

The Scoffers and the Last Days

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[0:00] Good. Well, let's turn now to our Bible reading for this evening, and we are in 2 Peter. If you don't have a Bible with you, do grab one of the visitor Bibles around the back or the side.

And it's page 1018 if you're using one of the visitor Bibles. So 2 Peter, I'll be reading firstly from chapter 1 and then from chapter 3.

So 2 Peter, I'm beginning chapter 1, verse 1. Simeon, Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that's in the world because of sinful desire.

Okay, flick over to chapter 3 and begin from verse 1. This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved.

[1:44] In both of them, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this, first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

They will say, where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

But by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

[3:19] Amen. Amen. May God bless His word to us tonight. Well, do turn with me, if you would, to Peter's second letter.

And we're focusing today on chapter 3 and verses 3 to 7, but of course, as always, we're ranging really through Peter's whole message.

Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 3 begin like this. Understand this, that in the last days, there will come times of difficulty.

Terrible times, the NIV translates it. And that is Paul's words to Timothy, as he's preparing the church for the post-apostolic age.

And these struggles in the last days are also Peter's focus in his second letter. Difficult times in the world, and even more difficult times for Christians living in the world.

[4:33] I try to avoid mainstream media as much as possible. I suggest you do also. 95% of it is just propaganda, trying to control the population.

But unless you're completely deaf, I don't think you can avoid the consistent messaging that is being aimed at us in the present day.

Let me quote from an analysis that I read this week from Dr. Tilak Doshi, who's an energy economist. He's the energy editor for the Daily Skeptic. He says this, The EU and UK political establishment that built their legitimacy on the alarmist climate consensus need a new organizing threat.

The rhetoric of imminent war with Russia, barely audible 18 months ago, has become the dominant note of European public life, displacing the language of climate emergency that had until recently served much of the same unifying and mobilizing function.

A pattern, he says, will be familiar to students of political history. A governing class, unable or unwilling to reverse policies that have visibly impoverished its own population, reaches for an external threat, large enough to make domestic failure seem secondary.

[5:53] One season, the enemy is carbon dioxide. The next is Vladimir Putin. The rhetorical machinery, moral urgency, the demand for public sacrifice, the casting of suspicion and dissenters, barely needs repackaging.

And he goes on to talk about the Prime Minister's speech recently about setting up a national center for information defense and rafts of even further measures to curtail free speech.

A veritable ministry of truth, as George Orwell would have called it, and did call it, in fact. In the end, saying, as the saying goes, when all else fails, start a war.

I don't know what you think about that, but it certainly seems to chime with my reading of the situation. And we need to think, don't we, about what the powers that be are pumping out to breed fear in the population today.

And we need to ask ourselves, which voices are we going to believe? When, as Paul warns Timothy, evil people will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

[7:11] Now, that is an important question for anybody today, friends. But it is especially so for the Christian believer who knows the ultimate truth in Jesus and who cherishes the word of truth in Scripture.

Because, as Peter says here in chapter 1, verse 3, God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness in the precious truths that we have that we can trust the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

So that amid a world of deception and propaganda and evil, we may be people who live the truth because we know the truth. We can be people who, regardless of the circumstances, are doing what the very last verse of his letter here says, growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and not being carried away with the error of lawless people.

So as we lose our stability, however destabilizing and destabilized this whole world becomes, we have great and precious promises.

And through these, we will reach our true calling and destiny no matter what happens in this world because it is something that far eclipses this whole wide world.

[8:33] Peter says, we are destined to share in the divine nature, in the life of God himself. And we have these powerful promises as we saw last week in the scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Chapter 3, verse 2, the words of the prophets and, that's the Old Testament, and the command of our Lord and Savior through your apostles, the New Testament. not propaganda, not falsehood, but divine truth.

And we have it in our hands. What an extraordinary privilege that is and what a wonderfully positive message that is for very difficult and uncertain days, however difficult they become.

