The Summum Bonum of Earthly Life

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Date: 06 February 2022

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[0:00] I love to hear you sing. Right now it echoes off the floor. When the carpet comes, I guess it'll, I don't know what it'll do to it then. Have to sing. Greg says you'll have to sing louder.

Well, folks, let me invite you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter, where we are working our way verse by verse, expositionally, through this wonderful treatise from the Apostle Peter.
No stranger to suffering and trial himself, writing to people in trial who are suffering. The title of my message for this morning is a little hard to pronounce, nevertheless.
The Summum Bonum of Earthly Life. What in the world? Well, if you've taken any philosophy courses or if you've read much in the classics, you've probably come across this phrase before.
Historians trace Summum Bonum to Cicero. That's the origin of this phrase. He was a Roman statesman and philosopher who lived in the century just before Jesus was born.
[1:16] It was the time of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. A very, very weird time of upheaval in the Roman world.

Well, the phrase is obviously Latin, and it means this. It means the highest supreme or chief good from which all other good flows.
So if you look it up in Webster's Dictionary, here's what you'll find. The supreme good from which all others are derived. And this is one of the primary issues that ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle and Socrates were so busy debating and trying to resolve.
Now, I don't know if they read the scriptures. They would have found all their answers right there.
But they spent a lifetime debating all of that, the Summum Bonum of earthly life, and trying to figure out and resolve what is the highest good, the supreme or chief good that defines and rules all other good in life.
Is there a best? Is there a highest or supreme way to live your life? A supreme good, which then would define every other aspect of what would be the good life.
[2:51] Now, you guys know as well as I do, most of the people on the planet are chasing what they are defining as the good life. They want a good life.

So this is dealing with the heart and soul of what it means to be human. And it deals with the heart and soul of what most human beings are pursuing and giving lots and lots of money and time and other resources too.
Even willing to trade their marriages for it. Willing to trade their souls for the good life. Willing to forfeit their children for the good life.
How many broken homes do you know of? How many divorces do you know of? How many shattered families do you know of? For what?
For what? Well, at the end of the day, in my 30 years of dealing with people and soul care and ministry, I find that at the root of all of that is this idea that they are better off in these certain situations that they've tried to define for themselves only to find that they've really brought ruin and disaster on themselves.
[4:02] That's what we'll be talking about. What is the highest good? If it's true that there is a highest good, what is the highest good of this life?

How would we ever come to know for certain if what we think is the highest good is truly the highest good?
Well, the answers in order are yes. According to scripture, there is a supreme good defining all good for this life.
What is that supreme good? the highest good defining all good for this life is what? Knowing God and worshiping him forever.

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And yes, we can be certain that this is the highest good because God has told us so in the Bible. Now, if you're a parent as a Christian parent, you want to teach this very heart of truth to your kids, don't you?
[5:14] You want them to know what is the most worthwhile pursuit in all of life. And we as Christians, as believers, as followers of Christ, we want to tell them that it is knowing God and worshiping him forever, which catapults them beyond this life into eternity.

We want them to have an eternal perspective on themselves and all that goes on on this planet. We want them to realize that there is life after death.
The question isn't whether or not they'll live after they physically die. The question is where will they spend eternity? And we want to help impress that on them.
Right? God has told us what the highest good is in Scripture. He's told us what he wants us to focus on and what is worth the resources of our life over the course of an entire lifetime.
Just consider a few passages with me as we kind of put our minds in gear for this. If you'll go with me to Psalm 73. Psalm 73.
[6:31] When we ask the question about the highest good or what is good in life, what is best, what is supreme, Psalm 73. 28 gives us a good start.

