

1Peter 11-05-27a

This is Friday the 27th of May 2011. We continue our study in the book of 1st Peter. We resume tonight kind of where we resumed last time in verse 7, but I promise we'll we'll get further, at least further in this verse.

Let's take a moment at the outset to to pause and reflect on the grace that God has bestowed on us in giving us the opportunity to assemble and giving us the ministry of His Spirit and giving us this great passage to study together. Shall we pray? Father, it is such a wonderful blessing that we receive from your hands to be called by your name, to know that we are forever established and related to you through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that nothing can take us from your hands, that we are provided for, that we have fellowship with you and with one another. We thank you for the Lord Jesus and the work that he accomplished on our behalf, the continuing ministry that he exercises for us in intercession and in encouragement.

We thank you for the gift of your Spirit to enable us to understand and remember and apply the things that are far too wonderful for our mortal minds that are found in your word. We thank you for this portion of Scripture and the opportunity to study it together, and we ask your blessing on us as we do so. In Jesus' name, amen.

In 1 Peter chapter 4, he has presented us the example of the Lord Jesus, which is sort of a sobering thought just to begin with. It used to be very daunting to me. I've shared with you before that I really didn't catch much fire in my Christian life as a young, young man, because everybody kept saying, well, just live like Jesus.

What would Jesus do? Be like Jesus. And I thought, well, if I was the Son of God, if I was deity and was the copper wire welded to the iron pipe well then I could do all the things He did, but I couldn't really relate to Him as an example. I appreciated Him.

I was saved and I had all the usual amounts of gratitude for not going to hellfire and that sort of thing, but it just seemed very distant. The Christian life seemed like something that was for some kind of sainted people that I wasn't in that club. And it wasn't really until I came to see that the Lord Jesus did what He did with the very same things that have been given to us.

He lived His life by the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, not the power of His own deity. He was a man like us. He was tested in all points like we are.

And how many of you have heard, and you don't have to show your hands, but have you heard this illustration that the hypostatic union, the combination of deity and humanity, they have a Latin phrase for it, it's *posi non peccari, non posi peccari*, that He was able not to sin and He was not able to sin. They always used to explain to me in Sunday school that, well, the humanity part was the bendable wire like a soft piece of copper, but His deity was an iron bar. And because the two were wedded together and inseparable, Satan could tempt Him all He wanted and He was not

able to sin because His deity kept Him from bending.

Well, this is what really messed me up. If you ask me, and nobody has, but I'll tell you anyway, I think the *non posui peccari, posui non peccari*, that whole thing is a terrible, terrible analogy and it does not accurately reflect the hypostatic union. The reason Peter can give us Christ as our example, the reason Paul can give us Christ as our example, let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus.

We could not have that mind if it were some sort of super deity mind, because we're not deity. But the Lord Jesus was fully human and He was the prototypical human being filled with God's Holy Spirit and empowered and enabled and guided and encouraged by God's Word. And we can fully follow that example.

I'm not saying we can live a sinless life, but to the extent that we pursue it and to the extent that we care about it, we can live the same kind of life that the greatest of the saints, the greatest of the examples in Scripture ever led, because we have been given those gifts. The Lord Jesus Christ tried it out. He said, let me come down here and see how it works.

He lived in our flesh. He suffered fatigue and insult and temptation, and the temptations were real. It's not a real temptation if it isn't possible.

If Jesus is not able to sin, then He is not able to be tempted. I could tempt Brian right now. I could say, Brian, there's a big juicy piece of barbecued chicken drumstick in the refrigerator, and if you want it, I'll give you permission right now to get up in the middle of Bible class and go get that drumstick.

Well, I don't know if Brian's had supper. He might be really hungry. That might be a very real temptation.

And he is fully able, and I've seen him do it, to get up and go to the refrigerator and wipe out a drumstick. It could be a real temptation. If I said, Brian, I will give you one million dollars if you will go outside and lift up this house one inch off its foundations.

Just grab any corner you like, lift it up one inch, a million bucks. You can retire from Walmart, buy all the stuff you want. It'd be great.

Is that a temptation for Brian? It is utterly impossible, as far as I know, for Brian to go out and lift this house one inch off its foundation. I should maybe specify, with his bare hands. I mean, he's a pretty clever guy.