But of course, the positive alone isn't enough, is it? Never is in the Bible. There are necessary negatives. We saw that this morning. There are clear warnings, aren't there, that we also need if we're to avoid error.

And Peter doesn't hide from us these things. The Bible never hides reality from us in that way. People who think that the Christian gospel is just a crutch for feeble believers, they're the ones who are deceiving themselves.

[9:46] No. It's the Bible that kicks away any crutches, any pretense, and forces us to face up to the truth, the real truth. It always does that, and Peter does that right here.

And so Peter warns us about the reality of what it means to live in an age of what he calls scoffing. Chapter 3, verse 3. Know this, first of all, he says, it's of vital importance, first of all, to grasp this necessary negative, that it will not all be rosy as we wait for the Lord's coming.

Scoffers will come in the last days, he says, with scoffing. Nothing passive, do you notice that? It's not just that they'll come, they come actively scoffing. The trustworthy voice of the true teachers will not be the only voices that are heard by God's people, by his church.

Scoffers will come spreading evil, spreading falsehood. And notice, they won't come only from outside the church, but from the inside as well. Now that sounds very shocking to us.

We don't like to think that. Especially if we're the kind of person who thinks that somehow here on this earth we can have pure churches which will never be affected by these things. No. Look back to the end of chapter 1, the last verse of chapter 1, and the first verse of chapter 2.

[11:13] When Peter says that no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Wonderful. But, false prophets also arose. Where from? Among the people. Just as there will also be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies even denying the master inside the church among you.

And as we saw last week, unfortunately that is true. And if Peter is to be believed, then that is how it will be even within the church of Jesus Christ, even within the professing church until Jesus comes.

And we can't pretend that away. We have to face it. So the real question then is whose voice is going to prevail? When many voices are shouting out their own opinion, who do we listen to?

To hear truth and not error. To hear words that lead to reality and sanity and not to deception and to folly.

[12:29] That's the question, isn't it? It's a vital question today in many parts of society, but especially for the Christian church. And Peter wants us to be in no doubt. And so that is why he gives us a clear course here in voice recognition.

And in these verses, in chapter 3, verses 3 to 7, he gives us three clear marks of what he calls a scoffer and his ways so that we can expose them, so we can resist their pernicious influence, so we will not be destabilized, so that we will not be those who fall into fatal error.

So he says we need to understand three things. Their motives, their message, and also their mistake. And that's how we'll understand who and what a scoffer really is.

And of course, Peter's focus here is on those who seek to influence the church from within, but of course his principles apply much more broadly in many ways to the world as well.

So look, first of all, he says, scoffers have a clear motivation. It's there in the second half of verse 3. Do you see? Their teaching, their belief, their lifestyle is driven by what?

[13:43] By their own sinful desires. Their own sinful desires. That is in total contrast, isn't it, to the true teachers of Christ that we were thinking about last week in chapter 1.

Chapter 1, verse 21. We just read it. No prophet, no true spokesman of God ever produced his message from his own will, but they spoke from God as they were carried along, driven along by the Holy Spirit of God himself.

And just so the true teacher within Christ's church is driven not by his own desires, not by a quest for popularity, not by a quest for success or growth or self-satisfaction or anything, a quiet life.

No, not by his own interpretation of what the faith is about, but rather by the clear revelation of God in Scripture.

The faith that is once for all delivered to the saints as Jude put it. The faith that comes through the words of the Old Testament prophets and the commands of our God and Savior through his apostles as Peter says here in verse 2 of chapter 3.

[14:51] It's as stark and simple as that. So even if no one wants to hear those words, even if no one wants to hear that message, that is the message that the true teacher of God will bring.

Paul says the same thing to Timothy, doesn't he, in 2 Timothy 3 and 4. They won't want it. They'll want someone that their itching ears like to hear. Don't give them that. Teach them the truth in season and out of season whether people want to hear it or not.

And if you read on there, he goes, immediately on to say, there'll be suffering involved in that.

There's no suffering involved in telling people what they want to hear, but there will be suffering involved in telling people what they don't want to hear, but God tells you they need to hear.