The psalmist says, but as for me, the nearness of God is my good. I have made the Lord God my refuge that I may tell of all your works.
He's wanting to tell us my life is spent living out and speaking of the goodness of God. I want everything about who I am and what I am and what I stand for to reflect the character, the goodness of God in my life.
So he says, the nearness of God is my good. That is my highest good. All right, let's look at this together. Matthew 6, 33.
These are just a few places we could go. There are many. These are some that I thought of. Matthew 6, 33.
[7:36] Some of you probably have this one memorized. Jesus says, seek first his, God's kingdom, but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

This is a remedy for anxiety and worry on this planet. Jesus says, what I want you to see as the highest good is that you need to first and foremost of all in your life, seek God and his kingdom, his righteousness, his goodness.
And then, perhaps, staying in Matthew, chapter 22, another one you might have memorized, chapter 22, beginning in verse 36.
this religious leader asked Jesus a question and he said to him, yeah, it's you.
Verse 36, teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
[9:02] This is the great and foremost commandment. And then he added, the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love, the sumum bonum of life, the highest good of life, knowing God, loving God, seeking God, following God, living for God, and then knowing that that sets everything else in proper pace.

That's what we're looking at this morning. Then go ahead and let's turn back to 1 Peter and consider then what Peter says in our text for this morning. Here's how he puts it.
1 Peter chapter 1 beginning in verse 17. facing if you address as father the one who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth, knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb, unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but he has appeared in these last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God. If you go to verse 13 in chapter one, we've covered this ground before verse 13. 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. Peter tells his Christian readers that what God caused spiritually inside them, being born again to a living hope, that's verse three that we covered a while back, needs to work its way physically outside of them in the way they live each day. Now, we covered that last Sunday. We've been talking about that for a number of weeks together. We have this salvation that God has brought us in Jesus Christ, and it is a wonderful, beautiful, miraculous reality about who

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we are as being recreated in a new humanity. Now, Peter is saying what you want to do is take what God has done on the inside and work that out in holy living to the outside. Strive to work out what God has worked in. We've been talking about that reality and concept for a number of weeks. All right. We spent a lot of time on that, actually. Verse 13 in chapter one function somewhat like an introduction to verses 14 through 16, which we covered last week. Verse 17 for today fulfills a similar role for verses 18 through 21. Verse 17 acts as an introduction to the next few verses. So here's the point. We need to give careful attention and the lion's share of our attention this morning will go to this to what Peter introduces in verse 17 because it forms the summum bonum. That's what I'm referring to it as the summum bonum of living a holy life, a holy life. What do we mean by a holy life? It's a set apart to God life. It's not a life defined by, ruled by, and set apart to your job, your spouse, your kids, your hobbies, or any of those things that can be fine and good in and of themselves, but they're not God, and they don't define who you are.

So he's saying to us living a holy life is a set apart to God life. It is a life concerned with pleasing God in every aspect. Right? So what is Peter's primary concern? What is his main idea that he wants to instruct his readers in? It comes as our only command or our only imperative in these five verses, and here it is.

Conduct yourselves in fear. Conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth. This is the primary verb. Conduct yourselves in fear, which Peter conveys as his action. His action. It's the main idea Peter wants them to act on. We might say it this way as we talk to each other. Here's the takeaway.

[14:12] Here's Peter's takeaway. It's what he's most concerned with. So then I ask the question as I study this out. Well, what does Peter mean? What does the Holy Spirit mean by this command for us to conduct ourselves in fear? On the surface of that, if you're not familiar with this concept in Scripture, it seems like, maybe even sounds like, Peter is commanding us to be scared of God, to be terrified of God, to have a sense of panic about our relationship with God.

Why? Because God is up there in a wrathful state, and in any minute he can squish you like a bug. You know, there's some people who teach that, and that's how they keep you in line.

Well, that's not what Peter's teaching here. So we'll go back and we'll erase all that. Because that's not what he's doing. There's something else that he has in mind as he comes to this very important command. What does he mean to conduct yourselves in fear while you are living as a stranger, a pilgrim, a sojourner on this earth?

This is our first point to consider. And here it is. I'll put it up on the screen for you. Your response of reverence. Your response of reverence. We'll begin with your response, and then we'll move into how that response flows from your relationship to God.

So I want to be very clear. As I bring this to you, I am not suggesting to you that this is some type of work that you can do to earn your salvation or to make God happy with you and prove to God you're actually a good person. This is a response to the goodness of God. Very important. So your response of reverence in verse 17, if you address, you could have here sense. I like if because of what he's trying to do, but a couple of translations put since you address his father, the one who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth. Now, conduct yourselves in fear is where we're going to camp out for a few moments. All right.

