

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

KAPONO: So we ask this morning Lord, that You would just give us strength. There's some of us that well, maybe all of us are going through something this morning. Lord, will You be our strength? Will You carry us through? Comfort us, guide us, and love on us Lord. Thank You for the word.

Thank You for Pastor JD, Lord. Continue to bless him and his family, Lord, and keep him standing up also with Your strength. Bless this time together. We ask this in the mighty and the only name, Jesus, amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen. Good morning. Welcome. You can be seated. Thank you. Want to welcome those of you that are joining us online as well. We're so glad that you are. Real quick, for those of you here, just want to let you know that this Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. here in the sanctuary we're going to have our prayer meeting. I would really encourage you to come and join with us. And today we start a new book in the Bible in our trek through the Bible.

So last week we finished *1 Peter*. And so now the next book is *2 Peter*. Yeah. Is it too early? Okay, so our text today is going to be *2 Peter Chapter 1* beginning in *verse 1*, and we're going to make it all the way through *verse 1*. You'll see why.

So why don't you stand if you're able? If not, where you're seated is fine. You can follow along as I read. I'm serious when I say you'll see why here in a moment.

So the Apostle Peter, by the Holy Spirit, now writing his second letter, says, *verse 1*, **“Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.”**

Let's pray if you would please join with me. Oh, Lord, thank You again so, so, so much. Lord, we have a small portion here in Your word before us. It's really akin to a couple of fish and maybe a couple of loaves.

But as only You can, You can take that and multiply it and feed us the bread of life and even have enough to where there's leftovers, where we can take the application with us into our lives and our weeks.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Lord, we're hungry, we're thirsty. And we know that only You can satiate that hunger and thirst that we have. And that's why we're here, Lord. So will You do that for us? We are desperate, desperate for You. So thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

You can be seated. Thank you. So what I want to talk with you about today is how Jesus will always lift us up in those times when we find ourselves down. I love David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

He pens these beautiful, magnificent words of promise. **"He's the lifter of my head."** He's the one who lifts me up. Whenever I'm down, Jesus will lift me up.

Now, here's why I chose this title. Peter, by the Holy Spirit begins his second letter, and in just this first verse there's this, for lack of a better way of saying it, a wonderful introductory word fitly spoken.

And you have to understand, in that day they did not have bound books. They were scrolls, letter. So that's why the introduction always includes who's writing it, who they're writing it to. The greeting is always there. Otherwise you're... to find out... you know, because with our letters, you have to go to the bottom of the letter to see who it's from. And then you get there and it's anonymous and you're like, okay, really? So you file it away where it belongs in the rubbish can.

So you know now this is the introduction. It's a general epistle, commonly referred to because it's written to the Christians in general, not to a specific group of Christians or church. So here's this wonderful introduction and it's a word fitly spoken. And just in this first verse, it's so packed full of so much.

And that's why I didn't want to rush through it. Just this first verse, I think there's a word here for us today, especially for those who are really hurting and really down and really struggling. I hope that today will be an encouragement to you and that the Lord will, as only He can, lift up your head and strengthen those feeble knees.

Now, before we jump into this, I think I'd be grossly remiss were I not to first provide a preface to what we're going to see, just not in this first verse alone, but really the entire epistle.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

By the way, it's a short epistle, it's a short letter. Only three chapters in length. But it's believed that it was written about one year after his first epistle. Now, why is that important? Because it would place the writing of this letter on or about 64 A.D..

Why do I need to know that?

Because *Peter's* about 30-plus years older now when he writes this. And by the way, we're going to see this in this letter, he knows that his life is about to end, that this is his final letter, his parting words. And before he departs, he wants to write, inspired by the Holy Spirit, this letter of encouragement, which by the way, is very prophetic. We're going to see that, too.

So this was about one year and now a lot's happened in a year between the second letter and when he wrote the first letter. And this is why we see this notable difference between *1 Peter* and *2 Peter*.

1 Peter being chiefly to encourage Christians. And now, one year later, the second letter is to warn Christians.

Well, what happened in that one-year period of time?

Oh, false teachers came in. As if they weren't dealing with enough, Caesar Nero is still emperor. They're still throwing Christians into carcasses of animals, into the dens being eaten alive. They're still dipping Christians in tar and burning them alive as Caesar Nero mocks them as the light of a world. They're still going through all of that.

