

1 Peter #2 - Mindful Truths for Mindless Times

- All righty, well, it's good to have you. If you've got a Bible, go to the book of 1st Peter. We're in the New Testament book of 1st Peter. We're starting at chapter one verse 13 today. And just so you know, it's a letter and a letter is so special. When's the last time you got a handwritten custom letter? We all get the junk mail right? We all get the spam, we all get the text, we all get the calls, we all get the emails, I went to the mailbox yesterday. Here's what I do every day. I go to the mailbox, I open the mailbox, I take out all the mail, I put it in the garbage and then I go home. That's what I do every single day and all my neighbors do the exact same. I don't know why any of us has a mailbox, we could all save the mail person a lot of time and they could just drop it all in the garbage and save us all a walk to the mailbox. But every once in a while you get something very special. And this is a handwritten letter, something of actual length from someone that you know and love that obviously took the time to sit down and pen something very, very personal for you. When we get these things, we tend to keep them. Some of you have love letters, some of you have really great gifts that people wrote letters and notes to you and you've kept them over the years. Well, that's exactly how they would have received 1st Peter, 1st Peter is a letter. So the guy who writes it, he is the senior human leader on the earth spiritually speaking. He's their version of Billy Graham on the day and he writes a letter to a collection of churches, a multi site church in a region that's now Turkey, and it's about the same geographic spread and size as our great state of Arizona. And the church would have assembled and this letter would have been read and what it means is that somebody far away, loves you very, very much and they wrote something because you had some sort of need and they felt it was urgent enough for them to write it down and have it hand delivered over the course of hundreds of miles. And so when we open it, we're supposed to open it with that same anticipation. Imagine that somebody you really love and really respect and really admire, took the time to hand write you a letter to speak into the circumstances of your life, and to make your life better. That's exactly how we are to receive this letter. And in chapter one, verse one, he told us that we were elect exiles. I'll catch some of you up if you're new. Elect means that God has chosen you but exiles means that the world has rejected you. This is the constant conflict of the Christian life. God loves me, but this world doesn't work for me. God has a home for me, but this world doesn't feel like home to me. That's what it means to be an elect exile. He also goes on to talk about in 1:6 you've been grieved by various trials. And what he talks about is for Christians, we don't need to deny reality, we can actually accept it. And God gives us the means by which to deal with it. And so in their day, I don't know, tell me if this sounds familiar. They had economic trials, racial trials, political trials, social trials, moral trials, spiritual trials, sound familiar? Times change, but circumstances don't. They were grieved by various trials, lay over those all of your personal trials. And let me say this right now. In a day when there is a lot of crisis and conflict in our world, don't overlook the people that are in front of you to just join whatever problems are on the far horizon. Those things matter, but these people matter as well. I was talking to a friend of mine texting with him recently I said How are you doing? He's like, I'm fine, how are you doing? He's like, well, actually, I got diagnosed with cancer. And my best friend died my arms in a tragic accident this week, okay? That would mean in addition to all of

the big trials, you've got your own personal trials. And many of you are feeling that today. You're greed by various trials to quote Peter. In addition to everything that's on the big picture, there's also the little aspect of your life. And you're dealing with your own struggles, your own difficulties, your own hardships. And he says in chapter 1:7 that you're being tested as by fire. Does that sound familiar? Did you watch the news last night? You watched the news recently? Seems like we're all being tested by fire. And when we think of fire, we think of hell coming up and it kind of feels at times and seasons, like hell is making its way up. That ultimately things are disintegrating and self destructing, and in the process of tragically, burning down. Well, that's exactly where he set it up in chapter one. And then the Christians are living in the middle of it and the question is, well, what do we do? How do we live? How do we respond to a world that really has in some regards, lost its mind, how to we keep our mind? And God's people are being torn because this group is against that group and this ethnicity against that ethnicity and this gender against that gender, and this class against this class and this geographic region against this urban center. And God's people are feeling pulled and torn. Which side do I join in the fight? And what happens if you don't join aside? You get shot by all. That's what happens, right? Today, we call this America. That's where we find ourselves. And so God's people are trying to figure out what the heck do we do? How do we navigate this? And I wanna show you that the Bible isn't just about what happened but about what always happens. And I want you to see that God's people were dealing with some of the same struggles that you and I are, in the most powerful nation in the history of the world, the economic and military superpower, and they were feeling the same troubles, trials and temptations that you and I are, which means that this is not an old book, it's an eternal book. And it speaks to our time as currently as it did theirs. And so I wanna start in 1:13-14. And what he's talking about here is God over the mob. God over the mob. And what is getting Christians in that day in trouble and we'll get faithful Christians in trouble in any day is if your ultimate loyalty is to Jesus over everyone and everything else. So here's how it begins. 1st Peter 1:13. Therefore, and anytime you see it, therefore, in the New Testament, it's saying in light of everything that was just taught, here's the application, here's who God is and what God does, therefore, here's who you are, and here's what you're supposed to do. So it picks up on the prior themes. But 1:13, continues, he says, therefore, and then he proceeds forward, preparing your minds for action, and being sober minded. We'll talk about that, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now what he's saying is this. You need to have a sober mind. What's the opposite of sober? We're in church, you can be honest, drunk, right? Somebody is like Saturday, no drunk, okay? Drunk, have you ever? And I know you guys have ever been drunk 'cause the Bible says is sin. But let's say hypothetically, you've seen another person that was drunk. Do they make any sense? No, but what they're saying does it make sense to them? Totally it does. It totally does. Drunk people, it makes perfect sense to them, but to no one else. Well, when I saw the bunny that came with Michelle Obama on the UFO to open the pumpkin, you're like, you've had too much to drink? No, I'm telling you. You don't understand. No, no, you're drunk. When you're drunk, you think you're making sense but no one else can make sense of what you're saying. How many of you have not seen your IQ go up with drinks? Have you see that? Any of you scored low on your SAT, trying to get into a good college, you'd be like you know I need? More alcohol 'cause then my SAT scores always go up. Let me say this, no one ever got more