But not so, you see, the teacher or the leader or the preacher or whoever who purports to be genuine but actually is a scoffer.

He, says Peter, follows instead his own sinful desires. That is what shapes his teaching. And his message is shaped above all things by that. Now, we've got to be honest, haven't we?

[16:03] Because all of us secretly want to hear things that we do find congenial, that we do find convenient, that we do find self-justifying. Of course we do. And that's what everybody wants.

People today want so-called sexual freedom. And so the scoffer is the one who will shape his teaching in the church to accommodate that. He'll play down the things in the Bible, the commands of Jesus, where he says difficult things about adultery, about sexual immorality, and so on.

The scoffer will silence all of those things and bingo. Instead, all of our sinful desires actually become baptized into the church and are talked about in language that makes it holy and good and acceptable and even healthy.

A gospel of affirmation. With lots of talk about unconditional love. But very little talk about Jesus' unconditional command to repent and to turn away from sin and to walk in the way of holiness.

You see? That's the gospel minus, isn't it? That's the gospel with things that we don't like subtracted from it. Well, sometimes it can work in the opposite direction because, of course, what people want is health and wealth and prosperity and wonderful experiences.

[17:32] Things to thrill and excite them. So where Jesus said, take up your cross and follow me. And when Peter says it's going to be suffering now and glory only when Jesus comes.

And when Paul says we die daily that we share in Christ's death, the scoffer looks at that and says, no, no, no, no, no. We don't talk about that.

We name and we claim the things that we want. And we say we can have those things now. Not the cross now. Don't take up your cross. Take up your crown. You can have it all if you've just got enough faith.

Things that Jesus never promised or maybe things that Jesus did promise but said so clearly will only be ours when he comes at last to restore all things. That's not the gospel minus. That's the gospel plus.

The things that we want now are added to fulfill our own desires which are sinful because they're wrong and they're against the truth of God. Now sometimes people can do these things out of the best of intentions, I suppose.

[18:44] We don't want to offend somebody so we cut out or we just de-emphasize what we think are difficult bits of the gospel. We don't want to offend people of other faiths so we play down the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

But you see when we do that we destroy the gospel. Or we're doing that aren't we when we don't want to hurt people who have got themselves into a terrible mess sexually for example.

Well of course we don't want to hurt people and neither did Jesus when he dealt with for example the woman at the well with her checkered history or the woman who was caught in adultery in John chapter 8.

Jesus' reaction there is the very antithesis isn't it of sanctimonious moralism. There's absolutely no self-serving superiority in his attitude but his wonderful grace was suffused with truth wasn't it? because he knew it would be a far greater sin not to confront their sin. And that's why he said to the woman go and sin no more.

[20:05] And in that command is indeed divine power the power of his animating spirit to do exactly that in obedience to his lordship. But you see the scoffer the scoffer is not thinking about the desires of Jesus Christ.

He may say he thinks about these things but in reality says Peter no no no he's following his own sinful desires. He's like the politician who's always got his eye on the ballot box and self-preservation.

He's like the merchant who's always got his eye on the bottom line and needs to make a profit. So in the end what does he do? He gives the people what they want. Of course he does. Well that is the scoffer's chief motivation according to Peter.

Whether he admits it or not that is the truth. Even whether he's conscious of it or not he may not be. His own sinful desires. Well then what about the scoffer's cynical message?

It's there in verse 4. Where is this promise of the coming? They say it's a cynical message isn't it but it's a consistent one.

[21:20] Where is your God? Where is the evidence of your God that you claim exists? It's just an illusion. If he was real he'd make it far more obvious wouldn't he? What he said was true well we'd believe that but it's not true.

We don't believe it. That cynical scoffing goes all the way back to the serpent in Genesis 3 doesn't it? And all through history that is the consistent cynical message of the scoffer.

The nations say where is their God? Psalm 79 verse 10. We sang it in Psalm 42 just there. My adversaries say to me continually where is your God?