And then if that weren't bad enough, here's these false teachers to add insult to injury. So Peter now is inspired to write this second letter, which is perhaps one of the most powerful and prophetic books in all the Bible.

This is why *2 Peter*, this very short epistle, has come under such intense attack. Did you know that everything about *2 Peter's* questioned? Even that Peter actually wrote it, the date of it, the authenticity of it, the inclusion of it in the canon of Scripture?

Well, of course, it's going to be attacked and questioned because of what's in the letter, the content of the letter, and might I add and dare I say the prophecy that is in this letter. I can't

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

wait. I've been looking so forward to teaching through – I know I say that about every book, but whatever.

Okay, a few more things here that we need to understand before we jump into this. His use of the name Simon. Did you notice that right out of the chute, *verse 1*, **“Simon Peter”**? That was his birth name. Peter was actually not his birth name.

Do you know when and how he got the name Peter? It was in Caesarea Philippi when Jesus said, ‘Upon the rock of your confession, the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the church.’ Peter, “Petros” means rock. So Jesus gave him the name Peter. And so he introduces himself, introductory again as Simon Peter.

Why?

Oh, it's to emphasize his humility. We're going to see that in a moment. And then as you get to the – this is why it's only one verse. The next thing he says is that he's a bond-servant before he says he's an apostle.

I totally would not have done that. I would have introduced myself this way. Pastor J.D., called out one of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He doesn't do that. He's says a bond-servant before he says apostle. And he's an apostle by the Lord Jesus Christ. But he doesn't see that as being as important as being a bond-slave. We're going to see that in a moment.

One more. His use of **“God and Savior.”** Did you catch that when we were reading the text, the verse? He doesn't just say Savior Jesus Christ. No, he says first, **“God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

Why?

Because he's emphasizing the importance of Jesus being God. First and foremost Jesus is God. He's God first and He's Savior.

Okay, that's the preface. I wanted to do that so that we can have a better understanding of what I like to call the ‘why’ behind the ‘what’ of God's word. By that I mean we're all prone to only understand what God's word is saying, but not why God's word is saying what God's word is saying. I hope you got that because I cannot say that again.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

So let me see if I can say it this way. Okay, this is what God's word says. This is what Simon Peter bond-slave, apostle was inspired to write. This is what he wrote. Why did he write this? Why was he inspired to write this?

Answer: To encourage the Christian who is discouraged. Let me say that again. To encourage the Christian that is discouraged. Do you think they were discouraged? Oh, discouragement giving way to despair. And Peter is writing to them, wanting to encourage them, and also packaged with the encouragement Is this warning because he loves them so much.

And of all the people, here's another why answer, of all the people who could write a letter such as this would it not be Peter? I mean, for lack of a better way of saying it, he earned the right to write this letter. I know that's a play on words.

Why?

Because he was there. He walked with God incarnate. He had a personal relationship with God the Son. And by the way, God's done quite a work in this SIMON Peter over the years. We're going to see that next in the first part of verse one. Because again, he's some 30 years...

Well, let me ask you this. You don't have to raise your hands. How many of you have been walking with the Lord for over 30 years? Think about this. Yeah. By the way, this upcoming January, if we're still here, I should preface it, I'm going to be 41 years old. I'm looking pretty good for my age, don't I? (Chuckle) My spiritual birthday. So anyway, that's my story and I'm sticking with it.

So he is older in the Lord now. He's more mature in Christ. He's grown in grace. He's not the same man that he was 30 years prior. And that's going to come leaping off of the verse that's before us today, starting with the first one in the first part of *verse 1*, and it's this: Failures can be good.

This is what I mean by Peter, he can speak to this. I mean, think about all of the times Peter failed, faltered, coward, denied the Lord. He's sleeping when he was supposed to be praying. I mean, you could just go through the whole three years public ministry, Jesus here on Earth, God incarnate.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

And who's the one disciple that we read about the most in all of the Gospels, more than all the other disciples combined? Peter.

Why?

Because it's always Peter that's talking. He's always answering the question. Sometimes you don't even have to ask the question; *Peter's* going to answer it for you. He's one of those guys that – you know how it is when there's silence and it's too quiet? It's kind of like, well, I don't like this. It's uncomfortable. I'm going to say something. And he blurts out something.

