

## **1Peter 10-12-10a**

This is Friday, the 10th of December, 2010. We are in the book of 1 Peter, chapter 1, and we resume at verse 13. We'll take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, focus our concentration, and ensure that God the Holy Spirit will be able to superintend and exercise His manifest blessings upon us, both in the delivery and in the reception of the message.

Shall we pray? Father, we express our gratitude and our appreciation for the many ways that You have provided for us and blessed us in these past days and in these recent hours. We thank You for Your watch care over us, the perfect plan that brings to us challenges as well as opportunities and the amenities that make our lives enjoyable. We thank You for fellowship.

We thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus and for the life that we have in Him and through Him. And we pray that as we study Your Word together this evening, we will find in it those truths that will help us to appreciate those aspects of our lives even more, to more fully exploit the grace that You have given to us and that we can more completely reflect Your glory. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. The book of 1 Peter, the letter that we are examining tonight, is a missive that was sent out to people who were in tough circumstances. We know this.

We've reviewed it. And yet, as he has been addressing these people, he has continually told them that they are in a good place, that this is a good thing. And it isn't just eyewash.

It's not the power of positive thinking. Peter is communicating to them, as an apostle, truth that pertains to them. And we've tried to get a grip on this for ourselves because these were written for us as much as it was for them.

Our circumstances are slightly different, but the principles are the same. Whatever it is we face, whether it's good or whether it's bad, whether it's easy or whether it's hard, God has a purpose in it. And this is a wonderful thing.

As you know, I spend time dialoguing. As you know, I really hate making verbs out of nouns, but people spend time dialoguing now. They dialogue with one another, which is a verb noun.

But we talk with people of the atheist persuasion, of the secular humanist, materialist, godless, heathen, science-loving persuasion. And the inevitable place that you end up when you go down that road is hopeless. Everything that happens.

Somebody told me today, they said, you've got to be grateful for what science has done in bringing us all these modern conveniences. You've got to be thanking scientists for their work. Science is a wonderful system.

All this peer review and all this stuff. You've got to be thankful that scientists do what they do

because look at all these benefits. If I were truly invested in that system, I wouldn't be thankful at all.

I wouldn't thank a scientist for what he does any more than I'd thank a monkey for having a tail or thank a pig for making bacon. He can't help it. Way back when the Big Bang happened and all those atoms and molecules started scattering and forming and clouds of dust.

It's like breaking the pool balls. Rear the cue back. Let fly with the cue ball.

And it all just happens and bounces. It's happenstance. Any scientist that produces anything, he can't help it.

He's a product of forces beyond his control. He's just doing what he had to do because it was all predestined by the roll of the dice and the fall of the molecules. He could not have done any different.

It's fatalistic. It's nihilistic. It's hopeless.

It has no purpose. If there's no purpose, if there's no God, if there's no spirituality, if there's nothing beyond the material, you're wasting your time living your life. You're going to live.

You're going to breathe. You're going to do some stuff. And you're going to wink out.

And you're not going to have any consciousness that you were ever here. And you say, well, but I can make a mark. I can leave behind a monument to myself.

That makes no difference. What good is it to you? What good is it to any dead person? Andrew Carnegie. He lived.

He made a bunch of money. He endowed a bunch of things. He's got the Carnegie Mellon thing going.

What does he care? He's dead. He doesn't know. Doesn't do him any good.

He's no different than the yard I mowed last year. All of that grass that I chopped and it withered and died and went back in the ground. Those blades of grass.

Who knows and who cares? It's a hopeless, purposeless view of life. And Satan loves to sow those seeds. He loves to get people in that mode because if there's no purpose and there's no point, you know what it makes you do? Well, then I'm going to get mine while I'm here.

I'm conscious today and so I'm going to live for myself. I am my own God. I'm going to have a plan and I'm going to have my purpose and my purpose is to make myself feel as good as possible for as long as possible and really, if you push it to its logical extreme, I don't care who gets hurt in the process.

I can make promises today and I can break them tomorrow because I'm out for what pleases me. And maybe I'm in love with my wife today and maybe I'm in love with my secretary tomorrow and maybe I'm in love with a hooker the day after that. It doesn't matter.

I feel good and whatever feels good, do it. And that's really your only purpose. And well, this is what the animals do.

Animals eat when they're hungry. They sleep when they're tired. There's no higher purpose.

