1Peter 11-01-28b

Let's resume our study in 1 Peter, we're at the end of chapter 1, looking at verse 23 and 24. And what I wanted to point out, and I began to make this point previously, you remember where he said, gird up the loins of your mind, up in verse 13, gird up the loins of your mind, and it has the idea of arranging your clothing for work or for action, for battle, whatever it might be, and of having the right clothing on arranged in the right way. And the reason I find that interesting is that as we resume, you find a similar reference to clothing down here.

In our verse right after this quote, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass, or its glory is as the flower of the grass. And of course, this is a clear, and it doesn't take an interpreter to explain what this refers to, how transient and ephemeral and temporary human accomplishment is, how quickly it disappears, how soon it is forgotten, how little eternal import it has in and of itself. I've given you examples in the past of things that I look at, and they're very tangible and real in the moment, but given enough time, it has all completely disappeared.

The grass withers. Where is the grass from last summer? Well, it got mowed, it got gathered in bags, it got sent into recycling or whatever. It disintegrated and went back into the ground, and now it's a part of new grass, whatever it may be, but we don't see it anymore.

The flower falls away, and there's nothing more transient than the beauty of a nice, fresh flower. You can take the things, we've been doing this a lot lately, because you spend so much money on roses anymore, so you get somebody, for a time, until I wised up, I was getting Patty each year on our anniversary a rose for each year, and it was easy, we were married three years, got her three roses, married seven years, got her seven roses, married 12 years, got a dozen, we started getting up 15, 16, 17, 60, 70, 80, 90 bucks, and they're cut, and they look great, and they bloom out a little bit, and then pretty soon they start turning black and the petals fall off, and they get all withered and nasty, and their heads don't stand up anymore, and they look like a symbol of death and decay, and you think, well, I don't want to memorialize my marriage with this bunch of dead vegetation. So while they're still looking fairly lovely, you take them and hang them upside down on a clothespin and let them dry.

So now they're like petrified, they're like mummified flowers, and that's so much better. It's like a Minotep or a King Tut or somebody, where it's just a resemblance and a memory, but it doesn't look like a nice, fresh, if you want a nice, permanent, fresh-looking flower, you go plastic, you go silk, you go imitation and fake. Well, the Bible is true, God's Word, of course, the veracity of it is unassailable.

The grass does wither, the flower falls away, it represents the ephemeral, transient nature of this life. It is the Word of the Lord that endures forever. Now this is really interesting.

I hope I can make this as meaningful to you as it has been to me when I got to looking at it. When

you look at verse 25 here and he says, But the word of the Lord endures forever. And I mentioned right before the break that he said, you know, you've been saved by the Word of God, the Logos of God.

And Logos is just like our word logic that comes from it. What is a logical argument? You get at the substance of a thing. You address an issue or a question and you put it in terms of a proposition.

Here is my thesis, here is my protesis, here is my, what I offer you by way of a thought and now I'm going to draw a conclusion from it or I'm going to substantiate it or I'm going to turn it around and look at the other side. If A equals B and B equals C, it follows that A equals C. And there's, it's indefinite, it's abstract. In many cases, it's intangible, but there is a reality to it.

Mathematics is a numerical way of describing things. I can put down the dimensions of a doghouse on paper and say, I'm going to take a four by eight sheet of plywood and I'm going to cut it this way and that way and I'm going to nail it all together and I'll end up with a doghouse. Pretty small doghouse, if I only use one sheet of plywood, but there it is.

I can describe it all with symbols on a piece of paper. The piece of paper with its symbols is not the doghouse any more than a recipe is a meal, but it is a representation. It is an abstraction.

It is a communication of a literal truth. You go to, you know, Popular Mechanics or some magazine that has plans for a thing and that all looks great on paper. An exercise program looks great on paper, but until you do it and implement it and combine it with a diet and so on, you don't get the results.

It's just, it's an abstraction. It's a potential. But there is a reality.

If you get a good exercise program combined with a good diet, you will get in shape and lose weight and be more fit and more healthy and so on. There is a reality in the plan, in the abstraction, in the symbolic representation of the thing. There is a doghouse potential in the plan.

