

1Peter 11-01-28a

This is Friday the 28th of January 2011. We continue our study in the book of 1st Peter and We are at the end of chapter 1. We are going to look at this Old Testament quote Speaking of the glory of man being as the flower of the grass the grass withers its flower falls away But the word of the Lord endures forever We'll take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we will begin Father it is such a privilege to Lay aside the tasks and the hectic schedule and the demands of our earthly existence and pause for refreshment and restoration and encouragement At the oasis of your word we thank you for the fellowship of believers of like mind We thank you for the clarity with which you have communicated your truth to us Which gives us clarity and the ability to see our way Your word sheds light on our path so that we can walk rightly we can stick to the Narrow road that goes through the straight gate that leads to life We thank you for this passage in 1st Peter We ask your blessing on us as we study it together, and we ask these things in Jesus name Amen Well you remember again Peter is writing to these dispersed Hebrews dispersed Jews the Jews of the Diaspora or Diaspora depending on where you're from and he has been speaking to them about the Opportunity that we all have as Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ What is this opportunity it is a potential it is to me? It's like being in a almost completely dark room huddled with many other people and Suddenly someone opens the door and says you can leave this dark Smelly room you can leave this crowded place of no hope and no productivity and you can come into the light there are people who accept that invitation and people who don't and With a tip of the hat to the Calvinists and reformed theology who say God reaches in and grabs people out and hauls them into the light It is an invitation Everybody has the ability to accept or reject the gift of faith quote-unquote is given to all of us There are rare exceptions of people who are not mentally capable and so on and God's got a special plan for them People who are too young and pass away before they get the opportunity and so on but we are Generally given that opportunity and at some point in our life We look and we see the open door we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit calling us telling us you are in a place of sin and God's righteous judgment is going to fall on that sin But here is the open door to life the Lord Jesus Christ has made a way. He is the way He is the truth.

He is the life. He is the light of life and Through him we enter The kingdom of light transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the son of his love When we say yes, I would like to go through the door. It is God who does all the work Salvation is all of grace all of God We contribute nothing Our Decision to accept it is non meritorious faith is non meritorious But we accept it and when we walk through that door we enter a new realm there are times when we voluntarily walk back into the dark room and spend time there and It is all the same as if we weren't saved we cut ourselves off from God's grace.

We ignore God's mercy we Cast aside all of the resources and all of the opportunities that the Lord Jesus Christ died to give us we voluntarily in Sin and and in patterns of sin that develop into evil we voluntarily say you know what? I think maybe I left something in that dark room. I'm gonna

go back in there I really kind of enjoy a certain kind of Interaction with people where I can sin against them with my lips or I can sin against them in my heart Or I can sin against them with my hands. I'll commit some overt sins I just kind of enjoy that place of sin and getting down in the muck and the mud and the bile and the grease and the stain and the stench of sin and we voluntarily walk back in and Then we recognize that we've soiled ourselves We've fouled ourselves and we come to God we acknowledge that we have done.

So he washes us he cleanses us and we are once again able to Enter into that place of potential and opportunity that is on the other side of the door that is back in Christ back on the narrow road going through the straight gate that leads to life but every time we Walk back through that door into the darkness into sin into failure into disobedience into willfulness selfishness self-indulgence self-pity Self-centeredness We injure ourselves and we injure others. We hurt ourselves. We hurt others we grieve God he didn't send the Lord Jesus to die so that we could wallow in the muck in the mire So it is this constant Tension this warfare and this weaving back and forth between the darkness and the light that we spend our lives here trying to overcome Why would God leave us the opportunity to go back into the darkness? Why didn't he just slam the door and Bolt it and lock it and chain it and prevent us from going back through Because I was I made this comment earlier this week to somebody somebody said well, you know Eternity must be really boring.

I can't imagine, you know a million billion years I mean, what would you do? It would just get tedious. Why would you want to live forever? Well, this to me is a very small minded view but if you think well All right, let's say I was in a prison cell, you know People that that are in solitary confinement or confined to a four-by-eight cell for months and years on end that would get tedious if you couldn't if you didn't have some form of escape if you didn't have books or a television or computer or something to get yourself beyond the walls and and seriously if you think about living a Thousand years two thousand years ten thousand years just a short amount of time in The Universe represented by mundane existence on this earth. You might it might get tiresome It might get old and tedious and repetitious, but thank the Lord It's it's not limited to that.