intelligent with a few drinks. Write that down single guy. It's why you're still single, right? Have few drinks have a conversation, what comes out is probably not gonna be real smart. You should not watch it, I'm not recommending it, but it is a funny illustration. Have you ever seen the show Drunk History? Okay, if you did shame on you, nonetheless, the premise of Drunk History is this, we take a history professor, we get them drunk, and then we have them lecture on history. It's funny, yes, that's true, but not as accurate. I'll just say that. Peter tells us that we need to be sober minded, the opposite of that is, drunk minded. And what he's saying is this, when you get very emotional, you act like a drunk person. True or false?

- [Audience] True.

- True, true. We would say it this way, be sober minded, right? Get your head on straight. If you're on a football team, you smack a guy in the helmet, say get your head in the game. That's what he's talking about. He's talking about people that are very emotional because there's lots of cultural conflict and lots of issues swirling and lots of debates and lots of controversies and everybody's very emotional but nobody's thinking very clearly. Your emotions are like a sail and your mind needs to be like a rudder. All of this passion is fine, providing its directed, if not, it leads to destruction. A couple of things in this, number one, for the Christian worshipping includes your thinking, okay? Jesus says, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, that's your emotional life, all your mind, that's your mental life, all your soul, that's your spiritual life, all your strength, that's your physical life. We tend to think of worship is primarily being emotional and spiritual. I sang, I cried, I felt the presence of God, that's all well and good. But worshipping includes not just your feeling but also your thinking. You worship God with your mind. So when Paul says elsewhere, don't be conformed to the pattern of this world. Don't just march in the fools parade with whichever, whatever team you find to be most exciting at that moment. Don't be conformed to the powers of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you can discern what God's will is. That's what Paul says in Romans 12. That thinking is part of your worshipping. And I just wanna, I wanna say this, that for some of you, you're like, I love worship music and I love singing, great. You also should love reading and studying. So if you like I love reading and studying, but I'm not big into singing, well, it's you need to worship as a whole person and this does include thinking and your mind. Number two, thinking proceeds doing, okay? Like for those of you that are watching online, help me get this word out to the universe. All right, this is a big principle, everybody needs to catch, right? What we don't tell soldiers in the army is ready, fire, aim. The order is important, amen? Ready, fire, what do you shot? Where, I don't know. I'll dial it in later, it's too late, right? That you're thinking precedes your doing. How many of you when you get very emotional, your first thought is, I just need to do something. You do, you need to think about what you're gonna do. You can't just go ahead and do. You just can't go ahead and do. You'll do something foolish. Number three, mindless Christianity is the problem. If Peter says that the key to living in this world is to be sober minded, that means that mindless Christianity is a problem. And I am saying that there are people who are Christians, Jesus loves them, but their Christianity is largely mindless. Meaning it's not reflected, it's not studied, it's just driven by emotion and literally by mob mentality. And this is particularly true in a day of social media, limited character count Tweets and posts, in addition to

hashtags and social media is dominated by photos, very little of which, encourages deep thinking. That's why you could post a photo or a crazy hashtag, or a long thoughtful blog that reasons through the history of ideas, and nobody cares about that. They're like, give me the Tweet, give me the hashtag, give me the photo, don't make me read words, I already graduated. So what we end up with is a mindless Christianity. You can't be sober minded and have a mindless Christianity. And number four, what happens to mindless people? They follow the mob. They're upset, I'm upset, we're upset, we'll all be upset together. Where are you going? I don't know. What are you doing? I don't know. We're just all very emotional, right? Does this sound familiar or is it just me, right? I hate to interrupt your nap this morning, but I'm just, I'm pointing out something that you may have observed recently. So here's what I wanna do. I wanna do something controversial, 'cause that's what I do. So what we're dealing with as a culture is lots of emotion and very little reason, okay? Lots of feeling, not lots of thinking. So let me do this. And I believe that there is an underlying issue here. I'll tell you a long story and then I'll try to, I'll try to make this clear for you. So for me, I've always been really curious. I was that weird kid, there's ideas, where did they come from? Who started those ideas? What did they think about God and Bible and life and eternity? And their ideas, where ultimately are they going? Like, where does that idea conclude? In the same way, I would never just go to the airport and say, just put me on a plane. I would ask tell me where the plane is going, and I'll tell you whether or not I wanna board the plane. When you get very emotional, you just jump on a plane, you don't know where it's going. So at a very young age, I would get on my bike and I would go to the library. I was that weird kid. And I would check out books and magazines, I was trying to figure out okay, what do the different people think and where do they get their ideas from? And then in college, I became a Christian. And I wanted to figure out, okay, there's Christianity and then there's other thoughts, worldviews, these are lenses through which we interpret the data of reality and come to conclusions and make life decisions. So then I ended up getting a minor in philosophy, independent study under a professor, looking at the Christian versus the non Christian view of all kinds of thoughts and ideas in the history of the world. And then I graduated, and I become a pastor, Bible teaching pastor and then I get put in this group of young leaders, and obvious this is long time ago, 'cause I'm not young. And the young leaders would get together and just discuss theology, belief about God and church. Next thing I know they're deconstructing, dismantling, criticizing, disassembling what the Bible teaches and Christians have always believed and how the church is organized and led. And I realized, oh, this is from a philosophical system that I studied in college, I'm not gonna get into all of it, but it was called post modernism. And one of the great values of post modernism is something called deconstruction. It's dismantling. How many of you are people that have worked in construction? What's easier, the demo crew or the finished crew on a job site? Demo crew, I can do demo. I mean, I can do demo. Demo is easy. You just break things. It's the reconstruction, it's the finished work that's very hard. Well, postmodern philosophy is like a demolition crew. It just comes in and it just destroys and critiques and breaks, but it doesn't really build anything. So I became one of the great first critics of what was called the emerging church and stood up against that and wrote against that, and then did ministry in a major urban center for a few decades. Lots of conflict, lots of opposition, lots of complexity. And it was right near a university and what I discovered was, that at the university, there is a counterfeit gospel that dominates