There is a meal potential in the recipe. Well, there is a reality that is potential in the plan and purpose of God that is communicated in His Logos. Jesus Christ, from the beginning, has been the Logos, John 1.1. The plan and purpose of God has been summed up in Jesus Christ since before the foundation of the world.

In the beginning was the Logos. The Logos was with God. The Logos was God.

This is the plan and the potential. It's the recipe. It's the blueprint.

And contained within that, if that plan and blueprint or recipe is properly executed and properly followed, reality emerges from it. This is why our salvation is said to have been ordained in eternity past. The salvation of the world, Christ on the cross, all of this is for ordained.

This is where you get your lapsarianism, super-lapsarianism, sub-lapsarianism, infralapsarianism, which came first, the reality or the decree. Well, yes, both, neither. It's in the timelessness of the counsels of God in time before time, in thought before thought, in that eternity before our human history.

But here's the thing. When this says, the grass withers and the flower falls away, we know what that refers to. Look at old black and white photographs.

There's a thing on YouTube, I can't remember, Matthew, I think, told me about this. Somebody took a crank motion picture camera and stuck it on the front of a vehicle and drove down Main Street in some town, I forget, San Francisco, and just drove down the street for several minutes. And in, what, 1905 or something, back in the early, a hundred years ago and more, yeah, so it was 1905? Yeah, so 1905, driving down.

But it's fascinating to look at, because there was no special event. It's not the president on a podium giving a speech. It's not the unveiling of a car coming off the Ford factory line.

It's just life as it was on some day in 1905. They're just driving down the street, and so you see people walking by in the clothes of the day. They've got their briefcase.

They've got their satchel. They're carrying a burden. Many horse-drawn vehicles and carts.

People walking, diving in and out. It's madness. It looks like Beirut when all the signals were out.

You think, people must have died every single day on this street. Look at how they're darting in and out, unseen, traffic going both ways. People just, little kids.

There's no safety. There's no crosswalk guy with a vest and a flashlight and a stop. Little kids diving in and out of here, and I'm sure that they probably didn't even put it in the paper.

People got run over and smashed and injured all the time. But it's just fascinating. If you haven't seen it, you should watch it.

This is my recommendation for the weekend. Take a few minutes. Find the thing and watch it.

It's just fascinating. But the grass withers. The flower falls away.

There is no remnant of that world left. Somebody went back to the same street and drove at the same rate with a camera on the dash or something for comparison, and you can find that one. The street intersections are the same.

There might be a building storefront here and there that has survived, but that grass has withered. That flower has fallen and is gone. All of those people, everybody you see in that film from 1905 is dead.

Every single one of them. I promise you. There's not a face.

There's not a body. There's not a vehicle. There's not a horse.

There's not a dog. There's not anything that you see on that that has survived. None of those vehicles are still around.

Nobody's got one of those cars. The whole thing is gone. But the reality of it really impresses you.

I could go do this in 15th Street in Plano. I could go do this Main Street in Dallas, which they shut down for the bomb scare yesterday. If you saw that, we saw all the flashing lights and some dog sniffed an explosive package in the basement of one main place where CNN and Fox and a bunch of others had their offices, and they evacuated and blocked off.

It was just bedlam in downtown Dallas for several hours and turned out to be nothing. But they did get a good test of their reaction system, which I think is great. But it's the reality that was, and it's all gone.

And it really, for somebody who's been the way I am, it really makes you stop and think. All of the stuff that I just look around and take for granted and don't give two seconds thought to will vanish. If the Lord tarries a hundred years from now, can you imagine? Will any of this be around? What kind of cars? What kind of streets? What kind of people? It will all be different.

You look at the rate at which computers and the internet and everything are changing life, and now you never see anybody looking in the eye because they're all walking around in their PDAs and doing thumb typing. What's it going to be like then? People will probably have some little screen hanging in front of their eyes, and they'll just all walk around like this, and it'll all be the internet on their virtual goggles or something. They'll probably have a chip in their head, and they'll just see it, and it'll be piped directly in your brain.

There won't be anything on your face. The people will just be walking around in a daze, because in their mind's eye, they're surfing the web and buying stuff on eBay and e-trading and whatever it is they're doing. It'll probably be e-squared bay by then.