[16:37] Conduct yourselves in fear. Fear is the word phobos in Greek phobos, P-H-O-B-O-S. It's where we get in this. I'm telling you this. It's where we get our English word phobia.

Now we all know what phobia means, right? If you're phobic about snakes, you're terrified of them. So now we're back to the terror idea in general usage. That's exactly what it means. Terror or panic. But again, Peter is not using it in that sense here. So we have to be careful to discern the Holy Spirit's meaning, not the meaning we want to attach to it, even from our culture or our English language.

What Peter means by this is a worshiping respect. He's talking about a profound reverence when he speaks of fear.

It was also one of the uses of this word when applied religiously. Profound reverence or worshiping respect. It has to do with a sense of awe.

[17:45] Maybe amazement. Proper devotion. Now, for those of you who were here months ago, we went through Ecclesiastes verse by verse.

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And so this idea of the fear of the Lord being about a high and holy reverence for God, not a terror, not a shrink back, but a drawn to in humble adoration, in pure devotion, in a complete soul reality of worship.
You're giving it everything you have to honor God. That's a high and holy reverence. If you were here for the Ecclesiastes study, this concept is familiar to you because it's all through the book of Ecclesiastes.
Right, Greg? I mean, it was there on every page of Ecclesiastes. Solomon, the author of Ecclesiastes, used numerous verses throughout his book to emphasize the fear of the Lord as the wisest, highest way to live your life.
So it was no small concept. Coming to the final verses of the final chapter in Ecclesiastes, Solomon admonished us with this.
[19:05] And I want you to see this here up on the screen. Here's how he concluded his book after 12 chapters. The conclusion when all has been heard is fear God and keep his commandments because this applies to every person.

Now, that's about conduct, isn't it? That's about behavior because he has in mind here a heart attitude that expresses itself in an outward style of life, a lifestyle.
You guys remember that from Ecclesiastes? Boy, he hammered that and he hammered that. And remember, on the converse of all of that high living for the Lord was disaster and ruin if you don't. Right? So the stakes are high. Otherwise, I wouldn't have titled it Summon Bonum. The highest supreme. I'd have said, think about this as a possibility.
I'm saying this is it. But you've arrived when you come to the foot of the cross and realize that the goodness of God in Jesus Christ is the highest reason for you to live. You don't get any higher than that when you stooped lowly in humility at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ.
[20:20] You've come to the highest place you can come, friend. You found everything you need for your heart and soul at the foot of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we want to encourage you.

To consider carefully what we're talking about in the way of this highest and supreme way to live. This is about a life of reverence and holy behavior.
Summon Bonum. All right. Acts 931. You don't have to turn there if you look up on the screen. Acts 931 says, so the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace being built up and going on in the fear.
Phobos of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. It continued to increase. Now, when you think about. I don't know.
We'll figure it out. Glitchy. Right. We'll figure it out. We'll figure it out. No.
[21:53] Am I good? Oh, it is me. That's OK. There's a demon in this mic. All right. The point I want to make here is as you look at that verse with me, if this fear was about terror or panic or something like that, then they wouldn't be enjoying this.

There wouldn't be an increase in their numbers. People wouldn't flock to a place where you made them to feel terror and panicked. Right. No, this is something very different. This is life transforming truth.
This is warm and real and deep and sincere. Do you know why? Because it's about relationship with a person.
And that person just happens to be your maker and creator. And stands ready to be your savior.
Savior from what, Jeff?
From your sins. From the wrong and the evil that you do in your life as you live for self. That's what. That's. That's acts nine thirty one.
[23:07] That's Luke, by the way. So we have Luke bearing in on this. We have Solomon bearing in on this. We have Peter bearing it. Look now. How about Paul?

Here's the apostle Paul exhorting the Corinthians to live in the fear of the Lord. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, and he had extended all these promises. Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit.
Look, perfecting holiness in what? The fear or phobos, the reverent awe of God. That's how we live out a holy life.
With reverent awe of God. And then Paul takes care to instruct the Ephesians to this. Be subject or submissive to one another in the fear, phobos, of Christ.

