

The Precious Blood Of Christ

Embracing Humility to Avoid Presumption and Grow in Christ

I've been preaching from First Peter, and I realize I'm not going to try to cover from the beginning that I started this series, but this is a good place to kind of see where we're at with what Peter has been wanting us to know. To understand that God has a purpose for everything in our lives. He never gets things wrong. He always provides. We were just singing a hymn about being strong in the Lord. He equips us to be strong in him. And if we just take what he tells us and keep it to our minds and really trust that he will come through, not in our timing but in his timing, we save ourselves a lot of heartache, a lot of problems. And you know where we're going to tonight, Paul's going to get real personal. He's going to get real personal, and I'm going to unfold some of the things that his experiences were when Christ was with him on earth. And so the words I'm going to share, in many ways, it's Peter's testimony. We're going to go to the place of Peter's testimony, and all the things that he has provided in his letter is for our good. He wants us to know how God, how good God is through his letter. He wants us to know how much he wants us to be like him. Let me just put it out there. Many of us don't want to be like our fathers, especially if it came from a broken home. It's hard. I've dealt with it.

And with that, there is this dynamic that goes on in our lives where we know God is there. We may not physically see him, but we know he's there because in the way he provides. Do we really need to be physically present with him to provide? Absolutely not. Many times our physical fathers were present, but they never did provide. And so we are disappointed. It's a disappointment. But in contrast to God, every time God moves, every time he provides, we are never disappointed. Amen. So we're going to look at the life of Peter, what he has experienced in his life with Christ and with Christ resurrected, and his life still on earth, and what he remembers in his old age, because he's writing this now at his old age, and he's reflecting. These are the things I want my brothers and sisters to know because I personally experienced these things in my life, and I know it is true. And with, if you have that in your heart, God's going to bless this message, I believe it. I believe he will bless this message if you prepare your hearts.

So last Sunday, I spoke on verses 14-16, and these verses, and you can make your way there to First Peter, verse 14, I started with verse 13, my apologies, verse 13, the idea, that's a transitional verse that everything before it, these are the results. I ended my sermon with faith, love, and hope, right, and then faithfulness, obedience, and love are the results. So just wanted to pick out some of the things. Knowing all the things that he said in verse 13 leading up to verse 13, prepare your heart, prepare your mind, apologies, prepare your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now, I touched on this a couple weeks ago about how grace is, it's given to us, God, the way he gives things is through

unmerited favor. He doesn't ask for anything from us. He doesn't need anything. He is the one that owns everything, right? He doesn't need anything from us. So he wants to give. And we looked at passages such as in verse 10 about how the prophets, they inquired, dig diligently, they searched of the grace that should come unto you. All of that was for us in this present time. They didn't get to see the first coming of Christ, remember that. It was all prepared for us here, for us on the other side of Christ's first coming. And then I shared about verse 12, another point, where it says, unto us, what was it that the gospel was presented unto us. That you see that repeatedly with now reported unto us, preaching the gospel unto you. And then now, this is the fifth unto you, I didn't get to mention this last week, but it's found in verse 13, that the grace that is to be brought unto you. That's the fifth occurrence of that phrase, unto you. So we're supposed to receive what he presents to us through people, through the preaching of the gospel, and grace.

Now, as obedient children in verse 14, there are contrasts. I shared how this is our former life, how Peter puts it, and then our new life, some of the stuff, fashioning yourselves, not fashioning yourselves, right, and then now you are girding up your mind, you were formerly ignorant, now you're not ignorant, things of that sort. And then at verse 16, I mentioned about how the importance of, it is written. Now this is important, because when something says, it is written, it means it's not going to change. We should, we should, we should feel confident because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, right? We know that, it's immutable. So when he says, it is written, it's done. It's sealed, as it were. And I mentioned about in Leviticus 11:44, where holiness appears, how it is talking about purity and cleanness. But it's also, the reason is to remove ourselves from corruption and death, instead to provide us life. Life. And so God wants us to live with him forever and ever in his holiness. That's the end, the end point is to become like the Lord Jesus Christ, to image him, and he's doing that unto our lives. So that's just a brief summary of where we have arrived.