Where is your God? Where is your God coming to save you? It's the same in the prophets. Prophet Joel chapter 2 complains why should they say among the peoples where is their God?

And even within the professing church you find that same cynical message at times. See it in the scripture. Jeremiah the prophet.

[22 : 22] He had to confront Israel with their sin and he had to warn God's people about coming judgment and he was met with exactly that attitude. Read Jeremiah chapter 17.

What they were saying was oh where is this word of the Lord about judgment? Let it come the people said. Judgment? You must be joking. Bring it on. See if we care.

But poor Jeremiah had to go on speaking God's truth to those people who didn't want to know. And in the end well you know what happened to him. They threw him down a well into a cistern. Stuck in mud right up to his armpits for his pains.

And nothing has changed with that attitude of scoffing from the 10th century BC to the 1st century AD in the Lord's ministry and that of the apostles or the 21st century. It's all the same isn't it?

Where's your God?

Don't believe that. It's a lot of tosh. He'll never come. He'll never judge anyone or anything. Now that's today's scoffers. I'm sure you hear it all the time in your workplace or in school or in your university or wherever.

[23 : 27] Scoffing questions. Well if God were real why is there so much suffering in the world then? Explain it. Where's your God of justice? Look at the injustice in the world. Why do people still get sick and die if Jesus is the Lord of life?

Jesus hasn't changed anything. How come Jesus is supposed to have defeated evil? Well look at the evil in the world today. The world is just the same as it always was.

You Christians are just deluded. And as for judgment, what rubbish. Just yesterday I read a long article, some of you may have seen it in the Daily Telegraph by Richard Dawkins celebrating 20 years since he wrote that book The God Delusion.

And the picture that was there with the article was of him standing in front of a London bus with some of his chums. You remember those adverts? Some of the oldies will remember it. There's probably no God so stop worrying and enjoy your life.

That's the scoffer. There's a lot of faith to be put in that word probably isn't there? And the irony is, of course, 20 years on, although Mr.

[24 : 37] Dawkins, Dr. Dawkins is still saying he believes all those things just as firmly, he's been lamenting, hasn't he, the erosion of the Christian culture in this country which he rather likes. Well, you don't get to keep the things you like if you destroy the things that create what you like, Dr.

Dawkins. But you see, they're very confident, aren't they, the scoffers? And their message is very cynical. It was then, and it still is today.

But be careful, says Peter. Be careful before you buy their cynical message. Because you need to look first at their colossal mistake.

And that's the third thing he points us to here in verses 5 to 7, the colossal mistake. They deliberately are suppressing the facts. And a very special one fact, says Peter here in verse 5.

What fact? Well, they scorn the word of God, the promise of his coming, but they forget, culpably, with great conceit, that God's word is not only trustworthy, it's not just a true witness of the prophets and the apostles of Christ, but it is the very power that created this world in the first place.

[25 : 50] And it is the very word that has throughout history demonstrated God's judgment in the past. And, he says, it is this word and this word alone that is keeping the world in existence until the certain judgment that is still to come.

Look at verses 5 to 7. They deliberately overlook this fact that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.

And that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

And you ignore this fact, this clear evidence of scripture, you ignore it. without your peril, says Peter. Scoffers scoff at the Bible, of course.

But here's the real key question that people need to face up to. Do you take the historical Jesus Christ in any way seriously at all?

[27 : 09] Because if you do, and you really do have to be a very ignorant person to give no thought to that figure who dominates human history, if you do, you need to know that he took these words of God very, very seriously indeed, as did every one of his apostles.

And they were absolutely clear about these three things that Peter mentions here. First, that the world is not just here naturalistically by chance, but it was created by the word of God.

God. It takes extraordinary self-deception to deliberately suppress that truth and overlook this fact. And yet, even intelligent people do it all the time. We talked about Richard Dawkins. Another one is David Attenborough, a man of great learning. There can't be too many people in the world, can there, who know more about the natural fauna and flora of this world than David Attenborough. