Go Big AND Go Home

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, thank God,! And undefiled, thank the Lord,! And will not fade away, praise God, reserved in heaven for you, thank you Jesus, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

See, this is just dripping with the hope of eternity. In this, you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.
Yes, Lord, I feel that. Absolutely. So that the proof of your faith, that is, your saving faith in Christ, being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
You know, folks, only Christians talk like this. Only Christians refer to life like this when we suffer in trials and tribulations, when things worry us and create anxiety in us, when things seem out of control, when things are beyond our knowing, and there's dark spaces out ahead of us.
Only Christians talk about praise and glory and honor through Jesus Christ in the midst of circumstances like that. Verse 8, And though you have not seen Jesus, that is, in person, you love Him.
[1:54] And though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy, inexpressible, full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your saving faith the salvation of your souls.

Now, verse 10, As to this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries.
And I'm grateful for that. What are they searching out? What are they inquiring about? The beauty of the miracle of this salvation brought by God through the Messiah. They were seeking, in verse 11, to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating, as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.
What are they wanting them to look into and understand and better know? The cross. The way of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. How is He going to affect that for all of humanity?
Now, here's the kicker. Verse 12, It was revealed to them, now they searched and inquired and they got an answer from God. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves.
[3:13] They weren't looking into this as an end in themselves. Oh, great, I got my answer. I can go about my happy little life. No, what does the Bible say? They weren't serving themselves, but you.

In these things, which now have been announced to you, through those who preach the gospel to you, by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven.
God sent the Holy Spirit to work in these apostles, these disciples, these prophets, to preach the good news of this salvation in Jesus Christ and His cross.
things into which, at the end of verse 12, angels long to look. The angels are somewhat jealous or envious of the fact that we get to look into these things and we are recipients of what God has done for us in Christ.
We are the recipients of the joy of salvation in His cross, in His resurrection. We have that power living in us. Now, we don't always act like it, live like it, think like it, but it is there and we need to be encouraged in it.
[4:24] Now, here's where we'll be for this morning in verse 13. Therefore, you've seen that word before, therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, I'm going to stop right there because we're only going to do a few words in verse 13. We're going to drill down a little bit this morning. We're going to mine some of this that Peter is telling us in the way of running this race of spiritual endurance by preparing our minds for action and keeping

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sober in spirit.
See, Jeff Jackson needed this message this week. I needed to hear this. I needed to be reminded. Jeff, here's what it means for you to keep your heart prepared in an ongoing, continuous action of spiritual focus.
Jeff, here's what it's like for you to cultivate and nurture a sober spirit, a sober-mindedness about what's happening in your life. One of the hardest things in life for me has been being married to someone that I love with my heart, all my heart, and watching her suffer and being completely helpless to change it.
Now, that has pushed my buttons, I can tell you. And God knows that. And so, I think Suzanne's disease is as much about Jeff growing in Christ as it is about her growing in Christ.
[6:01] The health trials that we've gone through together. I'm just simply trying to say to you, not woe is me, but praise God God that He works in us through things that want to overcome us and He overcomes them for us.

And so, even in our suffering, God makes suffering purposeful. He gives meaning to the trials and sufferings, to the worries and anxieties, to the hardships and tears that we have in this life.
Now, some of you may be sitting here thinking, and I'm not really having that very much in my life right now. And I just say, well, the Word is still here for you. What does it say? Prepare.
Prepare. And so, we need to do that. Now, before we start drilling down into this, you see the title of my message is Go Big and Go Home.
This is a both and proposition, not an either or. Peter wants us to go big in Christ and then he wants us to go home to be with Christ. Now, that's the Christian life.
[7:10] I go big for Jesus right now. What does that look like for you? Because you're you and I'm me. Mine looks like what I am in my married life as a pastor, a husband, a dad with estranged children.

And I mean, I've got to wear all that. What does it look like for me to go big for Christ in the midst of that reality that I live in? What does it look like for you to go big for Jesus? Does Jesus get to be seen big in your life no matter what?
Does he? Are you basing all of what's happening now being defined by what is going to happen to you for all eternity? I mean, this is a blink compared to...
What is eternity? What do we know? How do we define it well forever? Okay, well, what's that? I don't know. Yeah, me neither. I'm just told that it will never end.
We have no idea what that is. No end? Everything about our life comes to an end. Everything you see here will decay. It'll all be dust one day or burn or be bulldozed and something else will be put up.
[8:15] Even your bodies don't last, right? This is what Peter is trying to tell us. Now, I want to proposition you here. I want to put before you something. I love the series of things that I get to say next because of where it takes us as we think about Peter's exhortation here, his spiritual encouragement to godly living here.