He might find a hydraulic machine of some sort, and then I'd be scratching around for money. But you get my point. A temptation has to be possible.

So it's really important, when you think about what Peter says here and what Paul says in other

places, when Scripture holds up the Lord Jesus Christ as our example, it's a real example. It is possible to follow in his steps. He isn't made out of stuff that empowers him to do things that you and I cannot also do.

Jesus said, the things that you have seen me do, he told the disciples, you'll do greater things than these. And they are greater because it's not just a miracle, it's not just calming a storm, it's not just restoring a withered hand, it is communicating the living Word of God. It is laying hold of righteousness by faith.

It is altering the eternal future, investing in the eternal future. Which would you rather have, treasure in heaven or an unwithered hand? If I had to take a choice, I'm taking heaven every time. I'm taking the eternal future every time.

Withered hand might wither up again next week. I might say, wow, look at this withered hand, and I'm waving it, and I'm in a truck, and there goes the hand. You can easily lose these temporal things, but that which cannot be taken away, that which is secured by the promise of God, is worth having.

That's what Jesus worked toward in his earthly life. Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame. And now he is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Nobody can take that seat away from him. Nobody. But he did it in human flesh through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

So Peter says, therefore since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, you have the same attitude. Adopt that same mindset. And it's a real thing.

The Lord Jesus is so much more precious to me now, because I know that he worked with the same stuff that God has given me. He is much more real. He is much more admirable to me.

I thought, well, it couldn't have been too much of a strain if he was the Son of God. But if he did what he did, and he did, in the flesh, using those tools, my esteem for the Lord Jesus just went through the roof. I had a whole new appreciation for him as the example of dedication to God the Father.

Well, Peter uses this, and we've seen these intervening verses, that this sets us apart. We can live in the world, but not of it. We are strangers and pilgrims, and the culture and the society and people around us who have no interest in the things of God pull us in bad directions.

But we decide to have that mind. I do not want to partake of sin. I'm finished with it.

And so then in verse 7, he says, look, the end of all things is at hand. The telos, the termination of all things. We are much nearer the end of history.

We are much nearer the end of the plan of God on this earth than anybody in history. If you think about that, I'm not really saying a lot, but you know, nobody has been as close to the rapture as us. Nobody has been as close to the millennial kingdom as us.

There has never been a day that was closer to all of those things than now. It is at hand. It is as close as the end of our life, and we don't know how long our life will be.

I've been reading a pretty hair-raising book. I was intrigued by it. It was on the half-priced books get rid of it quick shelf, and it's written by a Pulitzer Prize winning lady named Laurie Garrett, but it's a little bit old.

It came out in 94, but it's called *The Coming Plague*, and she followed it up in 96 with another book. But it talks about the unique conditions that now exist in the world that are responsible for diseases getting out of hand and for maladies to go completely wild and wipe out vast segments of the population making the Black Plague and earlier epidemics and things that we've seen look like child's play. She gives cases and the narrowly averted catastrophes that have taken place over the last few decades, and she says if steps aren't taken, and of course she's looking at it from a human point of view, the next time one of these things gets out of hand because of resistant bacterias and the overcrowding and global travel and just the way the world is set up today, the next big disease is going to cause huge devastation.

There won't be a way to stop it. They don't have a mechanism for stopping it right now, and it's a boulder on top of a cliff that it has already overbalanced, and it's not a matter of if it's going to hit, but when. And it's a very persuasive scenario.

The end of all things is at hand. You don't know when accident or the plan of God calls. Your time is up.

So his exhortation is, if you look at it from that standpoint, and of course this doesn't instill any big fear in us because it's promotion. It's going to be a good thing when we leave this earth and go to the next life, but Peter says because the end of all things is at hand, here's what you should do, and he says, therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers, and we sort of glanced at this last time, but I want to give you a little bit of insight into what he is saying from the Greek words here. The first one where it says be serious, well there's nothing more difficult than being serious when you're really supposed to be serious.

If somebody's telling you, come on, be serious, you know, funerals, things like that, this is when you can really have a hard time staying serious, and it doesn't really mean serious. This word is a, the actual word form here is *Sophronesate*, and *Sophrone* and the *Sophros* word group has a lot more to it than just trying to be serious. Let me give you a little bit of the lexical definition here.