And then Jesus has to say, Peter, hey Peter, just settle down. I think about the mount of transfiguration, which, by the way, he's going to mention and reference later on here in *Chapter 1*. Remember the man of transfiguration.

So *Peter's* there right? And here's Moses, Elijah, and Jesus is just glorified in their midst. And *Peter's* just (Looking stunned) In fact, the detail in the text says Peter did not know what to say. **“So he said.”** I mean, seriously, go look it up. It's kind of like, what do I say here? Somebody's got to say something. Okay. What does he say? **“It's good for us to be here.”**

[Laughter]

That's it, that's all you got, Peter?

And then he says this. Hey Jesus, let's build a tabernacle. One for Elijah, one for Moses, and one for you Peter, you know it would have been better, like the proverb says, you know, one is thought wise until they open their mouth, and it removes all doubt once they start talking. Peter, it would have been maybe just better you know, the best thing to say right now is nothing at all.

But not Peter. This was in some respects his greatest asset, but so too was his greatest liability. We talked a little bit about this last week at the end of *1 Peter*. Peter was so courageous. That was his area of greatest strength, but it was also the area that he fell in.

This is what Paul when he writes to the Corinthians says about **“be careful if you think you stand lest you fall.”** Because we shore up those areas that we know we're weak in and we do so at the expense of those areas that we think we got under control and are strong in.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

I mean, talk about the very area that Peter was the strongest was the greatest area of his failure when he denied the Lord. He had the courage to take on the entire Roman army when Jesus was arrested. But he did not have the courage to admit and acknowledge that he was associated with Jesus there when he was asked, and he denied the Lord three times.

Now, why do I take so much time on this? Because if you were to ask me what I thought was one of the number one reasons why we get down and even stay down, failure would be it.

Failure does not have the final word in our Christian lives. We know how it ended for Peter because Jesus would restore Peter three times as Peter denied Jesus three times. But failures can be good.

Let me ask you a question. I want you to think this through with me. Do you learn more from your successes or from your failures? That's a rhetorical question maybe.

See, our failures are lessons for us. And this is why I believe it is the 'why' again, behind the 'what' of Peter using Simon Peter. Because when he references Simon, it's almost like he hasn't forgotten where he came from. He hasn't forgotten how far God has brought him from when he was Simon 30 years prior. He's not that guy anymore. And he's failed and fallen and faltered countless times.

But there's no such thing as a failure when that failure is the catalyst for a success, a successful failure. Sometimes you almost can't – and I hate to use the word success. I hate it when the world hijacks a word. I shouldn't use the word hijack, being from the Middle East, but maybe for lack of a better one. I hate it when the world steals, is that better, steals a word and just marring it and they've done that with the word 'success.' And so I use it for lack of a better one.

But success in the Christian life only comes vis-à-vis failure in the Christian life. And Peter can testify to that. Oh, so you're down. You've failed, you've fallen, you blew it, you messed up, and now you're all down. Peter would say to you today, by the Holy Spirit, I know exactly how you feel.

You think you blew it? I blew it big. I mean, eyeball to eyeball with the savior of the world. I really blew it. I'm not trying to dismiss your failure, but compared to my failures, not even close. And look what God did for me. Look what God did in me.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

In those times of failure and defeat, the Simon days, don't be too quick to dismiss them. I would suggest instead embrace them like Peter did, because this can be a good thing.

There's something about brokenness. Because brokenness is required prior to the blessing. You'll never see anywhere in Scripture where the blessing precedes the brokenness, where the success precedes the failure.

No, it's the other way around. You see failure preceding success. You see brokenness preceding the blessing all throughout Scripture. I think about Jacob, the poster child when it comes to brokenness and failure.

Here's a guy that's; I'm kind of getting ahead of myself, strong in his own strength, and he demands, wrestles with the Lord all night, demanding that God bless Him. And the Lord's like, I want to bless you, but I can't bless you until I break you. I have to break you first. The breaking always precedes the blessing. The failure always precedes the success. Failures can be good.

Second one in the second part of *verse 1*. Titles can be dangerous.

Like success can be dangerous because it can lullaby us into a false sense of security when everything is going good. Everything you touch is blessed and prospered. Well, that's dangerous. Well, so too are titles. Which is why, there's a why again, Peter is very careful to emphasize this title of bonds-slave.