academia in America. It's called critical theory. It's called critical theory. A critical theory takes the breaking or dismantling of post modernism, and it adds to it something called social Marxism. Social Marxism looks at everything through the lens of power. And what critical theory does, it seeks to replace Christianity as a worldview and an ideology. And the basic tenets of critical theory is this. That there are those who are privileged and those who are not at all of the institutions and organizations that we have, were built by those who are privileged, and it's to the disadvantage of those who are non privileged. Ergo, justice means dismantling, disassembling, deconstructing, demolishing all of those institutions. And so what critical theory does, when it's applied to race, it's critical race theory, when it's applied to economics, it's critical economic theory. When it's applied to gender studies, it's critical gender studies. When it's applied to law enforcement, it's critical view of police and or military. Does any of these sound familiar? And the result is that to be just, you need to dismantle all of these institutions. So we need to get rid of capitalism. We need to get rid of police, we need to get rid of military, we need to get rid of education, we need to get rid of gender, we need to get rid of marriage, we need to get rid of family, we need to get rid of church. All of those things need to be dismantled, deconstructed, they need to be tore down. And if you ask, okay, well, then what replaces it? The answer is we don't know. We don't know. All we know is that we don't like what is built so we're going to deconstruct that and then we'll see if we can build something else. This is an overarching ideology that oftentimes is rooted in a critique that has some truth. Certain people are not treated well. There's not justice under the law. Okay, I agree with that. But if the answer is not Jesus Christ, and the Word of God, ultimately it is going to cause human harm and suffering, not human blessing and flourishing.

- [Audience] Amen.

- Okay, and so it's one thing to come and say, I don't like how that was built, I'm gonna tear it down. Okay, great, what are you gonna build? I don't know. Well, people still need a place to live. And that's institutions, that's what ideologies, that's what they provide for societies. Now, what this means then as well, is that a couple of things I'll say about this, this whole ideology, it really fuels itself on emotion and passion, not on reason or planning. And behind it is social Marxism. Marxism started off largely as an economic theory that now has proven untenable. And so its attempt to gain power is through issues, related to groups of people, not necessarily economic but instead more identity. And so what you're looking at right now, if you, so you're looking at you're like, why is there a rage every month? Why is this group and this group and this group all upset, but then they all come together as a super mob? It's because they're all part of the same ideology, the same worldview, the same basic philosophical commitment of critical theory. And if you were to say, hey, I don't necessarily agree with that, then all that it simply takes is to say, see, you're privileged and you're not loving and you're not empathetic and you're not compassionate and you understand, and that's why you're wrong. So it's a loose, loose. There's no reasoning through it. And what it does it negates personal moral responsibility. Okay, I grew up in a very poor first generation immigrant neighborhood, I was one of the only kids with a dad. And there were lots of men who love to sleep with women, but they have no aspirations to be fathers. And you could say, well, that's because of all of these sociological variables and

that may have some truth in it, but that man is still morally responsible for the decisions that he makes with his pants. And somewhat part of this is, it negates personal moral responsibility, which takes away dignity of the human being because if you're making the image and likeness of God, and you have a conscience and you can know right and wrong, if I say that you have no responsibility for your own life, I'm actually devaluing you, because I'm saying that you can't make any decision, other than what the mob mentality requires. That's actually denigrating. Another thing that it confuses is equal opportunity and equal outcome. When young people hear equality, they think equal outcome. It's 'cause they grew up in a world where everybody got a trophy, right? And the truth is, in business, you can have equal opportunity, not equal outcome. In school, you can have equal opportunity, not equal outcome. So if we're gonna talk about equality, let's talk about equality of opportunity, but we can't guarantee equality of outcome, right? The guy who's drunk and doesn't show up to work, doesn't produce the same results as the guy who got up early and went into work. They both had an opportunity to go into work and one produced results and one did not, because even if you have equal opportunity, it does not mean you have equal results. All of this, uses a lot of biblical language, like equality and justice. And it's literally break and deconstruct and critique and attack and fight. And then the mob rises up. Some of you who say Mark, I can't believe we're getting political, I'm not, I'm still biblical. Prepare your minds for action. Be sober minded, be sober minded. And what he says is, to set your hope fully on the grace that is to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This concept of hope, he's gonna articulate multiple times in 1st Peter 1. When we think of hope, we tend to think of something that is an open possibility in the future. Like I hope when I propose she says, yes. I hope when I take the test, I don't fail it, right? Hope in the Bible is a guaranteed assured outcome. It's an anchor to tether the soul to. And what he's saying is this, that your hope in Jesus Christ is ultimately certain. Therefore, it's not a hope to an open possibility, it's a hope to a closed eternity, where God knows exactly where history is going and that is to his Son, Jesus Christ. And he says, our hope is fully set on the revelation of Jesus Christ. What he's talking about here is for the Christian, we have Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God on our horizon, we can work toward justice and love and relationships and peace and the fruit of this spirit, but until Jesus comes, we will have problems. And here's the point. Everybody wants heaven, nobody wants Jesus, that's the problem. In every ideological, philosophical and political system is trying to create heaven now, without Jesus then. And for the Christian, we have a longer view of things and we say, this world is sinful and fallen. The storyline of the Bible tells us the problem. We are the problem, not the solution. Jesus Christ is the solution. What we need is Jesus to come back. We need Jesus to cause judgment, we need Jesus to forgive sin, we need Jesus to heal injustice, we need Jesus to reconcile people groups, we need Jesus to provide for the needs of all people for all time, that for the Christian, the hope is in Jesus. Hear me in this, for the Christian the hope is not in the election. For the Christian the hope is not in the political theory. For the Christian, the hope is not in the philosophical system. For the Christian, the hope is not, it is not in the hashtag. For the Christian, the hope is not for the emotional response. For the Christian, the hope is not in the neglecting of reality. For the Christian, the hope is in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- [Audience] Amen.