It says to be able to think in a sound or sane manner, to be reasonable, to be sensible, to keep one's head, and it was part of the Greek idea, the Greek philosophical idea, that you do nothing

to excess, you're always within bounds, you're always over your feet, you know, if you do martial arts or dance or any kind of athletics, they always tell you keep your balance, you know, keep your knees flexed, be able to take a blow without falling over, and that's kind of what Sophrone means. It means to be balanced, but most of all it means to be reasonable, to be a thoughtful thinking person, and this is kind of what we've covered in the past about prayer, that you don't just rattle off a list of I want this, I want that, please help so-and-so. It should be a thinking process, a reasoning process.

We should make a case to God. You remember when Moses prayed for Israel, God said stand back Moses, I'm going to wipe these people out, I'll make a new nation out of you. What did he do? He didn't say, oh God, please help the Israelites, did he? Moses made a case.

Lord, if you wipe these people out, what are the nation's going to think? You've made promises. What's going to happen? Your promises are going to fall to the ground. Your word never falls to the ground.

You've promised to take these people in and grant them the inheritance that was promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and if you wipe them out, he makes a case. He thinks his way through. When we pray, we should make a case.

That's what Sophrone means, think it through. Explain to God why this prayer ought to be answered in the way that you're praying, and if you don't know, then pray what you do know. Lord, I don't know if you want this elderly person who's now in the hospital, I don't know if you want them to recover, to kind of go on in their maybe limited capacity that they've been in a while, if it would be better to just take them home and be released.

I don't know which way. Well, not much point in picking one and trying to pray that way if you don't really know which is better, and you can say, oh Lord, I will be done, but that's pretty generic. But God says, think.

Peter says, be thoughtful in your prayer, and this means let's do some application. Let's exercise what we know. What could God be doing in this situation? In what ways could God's glory be reflected? Let's be specific.

Let's pray a prayer that we know God will answer in the affirmative. Lord, glorify yourself in this person's life. May they be strong at the finish, sprint across the tape.

May people see Christ in this person. May it be a witness. If there's unsaved medical staff, unsaved family members, if there's people that are far from God, may their life and their testimony never shine brighter than it does in these closing moments.

Think of something. Think about prayer. That's what Peter is saying.

The end of all things is at hand. We've got to be thinking people, thinking believers, and you

practice it in prayer. Prayer is great practice, great exercise in application.

The great thing is, if you're interceding, if you're doing intercessory prayer or petition prayer for others, it's other people. You can see it more clearly, and you can say, well, here's a person in this situation, and I can kind of see objectively what parts of the Word of God apply, what God might be doing, what this person, where they need support and strength, and where they need encouragement. I know they're kind of fearful.

They've expressed doubts and uncertainties before. Lord, you know, may the Holy Spirit bring to their mind the scriptures that will comfort and encourage and strengthen them, motivate them, give them surcease from the, you know, demons that are afflicting them or whatever it may be. I'm using that sort of in the abstract, but think about it.

It's easier to do it over here. Well, the next time we're in that situation, if we are used to analyzing these situations and figuring out what might apply and what God might be doing, how much easier is it going to be when I'm at the center of that situation? It's good practice. It's good exercise.

Thinking is important. We are not supposed to be running on emotion and instinct and visceral reactions. We're supposed to be thinking, and sometimes it's hard because you can have emotions and visceral reactions all over the place.

You can be seeing red. You can have adrenaline pumping. You can be nervous.

You can be panicky. You can be so deeply concerned and in great straits over concern and care for something, and that practice in thinking, practice in being objective, practice in boiling it down to its essentials. What is the plan and purpose of God? Why would God be allowing this? What could he be doing? What applies? And that is a spiritual skill that we hone in our prayers.

So that's what Sophroneo means. Be prudent with focus on self-control. Be reasonable.

This is all straight out of the lexical definition. Same definitions apply in secular Greek literature. This was used, for example, in Mark 5.15. Remember the demon-possessed man? They kept binding and he would break his bonds and harass people that were trying to go up and down the road.

He lived in the graves and he had the legion. He came running down when Jesus got alighted from the boat. He came down and fell at his feet because the demons could not stop him from going to Jesus.

One thousand demons could not stop a man from heading in the direction of Jesus. Isn't that something? Your choice cannot be stopped by negative influences, even if they are living, breathing demons. A thousand demons could not stop that man from leaving the graveyard and

running and falling at Jesus' feet.