Now, we've talked about this before. Just real quick to kind of bring you up to speed on what this word means. It's *doulos* in the Greek. In that day, if a Jew had a slave that had to pay off a debt, a fellow Jew was a slave, they would work for six years to pay off that debt, that debt slave.

But in the seventh year, if that slave who's now released, freed from their debt, freed from the slavery, if they loved their master and said, hey, I want to be your slave. I don't want to go anywhere. You take such good care of me. I want to stay. And of their own volition they stay as this servant, this slave. That's what the *doulos* is.

And this is interesting because there's actually a messianic reference to it in the Psalms.

What they would do with that slave who wanted to stay, they would take and pierce the ear

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

to mark. So whenever you saw a slave with a pierced ear, you knew that they were a bond-slave, there of their own volition.

Why?

Because they had a loving master, and they were committed to that master for the rest of their lives. Now, here's where I'm going with this. His de-emphasizing of 'apostle.' Because see, when you say 'apostle,' oh, that changes everything. Oh, I'm not worthy.

But when you say bond-slave, you're like, Hey, what's up? See, you're already low. You're so low you could play handball against the side of a dime. I'll give you some time on that one. You've already taken the lower seat, as it were. You're a bond-slave. You've got nowhere to go but up.

And conversely, when you're all high and mighty, the most holy apostle, reverend. I hate that when someone says Reverend Farag. Who? Reverend? I've never been comfortable with even titles at all, Because see, when you say "Pastor," you've just changed the whole complexion of any conversation I'm going to have with someone.

Because see, now there's this chasm, this division between pastor and laity. The clergy got the robe (Sounding holy) and the laity.

And Peter, again, very careful to emphasize that he is a bond-slave a fellow slave. Paul does it as well. But here's again why I believe it is that Peter would emphasize being a bond slave and de-emphasize being an apostle. Because see, these titles come packaged with this overemphasis of the role of one's own importance.

And isn't that interesting? Because the Simon I remember in the Gospels, he was always jockeying for position. Do you remember? Remember those times they were having conversations?

Jesus is like, Hey, what are you guys talking about?

Oh, we're talking about very spiritual things.

No, you're not. You're talking about who can sit at the right hand and who can sit at the left hand, who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom. And Jesus is like, okay, teachable moment. The greatest among you will be the servant of all.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Well, that was diametrically opposed. Peter wanted to be upfront. No need to fear; Peter is here!

He's come a long ways in 30 years. Now it's kind of like he's in the backdrop of obscurity and even anonymity and humility, de-emphasizing being an apostle. He was in every respect and with all due respect, he was an apostle, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. But he doesn't want to be identified that way. He doesn't see it that way anymore. He used to, though. He used to take great pride in having that title.

Do you know who I am?

No, I'm sorry. I don't.

Does anybody know who they are? Because apparently they think they're someone. You know, because Peter wanted to be in the who's who, and now he's like, who's he? He's nobody. He's less of me and more of You. How about none of me and all of You? Be very careful with titles. You automatically build in by default, create this dividing line now.

And let me take it a step further, and please hear me out on this, okay? I know we've talked about this before, but this is a big, big issue. As soon as you put a label or a title on somebody, you create a us versus them. Example: Oh, they're liberals. Oh, one of those Well, I'm a conservative.

Do you know what you've just done? First of all, you've lost the opportunity, any opportunity you could have had to bring that person to Jesus Christ, because now you've identified yourself first and foremost as this, instead of being a disciple of Jesus. See, here's what happens. So you've got oh, they're left, they're right, they're conservative, they're liberal, they're Republican, they're Democrats.

Really? I don't think Jesus noticed. No, no, no. Stay with me.

Well, Pastor, you're stepping on some toes.

Good. In Jesus' name. Wait a minute. So if they're a Democrat... Oh, you're a Republican. Jesus is going, you're either lost or you're saved because that's all that's going to matter in the end. You're either lost and need Jesus or you're saved because of Jesus. That's all that matters.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

And by the way, and I know I've shared this before, please hear my heart on this. This has changed my life, especially in the last couple of years. And you know what I'm talking about when it comes to the political arena. How divided is this country? How divided is this world because of this? Because of the label, because of the title.

Okay, I'll stop yelling, maybe. No promises.

But see, when you say, Oh, they're of that and I'm of this, well, then how are you going to, and this is the question I ask, how are you going to win that person to Jesus after you just got done blasting them and calling them a demon rat? I'm serious. How are you going to – you're going to share the Lord with them now? You just call them a name because you've labeled them this and you've also titled yourself this.