- Okay? You've got to lock your mind in and say, okay, I'm on team Jesus. And there's a lot of other teams that are recruiting me to join their team. But ultimately, I'm on team Jesus. He then goes on to talk about God over selfishness. There are these various ways that you and I, will make our decisions in our life. We'll get emotional and find some emotional people and do what they're doing. The additional option is, that we're just gonna be selfish and say, well forget everybody, I'm looking out for me. And he talks about this in 1st Peter 1:14-16, as obedient children. You are the children of God. Do not be conformed. There's a lot of pressure, amen? Right now there's a lot of pressure. Get in line, join our team. Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. Ignorant people are very offended by that, that's very judgmental binary. That's that seems very judgmental, yeah. But as he called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, quotes the Old Testament, you shall be holy for I am holy. Here's what he's saying. If you're a Christian on the earth, there's all these teams that are fighting. They're all passionate, emotional, excited, very worked up. We're against them, which team are you on? And your pressure, your pressure is to conform, right? Just join us say what we say. Do what we do, and you won't get hurt. It says don't be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. What he's saying is this, that ultimately, you need to not be conformed to the world, but to the character of God, to be holy as God is holy. Let me just say that I'll say lots of events of things. Here's another one. I'm sick of people who have no private morality, but then publicly, want to judge everyone else, and pretend that they are indeed righteous, because they simply click or like the right thing, without living the right thing. It's just odd man. You know you could beat your girlfriend, not pay your taxes, get drunk, not show up for work, scam your employer, neglect your offspring, but if you click like, you're fine. And what he's talking about here is to be very concerned about your personal conduct as the children of God. You're not gonna stand before God and give an account for everything that everyone else is doing. You're gonna stand before God can give an account for how you live your life, and that ultimately at the revelation of Jesus Christ, that is what the child of God has on the horizon. Someday I'm gonna stand before Jesus and the team I joined and the things I say, and the way I act and the way I live, ultimately, it's not going to be based upon public preference, ignorance and passion, it's gonna be giving an account to God. And what he's talking about here is obedient children. What children are supposed to do is obey their mother and father. As parents, we tend to know this, amen? Even if you're not a Christian, you're like, I still like that verse. Obey your mother and father, you like that one. You're looking at your kids like, hey, God says obey. But what God is also saying, is not only are you a parent with children, who need to obey you, you're a child with a parent that you need to obey. Okay, that ultimately God is your father and that when your Father gives you some instruction, correction and direction, you are supposed to obey your heavenly parent. And what this means is that you are to pursue holiness, by the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is God working for you, in you and through you. And a lot of times when theologians talk about God's attributes, these are aspects of his being. They will talk about him being all knowing, all present, and all powerful. For most people, if I said pick one word, one attribute of God, it would be love. The number one attribute in the Bible, more than any other mention holiness, holiness. And the Bible says without holiness, no one will see the Lord. And what holiness is, it is rebellion against this world, okay? Everyone is a rebel, because

there is the world and there is God. Sin is the world rebelling against God. Holiness is the children of God, rebelling against the world. Do you get that? What God calls holy, the world calls weird or even bad. I'll give you an example. Young Christian couple, they're dating, they're thinking about getting married, and they won't sleep together. That's weird, weird. That's weird, why don't you guys just live together? We can't, we're Christians. That would be unholy. Well, that's, that's weird. What are you doing on Sunday? I'm getting up and I'm gonna go serve. Well, that's weird. How much do they pay you for that? Actually, they don't I pay them 10%. Well, that's weird. That's weird. That's really that's weird, amen? What God calls holy, the Bible calls holy, the world calls weird, the world calls bad. And you know what that means? It means that the world is gonna conform you to be like them, which would be rebellion against God. God wants you to be like his son Jesus, which is rebellion against the world. Make no mistake, there is a conflict. And you've got to pick a side. How's it going? And where he is driving up this, is he is driving at the fact that there are lots of things that are celebrated in our culture that are not tolerated by God. There are things that you can put on social media that will cause others to cheer for you and will cause God to judge you. Give you some examples. Since we got nothing else to do. Let's say you're thinking about committing adultery, can you call 911? There is a crime in process. All right, my belt is off and things are going south, literally very quickly. The cops won't come because that's a sin, not a crime. It's a sin, not a crime. Hey, I'm gonna yell at my spouse, I'm gonna get drunk, I'm gonna punch the wall, I'm gonna break some stuff in my own house because I'm rioting under quarantine, so I'm gonna break this stuff at my house. That's what I'm gonna do right now. You can't call the police because that's a sin, not a crime. As children of God, you need to know that, in addition to laws that are crimes, there are things that God considers sins that the world does not consider a problem at all. That means that for the child of God, our personal expectations are far higher than greater than those who do not know God. That in addition to what the law states, we also take what God's law states and we add it, to our own desires for how we are to live our life. Don't be compact, here's what he says, don't be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. So you guys faces won't show up on the internet right now. But what are some of your passions of your former ignorance? Things you did, ways you lived, decisions you made, commitments you had, what were they? Passions of former ignorance. What were they? You don't have any? You're like no Mark, you talk we don't.