This is this is the This is the preschool of life in in the unit in the universes plural and in the futures that God Has I has not seen here has not heard it hasn't entered into the heart of man What God has prepared for those who love him if it was limited to this Maybe after several millennia you might start getting a little Tired of it the sameness, but there there is no limitation. There is no sameness But the level to which it expands the level to which we have access of things beyond Depends entirely on how prepared we get in this life Why does God leave that door open why does God let us go back into the darkness go back into sin Because he is never going to change the fundamental image in which we are made and what is that image? It's the image of God and it includes free will the angels have free Will we know this because a third of them chose to follow Satan into rebellion and disobedience against God We are made in God's image and we have the privilege and the gift of self-determination God doesn't wire us for faith. He doesn't wire us for obedience.

We're free So during the time that we have the pull and we have that open door we train ourselves We teach ourselves we learn from God's Word. We learn the importance of our connection to God We don't have the power to overcome sin. We don't have the power to stay out of the room Think of a think of a crack addict Think of a of a nicotine addict think of somebody that or an alcoholic think of somebody that just can't keep From going back to something that they know is destructive and they know is harmful, but they just don't have the power to change well, God gives us that power but in his wisdom and in the in the eternity of his existence God has had Plenty of time and this is I'm back to the comment.

I made earlier this week. Do you not think that in his eternal? Being God hasn't had time to come up with a plan That is a little bit more sophisticated than what a mere human being might be able to grasp With a few minutes of consideration, you know, somebody says, oh I heard there's a God and these Christians are trying to get me saved And I don't understand this God. I mean he lets pain and suffering exist in the world He look at the God of the Old Testament and he's mean-spirited and you know Christopher Hitchens and his little diatribe on God Well, excuse me.

Mr. Hitchens, but I think you know your few moments of consideration of what God must be like and what? He's up to with his plan is so shallow and so Much the ant trying to understand the skyscraper think how how big God is how powerful he is and how long he has had to Ponder and to perfect and to implement his grand design for human history it shouldn't be surprising that we as mere mortals with our brief Flash of existence here might not be able to enter into all of the depth and the wisdom and the multi Dimensionality of God's plan that he might really know what he's doing well one part of God's plan that is revealed in his word and we've seen it in this first chapter of Peter's letter is The reason God leaves us here the reason he ordained the reason that he knew these Jewish Christians would be scattered out in the Roman Empire is the same reason that we are left with the opportunity to dwell in this earth and To go in and out of that door of darkness and kingdom of darkness because we learned the importance we Experience the difference between Between God's life and being connected to God and dwelling in God and depending on him and the alternative we Go back and forth. We see how destructive how dark how dismal how? Erosive how corrosive how disintegrating it is when we Voluntarily as believers walk out of the light into the darkness it Creates pain pain for us pain for others. It's it's polluting and we see over and over again the demonstration of God's grace and his mercy and the depth of his love and compassion in Time and again Forgiving us accepting us granting to us Grace because of his son the Lord Jesus Christ who represents perfected humanity sitting at his right hand in the throne room of the third heaven and Jesus says human beings can Dwell in the presence of God.

I'm sitting here as one in Humanity he lived his life by the light of the Word of God sustained by God the Holy Spirit everything he did was in the power of the Spirit he didn't do it by his power as the second person of the Trinity and Because of that and it's an important doctrine the doctrine of kenosis that the second person of the Trinity emptied himself took on the form of a servant and

came in the likeness of men and Being found in appearance as a man being found in his form and structure as a man. He humbled himself and was obedient Even unto the death of the cross. He was sustained by the Holy Spirit.

He was guided and Encouraged and motivated by the Word of God the same things that are given to us Jesus Christ has proved that those things can sanctify and can qualify Human beings to dwell with God for eternity We have to learn that experientially. It's not enough to be told. It's not enough to simply be smacked with a righteousness wand and Sent to eternity because we still have free will we have to learn we have to know Experientially this prevents us.

This is our inoculation. This is our vaccination against repeating the error of the angels Who had never sinned who had never known sin and when sin was offered to them like Eve in the garden? Well, that seems like a good idea. Let's go with Satan Is there a plan for angelic salvation? I don't know if I if somebody put a gun to my head and said choose or die I would say yes on the analogy and on the pattern of everything else.

God has ever done There's always grace before judgment. I don't know what form it took. I don't know why it Could be offered without a sacrifice or if there were a sacrifice that these are things we'll find out later We have our hands full understanding our own salvation and entering into it and exploiting it But the fact remains that God has put us here just like these Jews these Jews of the Diaspora are a picture of us believers scattered in the world Constantly pulled toward the darkness There are hands reaching out of that dark door grabbing us tugging at our sleeve grabbing our leg Trying to pull us back into the darkness trying to tell us the light you see is not really light.