So here you are all up here, and they're down there.

No, we're like this. And the only difference that should ever matter is, are you saved or are you lost? The work that God's done in my life, and I am very open with you on this, I think you know this. But I could no longer be angry at someone that I was watching on the screen. And I had to disenfranchise myself from those who would try to make me angry.

Do you know what they just did?

No.

Oh, excuse me.

Let me try this. I want you to, in your mind, picture the person that you have the most disdain for in that arena. Maybe that's too much. Don't think about it too much. I want you to think about this. Whenever they talk, your blood started boiling. Have you ever thought about it like this? Jesus loves them. Jesus died for them. He doesn't love you more than them. I know you think that.

No, He loves them so much and He died for them. And you're attacking them and wishing ill upon them and talking stink about them and posting rubbish about them. You think that's pleasing to the Lord?

All of a sudden I went from being angry at them to feeling sorry for them. Because the realization, and this is the reality, there's coming a day very soon, soon and very soon, I

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

believe with all my heart, by the way, that if they don't know Jesus, they are going to plunge into these seven most horrific years in the history of mankind. And then after that, they are going to plummet into a Christ-less eternity in hell, forever and ever and ever.

And that changes everything. I feel sorry for them. They need Jesus. They need Jesus. I can't be angry. And didn't Jesus say, "pray for your enemies," those who speak evil of you, despitefully use you?

That's the 'what.' Do you know the 'why'? Because you can't stay angry at someone you're praying for. Or you might start off that way. In fact, the prayers are a little bit rough at first. You know, Lord, and it is even hard to come out of your mouth, but you're trying to pray God's b-l-e... b-l-l-essing on them. But there's no hurry, Lord. Let them suffer a little bit at first.

And then as time goes on, God starts changing your heart. Now you've got an investment in their soul and you're praying for them. So instead of being angry at them, you're praying for them. And don't be surprised when you hear one day that they gave their life to Christ, you're like, No!

Then you're like Jonah when all of Nineveh repented. He was so angry at God. Because he's sent to preach this message and he tries to run from God, you know, from – well, you know the story. This really happened. It's a sad commentary when you see movies make it seem like a, you know, fictional account. No, it really happened.

Jonah was swallowed up by a big fish, presumably a whale. And he was, you'll forgive the graphic nature of it, it's true to the text, he was barfed out on the beach of Nineveh. And he had been washed white from all the stomach acids. Bleached white. He comes out of there white. Okay.

Now watch this. The Ninevites worshiped a god that was half man, half fish. And so here comes this big fish and a man. And he doesn't offer a message of hope. There's no message of, hey, get saved before it's too late. No, he just says in 40 days, you guys are going to burn and I'm going to go over here, get a front row seat for it and pop popcorn. I can't wait.

And they're looking at this man coming out of this fish and going, this is God. And they repent. And Jonah's like, what's up with this? He's mad at God for their salvation.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Man, that's messed up. Anyway, I digress. Let's move on to the third one and the third part of *verse 1*. And this is super important. I mean, they all are, but this one in particular.

Righteousness is imputed. Again, very packed, just this one verse. And the importance of what Peter writes here cannot be overstated in the sense that he knew firsthand about Christ's imputed righteousness.

This word 'imputed,' don't get all hung up on it. It's an accounting term. It's credited to your account. Imputed righteousness has been imputed, credited to your account, which is in the rears by the way, especially when it comes of righteousness. Because, as Isaiah says, our own righteousness is as filthy rags.

Well, now here's Peter again. We got to keep in mind, 30 years later, God has done a mighty, profound work in this mighty man of God's life over the years. Because, see, the Peter that we read about in the gospels is very different than the Peter we read about in his epistles.

The Peter in the gospels, he's always trying to do everything in the energy of his own strength. I mean, after all, he's a strong-willed fisherman. Fisherman in that day, they were gruff, I mean, fisherman today are gruff. But back in that day, you were gruff, rough, tough and everything else that rhymes with that. I mean, you were just hardened. And then here comes Jesus. Follow Me; I'll make you fishers of men.

And here's Peter going – this gruff – if you can just picture it in your imagination, your God-given imagination, this gruff fisherman. These guys were so tough and strong willed, man, they just did it. I'm a fisherman. We're doing this. I'm going to make it happen in the energy of my own strength.

