

2nd Peter #4 - Die With Your Boots On

- Well, howdy, we are in 2 Peter. It's a great book of the Bible. If you've got a Bible, go to 2 Peter, chapter three. We tend to go through books of the Bible 'cause I love you. And I love helping you learn God's word. Here's where we find ourselves. He wrote 1 Peter, the church was under some real opposition, hostility in the culture. He writes 2 Peter knowing that things are getting worse, a bad government was coming into power. There was an economic collapse and disaster. There was rioting in the streets. There was lots of racial discord. I know this has nothing to do with your life, but that's what they were dealing with in the days of Peter in the Roman Empire. And he writes 2 Peter, and it's his final farewell address to the family. And so to me, it's such a significant part of Scripture 'cause Peter has lived an incredible life. If you know anything of his story, he met Jesus as a younger man, was hand-selected by Christ to spend three years being personally mentored, and trained as a close friend of Jesus. He betrayed Jesus, denied Jesus at the moment that Jesus needed him the most. As Jesus was going to the cross, Peter denied even knowing Christ yet Jesus pursued him, yet Jesus forgave him, yet Jesus restored him, and he wants to do the same for every single one of you 'cause he loves you as well. And if there's hope for Peter, there's hope for all of us, and God reinstated him. And he goes on with a few stumbles along the way 'cause there is no such thing as a perfect Christian, other than Christ, but we see here an older man who is seasoned in his years. He's got more the tone of a father, or a grandfather, and he's gonna write this final farewell address to the church family. And he told us at the end of 2 Peter, chapter one, that he knows that he's gonna die soon. His finish line is on the horizon. His check engine light is on. His life is nearing the end. Some of you older saints know exactly what this feels like. And he knows that he's gonna die because he loves Jesus, that ultimately the government is going to put him to death. And so as we get into this book, the heart and the tone is one that is really important. And I just want to speak first and foremost to the men. The Apostle Paul says he was called to the Jew, and then the Gentile. I'm called to men, then women and children. I love women and children. I think the best thing we can do is to raise up better men for them. And so where we read Peter, I need you to see that he's speaking like a father, or a grandfather to a family. And what he's trying to do is make sure that they know of his love, and the faithfulness of God's word. It reminds me some years ago, I'll tell you a story to set the emotional trajectory. There was a guy that I knew who came from a large family. He had a lot of kids, a lot of grandkids, and his dad knew that he was gonna die. His dad was the patriarch in the family, and a godly and a good man. So the father pulled the family together, prayed over all the kids and grandkids, wrote letters, recorded videos, I believe, and just sort of made sure that he had a final farewell word to everyone with great love and affection, to make sure that his wife was cared for. He made sure that all the passwords and all the accounts, and everything was buttoned up, and she had access to everything. He paid all the bills. He did all the home improvement projects. He scheduled all the oil changes for the next years on the car, and paid in advance. He literally took care of everything. I think he even had the hardwood floors re-sanded in the home, and then he died. And the next day his wife got flowers delivered to the house with a handwritten letter from her husband, who was still loving her, even though he was gone. Every year on her anniversary

for the rest of her life she still gets flowers with a handwritten note from her husband who's deceased. That man finished well. It doesn't matter where you're at. It doesn't matter where you begin. It doesn't matter if you stumble along the way, it matters how you finish. And that's where Peter is today. If you're a pastor, as I am and have that honor, you have two families. You have your family, and your church family. And the whole prayer and goal is to love both with a father's heart, to lead both with a father's wisdom, and to provide for both with a father's generosity. That's exactly what Peter is doing today. And he serves as a great example, reminder and model for all of us, but first and foremost for the men. Now that being said, we're gonna jump right into 2 Peter, chapter three. And if you're new, as many of you are, we go through books of the Bible that's kind of our thing. And we did 1 Peter, now we're doing 2 Peter. And this is where the last chapter concludes. He tells us, God loves you, even if the world hates you. This is kind of grandpa's farewell address. 2 Peter 3:1 through 3. This is now the second letter I am writing to you. We looked at 1 Peter, here's 2 Peter. Some critics will come along and say, how do you know he wrote both letters? Because he said so. Even if you went to public school, you're like, yeah, I get that, that seems pretty clear right there. This is now the second letter that I am writing to you. This is a key crucial key word. What's the next word? Beloved, okay, just grab that. And we're gonna examine that in detail. In both of them I'm stirring you up, motivating you, encouraging you by sincere mind, by way of reminder. We forget things. Sometimes we need to be reminded of God's love. That you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets, that's the Old Testament. The commandments of the Lord and Savior. That's recorded in the four gospels about Jesus. Through your apostles, they would be the eye witnesses to Jesus, and that attributes much of the New Testament. So what he's just summarized there is the Bible. Knowing first of all, that scoffers, mockers, late night talk show hosts, people on social media, critics, will come in the last days with scoffing following their own sinful desires. And what he's gonna say is this. If you believe the Bible and read the Bible, and follow the Bible and love Jesus, and believe in Jesus and follow Jesus in this world, this world is not going to cheer. This world is going to jeer. This world is not going to commend you. It's going to criticize you. This world is not gonna stir up your faith. It's going to practice scoffing of your faith. True or false, this is still happening? True, late night talk show hosts, media critics, political pundits, social media advocates, wherever you go you will find those who have made it their full-time job to mock our Messiah, to criticize our Christ, to make fun of our faith. True, it's still happening. And it's only gonna get worse between now and the election just so you know. I don't think between now and the election, they're gonna be, let's read the Bible and do what it says. I don't think that's where we're going. That doesn't seem to be where we're trending. So when you're in this world, and this world really is against you, it's good to know that God is for you. That just because life is hard doesn't mean that God is not good. It just means that the world really is bad. A couple of things I want to make note of here for all of us. First and foremost, though, for men, husbands and fathers. And I'm going to look at the example that Peter sets as a leader. There's some leadership lessons here, and he's leading a spiritual family. So this is for leading of your family. First is and I've said it many times, connect before you correct. That ultimately Peter is gonna tell them that they're beloved. And then he's going to give them some instruction and direction, but you need to connect before you correct. How many of you find it easier to listen to somebody if you know that they love you? And they have your best interests at heart, and their