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Our mutual submission to one another in the church as brothers and sisters who recognize that Jeff and Greg are not the bosses of the church. Jesus is the head and boss of this church that we all submit to one another out of mutual reverence for Jesus, who is the Lord of the church.
[24:21] Right? That's how we experience the sense of unity and togetherness and deference. That we're willing to be humble and deferential toward one another because we are so reverently awed with the Lordship of Jesus over us.

As he gathers us together as sin, blood-bought people who lived in sin and now cleansed us to live in holiness of life before him.
That's the reality. It's a recreated humanity that we represent because that's who we are in the Lord Jesus.
So back to Peter. Peter says, conduct yourselves. Conduct yourselves in this reverent awe of God. Conduct yourselves then takes in or it considers your entire way of life during the time of your stay on earth.
[25:26] A time reference, a place reference for us. You are just passing through on your journey here. So Peter wants you to carefully consider how your daily life, your lifestyle, reflects God's heavenly holiness on this earth.

Does it? To what degree? Do you see the challenge that's coming through here? As he talks about your stay on earth, he references that so that he can sober you with the reality.
Hey, you're an exile, a sojourner, a pilgrim. This is temporary. It's important, but it's temporary. Keep it in heavenly perspective.
There's an eternity waiting. Eternity, not temporary. And that's what needs to help us be defined in the way that we live, the way that we think, the way that we evaluate, perceive, make meaning of this life.
So look up here on the screen with me one more time. Our profound reverence, our worshiping respect for God is our supreme response to God's supreme work on our behalf.
[26:48] Your highest calling and most supreme good in this life are one in the same thing. To live in holy response to God's goodness to you in Jesus Christ.

If you don't take anything else away from this message this morning, take away this idea, this reality, that we are all living in response to God, whether we know it or not.
Now, for those of us who are Christians, we do know it because God has opened our spiritual eyes to see the reality of our need for forgiveness, to trust Jesus, to walk in holiness, to grow in grace. But even unbelievers are living in response to God. That response is one of rebellion, not repentance. But we're all living in the sight of the Lord and under the Lord.
Some of us are living in repentant faith and some of us are living in rebelling unbelief. Nevertheless, it's God's world that we live in and under.
[27:50] All right. All right. Now, what is it that gives life to the fear of the Lord as your as your thankful response and not as some kind of a what I have in mind here is a sterile obligation, a duty.

There is a duty element, but that's it's a legalism. What helps you live your life in the fear of the Lord is something that is a thankful response and not not the other, not that, not legalism, an obligation, not an empty matter of you just going through the religious motions.
What can help you avoid that? Because that's not the fear of the Lord. How can you nurture and mature your fear of the Lord? How can you nurture and mature this high and holy reverence for God in your life?
What can help you grow in it and apply it in your daily life as you respond to the Lord? Well, I want to give you four things that Peter gives you. You must prayerfully consider, first of all, God's work of recompense, which is also in verse 17.
God's work of recompense. Recompense means to compensate or to repay. So what is your compensation from God?
[29:08] What is his work of compensation toward you? Well, the text says, look at verse 17 with me, beloved. Since you address as father the one who impartially judges.

There's your concept. According to each one's work. That's your compensation. You ought to consider this reality prayerfully and soberly for yourself.
That God is about a work of recompense. Folks, what a miraculous privilege and responsibility that you have in addressing God as your father.

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Do you realize there's an entire sermon in verse 17 if you address as father? And I could just stop there and say, we're just going to camp out on God as father. And just talk about just the richness of that.
There was a time in your life living in rebellious sin that you couldn't call God father. Now that you can, it means you're owned by a different person. Now you were once under the ownership of Satan and now you're under the ownership of almighty God.
[30:21] As his child. To call him father means you are his child. It's a big deal. So God then is your authority, beloved.

He's your authority. And he shows no weakness in his authority and relationship with you through favoritism. He does not do that.
In terms of favoritism in his judgments of your behavior. He will not show favor in that way to one and then the other. It's not how it works.
God will recompense. He will repay, reward, compensate each one of us based on the life that we live in terms of our behavior.
Whether we live in faith to the glory of Jesus. Or whether we live in unbelief to the glory of sin and self. So to those who call God father who belong to God.
[31:21] Conduct your life in the fear of God because he judges you without favoritism according to your behavior. Now you understand that we are ultimately judged at the end whether we have faith in Christ or not.