You're fooling yourself It's an illusion. It's not real. God's not real.

The words not real. The future is not real resurrection is not real Come join us in the muck here This is all there is and we're gonna die in the muck and be gone and others will take our place and it's all just a vast accident There's a constant call and and grasping from the darkness to pull us back down we are exposed to that In the plan and purpose of God on purpose in the same way that these Jewish Christians were exposed to the religions of the Roman Empire in their communities the cults the temples the alleged proofs that oh, you know the Oracle of Delphi Here's where you get your truth You know sacrifice to the to the Roman Pantheon or pick your poison pick your God, you know Pick your patron saint as it were and and follow them dedicate yourself to Artemis or to the Jove or Mars or Bacchus get into the bacchanalias and drink enough wine to to get into the divine realms that way They were they were tested and tempted with the same things. This is why and this is the background This is the the backdrop for what Peter says here He says this truth the divine truth of God's plan and purpose and the reality of your salvation Has been communicated to you for a reason you're left in this earth with the knowledge of your salvation for a reason It's been preached to you By the Holy Spirit sent from heaven things that angels stooped down to see angels are learning from this They haven't gone through what we go

through we have that him angels and angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings and As far as we know they have not Therefore verse 13 Gird up the loins of your mind Now this is something I wanted to go back in and pick up we're not going to go all the way back and review from verse 13, but it see where it says gird up the loins of your mind and Then and we saw this be stable be sober be Be mature here as you Rest your hope fully on the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ keep in mind that this condition is temporary and This is the grace brought to you through the revelation of Jesus Christ grace is available Get back in the light Don't listen to the people screaming from the darkness don't voluntarily walk back in there for heaven's sake Rest your hope on the grace that is brought to you through the revelation of Jesus Christ This is why we have regularly scheduled Bible classes This is why you and I should have regular periods of meditation We need to stop at least once a day and spend at least a few minutes Free of distractions do it first thing in the morning do it on your lunch break do it when you get home from work in The house is quiet do it in the evening evenings are tough because you know everything's starting to shut down And you tend to say our Father who art in heaven hallowed and the next thing you're snoring but pick a time our meditation is a Step back to say I have been rescued and brought into the kingdom of light.

I need to remember The grace that has been brought to me through the revelation of Jesus Christ I'm not just an American citizen out here doing my job and getting my pay while everything is slip sliding away. I am a Child of God I have been redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God Who took on human flesh? To show me the way to open that door and get me out of that kingdom of darkness. That's who I am That's my identity listen people are in search of identity.

Let me read you something if I can get it up here You never know they're rabbit trails. You're you're gonna go down And I was I was I won't even tell you the long chain of events by which I was looking at feminism in Christianity and the inroads of feminist theology It's not the ology because that's male it's the allergy because the a is feminine So it's it's like a new word The a l o g wife the the out. This is your mother father God Crowd okay well back and listen you got it You got to watch because you know God bless the dear old time fundamental Presbyterian Church but in the modern day the Presbyterians have been hugely compromised and have had a dissension in the ranks and a bunch of the Presbyterians have gone in the direction of the World Council of Churches and feminist theology and so on well They they had a big thing.

It was in the press back. I think it was around 2003 let me see if I can find this thing Yeah and And so everybody got together in a nose 93 Minneapolis in 1993 Christian feminists at the reimagining conference And Listen one at one branch of the Presbyterians I forget which one was there and bought into this but they invoked of divine power And I won't I won't burden you and and sully your minds with too much of this I'll just give you a hint just a glimpse, and then we'll quickly turn away But they they had everybody stand up and pray this prayer together I Cannot read you all of this I'm a marine a lot of you people are military. I still can't read you this whole

poem.

I'm sorry I just can't you can look it up and get the whole thing. I'm only going to give you excerpts. It's too graphic It's not fit for mixed company It's not fit for any kind of company, and they stood up and this was allegedly a worship deal And I I apologize in advance for even reading this, but it does make a point Sophia God creator God Let your milk and honey pour out showering us with your nourishment our sweet Sophia.

We are women in your image I got to skip this part. We invite a lover. We birth a child With our warm body fluids we remind the world of its pleasures and sensations Etc but they what they have done is they they You know The belief that women have been downtrodden and that Man driven society has you know? There's there's a lot of social thinking that then is imported into religion the people that Peter wrote his letter to Were exposed to analogous things in their time in their generation.

This is the darkness Calling calling us back Well the the Appeal of this is to the arrogance in our souls. I am woman hear me roar I am I am black You know I've been abused I am Native American I am Handicapped I am deaf. I've learned through my daughter Elizabeth as she's learning ASL what a what a There's an antisocial element in the deaf community, and I can say this because they can't hear me.

