can be confident, though, that in God's new order, righteousness will enjoy a perfect, permanent existence. To get more information about what the new heavens and the new earth will be like, flip to the back of your Bible in Revelation 21.

We'll look at a couple of longer passages in Revelation 21 here. I'll give you a second to flip over there and then we're going to look at verses 1 through 4 and then we'll skip down to verses 22 through 27.

So Revelation 21, 1 through 4 have these words that John wrote. John said, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Skip down a few verses to verses 22 through 27 of Revelation 21 now.

[17:22] Starting in verse 22, John said, And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. And its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there.

They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations, but nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Before we leave those passages, just consider again some of the highlights from the Revelation 21 verses that we just read. We saw that God himself will be with them as their God, and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more.

Remember it also said, Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And then nothing will ever enter into it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, that is, nothing unclean will ever enter into it, or anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

[18:45] So do these verses help you understand the proper perspective that Christians should have on the day of God? That's why Peter could write in verse 13 of chapter 3, According to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

We definitely should look forward to living in a place like what is described in Revelation 21. And now that Peter has reminded us of the proper perspective for the believer, he'll spend the remainder of his letter discussing how we should live.

And first he summarizes the practices that a Christian should follow. So the practices make up your second blank. And we see the practices in verse 14.

Verse 14 says, Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish and at peace. So you can see from the start of this verse that Peter links the proper behavior to what is ahead for the believer.

He says, Since you are waiting for these, and these refers to the day of God, the new heavens and the new earth, the eternal state, and the glorious everlasting kingdom.

[20:06] So Peter's call to be diligent should remind us of similar phrases elsewhere in this letter. So let's just do a little bit of review of where he talked about similar concepts.

Back in chapter 1, verses 5 through 7, he wrote these words. He said, For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

A little bit further down, in chapter 1, he said these words in verse 10, Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall.

For the Christian, belief always should show itself through behavior. Another way to say that is like this. Faithful believers are motivated to live in a way that reflects their eternal perspective, and this

requires them to be diligent so that when Christ returns, they will be found by him living as they should.

And the phrase, to be found, is a sobering reminder that no one will be able to hide from Christ when he returns. Christ will overlook nothing, but when we're living like we should, we should look forward to his returning.

[21 : 34] Listen to what Paul says about the judgment bringing hidden things to light. This verse is 1 Corinthians 4, verse 5. And in 1 Corinthians 4, 5, Paul wrote, Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

Then each one will receive his commendation from God. Each one will receive his commendation from God. And Peter describes two ways that we are to be found by Christ.

We are to be found without spot or blemish, and we are to be found at peace. Without spot or blemish means that we should be doctrinally and morally pure.

That's different than having moral perfection, at least in this life. The New Testament does teach, though, that those who belong to God's people will live godly lives and they will be perfected on the last day.

The false teachers and the scoffers, on the other hand, will not be saved on the last day. Their blemish lives will condemn them forever. Now, when we talk about peace, in this context, peace primarily refers to the true peace of mind that accompanies a confident faith in the Lord.

[22 : 58] And it's an echo of Paul's admonition to the Philippians. We'll be getting there soon on Sunday with Mike, but listen to Philippians chapter 4, verses 6 and 7.

Paul wrote there, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Back in our text tonight and in what we're looking at in Philippians there, Peter is speaking about the kind of peace that banishes both earthly worries and cosmic fears.

It's a peace that comes from knowing for certain that our sins are forgiven. So no matter how terrible things become as human history moves toward the final destruction that we've been reading about, believers who live in hope have the settled peace that's sustained by what the Lord has planned for those who love him.

So we've seen the perspective and the practices. The third thing we see from the verses tonight is the perception. So the perception is your third blank.

[24 : 13] The perception is closely related to this perspective that we talked about earlier because the proper perspective should lead us to the proper perception or you could also say discernment from the current times.

And we should know what's happening in the world and see that in light of what the Bible tells us will happen. In verses 15 through 17, Peter tells us what we should be perceiving from the current times.

And he says, count the patience of our Lord as salvation just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.

There are some things in them that are hard to understand which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

Without question, Peter wanted his audience to wait eagerly for Christ's return. At the same time, he wanted them to avoid being so consumed with thoughts of the future that they forgot about their spiritual responsibilities in the present.

[25 : 31] God's judgment had not yet come and his wrath had not yet been poured out. There was still time to proclaim the good news to the lost. So Peter reminded his readers to continue in the ministry of reconciliation, seeking to reach others with the life-giving truth of the gospel.

I said those last sentences in the past tense, but the same is still true for us today. Because as we talked about last week when we looked at 2 Peter 3, 8, and 9, the Lord delays his return to save the remainder of his elect.

Therefore, Christians should regard God's patience with joy, knowing that he's adding to his family of believers daily until that family is complete. And when Christians anticipate the day of God, which for them will mean eternal blessing, they also should remember the day of the Lord, which for the lost will mean eternal punishment.

And with that in mind, as we mentioned earlier, the opportunity of God's current patience should only heighten our evangelistic efforts, and we should approach them with even more zeal than what we already do.

And Peter also points out that he's consistent with what Paul wrote. And of course, we know that Peter and Paul were the foremost leaders of the early church, and they were both well aware of each other's ministry.

[26 : 55] In fact, both of them had been present at the Jerusalem council that we'll see in Acts 15, verses 6 through 21. They had both ministered with Silas, and more than 20 years earlier, Peter had even been confronted by Paul when he wrongly refused to eat with Gentile Christians.

And as a primary spokesman for the early church, Peter probably was embarrassed and humiliated by that admonition by Paul, but he graciously accepted the rebuke, and he responded with repentance.

And we can tell from these verses that his respect for Paul was undiminished. When he talks about Paul's writings, Peter doesn't specify a particular letter or letters.

Instead, he gives a general endorsement for Paul's inspired writings, and that actually shows the divine origin of the revelation given to Paul because he says that Paul's writings are twisted just like other scriptures are twisted.

Peter also notes in there that some things in Paul's letters are hard to understand. So when you struggle to understand some of what Paul wrote, take heart that Peter also recognized that people had to work hard to understand those things.

[28 : 11] He doesn't say what the hard things are, but we can guess about some of them. The hard things probably include the rapture of the church, the coming man of sin, the return of Christ in judgment, and the glories of heaven because obviously Paul had first-hand knowledge of the glories of heaven that nobody else had.

When he talks about Paul's writings being hard to understand, though, the word translated hard to understand carries the connotation of being difficult to interpret. So he was not saying that Paul's teachings are impossible to understand.

He's simply recognizing that some are more complex than others, especially prophetic revelation. So we need to spend more time working at understanding those complex parts.

Unfortunately, though, the complexities also open the door for the ignorant and unstable, namely the false teachers, to twist what Paul taught about the future.

Ignorant there denotes a lack of information. Unstable signifies a wavering spiritual character. And twist is a very graphic picture.

[29 : 18] It actually speaks of wrenching somebody's body on a torture rack. And it vividly pictures how the false teachers manipulated some of the prophetic issues. They twisted them to confuse and deceive the undiscerning.

And that distortion still continues today regarding prophetic revelation. He also talks about how the false teachers also distorted the rest of the scriptures, including the biblical teaching on God's law, repentance, justification by faith, and sanctification.

And we already talked about how the fact that Peter placed Paul's writings on par with the rest of the scriptures clearly affirms that Paul wrote divinely inspired truth.

The end of verse 16 echoes a theme that we've seen elsewhere in 2 Peter. He says that the false teachers' distortion of scripture will lead to their own destruction.

So how can we as believers guard against becoming victims of false teachers' lies and errors? Know the truth. Exactly. We need to know the truth.

[30 : 25] And he says that in verse 17. He says in verse 17, You therefore, beloved, remember he's writing to believers here, You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

So just like Barbara said, we should know the truth. And he's also telling us that we should know that these false teachers will come along so we shouldn't be surprised when they do.

He starts off by saying no beforehand and take care that you're not carried away with the error of lawless people. Take care also could be translated be on guard.

And Peter has already shown us all sorts of ways in which believers should be on guard. They should watch out for immorality, for the distortion of scripture, and they should beware lest they or others forget the promises of God.

Peter certainly chose his words carefully here in his summary because the word error, which comes from the root word to wonder, and that's W-A-N-D-E-R, that reminds us of the false teachers who have gone astray.

[31 : 38] He talked about that in verse 215 of this same letter. He also says that they are lawless, and although the ESV translated it with a different English word, way back in 2-7, the same Greek word was used, and there that lawless word was used to describe the people of Sodom.

And reference to stability here in 3-17 recalls verse 12 of chapter 1 where Peter had encouraged his readers by acknowledging that they are established in the truth.

So in other words, he's already told us way back in chapter 1 that we're established in the truth.

Now he's saying don't let anything affect that stability.

So the proper perspective, practices, and perception all should motivate us to progress in our Christian lives, and we should be motivated to become more and more like Christ every day.

And the progression is the final thing that we see from Peter. So again, your fourth point there is the progression. Verse 18 summarizes what the progression involves.

[32 : 51] Verse 18 says, 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. So here we have a wonderful final appeal, and he's urging growth, and he tells us for that growth we have the continuing grace of the Lord.