Now we're talking about these works that you do that bear out whether or not Jesus lives in your heart. If you're a Christian and you're truly born again and trusting Jesus for forgiveness of sins and you can call God father.
Then your outward life ought to look like that inward reality. Then there are those who don't trust Christ and their life expresses that inward reality. They don't live for the glory of God.
They're not concerned with the things of God. You will be judged on your works. All of that will be laid before the Lord. The works that were done in honor of Jesus Christ.
That will be considered by God as precious jewels and gold and precious stones. Everything else is wood, hay and stubble and it'll get burned up. And then unbelievers can't do anything to please God.
[32:30] So all that they will come before the Lord and be judged with will be burned. Tragically and sadly to include themselves.

This is what's at stake. And it's sobering for each of us. This is the recompense concept that we're talking about. Conduct yourselves in the fear of God because he judges you without favoritism.
Folks, in one sense I can say this is, I believe the emphasis here for Peter, this is God's discipline for those he loves. So you say, all right, so we're not focusing as much right now on the kind of judgment that will happen at the end times.
We're talking about a judgment that we experience within the flow of the context as we are sojourning on this earth. You see the emphasis Peter's making there?
While you are pilgriming on this earth, conduct yourselves in this way because you have a father who impartially judges you as you live this way.
[33:41] That's in the present. So I think we're talking about, at least in part, a significant part, the way that God spanks his kids. Please don't be offended by that and think, oh, they spank here at this church.

I don't know what everybody does. All right? I don't know what everybody does. God disciplines his kids. And the analogy I'm using is he's not afraid to spank you.
He's not afraid to thump you if you need thumping. He's not afraid to get your attention and keep it.
Let me show you what I'm talking about so you're in context with Scripture. Look at Hebrews chapter 12, if you would.
You just have to turn a few pages to find Hebrews 12. James is before Peter. And then Hebrews is before James. Hebrews 12, beginning in verse, we'll pick it up in verse 7.
It is for discipline that you endure. That is, endure in the Christian life, striving against sin and the sin that would so easily entangle you.
[34:52] He said it is for discipline that you endure. Therefore, God deals with you as with sons or daughters. For what son or daughter is there whom his father does not discipline?

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Right. But if you are without discipline, that is, gods, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.
Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not much rather be subject to the father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them.
But God, he disciplines us for our good so that we may do what, church? Share in his holiness. Do you see?
Verse 11. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful. That's a very tactful way for the Holy Spirit to say that. Spankings hurt. Right?
[35:56] When we were raising our children, I never remember when the time came for that moment to happen, our kids beaming out and saying, oh, boy, a spanking. Wonderful.

With Jared, Suzanne tells this story. With my son, Jared, you would think that we were cutting both of his arms off before anything happened. Because he knew.
He knew. We brought the rod primarily when rebellion against mom was the issue. Because I told them, that's the nuclear bomb of discipline.
You rebel against your mom, it's going to cost you. And we made good on that promise. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful but sorrowful.
Yet to those who have been trained by it afterwards, what does it do? It yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. This is the discipline of the Lord for his kids. For those whom he loves.
[36:56] So that you will experience what he says here in verse 10. So that we may share in God's holiness. That is the same theme Peter's bringing to us in the way of this living hope.

That God is making us holy as well. In our conduct. In our lifestyle. In our speech. We have been made holy in Jesus Christ.
That is, we have been made as pleasing to God as we can possibly be in his son. So we don't have to worry about that. Now, because we're still in this earth, we have to live a life that is commensurate with.
Expressive of that reality that we have been made completely pure in Jesus. Now we need to live like that. And what we experience is sin. We don't live like that sometime.
And so if we don't repent. If you don't become sensitive to sin. So that as you sin and recognize, you repent. That is, look.
[37:56] In Russia, when the wall came down. The iron curtain came down in Russia and Germany in the wall. We started to send missionaries. I heard this story from missionaries that had been in Russia right when that was happening.