I want to put before you that the world has not changed much in 2,000 years. Oh, yes. Lots of technology, lots of advances in the way people do things. We don't have to necessarily wash our clothes by hand anymore in a river with a rock or whatever.
You know, we throw them in a machine and it goes and it does its thing and we take them out and put them in another machine that spins them and they get dry and we take them out and, you know, all that kind of stuff. We have a dishwasher.
We throw all of our dirty stuff in. We walk up to the sink and, you know, we... and everything's fine. We don't have to go out to the river and dip the water and take it in and drink all the amoebas and stuff.
It's all filtered. I mean, I get it. I know that. But I want you to think about this with me. Really, humanity itself has not changed much, if at all, in 2,000 years.
[9:32] As a new year, let me refresh you here. Some of you... How many of you were born after 1980? How many of you were born after 1980?

Babies. I was graduating high school in 1980. But listen, as a new year came in 1980, American morale was very, very low.
And it is so interesting to me how much what's going on today parallels what was going on in 1979 and 1980 when I was a junior and senior in high school.

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American morale morale was tanked at this time. I remember, even as a kid, as it were, still not yet really out in the workforce.
I had a job. I had a couple of jobs. But I wasn't really out in the workforce. Didn't know what I was going to do with my life. Just a couple of months prior to the new year, on November 4th of 1979, get this, 3,000 Iranians attacked the American embassy, creating a 444-day hostage crisis, very much like the one Israel went through after October 7.
[10:51] You see? 444 days, they kept the people in the American embassy in Iran, I guess it was in Tehran, hostage. I watched the news.

Rescue attempt was made, it failed. There were Cold War tensions with Russia and they were at an all-time high. A month later, in December of 1979, just before the new year, Russia shocked the world by invading Afghanistan.
A major war broke out in Afghanistan. Does that sound familiar to you too? Now, sandwiched between these two military events, on November 9th, Americans got the scare of their lives when a nuclear warning system at NORAD, our North American Air Defense Command, sounded an alarm that signaled a massive Soviet nuclear missile attack on the United States.
Did you know that? You're shaking your head yes, PJ. Now, it turned out to be the result of a technician entering a wrong code during a test.
How'd you like to be that guy? Then, some of you will remember this, we had the wonderful Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, sending these bombs through the mail indiscriminately to people and killing them.
[12:22] He was a terrorist. Even as Americans were trying to curb their rising tempers over having to wait for hours and hours in long lines just to do what?

Put gas in their cars. Folks, I'm not talking about gas at $4.50 a gallon or $5 a gallon. I'm talking you couldn't get it. I remember that.
1979 was a hard year on Americans and it seemed like the nation needed something to lift it out of its defeatism. Man, I remember this time too well.
In February of 1980, something so unlikely happened that it catapulted the heart of our nation and it crushed the heart of the Soviet Union.
It didn't happen on a battlefield with rifles or boots or bombs or strategic objectives. it happened on a battlefield of ice with sticks, ice skates and a puck shot into a net.
[13:34] I know. Many call it the greatest moment in American sports history. I remember watching it. I get goosebumps thinking about it. I watch that movie probably every year. I watch them.

I just can't get enough of it. Because I remember I was there not physically at the game because it happened in Lake Placid. but I was there glued to it. Screaming and it was incredible after everything that had been happening.
It was at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid when sports commentator Al Michaels ecstatically shouted into the microphone Do you believe in miracles?
Do you remember that, PJ? Do you remember that? Do you believe in miracles? As the clock ticked down with the final seconds and the American unprofessional amateur hockey team beat the professional Russian hockey team that had dominated hockey forever in a day and we lost our minds.
We watched all those young kids out there those young guys who had given so much to be there and do what they were doing crying and hugging and jumping and we were all doing it with them.
[14:50] Do you believe in miracles? Two days later they went on to win the gold medal against Finland. The country was absolutely electric.

Now that game came to be known as the miracle on ice and it galvanized our nation and gutted the Soviets. I was in my senior year as I said in high school I was one of those people weeping for joy and playing the idiot jumping up and down feeling the immense sense of pride that this most unlikely of victories brought home to our country.
I think it just came out of nowhere and shocked us all. Now you've heard the saying I'm going somewhere with this you've heard the saying go big or go home. You've heard this I didn't make this up.
It means this it means give it your all. Give everything you have put yourself out there go for it we might say or go home get out of the way don't bother to show up if you're not going to give everything that you have to this just go home.

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It can also refer to winning and advancing in competition or you lose and you go home you don't get to compete anymore sudden death. Usually it's a sports metaphor it challenges each member of the team to put their whole heart into winning so go big is what the U.S. hockey coach Herb Brooks instilled into his team he forged those men into a skilled disciplined determined group but most importantly listen to this he forged them into a group of young men playing together out of a sense of being duty bound to each other.
[16:31] I've never been in physical combat before unless you count spiritual combat which I've had plenty of but I've never been in physical combat where I hear that physical combat tends to forge men in a way that nothing else can because you're literally depending on the guy next to you doing what he needs to do to keep everybody alive.

For this challenge to have its effect the team had to believe that their efforts their sacrifices their pain their determination were all worthy of the goal.
In other words they had to not only just believe in themselves they had to believe in what they stood for. They had to believe in the goal they were pursuing. Listen they had to endure and persevere great personal sacrifice by believing that the goal was worthy of that sacrifice.
That's Hebrews 12. Is Jesus worth the sacrifice? That's where it comes to. Is Jesus worth the sacrifice?
See we use that word and I've tried to factor it out of my spiritual life. I don't want to talk to God about my sacrifices when I think about what Jesus has done and continues to do what is sacrifice on my part?
[17:49] Can you relate to that? So I try not to use that word when I talk to the Lord. Oh Lord what a sacrifice I'm making. Oh that just sounds so puny. And it does.

It gets really small when it's compared to this the cross. Right? I owe Jesus everything. And so do you. And so we're talking about our ability to endure, to persevere in hope for the Lord and what is involved in that and Peter tells us in this verse.
Each person needs to have a really high commitment to duty. That is to a clear and unbreakable sense of their own personal responsibility to the success of the effort. That's what teams do.
And we're a team. That sense of personal duty is the key element so that if anyone doubts, if anyone disbelieves, the worthiness of the goal he or she or perhaps the entire team will not be able to go big.
It only takes one to be the weak link in the chain and be an anchor. Drag it down. Things are very, very hard and depressing in the world of Christians as Peter writes this letter.
[19:05] Now I don't have time to go into a lot of the history. I would have already done that if we were preaching through 1 Peter and I did when I was doing this. But just suffice to say it's a very difficult time. Why? Listen, persecution and suffering are heating up due to people living out their faith in Jesus.

People are being persecuted because they're living faithful lives to Christ. They're being martyred, hunted down, ridiculed. Their homes are being taken away. Their land is being taken away.
They're being dispersed. It's gloomy. The outlook isn't good in terms of the suffering that is worsening under hear this name, Nero. Emperor Nero.
Gets really, really, really bad under him. Peter wants to inspire and help focus the hearts of these Christians, these believers, and he wants to do it in a way that sustains a maximum effort for making the most of their salvation in dark times.
He is calling them to this maximum, sustained, enduring, persevering effort in striving for the glory of Christ. In other words, he's saying, don't lose your spiritual focus.
[20:16] Don't forget why you're here. Don't let these earthly things and the trials and hurt and pain and tears, don't let those things draw you away from the hope that you have in Christ.

You would live each day with that perspective in mind. Again, I told you I needed to hear this. Perhaps I'm preaching this more to me than I am anybody. So he calls them to spiritual arms as he speaks to their sense of personal duty.
Now this is a good duty. This is a duty to Jesus. A duty that we should lovingly want to perform.
Peter wants to command an all or nothing mentality in Christ's followers as he comes to this section in his letter.
So in verses 13 through 16 he urges them to go big. Go big. In living out the rich reality of their salvation. Think about what Jesus has done.

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Think about what Jesus has purchased for you. And go big for him. His encouragements are linked together. They just go in succession.
[21:23] But here's what I'm going to do. I think we can capture Peter's instruction in what I'm going to call three primary or three commands concerning our conduct as Christians.

I'll put it up here. Three commands concerning our conduct as Christians, particularly given the fact that we suffer as we seek to be faithful.
We suffer because sometimes we sin and we have to live in the consequences of that. But many times we suffer because we're just trying to live our lives before the Lord. And life here is very hard. things come at us. Another way of thinking about this is three ways for you to activate. These are three ways that you can begin to act on to apply God's salvation blessings in Jesus to how you live your life each day.
Now these aren't the only ones. The New Testament is full of these kinds of exhortations, friends. But today we're going to do these. And I'm only going to focus on the first action of preparing your heart.
[22:29] I have three for you. Let me put them up here for you. Prepare your heart, place your hope, and protect your holiness. That's what we're going to deal with this Sunday and next. God willing. God willing next Sunday.

I'm just going to do number one today. What does it mean for you to prepare your heart? This is so foundational for how you deal with sin.
How you promote holiness. In a sin-cursed world. How you deal with and have perspective on the trials of your life. How you deal with your marriage, your kids, your job, making money.
How you deal with in-laws, ex-laws, I don't know. All the different ways that you and I face life together. And have to deal with the fallout that often happens in our relationships.
relationships. So let's deal with this first one in the way that verse 13 begins to outline it. Now remember we're only doing the first one. Prepare your heart. And we're going to drill down in that a little bit because I said it's foundational.
[23:36] It's so foundational. We can't move on to hope and holiness until you've grasped this one really well. So the first thing that we want to talk about this morning is obediently preparing your heart.

That's number one in verse 13. And it is very clear. Therefore he says prepare your minds for action.
And then the parallel thought keeps sober in spirit. Now you notice the word therefore. We don't want to skip over that just like we did when we read Hebrews 12 earlier this morning.
Therefore takes us back into the first 12 verses where Peter expounds our riches in salvation. Now don't skip over this because this is the basis of how you are to think about meeting the challenges of life.
See here's the thing. You and I get ourselves in trouble. We make bad decisions. We sin. And we're sinned against. And sometimes when we're sinned against we respond in sin by being sinned against.
[24:41] Don't we? But we get ourselves in a mess sometimes. Now how are we to understand the mess? How are we to understand what to do in the mess? What does Jesus have to do with any of that?