They couldn't do it. God won't allow it. Anybody that wants to can be released.

Anybody that wants to can come to Christ. No better illustration in the Word of God than that. But this is in Mark 5.15. You remember, after Jesus has the conversation with the legion and the legion leaves and you get the big pork fest going over the cliff, what happens? The people come out and they came to Jesus and they saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion sitting and clothed and sophroneo.

Remember the King James translation? Clothed and what? In his right mind. When you pray, be in your right mind. That's kind of what it means.

Be as rational and clear and composed as the man after the demons left. They were shocked at the transformation. In Titus 2.6, Paul says to Titus the pastor, he says, different groups in your flock there, in your congregation, exhort them in different ways.

And he says for the young men, the exhortation for young men, exhort them to be sophroneo, to keep their heads, to be rational. Don't be riding your motorcycle down Central at 85 or 90 miles an hour like the little, like the teenager that went past me this morning on my way to work. I mean, I don't go slow down the highway.

If somebody passes me, they are flying. And this guy passed me like I was in reverse on a motorcycle. That is not sophroneo.

That is nuts. It is just an emergency room visit or a morgue visit waiting to happen. So in Romans chapter 12 verse 3, Paul says, I say through the grace given to me to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think sophroneo, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Well, this is what Peter exhorts in prayer. Prayer is not a quick run down a list. It's not a quick dash off the top of the head.

It's a thinking process, analytical process, reasoning process, making a case. You wouldn't want your lawyer going into the court and just making it up once he gets there. He should be prepared.

He should have a case. He should be able to make the case persuasively. That's what sophroneo is.

The second word here, it says be serious, be sophroneo, and watchful. And the word watchful is nepho, N-E-P-H-O. Nepho means not drunk.

That's its original meaning, not drunk. And you find it translated literally as sober in a lot of places in the in the King James. But what it really means, because it builds on that idea, is to be well

balanced, to be self-controlled.

In other words, to be free, and this is again from the lexicon, to be free from every form of mental and spiritual drunkenness. You can be drunk on emotion, you can be drunk on worry, where you're overwhelmed, you can't think straight because something has so clouded your judgment and clouded your mind. Peter says don't be that way.

Be nepho. Be clear-headed, clear-minded, well balanced, self-controlled. You see a lot of people in the, you know, it's an easy thing to pick on the charismatics.

You know, some people's sins are hidden and others are right out in the open. And, you know, some of us mess up spiritually in private and others just are unashamed to put what they do right out there in full view. And bless their hearts.

You've got to admire the enthusiasm and the dedication of a lot of the people in the charismatic thing. But one thing they have a problem with is excess. If you get, you know, into the holy laughter thing, you get into rolling in the aisles, you get into the dancing and the frenetic, you know, they just work themselves up into a lather.

That is the exact opposite of nepho. Nepho is completely at the other end of that spectrum. And it would be helpful if some of those folks who think that, you know, repetition or, you know, even the thing that the Jews do at the Wailing Wall where they get their hair and start bobbing up and down.

Used to have one of those little birds on a glass stem, you know, there's red stuff in it and it would just bob back and forth. And this always reminds me of that when you look at film of the Wailing Wall. They're there and they're doing this bobbing thing.

One guy started that sometime back, you know, hundreds of years ago. And since then everybody thinks that's the way to pray at the Wailing Wall. Why are they bobbing like that? Where does the Word of God say anything about bobbing? But I'm telling you, they just bob.

It's like a, it's just catching. The Bible says when you're praying to God, you should be as alert and composed and clear-headed and thoughtful and rational and making a case as anybody that ever walked the planet. Both of these words read that.

And why? Because the end of all things is at hand. So, and above all, have fervent love for one another. And this word, you say, okay, well, here's where the emotion is going to kick in now.

I'm going to be all logical and reasonable and I'm going to get my prayers across in a very effective, cogent way. But when it comes to love for one another, now I can cut loose. I can gush.

I can really just get the emotional side of things done here. Well, *ektene* is the word that is translated fervent. And it doesn't mean so much fervor in the sense of intensity as it means

perseverance.

A good translation for *ektene* is steady. It doesn't really address the emotional side. If you want to be emotional in your love, great.