And the Christians that were coming to Christ as a result of all of that referred to themselves as repenters. That's what they wanted to be called. That's what they were calling each other.
They would say, are you a repenter? Not a believer. Are you a repenter? They were learning to live in an attitude and spirit of repentance. Holiness was a premium for them in their lives.
It was precious to them. The fear of the Lord. That's what I'm talking about. God wants you to repent. Now, what about unbelievers? What about unbelievers?
Well, go to, if you will, of all places, Proverbs chapter 1. Let me show you something very interesting here. Proverbs chapter 1. What about this discipline or this judgment that God meets out here for us on the earth?
[39:04] Proverbs chapter 1. Beginning in verse 22.

22. 22. I'm going to give you 22 because it's at the end of the passage that I want you to see this, but I want you to have the context. How long, oh naive or simple ones, foolish ones, will you love being simple-minded?
So these are people who are refusing the wisdom of God, refusing the fear of the Lord, living in themselves and in their own ways. They say in 22, they are scoffers.
Scoffers. They scoff against, rebel against, against the wisdom of God. Scoffers delight themselves in scoffings. Fools hate knowledge.
That's the knowledge of the Lord. What does he say? Turn. Repent. Turn to my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you.
[40:06] I will make my words known to you. Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention. You neglected all my counsel.

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You didn't want my reproof. I will also laugh at your calamity. I'll mock when your dread comes. When your dread comes like a storm. And your calamity comes like a whirlwind.
When distress and anguish come upon you. You see, that's what you get when you don't live in the fear of the Lord. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer. They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.
Why? Because they hated knowledge and did not choose. What did they not choose? The fear of the Lord. They would not accept my counsel.
They spurned all my reproof. Now, here's where it turns. Here's the point. So. They shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices.
[41:11] That's God giving them over to what they wanted. OK, fine. You don't want me. You don't want my wisdom. I'll give you over to what you want. And we'll see how that goes for you. And it's not good.

For the waywardness of the naive will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil. Now, I don't know about you.
I don't know about you, but I really appreciate the Bible being plain and clear and straightforward about these matters because they're matters of life and death. Matters of life and death.
That's what we're dealing with. That's what we're dealing with in this judgment here and now from the Lord for believers. It's a judgment of discipline where God loves you enough to discipline you in your life spiritually to bring matters into your life so that he gets your attention.
[42:15] And I could tell you story after story about that. But I think you get the point for unbelievers. That judgment looks like I will give you over to what it is that you are idolizing, worshiping and wanting most.

In some in some cases, that means death. For those folks, and that's judgment. That is God's judgment. For other people, it means all kinds of catastrophe and disaster.
In their lives, what they don't have as unbelievers that we have is believers in moments of trial, in moments of disaster, hardship, heartache.
They don't have the comfort of the sovereignty of God. They don't have the comfort of knowing that God's in the details and he oversees all of these things that happen in our lives.
That we might what share in his holiness. That's the point for us as believers. All right, let me give you the next one and I'll hasten on.
[43:13] This third consideration here. Or a third point that I'll give you second consideration. God's work of redemption. God's work of redemption in verses 18 and 19.

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver, gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers. But here's the contrast.
This is what you were not redeemed with. Here's what you were redeemed with. The precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Right? A lamb unblemished and spotless. The blood of Christ.
Verse 18 states what you know in negative terms. God did not use perishable stuff of this world like silver and gold which men put such a high, high value on.
He didn't use any of that to redeem or to rescue you from sin and self. Right? He used something much, much more precious in verse 19.
[44:18] Verse 19 tells you what you know in positive terms. God used the precious blood of his own son to redeem. Another word there would be ransom you from sin.

But the world's goods were and are stained, tainted, and filthy. The world's highest and best cannot do for us what God's highest and best can do for us.
The world cannot attain to what we need for our salvation. There's no amount of money or earthly goods all brought together and laid at God's feet that could ransom or rescue sinners from their sin.
Now, one of the things that tells us, friends, is this. That is how deeply rooted your soul is in its rebellion against God. It tells us, the cross tells us, the value and price that it took for God to rescue us from what had taken control of us.
So it doesn't just reflect on the value of the cross. It reflects on the deep-seated nature of sin.
[45:41] How dark and wicked and awful and disgusting it is to almighty God because of what it took to rescue us from it. It took his son.

To rescue us from that. That's how powerful it is in your life. That is the only thing God could offer that would rescue us from our depravity.

