

1st Peter #3 - You Can Be Healthy in a Sick World!

- Well, happy Father's day to all the dads and my heart for you all is like a dad for a family. I love you, it's really good to see you, and I'm really looking forward tonight, having my kids sit around the table. We're going to have conversation, catch up, be together. And as the dad, one of the things I love to do at our dining room table is kind of set the topic of conversation. So, we're going to have a little family meeting here today. I love you, it's good to see you. We're not going to talk about masks. We're not going to talk about protests. We're not going to talk about riots. We're not going to talk about, Oh, elections. We're not going to talk about the left or the right. I am so sick of everything. Pastor Mark, what are you sick of? Everything. Everything. Jesus, if you want to come back before I finish, that's awesome. I will be happy to go home. I will be happy to go home. And if not, help me, 'cause I am very frustrated and I need to talk in front of an audience. So, here's where we find ourselves. Everything is bad news. Everything is closed. Everything is weird. Everyone is scared. We're going to do something different. We're gonna open the Bible and talk about Jesus. Somebody be like, "What about everything else?" Flush it, that's what you need to do. Just hit the lever, send it away, flush it. Let's open our Bibles, see if God has something else for us, amen? So, we are in 1 Peter 1:23-2:3. We're going to talk about scripture. We're going to talk about the Bible. In a world filled with bad news, you would need good news. In a world where everyone's fighting over the problem, you need some solutions. So, we'll jump right in and it is... The scripture makes you healthy. 1 Peter 1:23-2:3, "You have been born again." So, if you're a Christian, you were born physically and then, you're born again spiritually. "Not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God." A seed has the power of life in it. The word of God has a seed for spiritual life. And he quotes the old Testament. "All flesh is like grass." We're all gonna die. There's an expiration date for us all. "And all its glory, like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, the flowers fall." Welcome to Arizona. It's going to be 110 this week. You'll see exactly what he's talking about. But the word of the Lord remains for how long? Forever, that's good news. Wouldn't it be nice if was some news, that was consistent? Mask on mask off, open closed. Wouldn't it be nice if there was some consistent news? "The word of the Lord endures forever, and this word is the good news that was preached to you." Needs to be prayed. "So, put away all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander like newborn, chubby, cute little babies long for the pure spiritual milk or nutrition that by it, you may grow up into salvation. If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." What he's talking about here is a nutritious diet that will make you healthy versus having a bad diet that'll make you sick. When he's using this language of growing up, health, milk, he's talked about nutrition, is what he's talking about. And what he's doing is he's taking things that you and I experience physically, and using those as examples for our mind, for our emotional life, for our heart and our soul. How many of you have had at least a season in your life where you ate garbage? Have you had that season? Some of you are in your twenties, welcome to it. You and I have all probably had a season where we didn't eat very well. I didn't have a good palette or a good diet, and this really started when I was young. Didn't make good decisions. I exercise a lot, I was an athlete, I was busy and when you're young, you cut it... It feels like you can eat whatever you want and then you're fine. And then, I hit college and I had a bad diet and

I didn't know how to cook and I didn't know how to pick good food, and I put on a little bit of weight. Now, the direction I was going is, needing to take my pants off, to get anything out of the pocket. That's the direction I was going, okay? So then, I hit my twenties and my thirties and just so you know, as you get older, your metabolism slows down, it just does. If you are in your forties and drive by a McDonald's, your cholesterol goes up. You don't even need to pull over, that's just the way this thing works. So, I had a very bad diet and I didn't eat well, and I was putting on weight and I was sick and I'd get nosebleeds and allergies, and I'm wheezing all the time. I sound like Darth Vader for no reason. Meanwhile, Grace, my wife, very healthy, very strong. Everything is fine 'cause she knew what to eat and I didn't. So, I would eat her food and then microwave a burrito and then eat like a sundae with hot fudge, and I couldn't figure out why she was healthier than me. It's because she was smarter than me. And so, I went to my doctor and I said, "Hey, "I don't feel good." He said, "Well, tell me about your diet "and I'll be able to predict your illness." That's true, right? If you drink too much, what do you blow out? Your liver. If you smoke, what do you ruin? Your lungs. This isn't even a surprise. We put this on the label, that this didn't... This isn't a ninja that snuck up on you. "I had no idea." It tells you right on the front. So, my doctor said, "Well, what do you eat? And I was like, "Oh boy, "this is probably not going to be good." Well, my primary for food group is idos. cheetos, fritos, doritos, taquitos, burritos. My primary... I'm committed to a brown diet. I don't need anything green, everything's brown in my diet, and half of what I eat goes in the microwave. Hot pockets, and also, you know, microwave burritos and frozen pizza, none of which is on the periodic chart. This stuff wasn't even created by God. And so... He's like, "Well, you have two options. "You can keep eating like you're eating "and then you're going to get sick "and you're going to need medication, "and eventually you're going to need surgery "and then you're going to die." I was like, "Okay." "Or you could change your diet." I was like, "Okay, well, I'll change my diet." So, I changed my diet. Lost weight, don't need medication, feel fine, everything is fine, nosebleeds go away. Everything is different. What is true physically, is true emotionally, What's true physically, is true mentally. What's true physically, is true spiritually. We've all heard that old adage, garbage in garbage out. And what Peter is talking about here is nutrition for your whole life. God wants you to be healthy people. The language elsewhere in the Bible is something called sound doctrine, and that original word in the Greek language is healthy. God wants teaching to make you healthy. That's what God wants, God wants you to be healthy. And we live in a day when everyone is worried about physical health. Have you notice this? It's weird even going to the store, right? It is weird. I never knew what it was like to be a leper. I always read the new Testament and I'm like, "We're all lepers. "We're all just freaked out "and everybody's worried about physical health." Which is totally well and good and I'm for it, but at the same time, we're focused so much on physical health, we're not equally concerned about emotional health, spiritual health, mental health. And what Peter's talking about is holistic health. And he talks about a diet that'll make you sick. First thing he talks about his malice. If this is on the menu, you're not going to be healthy. Malice is, "I don't like you. "I don't want good for you. "In fact, I want punishment or harm, or danger, "or damage for you. "With my deeds or with my words, "I'm going to make your life less pleasant." How do you know that you have malice towards someone? Well, number one, if something bad happens and you have malice, how do you feel? You feel good, "Oh, they have cancer. "Wow, yay, God does answer prayer," right? "Oh, they got fired. "Well, they should have, "they were