I don't know what it'll be. It'll all be 3D. 3D televisions are already coming off the lines.

Who knows what it'll be like, but one thing you know, when the Bible says the grass withers and the flower fades, what are we accomplishing that we think is going to be a great granite monument that is going to last and be beneficial and count in the eternal judgment of God? What is it we think we're doing? Is that basket of laundry going to make a big difference? Is that nice, clean car that I washed and waxed, is this lawn that I mowed? Is this conversation that I had got any meaning past the moment? It's an investment of my life. The sand is going through the hourglass. The clock is ticking down to my last minute and my last second on this earth.

Am I going to be happy about the way I invested that time? Did I put it into currency that will survive the moment? Well, Peter is telling us, reminding us from the Old Testament, this is how you do that. This is how you redeem the time. Can you imagine taking your paycheck or taking money that you've got in the bank and just picking it up a hundred dollar bill at a time and lighting it on fire? Hundred dollar bill, light it on fire, hundred dollar bill, light it on fire, okay and here's your quickened balance diminishing every hundred, you know, cha-ching, hundred dollar bill, cha-ching, hundred dollar bill, minus a hundred, cha-ching, you know, well, these are the hours of your life.

We're burning them. They will never return. You can't get yesterday back.

You can't get today back. It is gone. What was it invested in? And the wonderful gift, part of that package when God opened the door through Christ and transferred us out of darkness into the light, when we're dwelling in the light, when we are walking in the light as He is in the light, the hours and the minutes of our lives are preserved.

They are converted. They are invested in eternal treasure. It's depicted as gold and silver and precious stones.

It's not gold and silver and precious stones. It is permanent. What's the difference in grass and flowers and gold? Which would your wife rather have, a dozen roses or a dozen diamonds? You know, does a rich guy get his wife one diamond for every year they've been married on the anniversary? You know, roses, week, week and a half, tops, or you know, mummified at best, but even those, the cat gets in them.

You know, the flowers have fallen off, so we put the mummified petals in a bowl and it made kind of an injury. Well, then the cat got in it and even that is gone. Diamonds, quite a bit more durable, quite a bit more valuable, quite a bit more useful when the chips are down.

And, well, honey, you know, looking at Quicken, I think we ought to cash a few of these in and you know, there's, it's potential, it's investment. It is much more permanent and that's why the Bible compares eternal treasure, treasure in heaven, do not lay up for yourself treasure on earth, moss and rust corrupt, thieves break in and steal, even diamond, silver and gold, you know, put it in the stock market and see how long it lasts, invest it in a company and hope and pray that it's not a bubble and that it doesn't go belly up, put it in a bank and hope the bank doesn't fail. No matter what you do, it's very difficult to preserve wealth and at the end of your life it gets distributed.

I have been privileged to be near at hand to see the estates of several rich people be handled after that person's death. It's very sobering to see what took a lifetime to collect and amass blow to the winds and I don't care if it's Christie's and Sotheby's doing the auctions, it's still very sobering to have visited a house full of furniture and fine porcelain and beautiful expensive

paintings, things garnered from travels all over the world, treasured, valued, enjoyed and within the space of a few months to try to reassemble that collection you would have to travel all over the world and go all over the place because an explosion could not have scattered it more thoroughly, could not have disassembled it more completely. Visit Antiqueland, here's somebody's, at one time this was a centerpiece of somebody's dwelling, their bedroom, these beautiful headboards with faces sticking out of them and burled oak and it's in Antiqueland for crying out loud.

All these beautiful things, a doctor's bag, I get very philosophical, I should never go to one of those places because my mind just starts running and I start imagining, people say if this thing could talk, what stories could it tell? Well what it would basically be saying is, what am I doing in Antiqueland? What happened to my venue? What happened to the place where I was initially purchased and installed and enjoyed and used and appreciated and now I'm in here with all this other flotsam and jetsam. Well the grass withers, the flower falls away. Why does the Bible remind us of this? We know this if we stop and think about it, but it is a challenge, it is a call, it is a look back through that door into the darkness to say, what do you want your life to mean when you're all done? Will you be content to say I had a great career as X, I really shone brightly as Y, I made a big sparkling stream through the sky like a bottle rocket as Z, but the bottle rocket has gone out, the stick and empty cardboard is about to impact the ground and I'm going to be gone until eternity rolls around and the judgment happens.