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Now, that's sobering. What I hope right now is you're experiencing just a little bit of a tinge of reverence. That ought to help us in that reverential awe department.
But that's the reality of verses 18 and 19. Your soul was so deeply mired in your sin debt to God that the only currency valuable enough to redeem you, that is, redeem is to free you from your debt, had to come from heaven itself.
It had to come from heaven itself. So God sent his son. A lamb of sacrifice. A lamb of suffering. A lamb of salvation.
[46:52] Unblemished. Unstained. Sinless. Perfect. To rescue you from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers. Well, futile means worthless.

What it was that we inherited from our forefathers was worthless. Worthless in what sense? Worthless in the sense of it can't save you.
It actually is your problem. It's another way of saying this. You're just like every other sinner before you. Same need.
Same need. Same savior. Same need. In your life. Well, folks, that is God's perspective on anything which falls short of his holiness.
His standard of perfection for relating to him. Now, if you say, Jeff, if that's God's standard, there is not a single human being on the planet that can measure up to that.
[47:55] Yes, you're getting it. And that's what makes Jesus shine. Because God gives you Jesus in his perfect sinlessness so that you then are seen by God in his son.

God looks at you and sees Christ in his perfect righteousness, as it were. That's the beauty of the gospel that we preach here. Say, Jeff, that is miraculous.
It is. It's a miracle of salvation. If you'll notice on the screen here, each of us, if left to ourselves, will live in the futility of our own sin nature.
That is our anti-God inheritance at home in our hearts. It's what you inherited from your forefathers. This is the sin stain, folks, that it takes the blood of Jesus to wash away.
This is how we are forgiven and freed from sin. And this is why Peter is speaking in such graphic or descriptive terms about you and I being, look, unblemished and spotless.
[49:07] That's what we are in Christ. This unblemished, spotless lamb of sacrifice. The perfect, highest good that God could offer to redeem, ransom you away from.

That debt needed to be paid and Jesus paid it. And he didn't pay it to the devil. Oh, that's terrible theology. Jesus didn't say, yeah, I'll go to the cross and pay the debt that these people owe for their sin.
And I'll pay it to you. So, Satan, I'll come down to the places of hell and present myself and pay you what? No, no, no. Who was the ransom pay? Who was the debt owed to?
Amen. Good. Yes. You were ransomed in that way. And so the demands of God for righteousness in relationship to him were met in his son, Jesus Christ.
And now Jesus comes to live in you, which makes you able to then stand in the presence of God, fully accepted, fully forgiven for all eternity, so that all that is put out on the son is now your treasure to share in.
[50:18] Don't you want that? Don't you want him? He is the treasure. He is the treasure. He is the change, the hope, the life for each one of us.

Well, God's handiwork is seen in your freedom from sin. But now consider this one, this one, God's work of revelation. For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.
This is still talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice at the end of verse 20 what Peter wants them to realize about this chain of salvation blessings that he's rehearsing in Jesus right now.
Notice the very end. What does it say? For the sake of you is how my translation reads. In other words, friends, Jesus appeared in these last times, that is the time or the era in which Jesus came, lived, died, rose again, for the sake of you, his readers, and us.
What's he getting at? How was it for our sakes that this all happened when it did? For he was foreknown, notice the text, he was foreknown before the foundation of the world.
[51:46] Look, here's what he's saying. God did not throw together this plan for Jesus to come and to give his life as a ransom for many to redeem you away from sin.

It's not that. Before God made the world, he predetermined the time and work of Jesus. So your salvation was not an afterthought for God.

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You, friend, are not an afterthought of God. None of the sin in your life caught God off guard so that he looked down one day and said, Oh, man, I didn't know they'd do that.
Now what do I do? There's no sovereignty there. Look, this is what you are. Let's put it up here for you. This is what you are.
You are, what does he say? A chosen one. That was all the way back up in verse one. That set the tone for everything he's saying. You are a chosen one.
[52:51] Look, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood. He said that all the way back up in verse two.