And here comes Jesus saying, you know, instead of trying, you need to be trusting. Now, here's where I'm going with this, and this is why righteousness being imputed is so important.

See if I'm trying to live my life, my Christian life this way where I'm trying – okay Lord, I blew it. I messed up. I'm going to try harder, and I'll pull myself up by the bootstraps. I'll make it happen and You'll see. And we make vows to God. God, that's it. I'll never do that again.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

I just picture God in heaven going, yes, you will.

It's oh, I'll try harder.

Try harder. You know what try harder means? That's flesh. That's the energy of the flesh. You're trying to live a righteous life in the energy of the flesh. It'll never happen. It's impossible. It will never happen. It has to be by the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling me. That's the only way I can live a holy life. It's not in my strength. It's not trying, it's trusting.

That's the hardest thing for Peters, isn't it? And you know who you are. I won't look at you or point. I've got to be careful whenever I do this because people say, you're pointing at me. No, I'll just do this then. How about that, Yeah? You know who you are Peter, Simon Peter. This goes against everything. I mean, you chafe, your sin nature, the flesh just chafes at this. Because you're after all, a self-made man.

Oh, really?

No, I'm not a self-made man. I'm the man that God made me to be: Christlike. So what is required to leave the arena of trying and enter the arena of trusting? In a word, 'surrender.' Surrender. And that's hard for Peters. Okay, I'm speaking for myself. I'll take one for the team. I identify with Peter. I have all my life, all my Christian life, and I still do to this day.

I'll confess, this is a real struggle for me because I'm just wired this way. You just get in there and you make it happen and you're going to try as hard as you can to make it work. And I just picture the Lord going, okay, I'm not going to force Myself on you, but I'll be here when, not if, you fail and falter in the energy of your own strength.

When are you just going to trust Me instead of trying to do it yourself? Because you'll always fail, you'll always fall.

See, here's how it works. When I come to the realization that it's not my righteousness, it's not me living a righteous life. We talked about this in the communion service on Thursday night. It's a very powerful principle that can really change your Christian life.

See, here's what we do with our Christian lives. We live with this merit-based relationship with Jesus. So what does that look like? Okay, so you had kind of a bad day and you really blew it. Don't tell anybody.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

And then the guilt, you know, setting in and the enemy is right there heaping condemnation on you.

Man, I don't know, after this one. You even told the Lord you would never do that again. I'd lay low if I were you for a while. I wouldn't go to church either. I mean, if the person sitting next to you knew.

Don't look at the person sitting next to you.

But if they knew what you did. You call yourself a Christian.

I know, I know! Okay, I'll try harder.

No.

And so we think that because we've failed, we've sinned. This is unrighteousness that God's going to be like, okay, you're going to have to pay for that one. And you're just waiting for the other shoe to drop, but it never drops.

Why?

Grace.

Instead of the other shoe dropping – because that other shoe dropped on Jesus on that cross, and He paid for it in full. So **“there is therefore now no condemnation for those of us that are in Christ Jesus,”** no guilt either.

See, Satan doesn't want us to know that or live like that because as long as he can keep us crushed under the weight of guilt and condemnation, he's got us. And we need to live no longer in that state than it takes to get to the cross where that was paid for.

And I need to be reminded of this and Peter is reminding them of this, and he's got the right to talk about this because he lived like this, this merit-based relationship with the Lord.

Okay, let's go back to Caesarea Philippi For those of you that have been to Israel with us, it's a very demonic place, The Pan God, where we get the word 'panic.' It was the gates of Hades. It's the most evil place.

And Jesus takes His disciples there, and while there, asked them the question of **“Who do you say that I am?”** And only Peter, of course, gets the answer right and says, **“You are the**

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Christ, the Son of a living God.” And Jesus says to Peter, Good answer, Peter, Simon Bar-Jonah.

And then He says, Upon the rock of this profession, I'm going to build My church and the gates of Hades ...

That's what they called this place at Caesarea Philippi, the gates of hell, the gates of Hades. And it will not prevail against the church because of that.

So he's like, Hey, guys, do you hear that? You guys are all like, (Goofy sounds) Who do you say that I am? (Goofy sounds) Leave it to me. I've got the right answer. Peter.