Let's now go into verse 17. We're going to touch verses 17 and, Lord willing, all the way to verse 21. So if you can, please follow along with me as I read verse 17. 17 says, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." All right, we need to contrast this with verse 15. In verse 15, we see that he is the one that hath called us. Now in verse 17, it's we are calling upon the Father. It's a dynamic relationship. He calls us, and we call unto him. So this is where we're going to go. What are we to anticipate when we call upon the Father, what are the things that we should think about when we think about the Father? Well, there's two aspects of God's character. Number one, he is our Father. If you are a believer in this room, you can call him Father. He is your Father. There's a paternal relationship aspect to it. Father, child. Next is a judge. He's a judge. Father and judge. That's his twofold characteristics.

So look with me with the part where it says, who without respect of persons. Now Peter spoke on this in Acts 10:34. He said this back then when he was younger. So he's not saying something that's new. He's saying something that he has said in the past. There you will find that he has said, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. And what is

this idea of no respect of persons? It means impartiality. No favoritism with God. There's no favorite child according to God. He looks at us the same in this way. I want you to imagine, many of us have flown in airplanes, a very high elevation. You'll notice if you are sitting at the window seat, and you look down, and you look at the mountains, and you look at them, and they look even. They look pretty uniform, but when, as soon as you're on the ground, and you look up, they look big, don't they? Now imagine now with God. And Isaiah 57:15 says this, that he resides in the high and holy place. So I gave you the illustration of that airplane scenario. Now this is not 30,000 feet. This is beyond our comprehension of height. He is so high and so holy that none of us sinners can reach that height. And think about him, his viewpoint. Looking at us, we're like completely flat. That's what impartiality looks like. He doesn't see the way we see things of status. Oh, you know, I have this many people that like me. He doesn't care anything about that. Nor does he care about reputation. He doesn't care if you're an honorable person or a not honorable person. Yes, those are good characteristics in and of itself, but he doesn't look at us in that way. He's impartial to how we compare ourselves. It's all important to see how he sees us as a judge.

And let me just say, that's important to understand, because in one side, with this verse, is that it's serious. It's reverent. It's okay. He's going to examine me the way it is. There's nothing hidden from his eyes. We know he sees all truth. He sees us every time, every moment. Whereas we, as humans, we're not privy to that. So in one sense, that's serious, reverent, but on another side is that it offers a blessing. It comforts us, knowing that God assesses truthfully. He's impartial. That should bring you comfort. That should bring you comfort because he assesses the whole truth. He assesses everything of our lives, not just parts of our lives. Only he knows everything. So now let's consider, judges according to every man's work. Let me ask you, do you really grasp every fleeting act of impatience, every worldly thought, every subtle pang of pride, every evil desire, whether momentary or persistent, and do you realize that God knows all those things, and do you know that he has already judged them? He doesn't need time, because he's perfect. He's all-knowing. He doesn't need to assess the situation. He already knows everything. So he's already, with the moment you have the thought, it's already judged. This is God. So he assesses it, whether good or bad, good fruit or bad fruit, the value of it, positive or negative impact on your life, your character. And then he has already initiated the consequence, the principle, sowing and reaping. See, the sowing and reaping principle follows along with impartial judge. He doesn't say, "Oh, oh, no, you're good. You don't have to deserve the consequences." No, no, no. The sowing and reaping principle follows for every single person here. What you sow, you will reap. And he will allow the consequences play out.

So with understanding of that, there is a danger of misinterpretation that there isn't going to be judgment for Christians. There's two judgments. There is a white throne judgment for the lost, and there is a judgment for Christians, the judgment. And he's going to assess the good and the bad. And many people have ruined their lives thinking, "Oh, I'm a Christian, I can just, God is my Father, but he's not really my judge. Oh, he's not really assessing my life." No. Says in the text, "Who without respect of persons judgeth?" He's talking to Christians. There's some passages that I'm still trying to

understand, but let me just share some of them. 1 Corinthians 3:15 says this, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Contrast that with Ephesians 4:13, says this, "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." So on one side, he's barely making it, on another side, he is full in who, in Christ. And as a pastor, that's one of my things that I have, I am called to do. I am here to make you experience the fullness of Christ. If you're not there yet, we're all getting there. But there is that way of that we are going to be judged one way or the other.