Does he matter? You said everything? Yeah, everything. Well, at least we should be looking to him in that way. Therefore takes us back into the first 12 verses where Peter expounds on the riches of our salvation.
You can't skip this. You just look at it with me. In verse 1 he says we are chosen. Does that have anything to do with our salvation? You didn't save yourself. You didn't decide to get saved.
You were chosen. Now eventually you had to come to the place where you made a choice for Christ. But you could never have made that choice if God didn't draw you and choose you. You'd have just stayed ignorant, stupid, moronic, sinful, dark, deceived.
Then you'd have just kept living like that. Because that's what you want. That's what I want. But no, God intervened. Amen. God chose you in His Son.
[25:49] See, that's important. He goes on in verse 2 to say we have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is the power that has cleansed you from the sin that would put you in a devil's hell.

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In verse 3 he speaks of God's great mercy that has done what? Caused us to be born again. You see, there it is again. God caused you to be born again.
He made you a new creature, a new spiritual being by His great mercy. And He gave to you, notice the result, a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
You have a living hope. Not a dead one. Not a dying one. A living hope as you live in Jesus.
Now this ought to make you want to come out of your seats, folks. And if it doesn't, I'm going to start over and do it again. Verse 4, you have obtained an inheritance. In other words, everything that belongs to Jesus belongs to you.
[26:54] In verse 5, He speaks of your faith, which He defines as a salvation, which is ready to be revealed.

In verse 7, He mentions your faith again, a faith that's more precious than gold because gold perishes, your saving faith doesn't. In verse 8, He speaks of belief in Him.
In verse 9, once again, faith, that is the salvation of your souls. Verse 10, this salvation that the prophets looked into.
And now over to verse 13, therefore. Once you rehearse these wonderful salvific blessings of Jesus Christ, therefore, you are duty-bound, team Jesus, to prepare your minds for action and to keep sober in your spirit.
That's your responsibility to yourself, to Jesus, and to the team. Peter wants us to be fully mindful of God our Father and of His precious salvation blessings given to us now and forever.
[28:15] So look at this. Here's some questions for you at this moment. What is most worthy of you building your life on? What is the bedrock that you're sinking your heart and soul into?

The bedrock would be the idea that Jesus gave us in Matthew when He talked about you building your life on the sand or on the rock? What is it that gives meaning and clarity and purpose to your life each day?
Why do you get up every morning? To go to work? Alright, well, what's work? A way to make a living. What's making a living? A way to provide for my family. What's providing for your family? Eventually, you need to get to the point where you say, well, it's all about the glory of Jesus.
For Christians, the answers to these questions form one complete whole for how we believe and live. Jesus Christ crucified and raised again for us.
So the God-given blessings of this relationship define our lives. Listen, Jesus is the treasure. We cannot stop preaching Jesus.
[29:26] We cannot stop honoring and glorifying Jesus. Every sermon ought to have Jesus as its terminus. Every sermon ought to have Jesus as its definition, its reason for being.

Raison detrit. Every single one of them. Wherever we are in the Bible, we need to come back to this reality. The God-given blessings of this relationship define our lives.
Your relationship with Jesus defines you. If you're a Christian, that's the truth. So therefore, let's go back to that. I'm going to put it up here.
Therefore, beginning in verse 13, Peter tells us to faithfully live out these blessings in hope and in holiness.
Now we'll get to hope and holiness. God willing, next week. We're to do this as obedient responses to circumstances. Is that what it says?
[30:24] We're to do this as obedient responses to situations. The wisdom of man. Our feelings.

No. As obedient responses to God. Because it is God who is defining and ordaining these trials and circumstances in your life. Now, folks, please, let me pause right here and again, be pastoral with you.
I always want to try to be transparent. I told somebody recently, I think it was on Wednesday night. Look, folks, I am never going to intentionally stand before you and try to make myself out to be something I'm not.
I want you to be proud of me. I want you to have respect for me as I preach the gospel and live before you. I want those to be parts of how we relate to each other, sure. But I don't want to be plastic with you.
And so as I say this to you, as I speak to you about a hope and a holiness that is obedient responses to God as our Father, we're supposed to respond to all of life that way.
[31:26] I can tell you that is a challenge. It's hard to be in the heat of the battle, some spiritual issue or trial in your life, and keep at the forefront of your mind.

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My primary responsibility right now and privilege is to make responding to this thing in my life about responding to God. and not being defined by the problem, not being defined by what I don't know, what I can't control.
I cannot control Suzanne's disease. Now I know I'm speaking about, but this is where I am right now. I'm just speaking right out of where your pastor lives right now. I can't control it. I have begged God with tears for years to please take it away from her.
In his wisdom, he hasn't. Now do I understand all of the dynamics of what's going on in my life as I try to respond to God? No.
And so what do I base my responses on? What I don't know? What I can't control? No! I base my responses on the truth. What God has spoken, what God has told me, what God has shown me.
[32:37] And right now, here's my marching orders. Hey, Jeff Jackson, prepare your mind, brother. Prepare your heart. Endure by protecting a sober-minded view of life.