So was there anything besides this bright streak of sparks, is there anything tangible, did anything mean something, did anything last? Well he says the word of the Lord endures forever, and you think well that's great for the word of the Lord, but what about my life? And in the past we've talked about well store the word of God in your soul and then you'll have something you can carry in, but really still that's just, I say just, that's the word of the Lord with its durability and its intrinsic eternality, but all I can do is try to load myself up with the word of God and then sort of carry that with me, and that's not what this is saying, and I think sometimes we've sort of misunderstood it and said well you just want to get a hold of the word of God and hang on to that because that's the undiminished, undisintegrating train, so get on that and just hang on to it. But this is why the vocabulary changes, and you have the word rhema, the rhema of the word of the Lord endures forever, and you can do a word study, you can read the theological dictionary of the New Testament, and there's pages and pages on the difference between logos and rhema, I will attempt to boil this down and distill it. You understand logos, this is the insubstantial substance, this is the proposition, this is the plan, the recipe, the representation of reality.

It's not the reality, it is what can structure and bring about reality, it's like a blueprint, it's like the, I speak a command to my troops as a platoon commander and they go set up the tents and put up the RC-292 and now I've got to hook up the PRC-77 and now I've got a command center with communications because I had a logos, I had a plan, I know how to go in and set up a battery position and a fire direction center, I have that plan, there is a procedure, there is a way to get

that done. RC-292, by the way, is a real interesting tall antenna, it's many, many sections stuck together and then it's got these wands that stick down, I don't know if they still use it now or not, I know they don't use the PRC-77 anymore, but this is what we used to use. Well there's only one right way and there's about 12 wrong ways to put that antenna up because you have to assemble it horizontally and stick the wands and stuff on it and it takes three guys and it takes a lot of pieces of line that you attach to it and then you've got to move it from horizontal to vertical without breaking it and every lieutenant in the Army and every lieutenant in the Marine Corps has snapped an RC-292 at some time or the other because you just do, there is a logos for getting that thing installed and operating correctly and there's many wrong ways to do it and you'll snap it every time, it's one of the most fragile, it's made of wood, I mean that's how old it is, it's World War II, Korean War vintage and that's what we had, but there is a way to get the thing up but you've got to follow the procedure, there's a recipe, there's a blueprint for putting it together, getting it up, getting it installed and making it work right.

So, I follow that logos, but the way I get that plan, procedure and assembly into reality because I learn it and know it, I issue a command, I speak it and I tell people get this done, that is rhema, it's spoken word, the plan is on paper and it's great on paper, but until I command it, until I speak it and get the ball rolling, get people moving, you plan a garage sale, these are the things we're going to sell, these are the tables we're going to set it on, this is the day we're going to do it, we've applied for a permit, we've gotten some change and some dollar bills and stuff for it to make change and so and so is going to come over and help me, that's all logos. When you call people up and say come over Saturday, it's going to be a good day, let's do it and when you tell your kids set that table up, bring out grandma's old lamp, bring out your old toys, we're selling that stuff, that's rhema. So, that's my practical example of the difference.

We are saved because of the logos, the plan and purpose of God that he put into existence, that he developed in eternity past. In time, God makes it happen. What does he do? He tells the Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art my son, this day I have begotten you.

Do the incarnation. When Jesus was speaking to Satan in the temptations and he said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every rhema that proceeds from the mouth of God. We can't live by every logos.

God's got all kinds of structures and plans and purposes that we're not a part of. God has plans for your life that I'm not a part of. He's got plans for my life that you're not a part of.

For me, there is rhema. There are commands that I am supposed to do because I am a husband to a certain lady. I am a father to certain girls.

I am a pastor for a certain church. I am an employee of a certain organization. These are my marching orders.

There is a grand plan for the war. The individual units get their five paragraph orders. You take

this hill.

You establish these fields of fire. You fly these missions. This is your part.

They might send out the logos. They might send out the plan in advance, but until you get the command to go and until the thing is on, remember some of these great invasions and things had to be delayed. They had the logos, but they didn't get the rhema until the weather was right.