- [Man's voice] Gambling.

- Gambling? Gambling, any of you say, I used to gamble and now I tithe. Just you know that's changing teams. On the other side of that highway is a casino. It has a different value system. It's funding a different agenda. It just is. And if you used to be there, and now you're here, you've made a change. Other examples of the passions of your former ignorance, laziness. Nobody ever got arrested for laziness. It's not a crime. But according to the Bible is it is a sin. The Book of Proverbs talks a lot about the sluggard. Like, what is that? It's a guy who thinks that a slug is something to aspire to, Right, don't move and if you do move as slowly as possible. That's a slugger. Okay, other examples of the passions of your former ignorance.

- [Man's voice] Lust.

- Lust, he said it. You're like, I can't believe he said it. I can't believe one of you didn't say it already. Before you may Jesus lust drives most of your decision making. Lust of the flesh, that feels good. Lust to the eyes, that looks good, boastful pride of life, lust of possessions, and pleasures and passions, 1st John says. And it drives your decision making. It drives your time, your energy, your money, your focus. It's the passions of your former ignorance. And the problem is not that we're passionate, that we're passionate for the wrong things. That God wants us to be as passionate for holiness as we were gambling. God wants us to be as passionate for holiness as we were recreation. God wants us to be as passionate for holiness, as we were lust. You see that? And it doesn't mean that the Christian is perfect, but they are different and they're in a process of moving toward the direction of perfection. And so what we're not looking for in this life is perfection, but progress in the direction of perfection. And here's what we love to do. We love to talk about their sin, not our own. This is our whole culture. You're wrong, what about you? We're not talking about me, no we should. We should. That ultimately you and I should be exceedingly concerned with our personal character and conduct. And it's not that we don't care about other people in their behavior, but that is not our primary responsibility, you and I will not sit on a throne to judge the nations, Jesus already has that job taken care of. So ultimately, your allegiance is not to the mob. And if you're in your 20s write that down. Most emotional people in their 20s who went to a university are not wise. There's a difference between an education and wisdom. How do I know that, I went to college. I did not see everyone reading Proverbs, I did not. We value education, not wisdom. We value passion, not wisdom. We value volume, not wisdom. It's not enough to follow the mob and it's not enough to be selfish. And what some people will do then, when they go to make their primary life decisions, they will just do as everyone else in culture does. That's where Peter goes next. "And if you call on him as father "who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, "conduct yourselves with fear that's respect throughout your time of exile." Now what he's saying is this that is exile, he already told us this in 1:6-7 that were exiles. What does that mean? What does it mean you're an exile?

- [Man's voice] You're an outcast.

- You're an outcast. You're an outcast. This world doesn't fit, it doesn't work, it's not home. You wake up every day and you try your best but when your head hits the pillow at night, you're like, gosh, it just doesn't work for me, this planet. Amen, and even Christians feeling that. I read the Bible yesterday, I had dinner, I turned on the news and I was like, this whole world needs Jesus. Everybody needs Jesus, everywhere needs Jesus, everything needs Jesus.

- [Man's voice] Amen.

- And I'll just tell you that this world, the closer I get to Jesus, and the more I study the Word of God, the less this place feels like it's gonna work. Some people are like, it's so sad that we die. I

don't know, would it be worse, dying or being here forever? This forever? I'm telling you right now. It does not sound good to me to be here forever, if something doesn't change amen?

- [Audience] Amen.

- That's what it means to be an exile. And what he's saying is that you're away from home for a little while, that this is not your home, that it doesn't work for you. It's not made for you, that ultimately it's fallen into sin. It's cursed, it's broken, demons are afoot, that ultimately problems are everywhere. And he says call on him his father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds. He's back to personal moral responsibility. And let me just say this, if there was more personal moral responsibility, there would be less public problems. That's why the Bible says that we received the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives us self control. You know what that means? We have a lot less need for other control mechanisms. Because the Spirit of God provides self control. The most important thing I can do, raising my children is to teach them the presence of the Holy Spirit to live with self control. If so, I don't need to control them. I don't need the government to control them. I don't need a truant officer to control them. I don't need a jail cell to control them. I don't need a rehab center to control them, that's already taken care of. That's already taken care of. And what he's talking about here is he's appealing to the universal moral laws. And he says that God is the father who judges impartially. And here's what happens. People tend to think that as long as they are compliant with their culture, that they are fine in the sight of God. And that is not true. That every culture has in it sin, folly, rebellion, the stench of death that comes through the curse. That if all you do is what the culture does, you will find yourself at war against God. And over all cultures is universal law that when he says that God is the father who judges impartially, the only way you can get impartial judgment is if the law is same for everybody. Now, here's what happens. This is the moral hypocrisy of the world we live in. The same people who will say, morality is relative, there is no universal standard, there's no universal laws, there's no universal law giver, you know we all get to be our own person, make our own decisions, I'm a law unto myself as soon as something happens that is not preferred, we appeal to the thing that we denied. You did something wrong, I didn't think there was wrong. You broke a universal law, I didn't know there was a universal law. You have violated the universal law giver, you denied there was one. This is what we call hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is denying a standard and then appealing to it when it's convenient for you and denying it when it is inconvenient for you. What you did was wrong. You can't judge me, there is no universal law. That's cultural preference and prejudice. You're looking it through your lens. You have no right to judge me. Well it feels like that's exactly what you're doing. As soon as we feel that we are going to be convicted, we deny law. As soon as we want someone else to be convicted, we appeal to law. See, and what happens is we tend to think, we're so smart, not like those people a few thousand years ago. And I'll tell you this, they were just like you. That in the human heart, there is this love-hate relationship with authority, with law and ultimately with God who is in authority and gives law. And what he's saying here is that God judges impartially and this is really the heart of justice. The heart of justice is, it doesn't matter what generation you're in, it doesn't matter what nation you're in, it doesn't matter what culture you're in, it doesn't matter what socio-economic background you're in it doesn't matter what sort of environment you