I'll tell you They won't know I'm talking about it No, I'm kidding, but but there's a there's a there's a defensive sort of arrogance Elizabeth was telling me this earlier in the week We had a really wonderful visit while we were going to Nacogdoches and back on Monday And she was explaining to me what she's learned. She's had a lot of exposure to to the deaf through her ASL classes, but it was fascinating to me that American Sign Language actually has its roots in French and So the signing even when they're spelling out words and so on is very condensed and in some cases sort of corrupted and You would think well if I was deaf I would be so literate I would read all the time I would be an excellent writer Much of the deaf community it has a problem with illiteracy Because if you think about it, there's nobody there to teach them words Words that they learn are the signed symbols that represent ideas But they don't match they don't comport they don't it's very difficult for them to get into the reading world It's it's and I never really thought about it, but if you if you do think about it, it's true Our facility with words comes to us because even when you're a little kid playing with your blocks or whatever You're hearing people talk your mother is Holding up a carton of milk and saying do you want some milk? Do you want some juice? Let me have your bowl Here's your spoon open your mouth and say ah open your mouth You know we we get the sound of these words and then we learn by phonics how to read right? Phonics is the is the great way well the deaf are totally shut off from that They learn by watching lips and you only get you know 20 or 30 percent of a word by watching lips and they learn ASL which is Abbreviated Elizabeth was telling me that she was trying to talk to a guy and he said for example when I say the British Well, they don't see the T sound when you say British It looks like brish to a deaf person and that's how they sign it BRSH is is the sign So they don't

match that when they try to read a book and it says BR ITI SH It's extremely difficult for them to learn this so Anyway that this is recognized that that that ASL is very defective in bridging the gap for a deaf person and getting them into literacy What a world would open to the deaf community if they could read as well as as hearing people can read Well, they recognize that the problem is in ASL. It doesn't match.

It doesn't give you a bridge to Printed material or the Internet or anything else where you rely on on reading So they said we need to fix this and so they made a new Sign language and she told me the name of I don't forget what it is English signed English and it's it is structured to match and to bridge and to and to open a door out of the deaf world into the world that is opened by print think of the Millions and millions of printed works and opportunities on the web if you can read well So they said we're going to we're going to stop teaching ASL. We want to convert people over to to signed English The deaf community went into an uproar you're Implying that we are second-class. You're you this is our community.

This is our this is our heritage This is our culture. We've and and and there was a huge there's an outrage in the deaf community right now It is like suggesting to a Christian that we all Convert and become Muslims and go to a mosque, you know that that really Islam is a better religion than Christianity I mean there is that level of of Levity and and insult and and Horrific Recoiling at the idea that that there's something wrong with ASL and there's there's an arrogance in it There's a there's a lack of objectivity. There is a defensive sort of this is my identity Well, you see this in the Sophia movement in feminist theology.

You see it in in the third world with with What theology am I thinking of where they want to rebuild all the poor countries Liberation theology Reconstruction theology all these theologies even the new dispensationalism progressive dispensationalism is a Hooks into some of this Reform theology hooks into some of this there is an arrogance that that is denied But is present in saying well, you know God picked me and he didn't pick that guy for salvation and I know that I'm hopeless helpless and depraved and you know It's all of grace and so on but you know still he picked me and he didn't pick him I mean, it's just intrinsic you can't help it You know God loved me and he turned he passed for no is to for love God looked down the corridors of time and thought that one. I want that one I don't know why certainly I was just as depraved and all I do is give him the glory But you know, I'm still in the glorified saved bunch and these people aren't and you can't help it's built into us It's a part of the darkness and the muck that Jesus died to pull us out of but we can't save ourselves from it We can't think our way out of it even aware of it. We can't it's like a smoker saying I know these things are killing me.

I know this crack cocaine is killing me. I know it's wrecking my family I know I lost my job and all of my money, but they can't stop the knowledge doesn't give you the power to escape the Lord Jesus Christ does and that's what Peter is talking about when he says the Revelation of Jesus Christ gives us the power rest your hope on it Focus on it. This is why our daily Meditation on the

things of God on what we remember that we've learned in Bible class on what is stored in our souls our memory verses Crack open a book read a devotional get streams in the desert and get our utmost for his highs anything you want get ch McIntosh any whatever floats your boat your spiritual boat that Goes back to the Word of God get into it and Reflect on it daily because we require Restoration we are fallible.