horrible to work with," right? You feel good if something bad happens, but if something good happens, how do you feel? Frustrated. "What they got... "They got a promotion? "They got married? "They got a kid? "They get to lead in that ministry?" Yeah, that's very frustrating. You know you have malice when something bad happens and you're happy, and something good happens and you're sad, okay? True or false, our culture has got a little bit of a malice problem. True or false?

- [Audience] Yeah.

- Okay, this is where we communicate. "I got nothing else to do, I got nowhere else to go. "The nine o'clock, took a nap. "So, I need you guys to help me out." Okay, the second thing that's bad for your diet, deceit. This is not total truth. This honesty, skewing of facts or taking details and aligning them in such a way as to paint someone in the worst possible light. Does this still happen? Oh yes. If you've heard of something called the internet, you've seen this. And what it is, is that if you love someone, you present them on their best day. If you hate someone, you present them on their worst day. That's what it is. In addition, he says, number three, "If you want to be sick, "hypocrisy is a shortcut." This word hypocrisy in the original language, the Greek, that was written of the new Testament. It appears some 27 times and it's taken from acting. And what it was, in the ancient world, there would be plays and they didn't have you know, a large number of actors and actresses oftentimes. They would have a smaller number of actors and actresses, so they would each play different roles, right? Kinda like Mr. Rogers. I hate to break it to you. Mr. Rogers played most of the characters on "Mr. Rogers." I don't know if you knew that. Now you're like, "Oh, it's King Rogers." It was always the same guy, okay? What would happen in an ancient play. An actor or an actress would be on stage wearing a mask and then they would go off stage and they would change the mask and they'd come in and play another role. So, one person would play multiple roles through the course of the play, and they never actually played themselves. You never knew who they were. That's a hypocrite. You're with your Christian friends, "Praise the Lord." You're with your drunk friends, you know, "Pour another round." You're dating a Christian girl, it's like, "Hallelujah." You're dating a non-Christian girl, it's like, "Vegas." It's different depending upon who you're with, and the problem is no one really knows who you are, okay? And you know that you're a hypocrite, when you are afraid that these people will meet these people, 'cause they don't know each other, but they both know you. And who you are changes depending upon who you're with. So, when we think of hypocrite, we tend to think of someone who makes mistakes and isn't consistent. Who's writing this? Peter. Is Peter kind of a mess up? He is. Is Peter a hypocrite? I mean, he's telling us not to be hypocrites. He's a guy who denied Jesus Christ, okay? You would say maybe that was hypocrite. One day Jesus looked at him and said, "Get behind me Satan." Which... I don't care who you are, that's a bad day when Jesus calls you the devil, that's a bad day. But Peter is not a hypocrite, he is a genuine Christian who is struggling to make progress. Now, conversely, there was a disciple who was a hypocrite. His name was Judas Iscariot. For three years, he pretended to be what? A Christian. He pretended to be godly and trustworthy and unified, but none of the time was that the case. He was always pretending. He was always pretending. When he's with Jesus, he pretends that he loves Jesus. When he's not with Jesus, he is plotting

against Jesus. So, in the 12 disciples, Peter is not the hypocrite, Judas is. Peter is not perfect, but he's straining toward progress, and rather than straining toward progress, what we see with Judas is just someone who's pretending. We've all known people like that. You're like, "I thought you loved me. "I thought we had a relationship. "I thought you were honest. "Oh, you're not... "I don't even know who you are. "I don't even know who you are. "You were just pretending the whole time." That's a hypocrite. That's a hypocrite. Another thing that will make you very, very sick is envy. He lists these things. This is jealousy, coveting, wanting, your beauty, your fame, your money, your relationship, your status. And let's just be honest, social media doesn't help with envy, amen? How many of you are on social media for hours? Get off and say, "I feel so much healthier now." "I was feeling really unhealthy, "and then I went onto social media. "Now, I feel so much healthier." The social media platforms that tend to grow the fastest are those that use images because it's the shortest route to envy, jealousy, coveting, discontentment. So, let's be honest. What are the things that as we swiped through social media, we tend to get envious of? Let's just be honest.

- [Congregation Member] Travel.

- Travel, Oh. Remember the days when we'd go places? "Oh, those were good days." And some people are still going places. You're like, "What are you doing?" "Going to a place." "I envy you." What other things do we envy?

- [Congregation Member] Cars.

- Cars. Barrett-Jackson. That's one guy's way of saying, "I have the best cars." We love cars and you swear, you're like, 'cause some of us went , "I got a new car." "Mine's from Korea." They got a new car. There's this from Germany. "I felt good until I saw that," It's envy, it's comparing, it's coveting, right? And I'll be honest, I'm struggling with it. I just broke the motor on my Jeep for the third time this year. Yep, I got a state-of-the-art Fisher price motor and I keep breaking it. So, you know what I've been doing all week? I'll just be honest, cause we got nothing else to do. Is, I've been scrolling through trying to figure out how much it would be to put maybe a Hemi or Hellcat, or an LS motor in my Jeep, 'cause I saw that other people had them, and they go fast and they don't break, and I was envying. And I'm not saying I'm going to repent of that, but I'm just sharing what I've been dealing with. So, what other things do we envy?