There's no design that they can appreciate or enter into. And this negates and obviates and dead-ends human interest and human investment in the actual reality of spiritual things. And it is Satan's favorite ploy and it has been thus for centuries.

Well, Peter is talking to Jews that have been scattered and dispersed out into pagan cultures, cultures that if they have a religion, it's a pantheon of capricious gods. This is what Israel has faced from the beginning. They faced it when they were slaves in Egypt.

They faced it when they went out into the wilderness. They faced it when they went into the land of Canaan. What is the alternative to belief in the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? What's the alternative? It's the world.

It's mechanistic. It's I'll do whatever I can to get by. And most of these religions are largely human to human.

We say, oh yes, we're worshiping Jupiter or we're having a bacchanalia or we're worshiping Ashtar or whatever. But there's not really an investment. There's not really a deep belief that there's an actual God up there.

It's a fraternity. It's a society. It's like some of the fraternities and societies you have now where it's really kind of a good old boy thing where you and I are in and we'll help each other and we're all members of the same club.

And there was no real deep belief. And when there was, it was often demon incited. Well, this is what Peter is preaching into.

And believe me when I tell you today is as virulent and as aggressive an opposition to your Christian faith as any time in human history. There is as great an opposition, as active a plan to undercut and undermine and chip away at your faith in the God of the Bible as there has ever been in history. Why? Because the time of the end is drawing near.

There's not much time left for Satan to play his cards, to make his case. And he is frantically trying to get believers destabilized, to question their faith, to not practice biblical faith, practice anything else. There are pseudo-Christianities.

There are pseudo-biblicities. There's the Bible that's not the Bible. Let's retranslate it.

Let's re-genderfy it. Let's re-interpret it. Let's make it say what it didn't used to say.

Let's undercut its truth. Let's chip away at its foundations because the more you can discredit the Bible, the more you can discredit Christian faith, biblical faith, because our information comes from the Bible. And if it's not trustworthy, then our faith is futile.

Well, there is an inevitable question that arises. And that is, if we are thinking human beings and we're educated and we're aware of all of the knowledge and information that modern investigation, modern man has gained, how can we still hold to a biblical faith? Hasn't science proven that the earth is not 6,000 years old and animals didn't originate just a few millennia ago and that they've been around a lot longer? And it's just, isn't God just the God of the gaps? Well, we've addressed some of these things before, but rather than try to refute science on science's ground, which we have done in other studies, and rather than address the philosophical aspects like we did when we went through Bart Ehrman attacking the Bible proper, let's look at what Peter has to say in this letter. What is God's response? What does God say to people who are immersed in pagan culture? Isn't that who these people are? This is the diaspora.

These are Jews that have been uprooted and driven away from their homeland and their support mechanism. They can't look up and see the temple and say, I've had forefathers for a thousand years believing these truths. They must be right.

I've got a book of the law that's 1,500 years old. It's got to be right. We wouldn't have had a nation and a history and all these things.

They can't wander the land. They can't see the places where David and Joshua and Absalom and all of the other events of Scripture took place. They're driven out.

They're isolated. Their community has been divided. Their roots have been cut from them.

And what a prime opportunity to be swept away by the world just like us. Just like us. So, what has Peter said here? I like to read it out of the genuine Bible made out of trees.

1 Peter 1, the portion that we have already studied, and the section we just finished studying here. Peter says, beginning in verse 8, "...whom Jesus Christ, having not seen you love." Having not seen. These people, this generation that Peter's writing to, some of these people never saw the Lord Jesus 20, 30, 40 years earlier, whenever it was that Peter is writing this letter, it's many years after the ministry of Jesus Christ.

We would expect this might be in the 50s AD, possibly the 60s AD. Actually, AD 50s, AD 60s, Anno Domini. You all know that, right? In years BC, it's 360 BC, 603 BC, before Christ, and then years after, the proper way to say it is AD 33, AD 50, AD 90, Anno Domini, year of our Lord,

whatever the number is.

Free no charge. So, he says, "...having not seen you love." How can you love what you have not seen? Well, it takes two things. It takes information, and it takes belief in that information.

Assigning it credibility. Placing faith in it. You can't love what you don't know about.

I could say, Hey, Leo Kottke's got a new album out. Do you love it? I don't know. I haven't heard it yet.

When I hear it, I'll let you know. You have to know a thing. You have to be exposed to it before you can love it.