God promised, planned, and now in our text revealed, revealed his plan in Jesus Christ. He predetermined your place in his plan by the timing of your birth, your salvation, and your growth in grace.
Now, early in my Christian life, I would think about this kind of stuff. And I would, because, you know, I don't know why I did it. I just did it. Because it was all new to me, I guess.
And I would think about me being in that plan. And I would think things like, I wonder why I wasn't born in the Roman times. I could have been born any time. God could have put me anywhere.
Why was I born now? Well, part of the answer to that is what Peter's saying right now. It was all part of God's predetermined plan that you and Peter's readers would be put in life where you are right now.
[54:02] And for your sakes, you get to look back on the cross, back on the life of Jesus. You get to look back into all these wonderful things that none of them fully understood.

And the prophets themselves, remember what Peter said earlier in an earlier message? Even the prophets didn't understand this. They realized they were writing for you. It wasn't being fulfilled in their time.
They were writing for you, for your sakes. Now Peter comes back to that theme, for your sakes. Isn't that wonderful? For your sakes. This is the kind of father you have.
This is the kind of God you serve. Don't ever let anybody make you think God is some grumpy old grandpa up there who can't wait to just put it to you. If anybody ever brings that to you, you point them to that.
And you say, that doesn't square with the God who gave his son for me. For me? We want to lift Jesus. We want to exalt God for who he is.
[55:10] We want to let the text tell us, who is our God? This is who he is. He's the God who sent his unblemished, spotless son to rescue us from sin, to ransom us away and pay our debt for us and put us in faithful, righteous standing with him.

How could you not be blown away, amazed, and put in reverential awe of that God? He's a big, good God.
And so the point is, you are chosen. He revealed his plan to us at this time in our life. Peter's readers got to see this.
The timing of the birth, life, death, resurrection of Jesus, it came at a particular era in history. And Peter is telling them, and he's telling us, that given our time in history, God did this for our sake as well.
So, folks, we are the beneficiaries of the revelation of Jesus coming when he did. As we look back on these events in his life and in his ministry, we get to draw on all these fulfillments of these rich realities in Jesus that were only shadows for the people who were on the other side of the cross.
[56:36] It's a privilege for us to know this. And Peter says it ought to make a difference. It ought to make a difference that you're living on this side of the cross and not the other side.

Because you're getting to see things. This is for you, Christian. So, prayerfully and soberly consider also how all these realities relate to this final point.
Here it is up on the screen. God's work of resurrection. That's verse 21. And it just jumps off the page. Who through him are believers in God? Who raised him, Jesus, from the dead?
And gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God. Here's that so that again. So that your faith and your hope are in God.
We could say it this way. You are a believer in God. You are set apart to and you have your life in God.

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[57:41] You have an enduring and indestructible faith in God. And you have a living hope in God. All because God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory.

Once again, we draw on the riches of verse 3 in 1 Peter 1. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope.
Through what? The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. God raised Jesus Christ from death. And Jesus now becomes our proof that what God did for him, he also has promised to do for us at our death. And now in verse 21, we are believers in God through him.
Who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that our faith and our hope. Peter returns to the theme of our hope. Hope in this God who will do for us as he did for his son.
[59:05] He wants to deeply impress on our hearts this God, this father, who has done all of this for the sake of you.

As his exiled pilgrims in this land of the lost. I thought it was really fitting that we would close with Solomon's Summum Bonum in Ecclesiastes 3.14.
Here it is. I know that everything God does. You see that everything? Will remain for how long? Forever.
There is nothing to add to it. And there is nothing to take from it. For God has so worked that men should fear him.
Be in awe of him. That's the sumum bonum. That's the calling. Hey, that's the celebration. That we all share in as followers of Jesus.
[60:07] Will you pray with me? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Our dear Father in heaven. How is it that we would find words to say thank you?

You tell us. Conduct yourselves in the fear of the Lord. That's how we respond. That's how we say thank you.
That's how we express joy. That's how we communicate to you. The reverence and awe and amazement that we feel.
That you would send your holy and perfect and sinless son. To die and be tortured to death on our behalf. That we might be raised with him in life.
And know you forever. And so I pray for my brothers and sisters. And even for myself I pray. Help us almighty God to live to your glory and honor.
[61:11] As we live in the fear of the Lord. The high and holy reverence that we have for you. As our king, our father and our savior. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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