- [Congregation Member] Physical fitness.

- Physical fitness. Somebody like, "They have a six pack, I got a cooler." Or your spouse... Their spouses beauty. Okay, I won't talk about that. What else would you like to talk about? Wealth. Education. Their kids. "Their kid's an honor student. "Mine can't even spell honor." Poor kid's getting homeschooled by someone you know, like me. There's no hope for this child. We get envious, right? I see where you live. I see where you go. I see what you have. I see what you do. It used to be, you live in a farm in the middle of nowhere, there's no technology. Now, we get to go online and like, got appeared in everybody's lives. "Oh they're on vacation. "They're eating

steak. "Their kid's an honor student. "They have bangs, their car runs. "Their dog doesn't go to the bathroom in the house. "I'm envious." Okay? It's... And what it does, it makes you very sick. It makes you very unhealthy. And then lastly it talks about slander. Slander is, I want to make myself look better by making you look worse. That's what slander is. And one of Satan's tactics and tricks is slander. In fact, do you know what the name Satan means? Slanderer. True or false. There's a lot of slandering going on in our world. Social shaming, commentary. Right? And I'm not just talking globally, I'm talking personally. Lot of slander. All of it's demonic. All of it's satanic. All of it is the dragon. None of it is the Lord. And what he's saying is, if these things are part of your diet, you will be a very sick person. Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. This is the primary categories for social media and media. If you wake up every morning and start with your phone, instead of starting with God's word, you are poisoning your soul for the duration of your day. There is no way that you can take all of this in and be healthy. This is like getting up and saying, "For breakfast, I'm going to eat batteries "and wash it down with antifreeze, "and I can't figure out why I feel sluggish "in the afternoon." Okay? And so, the question is, is there an alternative to this kind of diet? Is their nutrition? And he says, there in fact is that is the word of God. That is the word of God. Now, what he's talking about is he's talking about, that you as the children of God, need nutrition for your mind, your heart, your soul, just like a baby needs good nutrition. One of the things I learned when our kids were born, is that I knew nothing about what to do with a baby. How many of you dads, when the baby is born, you're not sure what to do? Okay, and I didn't know what to feed them, that was the first thing, okay? So, for me I'm like, "Okay, kid's hungry. "I'm gonna go get a cheeseburger, do they want one?" Like, what do we do? "No Mark, they don't have teeth." "Okay I can blend it and put it in a sippy cup. "Well, can they do a cheeseburger?" I'm like, I'm not a big contributor to the nutrition, okay? Grace is like, "No, no Mark, I need to inform you." So I got disciplined. Okay. Just so you know, that's called marriage. And so, Grace informed me she's not... Though the kids' bodies develop and they can't process certain foods until certain stages of development. If you introduce certain foods too quickly, their body will reject it. They would get gaseous. They'll get diarrhea. They'll feel sick. There'll be throwing up. You've ever seen this? Some of you, your kids are sprinklers. Now, you know why. There's this stuff coming out all over. It's because you're not putting the nutrition in. The body can't process it, and many people's food allergies are because foods were introduced to early, their body didn't have the means to process it, and as a result, they have significant food allergies. So, grace with the kids was like, "No, no, no. "We need to be very careful, specific, calculated "with their nutrition." So that, and Peter is using the language. So that as newborns, they're going to have nutrition and then, they can grow up and be healthy. And what is true of a child is true of a child of God. And what he says is there are five things on the menu that can make you sick. There's one thing on the menu that can make you healthy. What is it? It's the word of God. It's the Bible, It's the scriptures. It's this? That the God who made you has designed a diet for you 'cause He loves you and He wants you to be healthy and grow. He doesn't want you to be sick, and depressed, and miserable, and anxious, and hopeless, and stressed, and bitter, and conflicted. He wants you to be healthy. And so he uses this language. "You've been born again, of imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God. All flesh is like grass. Everything falls away, everyone falls away, but the word of the Lord lives forever. Like babies who need milk, you can grow up into salvation. If you

taste that the Lord is good." He's talking about nutrition for the soul. And what he's saying is this. He's saying that people are the product of their teaching. If you look at a kid that's sick and throwing up and malnourished, there should be compassion for that kid saying, "Gosh, somebody needs to just "make sure that kid gets a better diet." I feel that way, as a spiritual father for people. They don't forgive, 'cause they've had bad teaching. They don't unburden, 'cause they have bad teaching. They don't believe that God loves them because they've had bad teaching, and as a result, it's made them sick. You need God's word as much as you need food. Jesus said it this way. "Man lives not by bread alone, "but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." What he's saying is this, in addition to nutrition for the body, the mind, the soul, the heart need nutrition. Now, let me say this as well. That first of all, you need to disciple your palette. If your palette right now is, "I just like the news." You're not going to be healthy. If your palette is, "I live on social media," you will not be healthy. If your palette is, "I just binge watch Netflix all day, every day," you're not going to be healthy. I'm not saying that any of those things are a sin, but I'm saying it's like junk food and it's not nutrition. Okay? And you need to disciple your palette. This was one thing that I really appreciate, and I want to honor Grace in this. When I realized that I had bad nutrition, I had to change my nutrition. It took a little while to recalibrate my palette. Do you have that experience? And all of a sudden you said, "I got to get used to different food." Because our kids grew up with a healthier diet than I did, they didn't have that need to reset their palette. It was already set for them, okay? Some of you, you've had good Bible teaching. Your pallet is already disciplined. For some of you, you've not, and you've got to retrain. You've got to redisciple your spiritual pallet. Number two. It takes a while, if you've been eating garbage and then you start eating healthy, to see the results. How many of you you're like, "I don't know. "They said to change my diet. "I went home., I ate carrots, I don't feel better. "I don't think it's going to work." You got to do it for a while, amen? And it takes a little while to build health if you've been sick. So, just because you pick up the Bible one day doesn't mean that, you know, 30 or 40 or 50 years of garbage in is automatically overcome. It takes a little while to feel the effects. But number three, once you change your diet and you start to get healthy, you realize how sick you were. How many of you that's been true of you spiritually? You're a brand new Christian, you're like, "I feel like I'm pretty good." You're like, "Oh my gosh, I was sick. "My desires were sick. My thoughts were sick. "My relationships were sick. "My motivations were sick. "I was a lot sicker than I thought I was." I'll tell you a story. Some years ago when I changed my diet, I went a long time without eating McDonald's and then, I drove by a McDonald's. And I thought, "You know what? "I've been a good boy, I'll go in and have a Big Mac." So, I drove through and I got a Big Mac. I kid you not, I threw up the Big Mac. My body was like, "Son, we're not doing this. "With or without you, we're not doing big Mac" Like, "You can do big Mac, but we're not, so "if you send it down, we're sending it back. "That's what we're doing with the big Mac." My body literally was like, "No." Previously, my body didn't do that because I was so sick, that even when I got something that was bad for me and made me sick, I would receive it, and then as I got healthy, I would reject it, okay? That's what God's word does for you. It sets a pattern and precedent of health in you, okay? So, let me say this, you know, just like a good parent cares about their kid's nutrition, I care about your nutrition, and that includes those of you who've given me the honor of joining us online. So, I generally go through books of the Bible. I want you to learn God's word and to have confidence to learn it for