Knock yourself out. It doesn't say one way or the other. It says above all things, have steady, enduring, persevering, unwavering love.

Steady, persevering, enduring, unwavering. These are the primary meanings of this word. Why would your love waver? Why would it be unsteady? Why would it wobble? Well, you have done something unlovely.

So now it is harder to love you, Sam or whoever. We have an object of love and as long as they're being lovely, you know, there's all been all kinds of songs down to the easy to love. You know, there's a great country song, easy to love.

Well, what if you're not easy to love? What if you're hard to love? Why would you be hard to love? Because you sin. You mess up. You become selfish.

You become irritable. You get aggravated. You shoot your mouth off.

You do some bad thing and you're hard to love now. I love you, but not so much at this particular moment. Peter says, above all, have steady, unwavering, persevering, enduring, unshakable, unflagging love because love will cover a multitude of sins.

Now, what actually covers sins? You know all the forensics of sin, right? The Lord Jesus on the cross. What are the three main things that Jesus did on the cross? There's RR and PR, right? Redemption, reconciliation, propitiation. Each one has a direction, right? Redemption toward man.

Actually, it's redemption toward sin, reconciliation toward man, propitiation toward God, right? God is propitiated, man is reconciled, and sin is atoned for through redemption. The price is paid, right? Those three directions. Well, if the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, then what's this talking about? Love covering sin.

In the justice side of sin, the penalty is paid, the guilt is taken care of, the stain of it and the corruption of it is removed because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. You can be stabbed with a rusty screwdriver. Somebody can remove the screwdriver, but the rusty hole is still there, right? It needs cleansing.

Sin may be gone, but the after-effects are still there. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. The price has already been paid, the penalty has already been paid, but there are other effects of sin.

This is one of the most misunderstood, in my Christian life, is how multi-tentacled, hydra-headed,

octopus-armed sin is. The Lord Jesus cut off a couple of those for everybody in the whole human race. It was God's earnest.

God said, look, I'm going to take the penalty away for all of you people. Christ died for the sins of the whole world. He is the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Which direction does propitiation go? Reconciliation is toward man. Redemption is toward sin. So which way does propitiation go? Toward God.

He is the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. So how much sin is God holding against the world in the penalty sense? Nobody is going to go to the lake of fire for sin. God has freely, you know, and all the people say, well, it seems really unfair to me that, you know, Adam sinned in the garden.

I'm not sure if I was there I would have done that. And this whole thing, I'm dead in Adam and dead in sins, and Adam all die, and I inherited it, and I didn't get a break. I didn't get a chance to be perfect in sin.

I just woke up with it in the crib. So that seems kind of unfair. Well, guess what? God says you're right.

And because you didn't choose to sin, you also don't even have to choose to get the penalty released. Taking the penalty away. No, free no charge.

It's an earnest, but it's only one of the tentacles. You're not saved. It's not universal salvation, because the penalty has been removed.

There is still all of the other, and you know, Bob Thieme and others have illustrated this as bricks and a wall. You've got the problem of no relationship. You've got the problem of no life.

You've got the problem of corruption. You've got the problem of guilt. You've got the problem of separation from God.

You've got all of these things that also have to be remedied. It's not enough to say, hey, you got stabbed in the chest with a screwdriver. Let me just pull that screwdriver out.

You'll be fine. God's taken out the sharp instrument from our chest, but we've still got all these other problems that need fixing. And this is what happens at salvation.

And our kids right now are reviewing the fundamental study we did, and my condensed list, you know, various, you can talk to Schaefer, Thieme, or a bunch of others, and they'll give you varying numbers of things that happen at salvation. I tried to boil them down into just about four categories and 24 things. But at salvation, all the rest of those things are either at that moment or

potentially resolved.

The potential is given to us at that point to be ultimately sanctified, to be all these other things. Here's the point. Love will cover a multitude of sins.

One of those tentacles, one of those hydra heads, one of those gorgon, viper-headed bad things is the damage that sin does to our relationships. Sin damages our relationship with God. It's been described in different ways.

You are out of fellowship. You are in fellowship. And I typically don't use those terms because I think they got overworked and eventually kind of misunderstood.