Or you're going to spin out, bro. You're going to crash and burn. Well, I don't want to do that. There's too much at stake. Seeing your faces in my mind every week is an inspiration to me to help me keep going, to recognize that there's more to my life than just me and my suffering or whatever it is.
All of this relationship with Jesus helps keep me defined. It helps keep parameters on me. And you know, I can honestly say, I don't think I feel like those parameters hem me in in a way where I'm going, oh, oh, push them out, push them out.
I'm too closed in. I've learned to see these things as the discipline of the Lord, the protection of the Lord. And so I don't push against them. I'm not, I'm not trying to bump them out, at least not intentionally.
And if I ever come to think that I am doing that, I'm being a spoiled brat. I'm having a pity party. Those are ways that I do this. No, you settle yourself in and you say, all right, Lord, this is what you would have me race in.
[34:02] This is my lane. Here are the parameters for Jeff's lane. This may not be PJ's lane. It may not be your lane or your lane. This is my lane. And this is what it looks like.

And I need to stay in my lane. I have brothers in Christ who help me do that. They'll remind me, bro, stay in your lane. I'm trying to put some of what Peter's saying here in the modern vernacular, okay?
Therefore, beginning in verse 13, faithfully live out these blessings in hope and holiness, but do this as obedient responses to God our Father. So I'm not so much responding to circumstances.
I'm responding to God. So as Suzanne and I get in the car tomorrow and drive up to Richmond to do all the stuff we need to do at the surgery center for her, I hope that my perspective will be, this is a response, and it's a response to caring for for my wife, but there is the greater reality that this is a response to a sovereign God using medical science to help minister to my wife, and I need to get into that.
I need to get into that lane. Not complain, not whine, not worry, just get in the lane and go do the next thing and trust that God knows what He's doing, whatever the outcome, because I could lose my mind trying to press outcomes.
[35:33] Are you with me? Isn't that our nature? We want to press the outcome. We don't know if we'll be alive in two hours. I say this to you.

We live and move and we have our being in a salvation soaked relationship with our Creator. So in the uncertainties, hardships, trials, our salvation in the Lord Jesus is the difference for us.
And we need to be responding to God. Mark, you with me? Not to life. Not to problems. Not to how hard life is.
We need to be defined by Christ. And so everything that happens to us, our first thought ought to be, how do I respond to this in the Lord Jesus? What is God doing here?
And you only may have one thing to hang on to. Because the Bible tells you why God brings trials into your life. they may not be all the answers you want because they don't fill in all the blanks of what you don't know.
[36:38] But here's what you can know. One of the reasons God brings trials into your life is so that you will be able to comfort others with the same comfort with which you've been comforted. Right?

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We know that because it's written in the Bible. So I can grab that one and say, okay, Lord, in some way, the comfort that you're bringing to my life as I go through this trial with Suzanne is a comfort that you're going to use me to comfort others in at some point.
Maybe you're already doing that in ways I don't even know. But that gives meaning and purpose to it. Peter, listen now, please, catch this.
I want you to get lost in all this stuff I'm saying. Peter wants our lives to reflect that relationship with Jesus more than anything. And when we go through trials, that doesn't stop.
So he begins with our hearts. Why? Because our hearts are who we are in our relationship with the Lord and with other people. We relate to others out of our heart, out of who we are.
[37:47] We can't help it. In other words, our hearts are seen in what we think, believe, feel, want, and choose. That's how you see your heart.

So he says this, he says, look at the text, prepare your minds for action. Boy, those are fighting words, aren't they? If you say to yourself, if someone else says this to you, let's roll up our sleeves and get busy, what do you mean?
When you roll up your sleeves and get busy, it means, hey, let's get after it, right? Let's get focused. Let's get going. This is Peter.
Let's get going. The wording here is literally, gird up the loins of your mind. Roll up the sleeves, as it were, of your mind, or your heart.
This is what he's saying. Now, this is interesting. This reflects an ancient world's word picture of a man cinching up his long robes in his waist belt.
[39:05] So he would take the robes, you know, that's what they wore, they didn't wear stuff like this, and they would take those robes and they'd roll them up and then he'd cinch it into his waist belt that he had around here.

In other words, he unencumbered his legs for what? For action, for race, for movement, whatever he needs. He didn't want anything tripping him up. That's the word picture these people would have seen in their minds by this expression.
This is very interesting to me. I'll have this up on the screen so you can see it. Preparing your heart, that is preparing your mind, your will, your emotions, your wants or desires for action means this. Jeff, what does that look like in my life? It means unhampering your reasoning. Now, I'm trying to break this down for you so you can see how this can apply to your life. Unhamper your reasoning. You do this so that you can discern the best way forward in the Lord. This isn't necessarily the best way forward in remedying the problem necessarily.
[40:14] That could help. But right now, your greatest concern is I want to deal with the problem by first of all being faithful to Jesus. Being faithful to Jesus may not alleviate the issue.