"...having not seen you love." How can you love someone you haven't seen? Why do we love the Lord Jesus? How can we love the Lord God that we've never seen? We learn about Him. We are given information, and we believe and place faith, credibility, reality in that information. So, Peter says, "...you haven't seen Christ, but you love Him.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory." You notice that he is building something here. Even though you have not seen. What is the fundamental tenet of materialism? I've got to see it, or I don't think it exists.

I see matter. I see energy. I see laws of physics.

I see astronomical observations. I see the gravitational influence of dark matter. I see evidence.

I see repeatable scientific procedures. Therefore, I believe. I see bones in the dirt.

I see an absence of carbon-14. I believe that life is very old. I have to see it.

I have to confirm it. That's science. Observation is one of the keystones of science.

What's a keystone of Christian faith? I don't see. Faith is the substance of things. Hope for the evidence of things.

Not seeing. Science says, your Christian faith is a bunch of nonsense because you can't see it. This is like saying, music is nonsense because you can't see it.

The beauty of a sunset is nonsense because you can't hear it. The nature of it is such that it doesn't respond to that particular type of observation. To say, I can't hear a sunset, so there's no beauty in that.

I can't see moonlight sonata, so that's not beautiful music, is an absurdity. Yet science says, I can't see spiritual truth, so it does not exist. Well, I pity you that you're limiting yourself to your five senses and logic, and you are shutting off your God-given spiritual sensitivity.

God has put eternity in our hearts, all of us, people all around the world. Why do you think everybody has some kind of religion? Every culture, every country, go into the deepest, darkest regions of South America or Africa, and when you get there, they believe something. They have a flood story.

They have some sort of a pantheon. They believe there are spirits in the trees. They believe there's something.

Why? Because there is a knowledge in the heart of man that there is something beyond the physical, beyond the earthly, beyond the material. We know this. By the way, to be fair, science has come up with an answer for this.

They say, no, here's what happened. And I want you to know this. I'm not going to shine you on and leave you to be assaulted by materialistic critics.

Here's their answer to what I have just said. No, no, no, no, no, no. That's not spiritual sensitivity.

Here's what happened. You evolved back in the days when men were hunter-gatherers and first gaining sentience and rising above the monkeys and the apes and so on. It would happen that there would be a rustling in the bushes.

Well, there were two types of men. There were men who paid no attention to the rustling in the bushes. And there were men who said, I think something is causing that noise.

Well, the men who said, I think there's something causing it, even though I can't see it, tended to survive because that was the tiger or the lion or the bear or the predatory animal or the other human with an ax in his hand. And so people evolved the suspicion that there was a cause for things that they would observe even when they couldn't see the cause. And this was an evolutionary survival mechanism.

And because we evolved from these hunter-gatherers that were just suspicious all the time and spooked at noises and were afraid of the dark and thought that something is causing that unknown phenomenon, this was a survival thing. This is how they explain your God-given sense of the eternal. Now, how you get from, I think the rustling in the bushes is a saber-tooth, to Shakespeare and poetry and appreciation of beauty and all of the higher levels of thought that confer no evolutionary benefit whatsoever.

How many poets ever brought home the meal or proliferated their offspring better than a guy who could provide and kill things? Explain to me how all of our higher thought evolved. They can't explain it. They have no explanation.

How does it confer a survival reproductive advantage? It doesn't. People who sit around thinking deep thoughts get killed by people who are rapacious hunter-gatherers. And we ought to all be,

we ought to all look like saber-toothed, mastodon, woolly-hairy, killer reproducers.

That's what evolution produces. And they're coming up with all kinds of notions on, well, how did this happen? Because evolution can't explain it. But here's Peter's answer.

He says, look, you believe in what you do not see. And this is a response to your God-given recognition. It's a sense.

You have a spiritual sense, just like you've got sight, and you've got hearing, and you've got touch, and you've got taste, and you've got smell. You have the ability to recognize things beyond the material. Everyone has it.

Human beings have it. Not seeing, you believe. And with that belief, you have joy.

What does disbelief result in? Now, I'm not using this as an argument. I'm not saying, well, even if there weren't a God, you ought to believe anyway, because you'll be happier. Don't construe what I'm about to say that way.

But there is an inevitable consequence when you respond to your sense of otherness, of higher and greater things, things beyond the material and beyond the immediate. What does Peter say here? Believing you rejoice. There is a peace that passes understanding.

There is a joy that comes from belief in the truth. And without that truth, there is a recognition that, well, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. I was amused because somebody I was talking with was saying, well, you know, the average IQ of Christians is lower than the average IQ of atheists.

Which is true, because the education that you get is, of course, indoctrination. And the more education you get, and the higher you, you know, IQ, regardless of what they say, is not innate. It's heavily education dependent.

That's the way the tests are skewed. Well, education is indoctrination. You can't go to a master's level or a graduate or postgraduate level of education without being steeped in materialism, secularism, humanism, and all these other things.

It's like, you know, you can't get a THD without getting steeped in the Bible. It used to be. Well, you can't, you know, that's the secular religion.

And so, obviously, well, so my response was, well, guess what? The suicide rate is much higher for atheists than it is for Christians. Much higher. It's like 13% higher for atheists.

They kill themselves. Why? What's to live for? Why stick around? You know, if I'm having a bad time, why should I stick around? The only reason to stick around is to have a good time. If I'm not having a good time, well, I'm going to kill myself.

Because what else is there? There's nothing after. Nobody's going to care when I'm gone. You know, within a few years, nobody will even remember I was ever here.

Why bother? Why put up with it? It's hopeless. It's hopeless. It is joyless.

And the only hope and the only joy that the unbeliever and the atheist and the spiritually insensitive ever have is when they actually partake of the Christian worldview. When they say, well, but there is meaning. There is purpose.

I can help people. That's a meaning and a purpose. Who cares if you help somebody? Suppose there's the planet Zot and there's some Zotoids that live there and one Zotoid is helping another Zotoid, but then their son went supernova and cooked them all.

Who cares whether one resident of Zot helped another? What difference does it make? Well, listen, on this planet, one human helping another human is meaningless. The sun's going to swell and go dark. This planet's going to go cold.

Somebody's going to trip over a cord and set off a nuke and the whole world is going to go glassy and nuclear winter and everything's going to freeze over. There's going to be an extra solar flare or there's going to be another ice age. Actually, I'll tell you what's going to happen in my scenario.

If I was going to do a science fiction movie and the world ends and the population is destroyed, you know what's going to happen? These people that are monkeying around with the genes are going to make one that infects the human race and kills us all. I, personally, that's one of my theories about when people are saying they cry for death and death does not come, they say rocks fall on us. Somebody's going to say, you know what, we fixed the telomere problem.

You don't have to die of old age anymore. We've dissected a nematode and figured out how you can grow new arms and your body will regenerate itself and now you don't have to die. You chop off a hand, it'll grow back and your heart goes bad, it'll regenerate.

Well, everybody's going to buy into this and they're going to put it in the genetically altered corn or something and everybody's going to eat it and first thing you know, they're going to get this organic, I've got chips in my head, they can put a RAM chip in your brain right now. They can put a USB port in your head and add RAM to your brain and they've already done it. You need it? Yeah, well, that's what everybody's going to think.

And if history goes on for any length of time and they perfect this stuff and everybody's got part chips and part other and they can't rip it out because you'll die, it could happen. And man is going to do it to himself. I predict somebody 100 years from now, tribulation comes, I'm telling you 100 years from now person, you did it to yourself.

Humanity is going to do it to themselves. It is Satan did it to himself, fallen angels did it to

themselves, the backward Israelites, the apostate Israelites did it to themselves. We bring our own misery on ourselves and those people crying out in the last half of the 70th week of Daniel, largely that wormwood and that destruction and cursing that comes on them is going to be self-inflicted.

I'll bet you a shekel. Peter says, look, you have a choice. You're out there amongst the pagans.

They're trying to suck you in. Satan loves to see the people of God get deflected and distracted and discouraged, lose their hope, lose their understanding of the purpose of life. Satan loves that.

It bolsters his argument. It is incumbent on us. We are told from Genesis to Revelation, remember who you are.

If you're Joseph going down to Egypt, remember who you are. If you're in the house of Potiphar, remember who you are. If you're in prison with the butler and the baker, remember who you are.

If you're Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah and Daniel carried off in captivity and made eunuchs and suffering all kinds of indignities and hardships, remember who you are. If you're Ezekiel by the river Kabar, remember who you are. If you're the Israelites, if you're Caleb and Joshua wandering with an entire generation of people who are destined to drop in the wilderness, remember who you are.