intentions really are to help. The moral of the story is that oftentimes we don't open people's ears until we open their heart. Once the heart is open, the ears tend to follow. And so what he does is he connects, and he tells them how much he loves them, that they are beloved, they are beloved. Now this little word, beloved, it's a word that really works better when you're older. If you're a 17-year-old guy, I know it's in the Bible, but don't drop it at football practice. It's not gonna go well for you with the other guys in the huddle, how are you doing, beloved? Just so you know, you're gonna get hit. That's what's gonna happen, okay? It's one of those words, that it really doesn't work that well, until you're an older man, beloved. It is the kind of word that a grandpa can use with a granddaughter, or an older father can use with a daughter. I'm really glad, I'm turning 50 soon, turning 50 soon, Grace and I both. And we say men age like milk, women age like wine. If you've seen Grace and I, you see that's the path that we're on. Grace and I are turning 50. I've been on the pulpit every week since Thanksgiving, and have been leading, and I feel when crisis hits, it's important for the captain to stay at the helm, and navigate the storm. And God's been very, very gracious to us through all this. So this next week I'm taking the week off, and Grace and I are going to Montana, 'cause we're both turning 50 that's what we're doing. Thank you. Some of you say why Montana? Ask Grace, I have no idea. I was like, do you want to go to Rome? You want to go to Spain? She was like, I want to go to Montana, what? I married Ginger, why am I going on vacation with Mary Ann? Like what the heck happened? So, okay, so we're going to Montana, but now that I'm turning 50, these words in the Bible make a lot of sense to me 'cause you could use words as an older man like beloved. When you're young, you're trying to be cool. At 50 you just quit, or at least you should, okay? So I'm not skateboarding home, and I don't have ripped jeans. I'm a grown man with hairy legs, no one needs to see that. I'm just a grown man. But when you become a grown man, and this is what I'm excited about, now that I'm on the precipice of my kids are getting married, and grandkids will be coming, words like beloved, they don't sound as weird. I kiss my daughters all the time, and tell them that they are beloved. This is the father heart of God toward the children of God. And Peter is gonna show and demonstrate the father heart of God as an older man. Just say this, men, as we get older, we should get more loving, and we should express our love more, more, more openly, more publicly, more consistently. And what he's gonna do with the people, he's gonna connect before he corrects, so I'm gonna just give a little parenting lesson. Many of you are new. I've shared this before, but when my kids were little, and now they're not, all my sons are tall, so if I want to look them in the eye I need a ladder, but when they were little I'd be like, hey, you come down here, I need to look you in the eye. When my kids were little I literally would squat down. You know why? I could be a little intense. I know that's shocking, all right? And I'd want to get down on their level 'cause I want to connect before I correct. I want to open the heart before I open the ears. I'd look at the kids, and I'd ask them questions like, who am I? Oh, you're my dad. How do I feel about you? You love me with all your heart. One of my daughters said, you love me as big as the sky, and as deep as the ocean. She was hard to discipline, I think it was a trick. I'd be like, yeah, I was gonna discipline you, and now we're going out for ice cream, you know, so, but I would get down on their level, and before we talked about whatever we needed to talk about I wanted them to know that I loved them, and I wanted them to see that I love them. This is what Peter is doing. You're the beloved, that's what he's saying. And what's amazing to me is God could have just yelled at us from heaven. Instead, Jesus

came down and stood on the earth with us. He literally came down and looked us in the eye, and he said we have some stuff to talk about, but I'm here 'cause I love you to look you in the eye, and to deal with it. So connect before you correct. Open the heart before you open the ears. In addition, know when to be tough and when to be tender. This will be a lesson for the men. 2 Peter, chapter three, it's the end of the book. There's three chapters chapter one, chapter three. He says, you could trust the Bible. You could believe the Bible. The Bible will lead and guide you. You are God's beloved. So it's about the Bible and the beloved. Chapter two, the tone really changes. If you weren't here last week, you picked a good week not to be here. It was intense, Amen. False teachers, kindling for hell, and then the grand finale is he says, some people are like pigs who like mud, and dogs who eat their vomit, Amen. That's it, he just ends right there. You're like, well, where's the happily ever after? There's just the dog vomit ever after. That's all you get at the end of 2 Peter 2. Now here's the point. There are times to be tough. There are times to be tender. Chapter one, chapter three, tender. Chapter two, tough. As a man, I just want to say this to the men, you need to be tough for your family, tender with your family. So, Peter, what he does, he's tender with the family, but he's tough for the family. When the heretics, the false teachers, those who would do damage come, he really, his tone changes very significantly. It's like a buddy of mine I know. He is a sniper in the military, and he's got all daughters. And he'll go out and kill bad guys, and come home and have tea parties. He knows when to be tough and tender. He's not out with the Taliban, tea? That's the wrong time. He doesn't come home with a gun to the girls. He knows which is which. You need to know when to be tough. You need to know when to be tender. Chapter one and three, he's tender, chapter two, he's tough. For those of you men who are only and always tender you're gonna allow the tough guys to hurt your family, starting with your daughters. For those of you men who are only tough, you're gonna be the one who hurts your family, starting with your daughters. So as men, it's about being tough and tender. Connect before you correct. Open the heart so you can open the ears. All of that Peter is modeling for us. And what he says, ultimately, is that his entire motivation is that he would help stir us up in our faith. Imagine if you never plugged your phone in. Imagine if you never gassed your car up. That's what happens to your soul when you don't get in God's presence with God's people. Eventually you run out of energy, you wind down, because this world filled with scoffers it's going to douse your fan of faith. It's ultimately going to, it's going to discourage you in every way. And the scoffers really will just suck the life out of you. How many of you, even personally, you've got people that you know, family or friends, they really would fit in that category of scoffer. You're like, I love Jesus, they make fun of you. Well, I'm going to church, I'm reading the Bible. They make fun of you. And heaven forbid that you ever say or do anything wrong. That's all that they're gonna talk about for the rest of their life, and what he says in this world, the scoffers they come to take the fan, the flame of faith, rather, and to just throw a bucket of water on it. And instead we need to fan it. We need to stir one another up. This is why all the time people will gravitate toward places of energy, enthusiasm, excitement. It's why culture of fear does not produce life and health and joy. This is why even a hip hop artist will have the hype man. This is why football teams have cheerleaders. And this is why you hire a personal trainer, right? If it was just you going to the gym, you would not go to the gym. You hired a personal trainer to stir you up. They're like, hey, you can do this. Put the Slurpee down, you can do this. They're trying to stir you up. When we come together, we come

together to stir one another up. We sing to stir one another up. We sit under the word of God to stir one another up. How many of you are just encouraged knowing, number one, there are still people alive on planet earth. Number two, they have left their house. And number three, they are following Jesus. You're like, I'm not alone. It's getting so bad as people are isolated, they are really discouraged and struggling. It's gotten so bad that in recent weeks, people want to be stirred up so bad. They just want to be motivated, encouraged, that they're driving from other states to come to our church. I've met people from Washington, Oregon, California, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Colorado, who have all driven here recently for church. A couple of them I've asked I was like, oh, so you're in town for how long? Just for today. Wow, you want to go to church real bad. I met a gal this last week. She drove over five hours just to come to church. She said, I think I'm a new Christian. I was watching online, and I just decided I just need to be around some Christians. So I got in my car and drove five hours from another state to come to church. Okay? And that's just, it's crazy times. Look, I'm just gonna say things I shouldn't 'cause I'm gonna go to Montana. I'm gonna go on vacation, but right now everybody's like, I know that there are issues. I know that there's problems. I know that there's health. And I know that whether or not you wear a mask, you're gonna die. Okay? I know when you stand before Jesus, it's not masks go to heaven, and non-masks go to hell. I know that it may be a help, but there is a day where it's not that helpful. And, ultimately, we need to keep the church open. We need to tell people about Jesus. We need to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to stir one another up to faith and good deeds. And what Peter is saying, as things get worse you need to get better. As things get darker, we need to shine brighter. And as this whole world is filled with scoffing, the church needs to be filled with stirring. That's what he's saying, okay? It's what he's saying, okay. So, I'm gonna read a bunch of verses now. The truth is this should be two sermons, but I'm going to Montana. And so we're gonna do it in one week. Harvest time continues until judgment time. 2 Peter 3:4 through 10. They will say here's the mockers, and the scoffers, and the folks who make fun. Where's the promise of his coming? Oh, where's Jesus? I thought Jesus was coming back. They were saying this 2,000 years ago. It's been a while, right? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, long time ago, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. Jesus hasn't come back. Nobody's gotten judged. Nobody's going to hell. Nothing's changed. Come on, man, just live. For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water, and through water by the word of God. We're gonna talk about the word of God. He goes on, and that by means of these the world that existed then was deluged with water and perished. He's talking about the flood in the days of Noah. By the same word, we're talking about the word of God, the heavens on earth that now exist are stored up for what? We're gonna talk about this. This whole world has an expiration date. It's all kindling. Some of you are like, but I live at Paradise Valley, and I'm remodeling my house. Well, thank you for the fancy kindling, all right? Being kept until the day of judgment, and destruction of the ungodly, but do not overlook this one fact. What's he say? Beloved, he keeps saying it. Everything's gonna get set up far, but God loves you. Phew, good to know. That with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance, but the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The end of the world will come.

Jesus will return. You're not gonna know when. And the heavens will pass away with a roar. And the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Here's what he's saying. If you believe the Bible and you are the beloved of Jesus you know that the end of the world is inevitable. And as you prepare yourself for eternity the mockers are going to mock every step of the journey into that eternity. Where is he? He doesn't care. He's not showing up. He's not done anything. Just think about it again. They said this in decades after Jesus' death. It's now been millennia. Things have not gotten any better, but what he wants us to know is that we can fully entirely trust the authority, and the power of God's word, okay? And this is so incredibly important. What he says is in the past God created this entire world through his word. That God is a preacher, and he preached creation, the cosmos into existence out of nothing. He says the same thing in Hebrews 11:3. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God. So that what was made was not made out of things that are invisible. In Genesis 1, the creation account, it says 10 times, God said, God said, God said, God said. Seven times, and it was so, and it was so, God saw, God saw, God saw. The point is this, God creates out of nothing. God needs no one, God needs nothing. God is self-sufficient. God is independent. God is fully competent. And that God's word preached and unleashed it brings life where there is nothing. When we started this church just four years ago, which is pretty remarkable we had nothing. We knew no one, but we did have the word of God. The way you get a church is the same way you get a world. You just preach it into existence. You let the word of God go forth, and it comes forth with the power of God. If you want to see things unleashed in your life, you need to unleash the word of God into those areas of your life. It is the word of God that brings life. It is the word of God that is the most powerful force at work in the world. That nothing and no one can stand against the word of God. Everything that exists came into existence by God simply unleashing his word. And so what he's saying is you can trust the word of God. You can bank on the word of God. You can ensure your eternity based upon the promises of the word of God. And now what he says is in addition, God's word promises that there is another world coming. The Bible talks about a new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem. We'll read of it in a bit here in the next section, but when he says that by fire, everything that exists will be dissolved, here's what he's saying. This world isn't working, and it comes to an end. How many of you would agree that this world doesn't seem like it's working? Anyone agree? Some of you are like, how many of you, even in this past year, if you trust the media, you're sad. If you trust the politicians, you're sad. If you trust health, you're sad. If you trust the economy, you're sad. If you trust Jesus, any day now would be a good day. Please come back, Lord Jesus, ideally before November. I'm sick of voting. I just would like one king on one throne, and get this all over with forever. What he's saying is that God's word is gonna bring a new world. This world will come to an end. Everybody's freaking out 'cause they think the world's gonna end. You know why I'm excited? The world's gonna end. Your worst fear is my greatest joy. What you're scared of that's what I'm looking forward to. I've got a kazoo, I'm ready to blow. I'm looking forward to it. And let me just say this practically, too, there's this powerful pervasive myth that's been sent out that this world is our eternal home. That the resources here need to endure forever. As a result, we need to reduce human population on the earth. We need to put condoms on 13-year-olds, and murder our own kids, so that we don't overextend the resources on the planet. Well, what it tells me in the Bible is the God who made

the world is making a bigger, better world, and, ultimately, when he comes back, there will be people who still have resources on this planet. Therefore, I'm not into taking human life. I believe that Genesis says we should fill the earth and subdue it. And I've been to Wyoming, they still got room. So we got work to do. We should care for creation because it's a gift of God, just as you should care for your body, as it is a gift of God, but, ultimately, the resources on this planet are for human life and flourishing, so that the gospel of Jesus Christ can be preached, so that the nations can come to meet the Savior because, ultimately, when Jesus comes back, the opportunity is over and the time is short. The time is short. And what he says is that mockers and scoffers will always make fun of this. And he uses two case studies. The first is in the Old Testament. Adam and Eve sinned against God. Sin and death come into the human equation. And then he waits 1,600 years until the days of Noah to judge the earth in a flood. It's exactly what he says. Now you may not know this because if you read Genesis 1, 2, and 3, creation, sinful, Genesis 4, Adam and Eve. By the time you get over just a few pages like Genesis 6, well, there you go, there's Noah and the flood, but when you flip those pages, you flipped 1,600 years. And it seems if God waits 1,600 years like he's slow. That's why many people just kept dating, relating and fornicating, and just doing all kinds of naughty things in old town on Saturday night. They just assumed in the days of Noah, God isn't judging. He's not coming. He says, he's gonna get us. Ah, it's been 1,600 years. Either he's changed his mind, he's lied, or he got lost. He can't find us. Now, Jesus has died for our sin, risen for our sin. He's coming again to judge the living and the dead, there is heaven and hell. How long have we been waiting? About 2,000 years, and the mockers and the scoffers continue. Jesus is coming back. There will be heaven, that's adorable, but it's all true. See, they were laughing until it started raining. Ultimately, the first judgment was by water. The last judgment is by fire. And what it feels like in the middle is that God is slow. How many of you it feels like things are moving slow? How many of you it feels like this year is going slow? I told somebody recently, I said, this week was a long year. Things are moving slow, right? Life feels slow, and he emotionally connects with that. And one thing I would say is when you're looking into the future, when you're looking through the windshield of life, it can feel slow, but the longer you live, and you look through the rear-view mirror at the past it feels like it moved very fast. How many of you are parents? You're like, gosh, they got so big, it happened so fast. I got so big, it happened so fast. It just feels very fast, right? But we look into the future and it feels slow. Question, is God slow? Why has Jesus not come back yet? He's patient. What's the difference between slowness and patience? Slowness is somebody who's incompetent or lost. Patient is someone who's gonna meticulously get it right the first time. Many things in our life rather than getting it right, we get it fast. God gets it right, he's patient. Why is God patient? How many of us are not patient? All of us are not patient. Some of you are like, I'm more patient than my spouse. Oh, well, you're still not patient, I asked them, and they don't feel like you're very patient either. None of us are that patient. We're the people that invented the microwave. We're those people, and we yell at it. Okay? But let me ask you this. How many of you God has been patient with you? Oh, yeah, see, the tone just changed in the room. How many of you are glad that God is patient with you? Patient with you. Here's what I know, if I was God, I would kill Mark, 'cause I live with Mark and I'm totally sick of Mark. I can't even put up with Mark. How God puts up with Mark is a mystery to me. How many things in your life has God, just, he told you no, and you just kept doing it, and he's just been so

patient. How many of you, there's something in your life, God's been working on for a really long time. And he's so patient with you. How many of you, it was years that God was just patient with you before you became a Christian and met Jesus. See patience is God's love in action. If God is patient with us let me just suggest this. We should be patient with each other. And in our world, there's just not patience. Everybody wants everything fixed by someone else immediately. And the truth is God is patient with us, and we need to be patient with one another. Especially, when times are hard, as they are, when times are difficult and complicated, as they are, but what he's saying is this. God is not slow, he's patient. He's echoing something that it says in Exodus 34. The verse in the Bible that is quoted more than any other verse in the Bible is Exodus, chapter 34, verses six and seven. God's children are in the desert. They're wandering around for 40 years 'cause they're rebellious, naughty kids. And so God speaks to them, and they feel like God's being slow, but he's being patient. And, ultimately, he reveals to them who he is. The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and you know what that is? Patience. Some of you you're like, I don't like that God is slow. Do you like that he's slow to anger? Yeah, I like that. Okay, that's patience. And abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love. It's all this language of the beloved for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty. Here's what he is saying. God is patient because he's waiting for you to turn around. The language of repentance there. God is not slow, but he is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to eternal life. That concept of repentance is literally turning around. Some of you right now, your back is toward God. God wants you to turn your face toward him. He literally wants you to turn around, and enter into this relationship, that God has been so patient in pursuing you. So let me say this. The reason you're here is to become a Christian. The reason why you're still alive is to become a Christian. The reason why all of the circumstances in your life have worked up to this sacred moment is because today, you're gonna make the most important decision of your entire life, and that is who you think Jesus is. I know you have a lot of problems, but your biggest problem is the sin problem, which causes the death problem. Once you allow Jesus to deal with the sin problem, the death problem, then he'll help you with all the other problems. Let me tell you about how repentance is possible. It's a change of mind. It's a change of heart. It's a change of nature. It's a change of destiny. It's a fundamental change at the deepest level of your being. It's not just a better you. It's a new you just like the new creation, the new heaven, the new earth, the new Jerusalem, are not a better version of what we have, but they're a brand new version. You and I are sinners by nature and choice. The whole world is just completely paranoid of death right now, and the truth is you're all going to die because we've all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God. And we may have medical developments, and I hope and pray that we do that extend our life, but it doesn't extend it indefinitely. Each of us is finite and we're a sinner. And if we're frustrated and angry with all of the sin in the world we need to make sure that we don't overlook our own. As we look at all the other things that everyone else does wrong, we need to make sure that we start by acknowledging the things that we have done wrong. And God looked at you, and me, and us with great compassion. He could have done for us as he did to Satan and demons, and just dismissed us and sentence us to hell, justice. No mercy, love of any kind, but instead God the father sent his only son, the Lord Jesus Christ into human history. That Jesus Christ lived the perfect life that you have not lived, that he died. He died a

substitutionary death that you should die. God came to the earth and we murdered him. That shows how good he is that he would allow that, and how bad we are that we would cause that. On the cross Jesus took your place, and he suffered and died in your place for your sins. You are loved by God. If you don't know that you're loved, look to the cross of Jesus. Greater love has no one than this, that they lay down their life for their friends. God demonstrates his love for us in this where he had sinners, Christ died for us. Friends, it is not that we love God, but that God has loved us. And he sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Every time that the Bible in the New Testament tends to talk about the love of God it tends to talk about the cross of Jesus, 'cause that's where God's love was made manifest on the earth for all to see. When Jesus died on the cross in your place for your sins, he gave you the opportunity to repent, to turn from God, to turn from sin, rather, and to turn to God. I have really good news for you. God has a whole family of people he calls the beloved, and he invites you to join that family. All you've got to do is just turn from the life that you have chosen, and turn to the life that he has chosen for you. All you've got to do is just turn from rebellion, and then turn to relationship. Jesus not only died, he rose from death. He conquered Satan, sin, death, hell, and the wrath of God. That's why for us who are Christians we view death differently. It's not that we don't respect death, and it's not that we don't want to live, but we believe the Bible which says to live is Christ, to die is gain. There's nobody in heaven right now going I'm so bummed. Wish I was back down there, paying taxes, voting, wearing a mask to the grocery store, the good old days. There's nobody up there, right? To die is gain, to live is Christ, to die is gain. The Bible says to depart, and to be with Christ is far better, far better, because that world is far better than this world. Not only does God have a new world, he will make you a new person, not just a better version of you, but a new version of you. That's why, if you are a Christian, this is your hell. If you're a Christian, this life is as close to hell as you will ever be. And all that awaits you is heaven. If you are a non-Christian, this is your heaven, and all that awaits you is hell. This is as close to heaven as you will ever be. And so what we are here to do is to invite you to make the most important decision you will ever make. And that is what do you think about Jesus Christ? My hope, my prayer, is that you would see God's patience in your life. Some of you should be dead right now because of the things you've done, or have been done to you. Some of you have tried to self-destruct, and God has spared you. Some of you have been arrogant, and haughty, and independent, and self-righteous, and proud, and God has been patiently pursuing you because he loves you. And all of your life culminates in this sacred moment where you're gonna make the most important decision you've ever made. And my question to you is are you ready to receive Jesus as your Savior and your Lord? Meaning he forgives you of your sin. And he now is in control of your life. I can't save you, but I could tell you about Jesus, but I'll tell you this, Jesus can save people. I'll just tell you this right now. There's no other Savior. It doesn't matter who we vote for. It doesn't matter what the economy does. At the end of the day, we have a God-sized problem. And God is the only solution. How many of you are feeling, and sensing that? The whole world is freaking out except for those who know Jesus. And they know that there's one who is over this world, and their hope is in him that ultimately he is coming again to judge the living and the dead. And if you are the beloved, it's gonna be a good day. Are you ready to receive Jesus? Are you ready to become a Christian? Are you ready to enter into that life-changing relationship with a father who loves you and calls you his beloved? You need to

make that decision before you leave. God has been patient, but I wouldn't press his patience any further. Let me pray for you. Father God, I pray for those right now who give me the honor of talking to them about Jesus. God, I just want to start by acknowledging, and confessing how patient you were with me. I was doing things I shouldn't be doing. I was saying things I shouldn't be saying. I was desiring things I shouldn't be desiring. Lord God, you were very patient with me. Even as a young man, there were decisions that I made that I should have self-destructed, but you rescued me. Lord God, I pray for all who would hear this that they would recognize they have a God-sized problem. They need a God-sized solution. Holy Spirit, would you please bring faith right now in Jesus' name. Would you awaken souls right now in Jesus' name. Would you bring people from spiritual death to life right now in Jesus' name. Would you cause people to fall in love with the Savior right now in Jesus' name. Would you flip the switch, and the souls, and the hearts, and the minds, and the lives, and the legacies of those who would hear about Jesus right now in Jesus' name. God, right now would people sense that you are calling them. That you're extending a hand to them. That you're inviting them. That you're healing them. That you're forgiving them. That you're blessing them. That you're rescuing them. Lord God, the greatest thing we've ever received is salvation. I pray for that gift right now to be lavishly poured out on all those who hear. God, I can't save anybody. Holy Spirit, you can apply the salvation of Jesus Christ, so we're inviting you right now to do that for many in Jesus' name. God, for those who are resisting, for those who are struggling, for those who feel odd to be prayed for, God, may this be the end of their wrestling, and the beginning of their trusting. Would this be the end of their running, and the beginning of their surrendering. Lord God, we pray for salvations, and an outpouring of salvations. God, this world is coming to an end. We sense it, we feel it, we know it. This world is not our home, it's not working. Something has gone terribly wrong. Everyone's angry and frustrated. And it's just part of the devil's plot and plan to get us to harm one another, rather than come together to worship Jesus, who is our Savior and rescuer and only hope. Holy Spirit, thank you for answering prayer. And thank you for saving people right now in Jesus' name, Amen. If you've received Jesus, you need to let the person who brought you know. We need to get you a Bible. You need to stop by guest services and let us know. Let me just tell you that there's a lot of things in the world that you can't change, but, ultimately, you can change when you die, which world you go to. And that's the most important decision you'll make. And what he's talking about here back to the text is God's patience. And what he's saying is that until the new creation comes we have this finite sense of time. We have this urgency, this matter that needs to be tended to, and it's all about evangelism. It's about people meeting Jesus. It's about the expansion of the kingdom of God. I've got a buddy of mine, dear friend of mine, he pastors a church in the middle of a bunch of apple orchards. His home is actually in an apple orchard. If you've eaten an apple, it's probably from his neighborhood, and there's this season of harvest where apples are everywhere, and they're harvesting, harvesting, harvesting. And then it comes to an end and the winter comes, and to celebrate, they take all of the branches that are dead, and they have a big fire. This world is like that, right now it's harvest time. And then afterwards comes judgment time. When Jesus comes back, and we don't know when he's coming back. He says he'll come like a thief in the night. I don't know about you. It would be nice if a thief told you when they were coming. They tend not to give you a heads-up. It's God's way of saying, you're not gonna know when I'm coming. And I know right now, lots of

people are predicting the end of the world, like, I got it all figured out. No you don't, 'cause everybody's been predicting for 2,000 years. And I don't care if you've got an end times chart mapped out on an ammo box in crayon it's still not right. I'm just telling you. All you guys up in Prescott, you're not right. I'm just telling you. So you and I don't know when Jesus is coming back, but we do know what to do until he comes back, and that's to grow in character, and to introduce others to Jesus. That's where he ends. 2 Peter, it's what's on Peter's heart at the end of his life. Keep your Bible and your heart open. 2 Peter 3:11 through 18. I know these are a lot of verses. I'm gonna read really fast 'cause I'm going to Montana. I'm already there in my heart. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved. Let me just say this real quick. Nothing manmade will be in eternity. Okay? God's gonna destroy everything that is manmade. And then the kingdom of God, everything will be God made. Everything in the kingdom of God will be a gift, nothing that you have made. So let me just, I just feel inclined in the spirit to just emphasize this point. Our priorities should be God's priorities, and God's priorities are people 'cause you know what? You're not gonna take your house. You're not gonna take your car. I know you love your pool, especially this time of year, but you're not gonna take your pool into the kingdom of God, but people will go into the kingdom of God. I'm not against possessions, but we do live in Scottsdale, Arizona. You need to be more concerned about people than what car you drive. You need to be more concerned about people than cost per square foot of your real estate. You need to be more concerned about people than your 401 or your 403 . You need to be more concerned about people than whose name is on your underwear. Okay? Because at the end of the day everything you have is kindling. Some of it's nicer kindling than others. Some of you are like, I have Ikea furniture. I can't wait 'til they burn up. Okay, great, that's great. You put it together with a tool like a monkey on an organ grinder, like, we're praying for you. Some of you are like, but I bought really handmade custom kindling. Thank you, it's all still gonna burn. And I'm not saying that you shouldn't enjoy the things that you have in your life, but I'm saying that the most precious parts of your life are the people in your life. And if everything else is gonna go away you know what you're gonna bring into the kingdom of God? The people you have relationships with, you are. So all the investments that you make, ultimately, will be for not. All the investments that you make in people will endure forever. Jesus died for people. People must be God's priority. Therefore, if we love God and God loves us, then people must be our priority. And what he's saying is this. Everything's gonna go away except for Jesus and people. So make sure that Jesus and people are your priorities. Okay? What sort of people ought you to be? Until Jesus comes back it's a good time to cultivate Christ-like character. And lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for the hastening of the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be set on what? Fire, everybody in Phoenix is like, this is the hottest it's ever been. Oh, this is winter. The fire is coming and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn, but according to his promise we're waiting for what? New heavens, new earth in which righteousness dwells. What's it gonna be like in a place where there's no sin, there's no division, there's no death, there's no lying, there's no media spin, there's no false promises. Therefore, who are you? Let's say it again. Beloved. Doesn't that just feel nice? God's a father, he looks at you, and he just says, I just love you. Can't love you anymore, won't love you any less. My love for you is not predicated on your performance, but my character. Beloved, since you're waiting