You've got to leave some of that to the Lord. And I say this is where most people often lose the battle against sin and spiritual immaturity.
And so they stay stunted. They cycle through the same kinds of sins and patterns of sin in their relationships with other people or in some stronghold on their life.
Listen, you always act on what you believe and perceive in your mind. And so Peter is saying you need to prepare your heart, prepare your mind, prepare the control center of your life for action. Gird up your mind, unhinder, unhamper your reasoning ability to discern in the Lord, to make wise decisions about what's happening to you.
[41:25] Paul spoke about this. He gave us an example of this that I'll ask you to look at here. This is Romans 12.2. You're familiar with this. Do not be conformed to this world.

Be transformed. How? By the renewing of your mind. This is you girding up the loins of your mind. What to what purpose?
So that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. You want to live a good life. You want to live an acceptable here means well-pleasing to God.
You want to live a good to God, well-pleasing to God, and perfect to God life in the Lord. Perfect here would be complete, mature. That would show the effects of a well-contained spiritual mind, a reasoning mind in the spirit, a mind that can discern life spiritually and respond appropriately in the Lord.
You know when this doesn't happen because you get in all kinds of trouble, and you start feeling like the wheels are coming off. You battle against worldly conformity or ungodliness as you are transformed by the renewing of your mind.

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[42:49] This is an ongoing battle. It's not a one and done. It's not a I've arrived. I haven't. All right, now look at this up here on the screen. For what purpose do you obediently undergo the transformation, the girding up of your mind or your heart?

And there it is in the verse, so that you may prove what the will of God is. The will of God is what you live out in the truth of the word. You live the truth.
That's why I put that there. Live the truth. This is you making God's word alive in your life. You're responding to Jesus in truth and your life looks like a life that is being lived in his truth.
That is by his will. That's how you connect those dots. It's a lot easier to say than do. God is working in your life as a Christian, always and in all things.
So the action that you're preparing your heart for is that of responding to God, your Father, with a holy, God pleasing lifestyle. Now, here's something else.
[43:57] A godly mind is prepped for a lifestyle of responding to God's work in your life. Your responses are your heart attitudes going public.

Do you see that? The way that you respond to life is your heart attitudes going public. They're being put on display. How?
Through your actions, your behavior, which reflects God's will and glorifies God's name if you're making it about God. And it all begins with your heart worshiping God.
So Wednesday night crowd, this is why we say the battle is in the mind. The battle is in the loyalty of your heart. You're either being loyal to self-imposed idols.
You're being deceived by wants and desires that God doesn't want for you. That's how idols are fueled and raised up. or you're making it about the Lord. You're making it about Jesus.
[45:02] Again, making it about Jesus doesn't mean you get all the answers. It doesn't mean that all of the darkness is pulled away so now you can see the future. That's not what it means at all.

It means that you're trusting the sovereign God to do a good work that He knows what He's doing. And listen, it doesn't always feel good. I can promise you the last couple of months of my life there hasn't been much in the way of feeling good.
It's knowing good. Knowing. It's not easy, is it? It's not easy, Fred. It's not easy. We have to persevere.
We're being called by Peter to persevere. Alright, now Peter's unhindered emphasis here, his emphasis on being unhindered, unhampered in preparing your minds for actions, suggests that we need to carefully consider something.
Here it is up on the screen, personal weaknesses. You have certain ways of gravitating toward or manifesting personal weaknesses in your life that inhibit your ability to respond to the Lord.
[46:12] Now, they don't have to be things that are not overcomable. Paul said, hey, my weaknesses show the strength of God because the only explanation for overcoming my weaknesses is God's grace.

So, I would rather boast about my weaknesses, right? Isn't that what he said? Yeah. Praise God because His strength is seen in my... That's the key. You don't run away from your weaknesses, you confront them in Christ.
And you ask God to turn those weaknesses into strengths that display His goodness in your life. I know some of mine because I've lived with them long enough now. And I can kind of sense them coming on and I can see signs of them manifesting.
And if I don't run to Jesus quick, it's going to be all about Jeff and not Jesus. I hope hearing that about your pastor doesn't discourage you. I hope you just see that I'm just like you.
I'm a human being and I need to do the same things that I'm preaching about here for you. We all need to be doing this. What kinds of things short circuit our obedience to Jesus, Jeff?
[47:18] What are you talking about? Well, things like this. Fear. Maybe the fear of man. You're all wrapped up in the approval of other people. You're all wrapped up in your own insecurities.

You can't stand the idea of being exposed as someone who doesn't know what you're talking about. Someone who doesn't have it all together. So your insecurities become something that define the way you relate to other people instead of love defining you.
You can't get past your own fear, your own self, your own pride, your own worry. Maybe it's stuff like control. You want to control circumstances for various reasons.
Maybe it's a sense of self-righteousness, I'm better than. That manifests in all kinds of ways. Maybe it's laziness. You're just lazy. You just don't want to pay the price.