Remember God is faithful. Remember that God has redeemed you. God has called you by His name and He has a plan and a purpose and He will work it together for good to those who love Him.

Not having seen Him, you love. And believing, you rejoice with inexpressible joy. It's transcendent joy.

It's not scientific joy. It's not rational joy. It's not materialistic joy.

Oh, look, I got a new toy. I got a new appliance. I got a new thing.

How happy am I? It's a transcendent joy. It's based on unseen things, things that partake of eternity, that partake of God Himself. We were created to connect to and reflect the glory of God.

That's when we are happiest. That's when we are spiritually fulfilled and at no other time and in no other way. You don't see happy atheists banding together to do good things.

You see believers forming churches and partaking of ministry opportunities, of helping people. You don't see atheists all getting together in a van and going down to help Hurricane Katrina victims. You don't see a bunch of godless materialists all banding together and saying, hey, we've all got a godless materialism in common.

Let's go build something. Look at this wonderful hope that we have in our nihilistic, slackware view of the dim future. Let's all run down and do something.

Who is it that builds? Who is it that invests? Who is it that cares for people, that does the hard work behind the scenes? It's people who know that there's a future. It's people who say, it's as though it were the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, when I was naked, you clothed me.

When I was sick and in prison, you visited me. When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink. We do these things because we see the invisible.

We help people around the world that we've never seen. We partner with believers that we only know by name and by correspondence because we have hope in common. We have the unseen in common.

We don't need to see to know. We don't need to see to believe. We don't need to see to have joy and to be happy and to rejoice with when things go well and to share with and to uphold and to support when things are down.

We don't have to see. We don't have to be there. Not the materialists.

Not the secularists. Not the humanists. If I don't see, I don't believe.

I take nothing for granted. I don't even think you're a scientist unless you publish a paper. I had another little dialogue with somebody about, what's the definition of a scientist? Well, you've got to publish a paper.

And it's got to be more than one paper. And it has to be recognized by other scientists. And they have to all kind of get together and in some indefinite way decide.

We have to see. We have to know. You've got to give us some proof, some evidence.

Faith is what is not seen. And Peter says that. So, when we get to verse 13, which is where we are tonight, because you are able to invest yourself in what you don't see, because you can believe it, and because not only do you see what is unseen and believe what you haven't seen, but you have joy in it, there is a consequence.

There's a result. There is a great, happy outcome. And that's what verse 13 says.

Therefore, act. There's no action that comes out of the foolish notion that this is just a big, random accident spinning its inevitable consequences out. That doesn't motivate anybody to do anything.

Oh, there's entropy. Oh, there's physics. Oh, there's an ever-expanding universe.

And there's dark matter, and there's black holes, and this, that, and the other. Listen, I love

science. I love technology.

Anybody that knows me knows that not only do I love the fruits of it, I love to read about it. I love to see new discoveries. I love to get into the details.

I love reading about DNA research and genomic research and tracing back in paleontology and figuring out how the animals were designed and their architecture. I love that stuff. Materialists and secular humanist scientists, nabobs, love to paint Christians as anti-science.

Christians invented science. Christians laid the foundation of science. Newton, Galileo, Copernicus, all those guys were believers.

It's so silly when they say, oh, you know, Christians are anti-science. Catholic Church was anti-science for a while, but I don't count them as Christians. But that's not where I look for my happiness.

That's not where I look for my hope. And people who rely on that stuff really have no happiness and no hope because what's there to be happy about? What's there to hope in? You're just one hour, one tick of the clock closer to being no more. What's happy about that? You are going to wink out.

Your body is going to be dead meat. Your consciousness is going to disappear. Anything you ever learned, anything you ever thought, anything you ever felt, anything you ever cared about is meaningless.

Peter says, not so for you. You have a deliverance. The prophets looked into this deliverance knowing that it was coming for someone future to them, that there was a kind of deliverance, there was an entrance into eternal things and spiritual things that even they, as believers and as prophets of God, could not enter into.

It was future to them. They wrote it down for us. And this is really kind of a startling notion.

Therefore, Peter says in verse 13, we're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, what is the therefore? Therefore, having seen these things, having recognized it, having celebrated it, having entered into that faith and that joy, now what? Peter says, because of all of this, and there's going to be an imperative verb, we should do something. What is it we should do? Gird up our loins? What does that mean? Well, we'll get into that when we come back.