But in the same way that if we get upset with one another because we think we've been shorted or somebody has been inconsiderate or has been thoughtless or has said something or done something or failed to say something, failed to do something, it's not just the thing itself. I asked you to take my suit to the cleaners or my dress to the cleaners because I needed it for this thing today, and you just didn't care enough about it to do it. Now here I am with a wrinkly set of clothes that I've got to go in and, you know, what's the matter with you? Well, you could fix the suit deal and say, oh look, ta-da, pull another set of clothes out of a hat.

But the sense of hurt that you didn't think enough of me, you didn't remember, you got busy, whatever it is, it interrupts relationship. It happens between us and God. It happens between one another.

And what Peter is talking about here is not that love is going to get sinners forgiven or that that love is going to make sin and its various effects go away, but the one effect that love does fix is my sense of indignation, my sense of having been wronged, my ego swelling up and saying, I shouldn't be treated that way, how dare you? You've hurt me, you've wounded me, you've insulted me, you've aggravated me, whatever it is that has happened to me. I can't help anybody else with redemption. I can't help anybody else with reconciliation or with propitiation.

I can't help anybody else with guilt. I can't help anybody else with corruption. I can't help anybody else with separation in their relationship with God or with other people.

The one tentacle of sin that I can deal with is the one that slapped me. Love covers a multitude of sins. I can have victory over that sin that affected me.

And how do I do that? It is the ultimate weapon against sin. It is steady, unwavering, dedicated love. Look at the Lord Jesus.

He's on the cross being crucified by these people and he says, Father, forgive them. Aside from bearing the sins of the world, aside from all of the other things going on on the cross, that one tentacle of sin that hit the Lord Jesus is these people slapped me around, yanked out my beard, spit on me, stuck on a crown of thorns, humiliated me, stuck me up here naked in front of my

mother and these other women, and have mocked me. But even on the cross, the Lord Jesus, the mind that was in Him, He said, this particular part of sin, this is mine to deal with.

This is mine to fix. And He fixed it. He shot love at it and killed it.

That's what each of us can do. Be rational. Be sober.

Be balanced. Be logical and thoughtful in your prayers. And above all, have steady, unwavering, constant stream of love, especially when sin comes.

Which is going to win, sin or love? Are you going to reduce your love? Are you going to let it damage your relationship? Are you going to let your ego out of its box and say, how dare you? Or you're going to have fervent love. Where does this love come from? Go back to Romans 5.5, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by God, the Holy Spirit. This is where cultivating the active presence and ministry, these are the things that kept that mind in Christ Jesus.

How did He do it? Power of the Holy Spirit, presence of the Word of God. He was able to be objective. Because rather than taking it personally and calling down legions of angels and pretty much ending the scenario right there, He recognized that there were bigger things going on.

It wasn't about just that little crowd of people and their myopia and blindness and stupidity in crucifying Him. He could see the bigger picture of God's plan and purpose. He had known it was coming.

He had prepared Himself. He knew the Old Testament Scriptures. He knew He was the suffering servant.

He knew this day would come. He steeled Himself. He spent hours and hours and hours in prayer daily.

Got up in the middle of the night, went off to commune with His Father and to brace Himself and prepare Himself for this mission. And now He's in a position to accomplish it. And that's what He did.

That's the mind that He had. That's the suffering that He accomplished for us. Arm yourselves with the same mind, Peter says.

Be steady and constant and unwavering. Don't let anybody diminish your love because it's that love that covers over. It's love that pushes away that one last wiggling tentacle of sin.

It's the last power that sin has over us. It can't separate us from God. It can't make us guilty.

It can't corrupt us. It can't take away our eternal life. It can't do anything other than break down the bonds between us.

And this is the last wiggle. I've used this illustration, but it seems so applicable to me. But it's kind of like when they weaken a germ and then shoot it into you as a vaccine.

If you've got an immune system, it actually strengthens you. Being exposed to that enemy strengthens you. God has left us in this world to be exposed to the enemy with the design that it will strengthen us.

Because He's not going to lock our volition down in eternity. We've got to practice making good decisions now. And we wrestle against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age.

And we get stronger. God is vaccinating us with sin here so that we will never be susceptible to it. And He won't have to strap down the plus-V side of our decision-maker.

We will never want to. We've already seen what it can do. And we can practice that now.

We shoot love steadily, directly at sin that comes our way. Love covers a multitude of sins. Well, we'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll actually move forward into verse 8 in this chapter and make some progress in this great letter from Peter.