were raised in. That the same God who made you has universal laws over us all, written down in the word of God and ingrained in the conscience of the human soul. And that ultimately we need to live, not in obedience to culture, but the God who will judge our culture. The God who will judge our culture. And this is really, really, really important because even what's happening right now, across the entire political spectrum, across the entire racial spectrum, across the entire social spectrum, is people will take their culture and make it ultimately the standard of righteousness. And then it's up against another culture and their standard of righteousness and what Peter is saying is for the Christian, we need to find the heart of God, according to the Word of God and God's standard for righteousness, and not judge other cultures by our culture, but judge all cultures by the character of God. Now, some of you were like, this sounds hard, it's thinking. This is where mindless Christianity, that is driven by former passions and ignorance. That is not sober minded but is drunk minded, has no possibility of navigating this degree of complexity. If ultimate authority is not to be found in the mob, in the self or in the culture, then the next thing that he goes after is the family. And he says in 1st Peter 1:18-21, knowing that each of you was or were ransomed from the what ways? Here's the good news. God's way works other ways don't. Let you know a little secret. God's ways work other ways don't. They are futile. "Futile ways inherited from your forefathers, "not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Now we're gonna talk about Jesus. "Like that of a lamb without spot or blemish, "he was for known before the foundation of the world, "but was made manifest in the last times God came to earth "as the man Christ Jesus, "for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, "who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." Your faith and hope for in who?

- [Audience] God.

- If you don't know God, your faith and hope will be in someone else as your God. You will pick a political leader, philosopher, moral leader, personal friend, movement cause, I'm just telling you, your God is wherever you anchor your hope. As long as they're in charge, I'm blessed. That's how we get counterfeits. That's how we get the demonic. That's how we get problems. But for the Christian, our hope and faith are in God. Our faith is in God and our hope is that God is coming to rescue us. And what he's talking about here, is that for some people, they say okay, I'm just gonna follow the mob. Other people say I'm just gonna be selfish and do what I want. Other people say whatever my cultural grouping is, I'm going to be loyal to it. And other people say, you know what, we're just gonna huddle up and take care of our family. And we're gonna be loyal to our family. And what he's talking about here is, some of the translations will say, the hollow and empty way of life handed to you by your forefathers. How many of you looking at your family system? You don't wanna be exactly like your family? How many of you have gotten married and relatives are a problem. Just if you're single write this down, relatives are a problem. Which relatives? All of them. What about the ones that have died? Magically, they're still a problem. Amen?

- [Audience] Amen.

- If your ultimate allegiance is to your family, you can't be healthy. That's what he's saying. So let's do this again. I got nothing else to do. What are some of the hollow and empty words ways of life that your parents, your grandparents, your extended family tries to put on you.?

- [Man's voice] Traditions.

- Traditions? This is the way we've always done it. Yeah, and it's been done for 500 years. I say we vote on something else. 'Cause this is what well, this is how our family does it. It's never worked. Do we have to keep doing it that way? What are the other things that family puts on here?

- [Man's voice] Family pride.

- Family Pride. Pride got Satan kicked out of heaven. Probably not a go forward plan for the family. What other things does family put on you?

- [Woman's voice] Guilt.

- Guilt. Guilt, I hate to say it and probably shouldn't, but of course I will. Lots of times parents control their children, long after they become adults through guilt. You know what, that that is a futile way, inherited from a family system. If you're driven by guilt from parents, rather than conviction from God, you will never end up in a healthy place. And so what he's talking about here, he's actually quoting, he quotes back to Exodus, I think it's 12:15, Old Testament book. And the story there was that, God's family was a number of families, a nation of a few million, they were in slavery in a nation called Egypt. And they weren't free to live their life. They were under this domineering, overbearing, social, political, spiritual, counterfeit of the kingdom of God. And God was going to liberate and deliver them. And so he told them that they needed to take a lamb without spot blemish or defect, all foreshadowing Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, they were to gather as a family, everyone in the family was to confess their sins, to acknowledge their faith in God, to substitute the animal and that it would die in their place for their sins to pay the penalty of death for sin under God. And then not only that they were needing to go public with their faith. See, there's two elements to your faith. It needs to be private and it needs to be public. Many of us love the private part. I've accepted Jesus in my heart. Well, also accept him in your job. Also accept them in your budget. Also accept him on your social media feed. Okay, and so what they did, they accepted him privately, and then they would take the blood of the animal and they would literally paint the door post to the home, to show publicly, we are trusting in a God, who will forgive and deliver those whose faith rests solely in him. Okay, and then death came to the nation of Egypt and every household had the firstborn male son die, so I would have been dead. And then ultimately, the only homes that were spared were those who in faith as a family, confessed their sin and faith in God and it was private, behind the door, and it was public posted on the door. And the point is this, your family needs Jesus. Your family needs Jesus. And if your ultimate loyalty is to your family, your ultimate loyalty is not to Jesus. And that may seem like a loving thing, but it's actually an

unloving thing, because your family without Jesus is a disaster. And the only hope for your family is not your family. For those of you parents who are living vicariously through your children, your family needs Jesus, your kids are not Jesus. I feel bad every time I see a bumper sticker, our kids did this, our kids did that. Like heaven forbid, that kid doesn't make the honor roll next semester. That's a lot of pressure. They need to continue to perform because they are the trophy for the family. And what he's talking about here are these hollow and empty, futile ways, handed to us by our family. These assumptions and presumptions that drive our decision making, because some people will say my ultimate allegiance is to the angry mob. My ultimate allegiance is to myself, my ultimate allegiance is to my cultural group and or my ultimate allegiance is to my family unit. And where he is driving is this, the mob needs Jesus, the individual needs Jesus, the culture needs Jesus and your family needs Jesus.

- [Audience] Amen.

- He's driving Jesus overall, Jesus for all, Jesus, the unifying center of history, Jesus Christ, the only hope for humanity, that's what he's talking about. And in the midst of all this craziness, they were enduring in the world, just say, well, people need Jesus, that's too simple. Look, I'm telling you, we're not smart, we need it, simple and God and his Grace has made it simple. And he says that this faith in Jesus is more precious than silver and gold. I wish, I wish, I wish that people in Scottsdale, got up and were more concerned about the investment of their faith than they were the investment of their finances. I wish that people got as upset about their relationship with God as they do their retirement account. I wish people counted their relationship with God as more important than the stock market numbers. I'm not against money, but I know that ultimately, it's all about Jesus forever. And that you and I need to ask, is my faith more precious to me than silver and gold? The way you know it is, is if you give it. Those who know that their faith is more precious than silver and gold can share, can give, the silver and gold that God gives.

- [Woman's voice] Amen.

- Those who do not believe that their faith is more precious than silver and gold, will hold on to their silver and gold because their silver and gold is the object of their faith. As long as I have money, I'm okay. As long as I got cash flow runway and margin, I'm alright. As long as I'm right side up on my mortgage, I'll be alright. As long as my retirement gives me sufficiency, so that I could live the lifestyle that I want and get my little piece of heaven on earth, I'll be okay. This is Scottsdale. We do not consider our faith more precious than silver and gold, we consider silver and gold the object of our faith. That's why people freak out, when they lose money in a way that they don't freak out when they lose faith. True or false?

- [Audience] True.

- See, you thought I was gonna pick on other people that I picked on you, and you're like, that's not fair. It is fair, we believe in equality, pick on everybody, that's what we believe. That's what

we believe. And then he talks about God over tribe, I'm almost out of time. Or as I like to say, just beginning, 1st Peter, 1:22-23, Having purified your soul, not only you need to wash your car, wash your dishes, wash your laundry, you need Jesus to wash your soul, by obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love. What does he say? Love, love one another. Well, it's gonna take a miracle right there. Amen?

- [Audience] Amen.

- May even need the Holy Spirit, for the fruit of Spirit is love. Can't get this at Costco, gonna need to go to God for love. Love one another earnestly for a pure heart. Are you kidding me? Since you have been born again not a perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding, word of God. What happens is, he's talking about tribe and tribe is I am loyal to people like me. And then the other tribe comes along and says, no, I am loyal to people like me. So then what do you get? A fight. Let me give you some examples. Democrat, Republican, it's a fight. I don't know if you've noticed this. It's a full-on prison riot, right? People getting Shank mattresses on fire situation, It's CNN versus Fox. True or false?

- [Audience] True.

- True you're like, what about MSNBC? It's CNN 2.0 we all know that. This generation versus this generation, this city versus this city, it never ends, amen? It just never, this group versus that group. And the pressure that the Christians are feeling in that day is the same thing that the Christians feel the pressure in our day and that is, well which side are you on? I'm trying my best humbly by the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit to be on team Jesus.

- [Woman's voice] Amen.

- So who are you gonna fight? I don't look, I'm such a mess. I got to work on me. Before I tell the world how to live like, I got to figure out my own stuff. But I'll love you and I'll love you. This is really hard. Because these two groups, whatever these two groups are, whatever these two groups are, probably aren't gonna love you back. Welcome to team Jesus. Jesus showed up and he loved everybody but not everybody loved him. You and I are gonna stand before God and give an account as to how well we loved people, not how well we fought with them. How many of you, you're like me. I'm a counter puncher by nature. Okay, you hit me I hit your back, you say something I say something else. How many of you, it's really hard. Your head to hug, your yelled at to bless. You're hated, to love. And this is really paramount, this counter-cultural lifestyle of love. And some people say, when I first became a Christian, I thought well love is weak. Love is thin. Love is what you put in greeting cards or what you write on a heart shaped Valentine to ask your middle school girlfriend to go to the dance? Now that I've gotten older, and I've dealt with people, I find that love is actually really hard. I find actually you got to be pretty tough to love. You got to be pretty resilient, you got to hang in there, and you got to put up with a lot. How many of you are married? This makes sense. It's just, it is, it's really love is the thing. And let me tell you this, passions, ignorance, mindlessness, mob mentality, us versus them,