yourself. So, I've got a study guide, introduction, overview. Every day, I want to help you learn God's word, and I want you to talk about it with those people you're in life and relationship with. It's why this is going to be a very long sermon, and if you're new, it's going to be a while, okay? Just to tell you, that's not an apology, that's just an acknowledgement. Because I believe, if you're going to take the time to get in your car and drive here, we should take the time to put some protein in your diet 'cause I want you to be healthy 'cause I love you, okay? And you can eat cotton candy really fast, but it takes a little while to cook a good meal. And what's interesting is statistically, they've now proven this and I'll share it with you. There was a study that was done and its result was called the Power Of 4 Effect. It was a study that was done with 400,000 people about their Bible reading. Who reads the Bible, who doesn't, when did they study it? And they were not anticipating this one fact. The fact that jumped out was not expected. This was kind of the surprise of the study. So, they studied 400,000 people and they found that the market difference in improvements in people's lives, comes with reading the Bible four or more times a day. One day a week, not much of a movement of the needle. Two days a week, not a big movement of the needle. Three days a week, not a big movement of the needle. Four days a week, big difference. And what that is, that's going from the Bible being a minority in your life to being a majority of your life. It's once you cross over that threshold. Those who study, read the Bible four plus days a week, they're 407% more likely to memorize scripture. You know why? If you eat something healthy and you're like, "I feel better, can I eat more of that?" You start to disciple your palette. You start to change your dietary desires. Number two, 228% more likely to share your faith with others. Because part of it is, "I'm in God's word. "It's making me healthy. "You're not healthy. "Hey, let me talk to you about God's word and Jesus Christ "and the power of the Holy spirit, "cause I want you to get healthy too." 59% less likely to view pornography. Right, because ultimately if your mind is consumed with the word of God, that makes you healthy, that will fight against things that make you unhealthy. And then, 30% less likely to struggle with loneliness. Well, based on that, you would think that mental health professionals, when you come in for a meeting, they'd say, "Well, "do you have a Bible? "That will be our first prescription. "Before we give you medication, "how about we give you this prescription? "Why don't you go read the Bible for two weeks, "come back and tell me if it made any difference." And I'm not saying that counseling is bad and I'm not saying the medication is bad. I'm just saying that if this is what makes you healthy, you should start here and then after that, see if anything else would contribute to your health. But what we tend to find is, I need somebody to talk to. I need something to take. I would say, "Maybe so. "But start with this, if you want to be healthy, amen?" Start with this, if you want to be healthy. And here's the big idea. That God made you, that God knows you, that God loves you, that God speaks to you, and that God wants to impart health to you. And let's just be honest, our world ain't healthy. Can we all agree on one thing? I'm not going to get super political today, but I don't care if you're in the left or the right, or the middle, here's one thing we can all agree on. This world ain't healthy. People are not doing well. They are self-destructing. They are self-imploding. Depression is up. Anxiety is up. Loneliness is up. Alcohol abuse is up. Drug abuse is up. Spousal abuse is up. Joy is down. People are sick. And as the children of God, if what we say is, "I'm going to allow that to be my diet" We're neglecting the great gift that God gave us in his word to become healthy. Here's what I can tell you. This world probably isn't getting healthy anytime soon, but you can be

healthy in spite of this world, if you're in God's word. And it's about you being healthy, 'cause I love you. Just like I'd look at my kids and I'd say, "Gosh, if all you do is eat cotton candy and drink red bull, "it's not going to end well." Some people are just waiting for the news to change. It's going to be bad news for a long time. And the point is, if you're waiting everything out there to get healthy, so you can get healthy, you're going to waste your whole life. If you invite the word of God to meet you and to change you, you can be healthy in here, which means you can be a hope out there. And this world has plenty of information, but it doesn't have much hope, help or healing. And that's the honor of the children of God. So, the first thing he says is, start with the scriptures and then apply it to your life. You can build your life on Jesus Christ. He says it this way. "As you come to him," 1 Peter 2:4-8. "A living stone." He's going to use this language of building. How do you build a life, how do you build a business? How do you build a family, how do you build a ministry? "A stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious. You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house." So we're a family. God's a father. This is the father's house. "To be a Holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." I'll unpack all of this for it stands in scripture. He keeps quoting scripture. "Behold, I am laying in Zion, a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious. Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." And we got a lot of shame going on right now. "So, the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to." He's using this language of building. And in the ancient world, the primary building material was a stone. It was mason work, that's how you'd build your house. And so, what you would do, you would start by collecting your stones and then you would need to determine, what's the first stone, where do I begin? They would call that the cornerstone. And he's talking about Jesus in terms of a stone. If you look at all of the options in your life, like a quarry. You can pick this religion, that religion, this person, that person, this commitment, that commitment. What do you pick first? What do you start with? And when I went to Israel some years ago with my family, we went to the temple, and they would have thought in their mind that temple. The temple is destroyed in 70 AD, but they were familiar with it. And when you go to the temple, it's this massive building or series of buildings that were constructed, not because God needs a house, but God's people do. God's people need a house. And so, it was built out of stone. Now, the temple was destroyed. So, you go there and it's just ruins, but they take you on a tour underneath to see the foundations because the foundations still remain. And the moral of the story is, if you want something to grow big, you need to dig deep, okay? That's what I went for When we started this church. We spent a lot of time digging deep, so that ultimately we could grow tall without toppling over. And so, they took us on this tour, underneath the temple, and there's these massive stones. You guys are walks like that show "Tiny House." These stones are about the size of a tiny house, each stone. I mean, this is like big boy Legos. I mean, they just stack them right on each other, and it's incredible. Thousands of years later, those stones are still stacked and still remain. And what they will tell you is, well, when they go to build, the first thing they do, is the most important choice is, what is the cornerstone? What happens if the cornerstone's crooked? Everything's crooked and falls over. What if the Cornerstone's brittle and weak and breaks and disintegrates? Everything crumbles and collapses. What Peter is using is this analogy, and he's saying that

everyone and everything starts to build every element of their life, family and society on some cornerstone. And so, what do you start with? You say, "I'm going to start with me," it's going to crumble. "I'm going to start with my spouse." It's going to crumble. "I'm gonna start with my kids." It's going to crumble. Why is everything seemed like it's crumbling? Because nothing was built on the right cornerstone. This is the truth. Marriage crumbles without Jesus. Family crumbles without Jesus. Nation's crumble, economy's crumble without Jesus. And everyone is yelling because things are falling, but no one knows how to start building. As Christians, we know because of the word of God. Where do we start? Jesus first. And he talks about Jesus. He says, "For Jesus, some people don't want that stone." "I don't want Jesus telling me what to do with my marriage." "I don't want Jesus telling me what to do with my finances." "I want Jesus telling me what to do with my sexuality." He says that they find Jesus to be offensive. For some people, Jesus and Christianity is offensive. It's like the roles are reversed. Like I judge God and I determined that He's evil and I'm good. That's what many people have done. He goes on to say that some people will stumble over Jesus as a stumbling stone. They're not looking at God being present in their life, they're looking over God and as a result, they trip over God. And somebody says, "Just reject Jesus." And I just feel inclined in the spirit, especially on Father's day, to unburden some of you. Some of you are parents of prodigals. Your thought is, "They rejected Jesus and we love Jesus, "and my kids don't love Jesus. "What did we do wrong?" Now, every parent has got a litany of things that Satan could come and accuse us of and condemn us for. But ultimately, every human being has to decide for themselves what they will do, receive or reject Jesus Christ. And I want to unburden you, that ultimately, it is between your child and Jesus. Now, you need to love and pray, and care, and hope, and serve and bless, but you cannot save. That ultimately, they need to decide, I will receive Jesus or I will reject Jesus. What he says is that some people reject Jesus. As long as they're alive, there's still hope for them. So, we don't have no hope for them. But in addition, he compares that to God, the Father, who has not rejected Jesus as the cornerstone, but received him. And He says, He sees him as chosen and precious in His sight. For those of us who are Christians, the hard part of our relationship with those who are non-Christians, is the person that we love the most, is the person that they don't care about. The person that we choose to do all of our life with, is someone that they have no use for. Let me say, if you hear or hearing this, and you're a Christian, this is why dating and marrying a non-Christian is a miserable idea. That kind of family will crumble. If they don't understand Jesus, they can't understand you. If they don't love Jesus, they don't understand the most important relationship you have with anyone, and it's not them. That ultimately, everyone receives or rejects Jesus, and what Peter is still doing, he's driving toward a decision. So, let me tell you why you're here or hearing this. You have the most important decision to make, more important than who you marry, what your degree is, where you live, or what job you pursue. The most important decision you will ever make is your response to Jesus. Will you reject him or receive him? Will you reject him or receive him? But ultimately, what he has just told us is that people come and go, nations come and go. That everything is like the grass of spring or the flowers of spring. Eventually the scorching winds and heat of the summer come and everything dies. That everyone, and every nation, and every movement, and every family, and every ideology is like that, but the word of the Lord endures forever. That thousands of years later, we're still being fed, nourished and sustained by the

same word of God, and it reveals to us the person and work of Jesus Christ, that Jesus is the center of human history. That Jesus is the center of scripture, and that life only works if Jesus is the center of your life. So, my first question is, do you know, Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Have you received Jesus? Have you become a Christian? Have you turned from sin and trusted in him? Don't reject him, don't be offended by him. Don't trip over him. Receive him. And then secondly, if you have received him, have you built your life with him as the cornerstone? Because some people it's like, "No, no, no. "My job is the cornerstone. "Jesus blessed my job. "No, no, no, no, my marriage is my cornerstone. "Jesus blessed my marriage. "No, no, no, my kids are my cornerstone. "Jesus blessed my family. "No, no, no. I am the cornerstone, Jesus blessed me." And those things all crumble because they're built on the wrong foundation. You have chosen the wrong cornerstone. And let me say this, Christian. You can be a Christian and build elements and aspects of your life on the wrong cornerstone. You're still loved by God, you're still saved, but life crumbles and collapses because it's not built according to God's designed decree. Not only does God have a way for you to be healthy, He has a way for you to architect a healthy life. So, He wants you to be a healthy person through the word of God. Opening the word of God, He wants you to get to know Jesus and then start everything with Jesus, which means, Jesus should get the first portion of your budget. Jesus should get the first portion of your schedule. Jesus should be the first priority in your marriage. Jesus should be the first priority in your parenting. Jesus should be the first priority in your career. And if not, everything you are building will be in the process of collapsing. And part of the loss, part of the grief, part of the frustration, part of the anger that the nation and the planet is feeling is working so hard to build something that falls down because it didn't have the right cornerstone. And the answer is not, "Well, then we just need to rebuild." No, no, first of all, we need to reconsider where we start the rebuilding process. I didn't even think of this until right now, but this might be a wonderful opportunity for the children of God to say, "I'm not going to just go back and do what I was doing, "I'm going to start with Jesus "and do it differently this time." That's an opportunity for the children of God. And on this Father's day, what he's talking about here is Zion. He uses this language of Zion like, "what is that?" It's their language for heaven, for the way that things are supposed to be before sin and the curse, and Satan and the fall and everything just became such a total disaster. For them, Zion is heaven and earth coming together and God ruling and reigning. And let me say, what's going on right now is on the political right and the political left. Everyone wants Zion, but no one wants Jesus. On the right, "What do you want?" "I want economic prosperity. "I want future and hope, and human flourishing, "and freedom and Liberty." "Oh, you want Zion." On the left, "I want justice, I want a good environment. "I want people to be healthy, not sick." "Oh, you want Zion too." Everybody wants Zion, nobody knows how to build it, because we're not opening the word of God and starting with Jesus Christ. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- That's so... If you're here and you're like... I'll tell you what, everybody wants Zion, nobody knows how to start building it. We start with opening the Bible and then we start by building on Jesus as our cornerstone. And let me say that those who will do this, Zion starts to show up in your life. All of a sudden, marriage starts to come together. Parenting starts to come together.

Life starts to come together. I probably shouldn't share this, but actually the world is a mess and this is one of the greatest seasons of my whole life. Okay? And everybody wants to talk about, "Ain't freaking out?" "I mean, "no." "Well, what if the world comes to an end?" "That would be awesome. "That means Jesus is coming back," right? "That means I don't preach anymore, I take notes." That's awesome for all of us, all right? "Well, everything's going to collapse." "Well, if it's not built on Jesus, "that's kind of what I expect." My life is built on Jesus Christ. I've done a lot of things wrong, that was no wrong. My marriage is built on Jesus Christ. We're not perfect, but God's been gracious and we love each other. I'm not a perfect parent. There is no such thing as a perfect father. There are things that I regret, but our family is built on Jesus Christ. And I'll tell you what, Jesus works in a way that no one and nothing else works. There's a lot of decisions I've in made my life. Starting with Jesus, according to the scriptures, is a decision that I've never regretted. I'm saying that everything in my life would be different, if it weren't for the scriptures and Jesus, and nothing would be better. Nothing would be better. And for those of you who are fathers, let me just get to your heart today. It starts with you. Sometimes, in church it's like, "Well, here's our Father's day sermon." Every Sunday is my Father's day sermon. Because I believe that the men need to go first, and if so, the women and children will be blessed. And so, for you men, this may seem very simple. How many of you are like, "The world has complex problems, "and Mark told me to open my Bible and get with Jesus." That's what Mark's going to tell you every Sunday, just so you know. Like, "well I need a real solution." "Well, there you go. "Okay, there you go." Open your Bible and start with Jesus. Tomorrow morning, open your Bible and start with Jesus. The next day, open your Bible and start with Jesus. The day after that, open your Bible and start with Jesus. And for those of you, men who will do this, particularly those of you who are husbands and fathers, you are multiplying the impact of the health through your family, into generations of legacy. There's a sociologist, his name is Bradford Wilcox. He has been considered the premier sociologist and statistical researcher on faith and family, on marriage and masculinity in our country. He's at the University of Virginia and he will pull out his credentials as the director of the National Marriage Project. And what he has found is that, what society needs more than anything, is Christian fathers. And Peter intimated at this in chapter one, he said that God was our Father. So, now we have a new paradigm for fatherhood. And then, he told us in chapter one verse 18, that we have been rescued or ransomed from the hollow and empty way of life handed to us by our forefathers. Peter gave us a clue in the previous chapter, that one of the ways that God was going to start building Zion in your family is by men becoming new fathers, following the example of God, the Father, not following in the example of their forefathers. Statistically, the presence of a father is the number one variable for the health of the family and the viability of the life of the children. Furthermore, the best fathers, statistically are Christian fathers. The highest rates of divorce and family dysfunction are where the husband and wife practice two different religions. 'Cause if you have God and Satan in a family, it's hard to have unity in health. The strongest marriage and families have a mother and a father who are Bible-believing, Jesus-loving, church-attending Christians. The Bible is open and Jesus is their joint cornerstone, and they build their life in marriage on Jesus. Those have the lowest rates of divorce, the highest rates of marital satisfaction, the lowest rates of spousal abuse and the greatest flourishing for families for generations. I'm summarizing his whole lifetime of work. What does that mean? It means that

God's divine designed decrease still works. It means that, you know what? If we had more dads, we wouldn't need as many cops. If we had more dads, we wouldn't need as much government. If we had more dads, then they would have been spanked when they were little and they wouldn't be rioting when they're adults. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- And furthermore, I'm just going to get into it now. There is a correlation, this is my observation, between a generation that was fatherless and a generation that is socialistic. There were never disciplined. They don't take any responsibility and they feel like their mother took a good job, caring for them, and now, the government needs to be their new mother. "Mom, I need a place to live. "Mom, I need something to eat. "Mom, they hurt my feelings. "Mom, their slice of the pie "was bigger than my slice of the pie. "Mom, go get me some more pie." Most of our cultural problems are family problems. Most of our cultural problems that our family problems, are father problems. The reason that Peter writes, he's a spiritual father writing to a church, which is a family. He's telling them that God is their father and that they can't just continue the patterns of their fathers. That the Bible needs to be opened. That the whole family unit and all of life, needs to be built on Jesus Christ, the cornerstone. And statistically, you give it time and eventually the researchers confirm that God's word is still true. To share little bit from what he finds in his book on "Gender and Parenthood." He says there are four things in particular that a dad gives to a child. They teach tough and tender. How many of you... How many of you are a dad with a little kid? How many of you are a dad with a son who wrestles with you? Amen? This is rough play. Dad comes home. If you've got a son, he's going to want to fight you. Okay, that's just how this works. But it's a fun playful, and what he's trying to figure out is, you know, how do you be tough, but where is the line that you don't hurt someone? Those are very important lines. You need to be tough, but not damaging and a bully. Dads teach that. Dads teach that. That's why you need to wrestle with your sons. Now, my sons are over six foot tall, so we pray together, we don't wrestle anymore But when they were little, we would wrestle. Number two. What he says is that a dad provides balance between learning to take risks and having safety. Let's be honest. Do mothers tend to err on the side of take risks or be safe?

- [Congregation] Be safe.

- The women said it, not me. I was just here to ask the question. From on the internet, say what you want. We'd be happy to delete it for you immediately. Okay, that being said. A dad teaches you how to take risks, but not how to be stupid. A boy who doesn't have a dad tends not to take risks. A boy who doesn't have a dad grows up to be stupid, makes dumb decisions. Right, this is how we got YouTube, boys doing dumb things and filming it. True, right? They did a little study swimming lessons. One parent was likely to be out in front, looking at the kid. "Okay, I'm right here, I'm right here. "You're going to be okay, I'll save you. "You'll be all right." And then, the other parent was likely to be behind. "Well, good luck." Okay, which pair do you think was behind? Dad. Well, this is how the world is, you're on your own. Figure it out. Don't die. Mom, where's mom? Up front. Up front. And both are good, you need both, amen? 'Cause you do

need to take risks and sometimes you're going to drown, so mommy's to jump in. It's good to have both. But there are things that you learn from your mother and your father that you can't just learn by having a mother or a father, and the results are very, very significant. In addition, a good dad protects from harm. That's what Peter is demonstrating for us here as the spiritual father in these church families. Statistically, if you have a dad, predators are less likely to harm you as a child. If you have a dad, you're less likely to have really bad friends. How many of you girls, when you are, let's say middle school, high school, college. You're like, "I really like that boy. "He's so strong and tough and he has nice bangs and he "drives motorcycle and he smoked cigarettes "and he has leather boots and tattoos. "And my dad will kill him," okay? You thought, "Man, I wish I had a different dad." Now, you're like, "Praise God," right? "He's in prison. "I'd be pregnant, my dad was a genius," okay? "Don't say it like that Pastor Mark, he has a good heart." "I'm a dad, no he doesn't and I'll tell you." Your dad protects you. Statistically, a dad also provides discipline. Now, you dad's don't be too heavy handed. But what happens is they found statistically, that a dad establishes order, authority, and honor. Things that we don't do in America anymore. And the results are pretty stark. There was a Princeton study that said that boys raised apart from their fathers were two to three times more likely to go to jail by age 30. Another study said that girls who grew up without a father were five times more likely to be a pregnant teenage unwed mother, and the rates of depression go down, when a father is present. Here's what I'm telling you men. If you will go first, your wife will be blessed. If you will go first, your children will be blessed. If you will go first, your grandchildren will be blessed. If you will go first, your great grandchildren will be blessed. I'm telling you that, opening the Bible and building everything on Jesus, isn't just building for you. It's building for your wife. It's building for your kids. It's building for your grandkids. And I'm not saying that everything's going to go perfect, and I'm not saying that there is any sure-fire guaranteed return on investment, but here's what I can tell you, looking at our world, if it ain't Jesus, it don't work. And so, as the children of God, we're going to open the word of God, we're going to meet with a son of God, and we're going to build everything according to the word of God, starting with Jesus Christ, amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Now, that being said, this is actually a better sermon than the nine. Pray for the nine o'clock folks. They... They were taking a nap and I really didn't have the energy to awaken them. So it was... It was kind of a Librarians for Christ conference we had here at the nine. So, this is going a little better. We're going to put this one on the internet. So, ring the band up at this time, and what I want you to walk out of here with, is a sense of hope, okay? Question, Is the world healthy?

- [Congregation] No.

- No. But, can you be healthy?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Yes. You can be healthy in a sick world. And what he's going to close with are some things that God says about you. Open the Bible, build everything on Jesus. For those who say yes to opening the Bible and building life on Jesus, he gives some hope. He gives some courage. He gives some insight. And so, I just want to hit these things quickly, and then I want to give you a chance to worship, to unburden, to meet with God, to talk with God. He, first of all says, "But you are," 1 Peter 2 starting in verse nine. "A chosen race." There's a big fight now, which race are you? If you're a Christian, you're the chosen race. All the nations, all the cultures, all the languages, all the people groups. If you're a Christian, it's because God has chosen you to be part of a new born-again race made up all of the nations, tribes, cultures, languages, and peoples of the earth. Can I get an amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- That's good news. "You are a royal priesthood." In the old Testament, the priest was the chosen one, the holy one, they got to be in God's presence. You are the children of God, and if you belong to Jesus and are filled with the Holy spirit, you are part of a royal priesthood. There would only be a shortened list of people in the old Testament that got to be called priests. Everyone who belongs to Jesus gets put in that amazing category. He also calls us a holy nation. Let's just be honest. There are not a lot of holy nations. There is a holy nation called the kingdom of God or Zion. If you are a child of God, your residence is here, your citizenship is there, and your eternal destiny is to be a people who are a part of a holy nation. A holy nation. Healthy people together forever. He says that, "You are a people for His possession, that you may proclaim His excellencies." What he's saying is this. God said, "I want you, and I want you, and I want you, and I want you, and I want you, and I want you, and you're going to be my people. I put together a new team, team Jesus. This is like a father who's just out adopting sons and daughters and bringing them home to love them, and to bless them, and to heal them, and to unburden them, and to encourage them. And he's saying, "You're my people, "and when you go out in the world "and everybody's talking about all their problems, "tell them who I am and see if they want to join the family. "Cause in a world filled with bad news, "they need good news, "and a world filled with problems, "they need a solution, amen?" That's why we're here. He says, "You've been called out of darkness into a marvelous light." some of you look at your past with regret and remorse. "Gosh, I can't believe I did that. "I can't believe I said that. "I wrecked my marriage, "made a mess of things. "I shipwrecked my finances. "I betrayed my friend, I... "I was looking at things and saying things "and doing things and, "I'm just ashamed of." Well, here's the good news. You've been brought into the light. "Jesus, this is who I am. "Jesus, this is what I've done. "Jesus, would you please take it, forgive it? "Heal me, bring life.. "Change me, give me a fresh start." Walking in the light is simply taking everything that was in the darkness and bringing it into the presence of God, into the presence of Jesus, who is the light of the world. And saying, "Okay, this is what it is. "Please take it, "so I can get healthy and do things differently." Whoever you've been, whatever you've done in the dark, it gets healed. It gets forgiven in the light. He goes on to say, "You were not a people, but now you're God's people." Right now, everybody's trying to figure out, "Which team am I on? "These people hate

those people. "These people don't like those... "What team am I on?" What God says is, "You're my people. "You're my people." You know what? I'll just say it. God says, "Some of the Democrats are people, "and some of the Republicans are my people, "some of the black people are my people, "some of the white people are my people. "Some of the people with the masks are my people, "and some the people without the masks, "they're my people too." And so, ultimately at the end of it all, we're about Jesus, and we know that everyone needs Jesus. And our job is not to judge anyone, but to love everyone, amen? 'Cause that's the heart of our God, and that's the way He's treated us. I love. You were not a people, but now you are. What a weird people we are? What a diverse scandalous, bizarre group we are? Welcome to team Jesus weirdo, welcome to team Jesus. He says, "You had not received mercy, but now you receive mercy." Is there any mercy in this world? If you post the wrong social media comment, is they're like, "Well, "nobody's perfect, we all make mistakes. "We love ya." If you say, or do something wrong, is it like, "You know what? "That's okay, there's grace for you." Zero. We live in a world that is, law for you, grace for me. God is mercy for all who belong to Jesus Christ. What this means is, you're not going to get the punishment you deserve, Jesus took it. You're not going to get the separation from God you deserve, Jesus endured it. Then ultimately, there is mercy, there is love, there is grace, there is forgiveness. I want you to see that this is the father heart of God. He looks at His kids and He's like, "You're a mess. "And my kid, I'm here to help." That's mercy. In addition, he calls you beloved. You know what your grandma probably called you? Beloved. Do you know what a parent calls a child? Do you know what a couple calls each other on their wedding day? Beloved. Here's what you need to know. God loves you. God loves you. God loves you more than you can imagine. God loves you no matter what you have done, God cannot love you anymore. God will not love you any less. In a world where we have no certainty, there is bedrock certainty in this, "The love of God endures forever," amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- You're loved. Just receive that. Just receive that. He then closes by telling us, that we are sojourners and exiles. Do you know why this world doesn't feel like home? It's not home. Do you know why this world isn't working? It's broken. Do you know that this world needs a solution? His name is Jesus. That ultimately, this is not your home, you're passing through, and ultimately there is Zion awaiting for you. And he says, "In the meantime, "you can war against the passions that war against you." As you are navigating the complexity of this world and the temptations of this world, God, through His word and His Son, and His Spirit and His presence and His power, gives you the opportunity to live a new freedom. Some of you are struggling with addiction. Some of you are struggling with anxiety. Some of you are struggling with depression. Each of us has a private personal battle that feels like war against the soul. And he says that God gives us the power to walk in newness of life, to walk in the victory of Jesus. So, here's what I want to do now. Take everything that you were thinking about when you walked in, and set it aside. Make this a sacred moment, not to check your phone, and not to jump in your car, but to meet with God. The word of God has been opened. The Son of God has been revealed. It's now time for you to meet with him. Some of you need to become Christians right now. Some of you need to give him burdens that you're carrying, that are going to crush you. Some of you

have sins that are haunting you and you need to bring those into the light and confess those to him. Some of you have anxiety about the future and you need to cast your fears upon him, because he cares for you. And I want us to declare that this is a day and this is a place for the people of God to be in the presence of God, so that we can get healthy as we navigate a sick world, and provide hope to those who otherwise have no hope. Father, God, as we come to worship, we thank you that we're not orphans, we have a dad. We thank you that we're not alone, we have a family. And God, we thank you that we are not left to our own devices, that we have your word. And we thank you there while everything is crumbling, you've given us the secret to building, and that is to start with Jesus Christ, who is our cornerstone. God, I pray for these dear people, these beloved people. God, I pray for hope for them, I pray for healing for them, I pray for heaven for them. And God let us start to experience bits and pieces, tastes and foreshadowings of Zion, until we're finally home, in Jesus' good name, amen.