We're like a Phosphorescent screen that gets hit with a couple of electrons and glows briefly. It's going to quickly fade. We need another exposure We need a fresh burst of energy from God and the power is in the word You can't rest on.

Well, you know, I was saved umteen years ago and and and once or twice a week I go to a great church or I listen to good Bible teaching Insufficient. Do you want to watch a television program on a on an old? CRT television, but you only get a picture once every five seconds You only you know people used to try to watch our Bible class and the thing would freeze frame and you could you could you? Know you'd get the max headroom thing It would freeze and then it would try to catch up and then it would freeze, you know Even small interruptions of the continuity mess things up We even with our digital flat-screen televisions, I don't want to see that pixelation. I don't want to see that blur I want it to be sharp.

I want it to be clear. I want it to be instantaneous Well, guess what? It's infinitely more important for our spiritual life to be constantly refreshed and renewed to be clear to be sharp to be vibrant To be connected to God This is what Peter is talking about when he says you've got to rest your hope fully This revelation gives you your salvation from Jesus Christ every day Salvation isn't pie-in-the-sky by and by we're delivered out of this present evil age. We are kept out of that dark stench filled room By the power of God that we voluntarily go to So go to it.

That's the exhortation Rest in it Grab it. This is the potential we never had as unbelievers This is the potential that most believers Fail to recognize and fail that the door is standing there open the light is there God is calling and people are in the dark room saying, you know, I don't understand why my life is such a mess I don't understand why I'm inconsistent and I constantly sin and I fail and I the door is standing open and we just don't go out and Into everything that Jesus died to to give us. This is what Peter is saying Rest your hope fully on the grace that is being brought to you through the revelation of Jesus Christ All you've got to do is go to it so go to it as Obedient children not conforming yourselves to the former Driving motivations don't go back through the door Be holy in your conduct Walk in the light as he is in the light Maintain your fellowship with him so that he can maintain his fellowship with you and the blood of Jesus Christ Keeps on cleansing us from sins when something splashes on us when we Sully and defile ourselves wash the stuff off.

Don't let it Drag us back to where we came from Because it is written be holy for I am holy to access the power of God We have to able be able to Be in touch with God to contact God to have fellowship with God and we can't do it when we're defiled and full of the Stench in the muck. We

have to be cleansed by the blood of Christ That's what qualifies us and keeps us in the light. So be holy if you if you stain your holiness get rid of the stain get washed get clean get cleansed and If you call on the Father who without partiality judges according to each one's work Conduct yourself throughout the time of your brief stay here With fear you ought to care about going back through the door You ought to care about staying in the light You ought to care about the price that Jesus paid to give us that opportunity to rescue us out of darkness into light That's the fear respect it value it Count it as something important You know, I know that there's a death penalty in the United States and I counted as something very important I'm not worried about it But I certainly respect it if I suddenly had the wild desire to go murder someone I would say, you know Especially here in the state of Texas.

There is a death penalty That ought to mean something to me above and beyond all the other things that would keep me from doing such a thing That's that's godly fear that's respect for something that is an important reality Conduct yourself through the time of your sojourn here with respect for what's important Look at the price that was paid you weren't redeemed with mere gold and silver You were redeemed with the blood of Christ the death of Jesus Christ. It was a dear price that opened that door. Don't forget it Redeeming you out of your aimless conduct received by tradition from your father's with a precious blood of Christ lamb without blemish and spot He was foreordained and manifest in these last times for you who through him Believe in God have contact with God or in that kingdom of light So that your faith and hope are in God Having purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit in sincere love of the brethren love one another Fervently with a pure heart having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but in a corruptible through the Word of God Which lives and abides forever because and this is where we pick up tonight.

All Flesh is as grass and all the glory of man is like the flower of the grass Even if somebody thinks that they've produced a brief flash in the dark room. It doesn't last it doesn't cleanse It doesn't empower it doesn't transport. It doesn't quench the thirst of man It doesn't qualify.

It doesn't build into the eternal future. There's people that think they're striking a cardboard match in the dark room They said look we've got light here, but it winks out and it changes nothing It's transient. It's ephemeral.

It's it's just a flash in the dark If anything it just blinds people the glory of man is like the flower of the grass the grass withers and the flower falls away This is ecto falls out falls off falls away But the Word of the Lord endures forever we're gonna pause here and take our break and we're gonna come back because you remember up above when it said that we have been born again through the Word of God and Then down here it says the Word of God abides forever. It's two different words the one up in verse 23 is Lagos we've been born again through the Lagos of God But what abides forever is the Rhema of God what's the difference that's what we'll explore when we come back from the break