forget it, I'm in it for me, I'm just gonna find a group and join a team, I'm just gonna hunker down and protect my family, that's happening, what's not happening is love. And we tend to think well, we have real divisions. Okay, let me just say this. In that day, the divisions in the church were between the Jews and the Gentiles. So you can find this through the whole New Testament, it's a constant conflict. These are two racial cultural groupings that hated each other. Okay, so the Jewish rabbis when they would sometimes ask, why did God make Gentiles, non Jews, they would say, well, hell needs wood and Gentiles are wood. So God made you as kindling. Okay, like well, I don't seem very pluralistic. Some rabbis said if a Gentile mother, not Jewish, is giving birth to a baby and is in crisis, for which he's gonna die, it would be a sin to help her because you would be bringing another Gentile into the world. If a Jew and a Gentile fell in love and got married, their families had funerals and considered them dead. And when Peter says, love one another and the letter is being read, it is to these people. Do you know why? God is the father, Jesus Christ is a big brother and the church is a new family. And the church is supposed to not just echo what is happening in the culture, it is to echo what is happening in the kingdom. This is why I say, over and over and over, we do not live culture up, we live Kingdom down. In the kingdom, we're family, whatever our other distinctions might be, they are not divisions for us. That it doesn't matter what happens out there that in the family of God in here, there needs to be love, sober mindedness, relationship, affection, forgiveness, the heart of God, for the family of God. Because if all we do is we take the problems of the world and we pull them into the church, now the world has no hope and the world has no church. If we take the kingdom of God, and we invite it into the church, now the church has the kingdom and now the world has the outpost of the kingdom, the church, which gives us a counter-cultural, different way of life, that shows how we deal with one another and our differences, with Jesus Christ as Lord ruling and reigning overall. What I am telling you is this, is that the word of God is the only way for this to begin. When he says that we've been born again, not of perishable seed, but imperishable through the living and abiding word of God, what he says is this, the only way for change to happen is for the Word of God to get planted into the lives and souls and minds of people. Until they are transformed by the renewing of their mind, until they are instructed according to the will and the word and the ways of God, all you are left with is just mob mentality, individual selfishness, devotion to family and family systems, some sort of cultural allegiance, some sort of tribal commitment, that apart from the word of God, you don't know that there's another way, you don't know that there is a God who loves you, that you don't know that there is a Jesus who died for you, you don't know that there's a resurrection awaiting you, you don't know that there's a spirit that fills you, you don't know that ultimately, who you are is determined by God and not by you and that ultimately you will give an account to God for how you live your life personally, starting with how you love others. So the most important thing we can do is just plant the seed of the Word of God in our own life and the lives of those that we have relationship with. So I just wanna say thank you, I'll be honest, My heart is broken as I see what's happening in the world. And in addition to that, I know that many of you personally are struggling with various trials. In addition to everything else, you got your own stuff. I was on the phone with a pastor yesterday, he's preaching in the neighborhood I used to preach in he's got homeless people using the hose in his front yard to take a bath naked in front of his kids, so they go back to the protest. He's got people walking up and down the street in his neighborhood with long arm rifles and machetes,

not police officers. He's like, pastor, what do I do? I was like, that's complicated. I mean, my mom had a heart attack this week and just got home from the hospital, I'm praying for you, mom, I love you. Let me just say this. People are hurting everywhere. And it's not just the ones you see on the news and not just the ones you see on social media, though they matter. It's the people that are sitting next to you. And it's the people that are under your own roof. And then ultimately, if this world is gonna have any hope, any help, any healing, it's gonna be that our hope is in the revelation of Jesus Christ. And that ultimately we're planting the seed of the word of God, so that the love of God can start to overtake our lives, so that our ultimate allegiance is to Jesus, so that other people are loved into the kingdom of God, because ultimately, here's what I think, I think people are getting worn out. I think they're weary, I think they're tired, I think that they have battle fatigue, and I think they need the hope, help and healing of Jesus Christ. That's what I believe. So some people would be like, what are you gonna do? I'm gonna preach the books of the Bible, until Jesus comes back. I'm gonna plant the seed of the word of God in the lives of people. 'Cause if you want to grow weeds, do nothing. You wanna bear fruit, plants seeds. I'm gonna invite the band up at this time. I know this is not where I should conclude the sermon, I just don't have a conclusion. I'm not gonna lie to you. I think ultimately, the way this sermon ends is determined by how you live. I don't think that ultimately, me having a great conclusion means anything. I think ultimately, you living new lives by the power of the Holy Spirit with the love of Jesus is really what matters. So I didn't think of it until right now. But here's what I'm asking you to join us, in person and online. Let your life and your love for others and your allegiance to Jesus, ultimately be, the conclusion to my sermon. And I'm gonna ask the band to make a little noise and we're gonna sing and celebrate because our ultimate allegiance is not to the mob, it's not to selfishness, it's not to the culture, it's not to the family and it's not to our tribe, our ultimate allegiances to him, is to Jesus Christ. And I'll just close with this from 1st Peter. All flesh is like grass. Everybody's gonna die. Spring comes, and I love the greenery in the valley. And now that's over. The grass is gone. All flashes like grass and all its glory, like the flower of grass, the grass withers, the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord remains for how long friends?

- [Audience] Forever.

- This was here 2000 years ago, this was here 3000 years ago, this will be here in 2000 years, this will be here in 3000 years, the Roman Empire was the largest nation in the world, the longest standing superpower in world history, the great economic juggernaut, and it's over. But ultimately, I love our nation, but it will be over. That I love the nations of the world, but they will be over, in 2000 years, in 3000 years in 4000 years, into eternity, the word of the Lord endures forever. The word of the Lord endures forever. We trust the word of God, we heed the word of God, we welcome the word of God, we obey the word of God, we honor the word of God and in so doing we love, honor and obey the God of the word, amen?

- [Audience] Amen.

- The word of the Lord endures forever and this is the good news that was preached to you. Let me pray, father, God, as we come into worship, God, we live in a world that there is just unrest,

we ask for the peace of the Holy Spirit. We live in a world that has a lot of conflict. We ask for an opportunity to worship. God, we live in a world where there is division, we say the Lord rebuke you spirit of division, and we welcome the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity. God, we live in a world of hatred, and we ask for your love to rain down on us, in us and through us. That by this all people would know that we are your disciples, because in spite of it all, we love one another. God, we pray for hope, help and healing. We pray for those who carry tremendous burdens, we pray for those who have lost jobs, we pray for those who have lost loved ones, we pray for those who have lost sleep, we pray for those who have lost income, we pray for those who have lost strength, we pray for those who have lost heart, that right now God you would meet with us, that you would fill us, that you would encourage us, that you would speak to us, that you would change us, that you would deliver us, that our hope would be set fully, on the revelation of Jesus Christ, in whose name we gather today, this very day. We declare this a day of Jesus, we declare this a place of Jesus, we declare ourselves a people of Jesus, in whose name we pray, amen.