And so, going back to the facets of God's character, and as a child of God, as we call upon him, and we can trust him, we can rely upon him. He is a good Father. But we must not eliminate a healthy fear of God as judge. Let's not eliminate the healthy fear of God as judge. Now look with me, the word work. Notice that it doesn't say works. This is very important that it's not in the plural. So he says, Peter says, the Father judgeth according to every man's work. Why does this apostle put it this way? In a sense, he's saying that it's not all your separate actions, your works, that God's going to judge, okay? He's going to gather everything as a whole, all of our actions, and then he's going to assess it through how you did things in your heart. Was it for him, for Christ, or was it done in ourselves, in our flesh? So how we think about things, and how we produce things in our lives, was it Christ-centered or not? Because we're still wrestling with our flesh, aren't we? And he's going to see the trend. Is it, is it going overall this way, or is it going down this way? And as a good Father, he's not going to want us to go down this way. So, saved by fire. There, that, there's that verse. Some people are going to be gone because they're just trending that direction. God wants to save their life as if it were a fire. And so, God sees things in its overall totality. We can't see the whole thing. We're not there yet, are we? But we can see ourselves right now. Where are you, where are you trending, Christian? Where are you trending? Because my goal is that you trend overall in the fullness of Christ.

All right, let's look at, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Now I'm going to go where I talked in my introduction about, we're going to look at Peter's life. We're going to look at Peter's life here. This is important, this verse. Of course, all the verses are important, but this is the part where I'm going to share about Peter's life, because what we see here is verse eight and nine, the contrast, right, the joy unspeakable, I talked about that, I talked about the full of glory in those verses. I commented on those verses. So those are the heights. Can you look at them as heights? Those are the things that we're going to experience. But now Peter comes back onto earth in this verse, and he says, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. In your mind, you might think, why should I fear? It's important to know what kind of fear, and I will explain that. It's not kind of a fear where you're tormented all the time. Oh my gosh, am I going to do this right, or am I going to do this wrong? Oh my gosh, like, that's not the kind of fear. It's not a tormenting fear. It's on you. Nor is it the kind of where it says the fear of God. There are scripture verses for that. But it's the kind of fear, and you'll get, you'll understand this, I share more of it, is the fear of succumbing to sin. The succumbing to sin, recognizing our own vulnerabilities, our own weakness, and the pervasive temptations that surround us all around us. That kind of fear. And you can sum it up with this word called

presumptuousness. What is presumptuousness? It's sins committed with deliberate intent or arrogance or a disregard of God altogether. That is the wanting to have fear in this world while you are passing by.

If you can rightly understand this, here in this life, what am I here for? And then, that I miss the opportunity that God has purposed in my life here, if I miss those things. What is going to happen, what is my outcome, what are the consequences of not knowing why I'm here, what is my purpose here, what is God wanting me to do in this season of my life, in this season of my life, in this season of my, and so on and so on. That's the kind of fear, you see. It's, it's, it's an idea of preparation. If you understood in verse 13, girding up your mind. It's that kind of preparation that we go into different parts of our lives, and we don't just fall in, oh, my life is falling apart. We don't do that. We assess it and look back and go, okay, what is going on here, what is God trying to teach me, because he wants me to learn something from here. Is it coming from the flesh, or coming from the Lord? He wants to see our response. So there's a contrast to that. And think about this. If we can just hone in on this word fear, it takes away all other kind of fear. Do you understand what I'm saying? It takes away all the other kind of fears that you shouldn't be afraid of. But there's a certain kind of fear you should be honed in on. So the way to contrast this is, don't fear everything. Just fear the thing that God says to fear. That's how you prepare your heart. That's how you prepare your mind. It's not this slavish dread, nor is it cowardice, but it's a well-grounded emotion. Yes, it is an emotion that we are to live with confidence, knowing that God has prepared everything ahead of time. Do you believe that? Do you believe that everything has been prepared for your life already, ahead of time, before the foundation of the world? He already knows. He already knows us.

So why do we go boldly, why do we presume things? With understanding that he knows everything, why do we fall into underestimating our own weakness and the power of fear in our lives? This is one area that we are going to be confronted with all the time. So I want us, I want us to get this right. And if you already know this, amen. But it's good to be reminded what's important to God. All right. Do you not agree that Peter's own presumptuous experiences taught him the humility behind this advice? That is a rhetorical question. Yes. Isn't it amazing grace that it came from all people, Peter, the man who said in Matthew 26, he said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." This is when Jesus said that it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. So, I'm not going to, I'm not going to, I'm not going to flee, but it's written, it's going to happen. And then Peter says, "No, I'm not going to be offended, I, I won't, I won't leave you." That's one instance. John 13:36-38, why cannot I follow thee now, though the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. This is in the context that Simon Peter said unto the Lord, where thou goest, Jesus answered him, whether I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said to him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, "That very night." You think you're going to lay down your life for my sake? That very night, verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Another instance, Matthew 14:28, Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me to come unto thee on

the water. I want to be the first one to get out of the boat, so I can walk unto you." It's that scene in the boat in the water, and what does he do? He drops. He fails right away.

Now look at Matthew 16:21-23. Peter says, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." This is in the context of Jesus was shown unto the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." But he turned, Jesus turned, and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." And then, lastly, the last instance I'm going to share, the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus told him and the two other disciples to pray with him. Three times he failed. And in the scene where the men come, he takes out his sword, his dagger, and he slashes the centurion's ear. Not acting with discernment, mind you. But now, in this quiet old age, writing this letter, he has learned many failures, many foolish actions, sins upon sins. But here it is. He repented. He repented. That made all the difference in his life, didn't it? So he's saying, "Look, remember me when I did not take this admonishment seriously. Remember me when I was presumptuous. Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. If I had known myself better, I would have been more afraid of my own weakness and the power of fear within me, and I would have steered clear of the foolishness. And I'm talking to you, those that are reading this, that you will make a shipwreck, that you will keep your faithfulness intact." Isn't that good, isn't that good that Peter is sharing this truth with us?

Because he was restored in John 21:15 and 19. When he was out, when he denied him three times at this point, Jesus arrived and restored him on this. Do you love me, three times. Three denials, three love statements. Do you love me, and a third time he said, you know all things. That shows that he knew, finally, who God is. That's it. You know all things. When I'm praying, and I'm going through all sorts of trials, Lord, you know all things. You know all things. You know I love you. You know I need you in this moment. That's the kind of, I think, Peter's response. You know all things, Lord. You know I've been trying, I've been trying, I've been trying, I don't know. You know. And then, and Jesus responds, "Go feed my sheep, be the leader that I've called you to be. Go feed my flock." And so he's doing this right here. Do you see the connection? It's beautiful. This is the way we need to be restored over and over again. We need to experience his love. He's ready to forgive us. He just doesn't want us to live this life carelessly. And he does it for us to remember the life of Peter.

Proverbs 28:14 says this, "Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." Those are wise words, aren't they? Those are wise words. Now, there's a lot of contrasting going on here. So I want you to again observe with me verse 8 and 9, where the words joy unspeakable and full of glory. And then we lay flat on earth, and we see to fear, these, but these two contrast, they help one another in this way. It's a word called courage. It's a word called courage. If you leave the two extremes and go with one and not the other, while on this earth, it will be failure after failure. But when you put those two together, you will have the courage of Peter in

his old age, and your life will show it. Wouldn't you want a courageous life? Wouldn't you want to go through the things that you were here for, to go into, but now you know? Now you know that it's important to have it. You're not going to escape it, but you have to pass this life with it.

Jesus said it so plainly, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." The thing to fear, again, it says, I mentioned, is that we just fall carelessly into sin. The worst thing that we can do, one of the worst things, is sin against God. That martyrs, for example, would rather die than sin against God. Do we, do we have that kind of reality in our own lives, where we don't, we're not concerned about our bodies anymore, but we are concerned about how God sees us more? See the different dynamics of fear happening that Jesus shares with us. One more, last comment on passing the time of your sojourning here. You should treat this place that we call our home, treat it like a foreign land, because it's not our primary residence. You are passing through it. You are passing through it. That's what is, by definition. It's a temporary residence. This is your temporary residence. It's a good reminder for us that takes up a lot of our hardships when we hold on to things in this life. The way God deals with that. Sometimes it's not easy, especially in this part of the world, where we get so many blessings, where we can hoard a lot of things, and we can start thinking like, this is our home. No, it's not. No, it's not. You are just passing the time of your sojourning here.

So that's one way. Secondly, the analogy of military, a military term. A competent commander will send out his scouts ahead of time, so that people won't attack from the side, because typically, the sides are the most vulnerable. So what does that mean? Don't just be focused on just one thing, meaning, focus that, oh God, I mean, I'm going to be attacked here, so I'm just going to look here. No, you're being attacked all around. You're being attacked all around. And this sense of, I'm here temporarily, helps you to be on that edge, as it were. You know what I'm saying? Like, you're not here, so I realize it's not my place. I should be mindful of this foreign country that I am in. Everything I'm looking at, I should look at it with these fresh eyes that, in many ways, we're on the other side, as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are being attacked. Whether you feel like it or not, you are being attacked. So it's important for us to see the enemies of God that are attacking you on a daily basis. And one of the ways is, it's right there. This is your home. This is your home. Enjoy it. Enjoy everything that you have here. Just take it all on. That's how our enemy attacks. And it happens in various forms, doesn't it? So just be mindful of that. Be mindful of that, when you're vigilant this way. When you're sojourning, this is a way of, as it were, putting your armor on. You'll never remove it until you're on the other side. Until here, you are here. This is very important to understand, of how we are to be circumspect in many ways, of how it can be so easy to just settle for just the minimum. I don't want you to settle for the, I hope you don't want to settle for the minimum. I hope you are desiring greater things that God wants to show you. But he can't do it if you're holding on to this life and expecting the other. You've got to drop this part of life. It's, it's literally, that's what he's asking for. Like, just be thinking about me. I'm all-important. This is my character. I'm your Father. You can come to me. I judge correctly. Don't worry. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

And you will, you will walk circumspectly. I'm going to stay here. I thought I was going to be able to go through verse 18, but I think this was necessary, at least for me. I sense the heaviness of my call, and I think a big part is, if I don't prepare well, how do I expect you to prepare well? It's a great responsibility. I hope we take these responsibilities seriously, 'cause until we live in this sinful body, until we still continue with the tendencies of all the pervasive temptations that come with us in this life, our bond to our Lord is all-important. And the way to do that is to have this kind of godly fear, to walk free, and not to walk freely in this land, thinking that there's peace here. I know everybody wants peace, but the true kind of peace that God offers is not offered anything else except in the Lord Jesus Christ. So rest in him. Ultimately, he is the one that's protecting you. Ultimately, it's, when you, in him, you are in him, you are in true safety. He's going to carry you through from this life to the life to come. So keep that in your memory. Keep that in your hearts. Reflect on the life of Peter. Learn from him. That's what he wants us to know. And may the Lord bless you as you continue to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, the capacity that he has given to you, and may others see the need for Christ as well.

I speak to you that are lost, that are on the other side of what we are dealing with as Christians, that you have lived a careless life, that you just see this life as the only life there is. So you're just enjoying every pleasure of this life, not knowing there is going to be a judgment for you, and it's a fearful judgment. The kind of likes that, I want to tell you, don't go there. Don't go there. Don't resist Christ when he's calling you, when he has made himself available to you to be saved from his wrath, from his judgment, saved from your sin, changes your heart, so you can be an obedient child of God, where you can take on these instructions, whereas before, you couldn't. That is what I will be praying for. So let's pray now. Father, thank you so much for this time. I thank you, Lord, for just every word that we got to read. God, there's just so much more that I wanted to share. But Father, with what was presented, I pray, God, keep it in each and every one of our minds and our hearts, that we will not be presumptuous as brothers and sisters in Christ, that we would see, God, there's just so much more we have in Christ, but there are things that we have to let go of in this world. Show each and every one, Father, what it is that they need to let go of. If you have already done so, Lord, continue to have mercy and grace upon them. God, I want them to experience the fullness of Christ, as we read in Ephesians, that they may become in maturity of Christ. Bless them in this way. And Father, continue to work on the lost in our church. Continue to work on their hearts. God, help them to have the godly sort that worketh unto repentance. Help them to repent. Help them to turn from their ways. Turn to the way, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Lord, I pray that thou would, thou would do this amazing work that only you can do in your sovereign will. Bless to this end. Well, thank you, in Jesus' name, Amen. All right.