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You don't want to do what's necessary. Maybe it's lust. Maybe it's greed. All of that comes from our hearts and all of that would hinder our minds being prepared for God-glorifying action.
[48:27] Now similarly, Peter mentions next that we're to do this. Listen, prepare your minds for action, but now what does he say? Notice the text, keep sober in spirit.

Now if you have the ESV, it says preparing your minds for action and being sober minded. That's good. Be sober minded.
So here are the questions that I just threw up here. What clouds and confuses your mind from sound judgment? Sober mindedness is sound judgment. Being able to make sound, godly, wise judgments about directions, about responses, about what you'll do.
Instead of being herky jerky, you're like a pinball machine. Something happens, you're off on that bumper. You hit against that bumper, you're over here now.
What about the steady course where you're not blown around by all winds of whatever? It could be doctrine, it could be ideas, it could be concepts, it could be circumstances, it could be a host of things.
[49:34] No. What clouds and confuses your mind? What draws your heart into disloyalty, discouragement, and disobedience? See, what are those weaknesses? A sober mind is a clear, alert, spiritual mind.

So here's what it is, listen now, you learn to spiritually assess, and then respond to life's circumstances by responding to God in them.
You're more concerned, not so much about rendering the problem as, am I honoring God in this response? Even if the circumstance doesn't change immediately, or change to my liking, am I going to live to honor the Lord in it?
Man, I'm telling you folks, this is super hard. Well, apart from grace, we'll never be this. So I say here on the screen, what you put into your mind and heart via your eyes and ears will determine what you fix your hope on and then live out in your behavior.
I can say this more succinctly. What are you consistently pumping into your mind? Let me say it even more concisely. What do you want? What do you want most in any given circumstance?
[50:51] What do you want? Because what you want is what you're going to pursue. I really liked Wayne Grudem as a theologian and Grudem had a good perspective here.

He characterized preparing our minds for action and being sober minded as, and I like this, spiritual alertness. Are you spiritually attuned to life?
Are you spiritually alert to life? So that as life hits you, you immediately begin to reason and then respond to what's hitting you spiritually.
You perceive it spiritually, you interpret it spiritually, and then you begin to respond to the Lord in that spiritually. That's a Christian that's growing in the Lord.
You can see why I would want to bring this to you this morning, I think. So to keep your mind sober means not letting the mind wander into any other kind of mental intoxication or addiction which inhibits spiritual alertness.
[52:00] Nothing that would inhibit your spiritual alertness or any laziness of mind. I think we're probably more of us are lazy minded than anything. And that'll lull your Christian into sin through carelessness or simply by default.

That'll just become your default setting. There's a couple of cross references here I want to show you before I move to a close. Look, if you look at your cross references in your Bible, you know how to do that?
You use the little verses corresponding to the number of the verse and you'll see verses listed and you should see 1 Peter 4-7.
So I'm going to turn there. 1 Peter 4-7 is a cross reference listed for this verse. Chapter 1 verse 13. The end of all things is near.
Now notice the word, therefore, be of what? Sound judgment and sober spirit. Why? For the purpose of prayer.
[53:00] You want for something to hinder your prayers? You want something to make your prayers all self-centered and self-focused? It's always about you? Well, you combat that with sound judgment and a sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

Now if you also look at chapter 5 verse 8. That's another cross reference that we have for our chapter 1 verse 13 verse. He says right off the gate here, verse 8, chapter 5, be of sober spirit.

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Be what? On the alert. That's the idea. Why? Because you have an adversary, the devil. He's named. He is a spiritual being, an enemy.
He is prowling around like a predator. And he's looking for someone to devour. Don't be a victim. Be on the alert. Be on the alert.
So this is a spiritual alertness in your life. He tells us to be sober-minded for the purpose of prayer and protection. Prayer helps you communicate with the Lord and agree with God about your life.
[54:12] Now you can see that Peter's calling us to protect and produce a spiritually maturing, steadied, readied mind because we're always making meaning of life. We're always choosing how we will live out our lives based on what's going on in our lives.

So being sober-minded, being spiritually alert in the use of our mind serves us in the effectiveness of our prayer life and in our protection against the schemes of the devil. Folks, if you're not alert to this, and no pun intention, if you're not alert to this, then you're going to be bounced all over the place or you're going to be lulled into a self-deceptiveness that lets you just live life as you just go along and do your little thing.
Your little thing. And Satan will let you be very comfortable in that, I promise you. Our for and no more, we're just doing our little family thing here, whatever. Remember, you're not spiritually alert. You're not on the team and in the moment. No. 1 John 2, 15-17, look at this, Do not love the world nor the things in the world, because if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Boy, that is so clear and terrifying. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of your life, that's not from the Father.
[55:39] It's from the world. The world then is passing away. And so, you're basically living for what is passing away, what is temporary. And also, it's lusts.