Well just go a few verses down further. And Peter, just full of himself now, thinking, man I... Jesus starts talking about going to the cross. And what's *Peter's* response? over my dead body.

I mean, that's a loose paraphrase. What does Jesus say to Peter? “Get thee behind Me, Satan.”

Wait, what? I have got whiplash here. You just got done saying, “**Simon Bar-Jonah, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but the Holy Spirit.**” And now “**get thee behind me, Satan**”? How did you go from that to that?

He can speak to this. It's not the energy of your own strength. It's not your own righteousness. It's Christ's imputed righteousness.

The fourth one in the fourth part of *verse 1*. And again, can be easily missed at first read. And this is another reason why we're only taking this one verse. But notice that Peter writes ‘**God**’ before He writes ‘**Savior.**’

Why?

Here's the why question again. Why? Because, think about this. Jesus has to first be our God before Jesus can be our Savior. Now, how does that apply when I'm really down and discouraged? Okay.

Answer: You have a personal relationship with God. You have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. But you know God personally.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Now, think about this. The God who created the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is, well, He knows you, too. You know how he dropped names? Yeah, I know so-and-so.

Oh, do you really? Wow. I know people in high places. Oh, yeah, that's nothing. I know the Most High. How about that? Personally, I can – You know how we talk about. Hey, I can. I've got their number. I can call them any time I want, and I know them that well.

Oh, really? Well, that's nothing. I have a direct line to the God who created the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is, the God of the universe, the Most High God. And I can call on Him anytime about anything, and I don't get voicemail. He picks up every time. In fact, He doesn't even let it ring. He already knows I'm going to call, so He'll always answer when I call. And I'm kind of down and I need Him to lift me up.

But we don't do that, do we? We call everyone but Him. He's the last one on our list. Oh, no! I better call so-and-so and God is going, call Me. In fact, if you call them, I promise you it's going to make it worse. And so we call them or him or her. But we don't call the Lord.

And when we call upon the Lord He will answer, when we call. And it doesn't even ring one time. He already knows we're going to call.

And as soon as we call: Hi, JD.

Oh, You didn't even let it ring.

I know.

You know I was going to call?

I'm all-knowing. I'm God. I knew you were going to call before you were born, by the way, but that's too much to wrap your mind around. I'm glad you called. What do you need?

I need You, Jesus. I'm here. I'm kind of discouraged, Lord. I'm really struggling.

I know, I know.

I'm really down, Lord.

I know. I'm going to lift you up. You called Me up; I'm going to lift you up.

That's what this means. That's the 'why' behind the 'what.'

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Here's Peter, now again, let's rewind when he was 30 plus years, whatever, younger. He knew personally, intimately, God in the flesh. He walked with Him. He talked with Him. He laughed with Him. He cried with Him. He prayed with Him. And he also slept when he should have been praying with Him. He knew God.

What was your problem again? What are you so worried about again? You mean God Most High. He's your God. You know Him. You have a personal relationship with Him. You have unfettered access to Him. What is what? You can call upon Him any time.

Last one. Faith in Jesus is precious.

Now, here again, first read, you're like, okay, it is precious. But no, there's a reason why Peter writes this this way. Actually, *Peter's* kind of fond of the word 'precious,' and it's evidenced by his repeated use of it. In his first letter, he refers to the blood of Christ as precious, "the precious blood of Christ."

And in *Chapter 2*, he refers to Jesus, the chief cornerstone as precious, the precious chief cornerstone, precious. Then here in *verse 1* of his second letter, he refers to our faith as precious, it's this precious faith that is ours.

And then when we get to *verse 4*, maybe next week, Lord willing, no promises. We'll see. In *verse 4*, he refers to God's promises as precious. Do you get the impression that he likes the word 'precious'? Do you want to know why?

Well, the answer to the question of why is because of the meaning of this word precious in the original. I'm going to ask you to use your God-given ability to reason, your God-given intellect, because God's given you a profound intellect. I want you to use that God-given intellect.

The word 'precious' carries with it the idea of incalculable, invaluable worth. Its worth is beyond anyone's ability to even begin to comprehend. That's what that word means. So let's take that understanding and superimpose it on the context in which he repeatedly uses this word.

Does that describe Jesus? Incalculable, unfathomable, worth. The precious cornerstone.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

In the context of our study today, our faith is of incalculable. I've asked this question before. I think it's appropriate to ask it again.