The mud had to dry for Patton. The channel had to be calm enough for the crossing. But at the point that it is implemented and it's spoken and you now do this thing, you're going to follow the logos because I'm giving you the rhema.

Does that clear it up a little bit? So when it says the grass withers and its flower fades, it's not talking about the eternality of God's overall plan and purpose of the great structure of salvation and humanity and planet Earth and the incarnation of Christ and all of that. That would be logos here. He doesn't say that.

He says the rhema of the Lord remains. What does ace mean? I've told you this a million times. When we're talking about the abstract, when you're talking about the physical, it means into.

When we're talking about the abstract, it is unto, with a view toward. The grass may wither. You're getting older.

Your body's falling apart. Your stuff is disintegrating. Entropy is happening.

The flower is falling. Your eyes are getting bad. You're having many strokes all the time.

Seriously, I was trying to play something on the guitar the other day that I have played literally 10,000 times. I can do it in my sleep. I figured I'll be able to do this when my brain is gone.

And you know what? I can't do it anymore. I've had some kind of a mini stroke. I don't know what happened, but these two fingers will not do that action, and I'm having to relearn it because they don't follow my command.

They've done it without me thinking about it for 25 years, and now I cannot do it, and it's like I'm learning it for the first time. I've had some kind of a mini stroke. I've noticed it in other areas.

The grass withers. The flower falls. You lose capability, and you've got to work to keep it.

One part of your brain fails. You've got to train another one to take over. One set of muscles doesn't work quite right.

You've got to compensate and do it a different way. Something has fallen apart. You've got to find another way to get it done.

Compensation. We compensate for losses because the grass withers. It is withering.

The flower is falling. You can't stop it, and you don't need to. Thank the Lord.

The door into eternity is open for us. We can stick stuff in there now, and we'll collect it when we get there. Praise God for that.

What a wonderful, wonderful gift. That is our salvation. Our salvation is being delivered to us.

We can take the time. It doesn't matter, and this is what this verse is saying. Hear me closely.

The grass is withering. The flower is falling. Falling out.

Falling off. Falling away. But the rhema of the Lord with a view toward eternity, God's command to you with a view toward eternity, remains.

You are still able, and you are still obligated to follow the rhema of God. This is not talking about some abstract that God's plan is just going to go on indefinitely. He says, look, it doesn't matter that things are disintegrating.

These Jews of the diaspora, it doesn't matter that it's getting harder and harder, that your children don't have the same love and appreciation and immersion into the culture that you had when you grew up, maybe in Israel or in Jerusalem. Your kids are a part of the Roman world. They've been Hellenized.

They've been immersed in some other culture, all of these other cultures where they were dispersed. They're becoming Cappadocian. They're becoming Bithynian.

They don't have the old, we look at our kids and we say, oh my, I really wish they could have enjoyed the America that I grew up in or the church that I grew up in or whatever. And it's just not here anymore. The grass is withering, the flowers is falling away.

But the command, the spoken instructions to get the logos done for you specifically with a view toward eternity is still here. It remains. It is just as important to implement the plan and purpose of God specifically and individually for you now as it was at the beginning, as it was when the grass was fresh and the flower was, the dew was on the blossom and all of that.

Well, now I'm starting to look like the mummified rose. Now I'm starting to look like the petals falling off. The old stem is drooping and the leaves are curling up and going brown.

The rhema of God for me remains. The rhema of God for you remains. With a view toward eternity, keep your eyes on eternity.

Rest your hope fully on that deliverance that is being delivered to you through the revelation of Jesus Christ. Keep your eyes on that. Don't worry about your losses.

Don't worry about your diminishments. You young people have no clue what lies ahead. It's an abstraction.

It's an idea to you now, but it'll come. And you'll see it. You'll see your elder relatives peeling off, checking out, transferring forward.

But whatever stage you're in, young, medium, old, the rhema of the Lord with a view toward eternity remains. Your obligation to carry it out remains. Keep your eye on it.

Don't forget your orders. Don't forget your mission. Don't forget who you are and why you're here.

This is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. And guess what the Greek word is here when it says, this is the word that was preached to you. Rhema.