It's interesting that Peter puts grace before knowledge. In many religions, knowledge becomes the key to accessing God, but in the Christian faith, we come to know God in the first place by His grace, and all subsequent growth that we have is part of His continuing gracious activity in our lives. And of course, we need to work at that growth, but God's grace enables us to have that growth. And so that takes us right back to the start of Peter's letter, especially verses 2-4 of chapter 1.

The believers to whom Peter wrote his letter originally, like all Christians, including us today, came to faith by God's gracious work in their lives. But coming to faith is only the first stage in a lifelong path to spiritual maturity.

Peter's already told us much of what's involved with this growing in grace. He did that all the way back in verses 5-11 of chapter 1. But this means for growth has been given to us graciously by His divine power.

[34 : 18] And we saw that when we looked at verse 3 of chapter 1 earlier. So as we grow, we realize that God is at work within us, and He's conforming us more and more to the likeness of Jesus Himself.

Peter also designated Jesus as both Lord and Savior, and of course we know that's the case. Pursuing a deeper understanding of the fullness of Christ's person both in His saving work and in His Lordship will provide believers with the doctrinal stability they need to avoid being misled. And that's really what Peter is driving home here. We have everything we need to avoid being misled by the false teachers. We'll want to read and learn from the whole of the Bible.

And certainly teaching and preaching from God's Word is one of the ways we grow in our knowledge of the Lord. But growing in the way that Peter's describing here is more than an intellectual exercise.

It's about listening to God's Word, really grasping a hold of His promises and His commands, and seeking to live out that truth. Now Peter really closed the letter with the doxology, and he called believers to worship and adore God.

[35 : 30] Believers are to give God all the glory both now and in the present and in eternity. And when he talks about Him in the doxology, it clearly refers back to Christ, and that also is a sure affirmation of Christ's deity and equality with God.

So Peter begins and ends this letter with the grace of the Lord Jesus and with His great glory. But he also calls on believers to trust in God's promises and His Word.

So listen to a couple of quotes from Charles Spurgeon about the ending. Spurgeon said, Let every heart joyously feel this doxology. To Him, the God who made the heavens and the earth, apart from

whom nothing was made.

To Him, who in His infinite compassion became the security of the covenant. To Him, who became a babe. To Him, who was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering and acquainted with sickness.

To Him, who on the bloody tree poured out His heart's life that He might redeem His people. To Him, who said, I thirst, and it is finished. To Him, whose lifeless body slumbered in the grave.

[36 : 41] To Him, be the glory. Then Spurgeon goes on to say these words. To Him, who burst the bonds of death. To Him, who ascended on high and led captivity captive.

To Him, who sets at the right hand of the Father and who shall come to be our judge. To Him, be the glory. Yes, to Him, you atheists who deny Him. To Him, you who doubt His deity.

To Him, you kings who want your splendor and will not have this man to reign over you. To Him, you people who stand up against Him and you rulers who take counsel against Him. To Him, the King whom God has set upon His holy hill of Zion.

to Him, be the glory. And here's another quote from Spurgeon that summarizes when we should praise Him. He said, Praise to Christ is never out of place at the beginning or the end of an epistle or in the middle of it.

You may praise the Lord Jesus Christ anywhere, at any time. It shall never be a waste of time to sing unto His name. So, in tonight's passage, Peter has shown us that we should live like Christ is coming back.

[37 : 53] And part of that living should be a desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. We also need to recognize that sometimes this growth is easier said than done.

After his passion and appeal for praising God, Charles Spurgeon also said this, and I put these quotes in your handout. He said, Do not suppose when you are depressed that you are not growing.

Many of God's plants grow best in the dark and He often puts them in the dark to make them grow. When you are growing upward, recollect that there is such a thing as growing downward.

You may have had yesterday a divine manifestation that took you up to the top of the mountain. If, on the other hand, you are deep down in a mine, do not imagine that you are any smaller for that reason.

You will often grow faster in the dungeon than on the top of a mountain, but it is not a pleasant place to be. When our depravity is revealed to us, when our desolation of spirit and our utter hopelessness and powerlessness are uncovered and made manifested by God's Holy Spirit, we grow even faster than we do when we are privileged to fly high on wings like angels.

[39 : 07] So do not measure your growth in grace by your feelings. It's an interesting line, isn't it, to wrap it up? Do not measure your growth in grace by your feelings.

I had a pastor when I was growing up who was fond of saying we should act our way into a feeling rather than feeling our way into an action.

That's kind of a neat way to say it as well. So whether you're on the spiritual mountaintop or down in the dungeon, remember the opening and closing words of this letter. 1 Peter 1, verses 3 and 4 told us, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to His own glory and excellence by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

And of course this should cause us to remember the ending in 3.18 where Peter wrote to Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.