Those wants and desires that drive your life into loving the world, that's all going to pass away and be judged by God. But, the one who does the will of God lives forever. See the contrast there? Now, please allow me to close with this. I want to give you a pastor's practical counsel. This is me trying to give you a few takeaways because I've said a lot of things.
I told you we were going to drill down a little bit in verse 13. Look, all we did in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 13 was I dealt with this. Therefore, prepare your minds for action and keep sober in spirit.
I just did half the verse. But, that's number 1. We'll try to do numbers 2 and 3 next time. Let me give you what I'm going to call a pastor's practical counsel.
[56:38] Three E's of caution and evaluation as you mature in your spiritual alertness. The first one concerns entertainments. They're all E's. Three E's. Entertainments. Be careful about what amuses and distracts you.

Now, listen carefully to this. You can see it on the screen. Don't allow yourself to be entertained by sin, evil, and vice. Please do not learn to laugh at, laud, lessen, or like what God says is wrong. In any form or for any reason. If I'm watching a show or something like that and some kind of sinful thing comes on the screen and I'm laughing at it, I'm like, Jeff Jackson, what are you doing? Why are you training yourself and taking into your heart things that teach you to laugh at sin, to laud sin, to be lazy about it? And you call that entertainment?
Be careful what you're allowing to entertain you. Be careful what you're learning to laugh at. Be amused by. Be careful what is desensitizing you to sin.
[57:50] You know, folks, I can't get graphic up here in the pulpit, but I do want to be a little bit specific. I have been astounded. And I haven't always been a Christian. I was a grown man as a non-Christian, an unbeliever.

So I've lived in the world. But I've been astounded at how many TV shows, or whatever they are, I don't know exactly how you get them, I might pipe them in, have very explicit scenes of nudity in them.
And they're super popular shows. Suzanne and I will be looking for some drama or something, and we'll see these lists come up on the screen that say, number one in streaming today, or this month. And you'll just look at the picture and go, yikes, that's number one? Millions of people? Have you noticed the cussing that's gone on in our society now?
Have you noticed that there are certain words that used to be like the absolute ultimate terrible cuss words, and now they're like commonplace. Women use them. It's craziness.
[59:03] But you see where our society is going. Well, I think a lot of this has to do with what people have allowed themselves to be entertained by. They've become even more desensitized to

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what's bad, wrong, immoral.

Now then we have this one. Now this is your life. Then we have this one, enlightenments. I just chose three things with ease. You know, you could do 50 of these, I guess.
Be careful what you allow to educate and instruct and inform your mind and heart. About life, about you, about what's right and wrong and true, what's good.
It's a very seductive path to find yourself sharing in what the world calls insights or wisdom, which the Lord calls foolishness. See, what's your standard? What's your standard for right and wrong, good and bad?
And then finally, enticements. These overlap. Be careful about what attracts, draws, holds, and occupies your mind and heart, because you're training your heart in that. even good things we do and value are vulnerable to being tainted by our deceitful lust.
[60:11] Even a good thing can become something that we want too much, value too much, allow too much to define us, and it kind of takes us off into a polarized position in a certain area of life.

It was a good thing that we allowed to come over here and get disproportionate. And so now I'm polarized by it. And what that will do is alienate people from you, and not in a good way, because it's your way or the highway, because your view, see?
Deceitful lusts are real, folks. So Peter's first two encouragements, prepare our minds for action, keep sober in spirit. Those two things combine to help us succeed in his primary point in this verse. What's his primary point? It's to fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus. That should be how you and I are defining the way we live in this life, in circumstances, situations, relationships.
I have a hope so fixed, so completely immersed in the favor of God on my life in Jesus Christ, in the hope that one day he's going to complete me in Jesus.
[61:24] He's going to bring me to Jesus and give me a body fit for all eternity. It'll never tire, it'll never wear out, it'll never cry, feel bruised. And I'll live like that with Jesus in absolute harmony with God forever.

He says fix your hope on that. Prepare your minds for action and be sober in spirit. God willing, we'll be able to do more with this idea of hope and holiness next time.
You're always good to listen carefully and listen fast, so thank you for that. Let's pray together.
Father, your word is so rich that we could just take a few words from one verse and drill down and not even mine all of the depths of the treasures of what you want to tell us and who you are.
But we have seen very clearly this morning that you are a good and gracious God. You are a God who helps us to live the truth, to take it into our hearts and to measure our lives by that truth.
And so I pray not just for the people in our congregation who are currently experiencing some very, very difficult trials. Yes, I pray for them, but I pray for each of us.
[62:39] I pray for each of us to take these commands to heart, that we would prepare our minds for action, we would unhinder ourselves with anything that would trip us up, and that we would have sober judgment, sound judgment, as we spiritually appraise the issues of life.

Help us to take these things to heart, Lord, to make change where we need to in repentance, and to replace where we need to with the glory of God as our chief objective and desire in life.
Thank you for being a gracious king and for giving us all that we need for life and godliness in him.
It's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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