This is the marching orders that were delivered to you when the gospel was preached. You diaspora Jews, you first century, first generation Christians, you got your marching orders when you first heard the gospel. Follow Jesus Christ.

He is the Messiah, but the whole Messiah angle and the national deliverance and the future in the millennial kingdom has been set aside for this special time. You've got foreknown by God. You were picked out and chosen to be pilgrims in this diaspora.

That's your rhema. So carry it out. Do it well.

This is the rhema that was given to you. You've got your orders. There's no doubt.

There's no indecision. There's no confusion. There's no ignorance of what the plan is.

We don't have to know all of the logos, but we had better have a really good grip on God's rhema, God's word for us. I am a husband. I am a wife.

I am a father. I am a child. Here is what I am supposed to do.

I am an employer. I am an employee. These are the roles.

I know this. There's no doubt in my mind what my calling and what my responsibility is as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem the time in my specific circumstance. I've been given a disability.

I've been given a shortfall. I've had a loss. The flower fell off before it ever came out of the bud for me in some cases.

I never could do this. I was always lacking in that. I was handicapped out of the starting gate.

That's your rhema. Deal with it. That's your assignment.

Convert it into eternal capital with a view toward eternity that rhema remains. It's not everybody's rhema. It's your rhema.

So carry the thing out. Get with it. And that's why when we start chapter 2, which now we'll do next week, do you see the first few words there where it says, therefore laying aside, and then there's a list of things? Remember up in verse 13 where it said, gird up your loins and be ready? Well, this is the opposite word.

This is ungird, take off. This is the word that was routinely used for removing your clothing. Take off your robe.

It's used elsewhere in scripture. Take off the old man. Put off the old man with his lust and so on.

It's a garment. It's a shell. It's an outer covering.

Why is it that? Well, we'll talk about this more next time when we look at these individual things, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and so on. We clothe ourselves with these. Why do we wear clothing? I want to insulate myself from the world.

I want to insulate myself from the eyes of people. I don't want them seeing my actual naked shape and form. I cover.

I don't want eyes to see me. I don't want temperature to invade. I don't want to freeze.

I don't want to boil. I don't want to burn. I don't want to chafe.

My clothing is a protection. It's a cloak. It's a covering.

Well, there are certain things we cover ourselves with that we need to take off. They are a defense. They are a pushing away.

And that's what these things are. Malice and deceit and hypocrisy are often defenses. They are ways to keep people at arm's length.

They are, I will act this way because I can clothe myself. I will look better. We like to wear flattering clothes.

Clothes that set off our good points and hide our bad points. The art of dressing is all about enhancing good things you have and hiding bad things. And everybody is this way.

Men are much more debilitated in this than women. You've got all kinds of things you can do. We don't wear, typically, cosmetics.

We don't wear girdles and foundation garments. We don't change our shape subtly and invisibly to appear better than we are, typically. At least we didn't used to.

But what little we can do, we have to do by putting on a suit with padded shoulders and making ourselves look more muscular than we are or more imposing than we are or put something in our shoes and look taller than we are or whatever. But just keep in mind, as you think about this passage for next week, when it says, laying aside these things, this means take the clothing of this off. Take this garment of envy and malice and hypocrisy that you have put on as a defense or as a covering, take it off.

You don't need it. You should have girded yourself with the truth of God. You should be girded and in action carrying out the rhema of God.

That's the kind of clothing you need. Work clothes. Gird up.

Do the work to which you have been called. Don't burden yourself down trying to gaudy and dress up and impress people with these things that are actually sin. Hate the garment that is spotted by the flesh.

Put the thing off. Take it off. Drop it.

Cast it aside. Well, that's what we'll pick up next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word and how graphically and emphatically and clearly it communicates to us your plan and purpose.

And not only in the grand scheme of things in the realms of eternity and the universe and the angelic and human creations, but also individually and specifically for us. And we pray that God the Holy Spirit will enable us to continue to see clearly and to remember the opportunity that has been given to us because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, that we will appreciate it enough and recognize its value enough to be informed by it and conscious of it hour by hour as we live the days that remain to us in this life. We know that as we do so, we have the privilege of reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus and fulfilling your pleasure in our lives.

And that is our goal. And we ask and pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.