for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. Calm down, don't freak out. Let the pagans do that, they got it covered. And count the patience of our Lord, patience. The patience of our Lord is salvation, just as our beloved brother, Paul. Hmm, talk about another guy. Also wrote to you, according to the wisdom given him as he does in all his letters. You know what that is? The New Testament, we'll talk about that. When he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand. You ever read Paul and it's like, what? We'll talk about that, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other Scriptures. You, therefore, he's gonna say it again, seems like a theme. Beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people, false teachers, crazy ideologies, and lose your stability, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ. Do you want to learn about something? Learn about Jesus. To him be the glory both now, and to the day of eternity, Amen. Here's what he's saying. I love you, God loves you. I'm not always going to be with you. He's gonna die, but the word of God will always be with you. The point is this. If you want to hear a word from God, all you need to do is open the word of God. That ultimately you and I need authority over our life, and direction for our life. And that all comes from the same place, the word of God. And what he says is this. The mockers and the scoffers they're gonna criticize, but instead we should be studying. And he says, ultimately, do not, and I love this language, get carried away. How many of you this year, issues, things, trends, fears, stories, got you carried away? You're down a rabbit hole of bad information. You're down a rabbit hole of fear. You're down a rabbit hole of some sort of conflict that is far beyond your ability to resolve. You get carried away. What he says is don't get carried away. Do grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus. Grow in understanding who Jesus is, and how he has made you God's beloved. And what he says is gonna be particularly helpful in that endeavor is the writings of Paul, he names Paul. Paul is a contemporary of Peter. They're writing at the same time. They're both going to die. They're both in the last phase of their life. The Emperor Nero is a godless, demonic leader, and he's gonna rise up in the Roman Empire, and put them both to death. Ultimately, Peter, they come to him and the government says you need to deny Jesus. We know you can do it. You did it years ago, you're good at it. And if you deny Jesus again, we'll just let you live. He says, nah, I'm ready to die for Jesus. If you're gonna die, die for Jesus. If you're gonna die, die like Jesus. If you're gonna die, die with Jesus. They said, okay, then we're gonna crucify you. He said, that's fine, crucify me upside down. Jesus loved me so much, I don't even deserve to die the way that he died for me. Peter knows he's gonna die, and he says, you know what? The Bible is gonna get you through the next season. They were facing economic collapse. They were facing political upheaval. They were facing riots in the street. They were facing racial division. All of this was during the Roman Emperor Nero's reign. It's all historically true. At the superpower, the empire that was the longest standing, largest and most affluent, and powerful in the history of the world. It was their America. And it was in the middle of melting itself to the ground. And as the people are filled with fear and anxiety, and they're scared about getting carried away, he says, have peace, open your Bible, focus on your relationship with Jesus. Eventually, it all comes to an end. God has a future for you, beloved. And he says that Paul is gonna be particularly helpful. Now Paul writes 13, maybe 14 books of the New Testament. I love that Peter, over and over and over in 1 and 2 Peter, reinforces the authority, the perfection, the

trustworthiness of Scripture. I'm a Bible guy, this is it, man, I'm all in, I'm all in. And what he says is that you should really get to know Paul. Now there's 27 books in the New Testament. There's 39 in the Old Testament. 13 books of the new Testament are written by Paul, maybe 14. We're not sure who wrote Hebrews. The majority of Acts focuses on the life of Paul. Luke and Acts are the New Testament history books. Luke is the number one contributor to the New Testament. And he's traveling companions with and friends of Paul. The point is this. Pretty much the whole New Testament, most of it, connects to a guy named Paul. And what he says is some things in Paul are hard to understand. Have you ever read Paul? If you haven't, you will know exactly what Peter is talking about if you start reading Paul. Most of what we fight about in Bible studies, Paul. Speaking in tongues, women in ministry, head coverings, predestination, Paul. Here's what Peter says. Peter says, I was reading Paul and he gave me a headache. Peter read Paul, here's what he said. He's basically come to the conclusion. He's smart, I not, that's Peter's summary. He's smart, I not, okay? Peter, at this point, he went to the university of Jesus. It was a great school. Went there three years, graduated, and then he's been a pastor and a preacher for decades. And now he's the highest spiritual authority on earth. And he just finished writing a second book of the Bible. And here's what he said. Paul is awesome, and gives me a headache. So as you study the Bible, you need to do so with a sense of humility 'cause what Peter is saying, you can know truly, but not know fully. That every time you open the word of God because it's alive, just like a relationship with a person, you learn something new, okay? And for those of you who are young guys, and you figured it all out, no you haven't, okay? Especially when it comes to Paul. I love you, we're gonna get into it, but there's young guys in this theological tribe called reformed and they're always like, I figured Paul out. No, you didn't, you're single. You haven't even figured girls out. You haven't figured anything out. Your mom dropped you off at church. If Peter didn't figure Paul out you did not figure Paul out. So guess what we're gonna do? We're gonna study Paul because he's writing books of the Bible. There's something very important here. Some people will say that the books of the Bible were chosen hundreds of years later in the fourth century by the church. Prior to that there was no agreement on books that should be in, or out of the Bible. How many of you have heard that? Okay, there were creeds and councils that met in the fourth century. The Bible was written in the first century, but those creeds and councils did not determine which books should be in the Bible. They defended the books that were already in the Bible. Big difference. Because the books that should be in the Bible, were already known by God's people. Peter just told us that Paul is writing what? Scripture, and what he says is, even though there are some things that are hard to understand, don't twist them as ignorant and unstable people do. What some people will do they'll take parts of the Bible, and then they'll twist it into false teaching, and false doctrine. That's what he was warning against in chapter two. Paul is still alive. He is still writing books of the Bible, and Peter, who is the highest spiritual authority on the earth says that they are Scripture books of the Bible. J.I. Packer says it this way. The church no more gave us the New Testament canon, which means measuring rod, where to cut it, what's in and out. The church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity by his work of creation. And, similarly, he gave us the New Testament canon by inspiring the individual books that make it up. Here's what he's saying. Two things in closing. You need to know the Bible, and you need to know that you're the beloved. The way to Get to know the Bible he says