The question is this: What is the most valuable thing you possess?

Now if your mind immediately goes to some material possession, well, the most valuable thing I possess is my home or whatever it is, my investments. It's not. In fact, it could be argued from the Scriptures that it's actually worthless, worth less, worthless.

The most valuable possession you have as a Christian is eternal life.

So here you are. You sit here today or you're watching online, and you've lost your job. You've lost everything. You haven't lost the most valuable thing you possess. Yeah, you're down because of what you've lost. You lost your job, you've lost your income, you've lost your savings, you've lost your investments. Maybe you've lost a loved one. You haven't lost the most valuable possession you have.

Does that help put it into perspective?

I was just talking with a precious sister. Precious sister. (Chuckle) Next time you use that, you'll never use that word the same again now, right? Neither will I. That's a good thing.

But precious sister talking about her son going home to be with the Lord, 40-some-years old and cancer. And I just oh, you know, oh, how painful is that?

And I was just sharing with her, you know, the apostle Paul writing to the Thessalonians said, **"We still grieve."** It's very healthy to grieve. But when we grieve, we don't grieve as those without hope, because we have the blessed hope. It's the most valuable possession we have.

The hope of glory, the hope of eternal life, the hope that soon and very soon, that trumpet's going to sound, man. And the dead in Christ are going to rise first. **"And we who are alive and remain are going to be caught up to meet them and the Lord in the air and forever be with the Lord."**

And oh, we also get our glorified eternal bodies. That alone, that alone. I can't wait. That's the most valuable, precious possession I have. Lift up your head. Lift up your head. Strengthen those feeble knees.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

Do you know – we talk about, you know, the inheritance. You know, I've got an inheritance. Do you know what your inheritance is? I mean, you might talk about a trust fund. I mean, I'm telling you, you – it – I have no words. That's a miracle unto itself. I have no words. It is beyond description. It is beyond comprehension.

And that should snap us back, shouldn't it? Because we get so earthly minded, we're of no heavenly good. You like how I switched that around? As you've heard it said, Mark Twain was the one who famously, I should say, infamously said it, "Christians can be so heavenly minded, they're of no earthly good."

It's the opposite. The more heavenly minded I am, the more earthly good I'll be, and it will be because my mind is stayed on thee. And Isaiah says, **"he will keep him in perfect [can I say precious] peace those whose mind is stayed on Him."**

Get your eyes off of that situation in your life. Stop looking at it. The longer you look at it, the bigger it gets, right? Get your eyes off of that; put your eyes on the Lord. Do they call that an attitude adjustment?

Did we talk about this last week? It's pretty bad when the pastor doesn't remember the sermon he preached the week prior. The more you look at it, the bigger it gets and the less you look at God, the smaller He gets.

And conversely, the less you look at that and the more you look at Him, the bigger He gets and the smaller that gets. Because He's God and you possess the most valuable possession that you could ever possess: Eternal life!

Get your eyes off of the temporal life, because if you keep looking at the temporal, you're going down. It won't be long. You're going down. No wonder you're so down.

Okay, I'll close with this corny, dorky saying. I love dork. I have the gift of dork. But you've heard this before. Here is a reminder. This is the saying. It goes like this: If your eyes are on others, you're distressed. If your eyes are on yourself, you're depressed. But if your eyes are on Jesus, you're blessed.

That is so true. I know it's dorky, but isn't that true?

You know, look within.

2 Peter 1
Jesus Lifts You Up When You're Down
J.D. Farag

No, don't look within. You're going down if you do because it's pretty ugly in there.

Okay, well, I'll look at them.

No, don't do that. That's even worse. No. Look at Him. Look at Him.

Why don't you stand. Kaponono, come on up. We'll close in prayer.

Thank You Lord, so much. Oh, Lord, so much here. And again, it's a few loaves and fish, but as only You can, You can take and multiply it, break it, blessed in that order, and then feed us with it to the full.

So Lord, would You do that now? Take it from here by the Holy Spirit. Again, especially for those who are struggling and hurting, down, discouraged, Lord, just lift them up. Remind them, remind them. Thank You Lord, for this reminder.

Thank You for Peter. Man, we love Peter so much. Can't wait to meet him in glory. Thank You Lord, for inspiring him to write this second letter. We're so excited to see what's ahead in this letter. In Jesus' name, amen.