is it's really helpful to get to know Paul. So guess what we're gonna do? We're gonna study Paul. Not next week 'cause I'm going to Montana. The week after that, we're gonna start into a book of the Bible called Romans. We're gonna do exactly what Peter tells us to do. Get to know Paul. It's Paul's longest book in the Bible. It gives us an amazing oversight of Christianity. The second sermon in chapter one I'll probably get kicked off of Facebook, so that will be fun. If you don't know what I'm talking about just read Romans 1, and by the end, you'll be like, oh-oh, the naughty people are gonna really be upset. Okay, we're gonna get into it. We're gonna go through the book of Romans together. I'm gonna have a study guide for you, daily devotions for you. God saved me 30 years ago in my dorm room reading this book of the Bible. I have been preparing to preach it for 30 years, okay? So that's what we're gonna do, yeah? The last thing in his life, the last words that Peter says, he's like, the Bible is for the beloved, and he wants you to know that your beloved. I just want you to receive that. If you knew how much God loved you, you'd run to him, you'd stop running from him. If you knew how much God loved you, you would take your failures to him without fear of him. If you knew how much God loved you, you would stop rebelling against him, and you would start obeying him. If you knew how much God loved you, you would sleep better. You would breathe deeper. And you would die happier. You are God's beloved. I just, I wish there was a way that I could just make sure that each of you knew how deeply God loved you. Some of you have been saints for a very long time. You've still not plumbed the fullness of the depths of God's love for you because it's a bottomless well. Peter told us in 1 and 2, Peter used this word a lot. He said, when Jesus was baptized, the father spoke from heaven and said, this is my beloved. This is the word that the father spoke over Jesus Christ, the son of God. Paul was just called the beloved by Peter. He says, our dear beloved brother, Paul, writes to you. Do you know that God loves you just like he loves Paul? Do you know that God loves you just like he loves Jesus? Do you know that God loves you just like he loves Jesus? Every time I hear this word I think of my two daughters. They're my beloved, I adore them. One was at the first service last night, and I brought her up and kissed her just as an illustration. She didn't know I was gonna do that, so she was in the front row. This morning at the second service, my other daughter was right here, so I brought her up and I kissed her as an illustration. I only have two daughters, you're the third service, so. But let me say this. If you see a dad kissing his daughter that's what it means to be the beloved. If you see a grandpa kissing their grandkid, that's what it means to be the beloved. You are God's beloved. He loves you, he loves you, he really does. You just need to sit in that. It will heal you. It will encourage you. It will bless you. It will strengthen you. It's amazing, this whole planet is gonna get burned to the ground. And the one thing that continues forever is the Bible, and the beloved because the word of God, and the people of God endure forever. And I'll just tell you this, too, I love you. It's an honor to be your pastor. You're incredible people. What God has done this year is extraordinary, and it's supernatural. We've defied gravity, we just have. And I believe it's because God has a great harvest for us. I believe that there's a lot of people they're gonna meet Jesus. I believe that we're gonna have a lot of baptisms, and new Christians. And I believe that God brought a beloved people together because he wanted an awesome family to bring some more kids into. I'm proud of you, I love you, and with a father's heart. He loves you, and you've made it very easy for me to love you as well. And I just want to publicly say thank you for that. I'm gonna pray for you. Let's sing a little bit and sit in God's love, okay? Father God, thank you

so much. Lord, we think of the Scripture that says, God is love, that God is love and whoever loves lives in God. God, what this world needs is more Bible. And to know that it's beloved. Lord God, I just pray. Holy Spirit, it says that you pour out the love of God into our hearts. Holy Spirit, I invite you right now, to pour out the love of God into the hearts of the beloved. God, for those who feel rejected, would they know that they're beloved? For those who feel discouraged, would they know that they're beloved? For those who feel afraid, would they know that they're beloved? For those who feel weary, would they know that they are beloved? For those who feel overwhelmed, will they know that they are beloved? For those who are having a good day, would they know that they're beloved? For those who are having a bad day, would they know that they are beloved? Lord God, thank you, that when all is said and done, it is the Bible and the beloved that endure forever. And so, Lord, until the day that we see you face to face, until the day that the Lord Jesus determines that it's the end of time, let us stir one another up to love and good deeds. Let us encourage one another. Let us bless one another. Let us be patient with one another. Let us share the father's love with one another. And God let us invite the family, the friends, the neighbors, the coworkers, and the enemies that we cross paths with to come to know Jesus, and to receive the love of God, and to live in the love of God. And, God, this world has a lot of resources, but it is sorely lacking in love and patience. Help us even in this difficult season to be people who give patience to others and love to others because you have given patience and love to us. And, Lord, I pray for the men. I pray that they would start with a father's heart, that they would lead and love, that they would know when to be tough, and when to be tender. I pray that wives would know that they are beloved, that children would know that they are beloved, that grandchildren would know that they are beloved. And I pray that the Trinity Church would be a place that women and children are blessed in the love of Jesus Christ. And so, God, as Peter led that family, help us as men to lead our families in love. In Jesus' name, Amen.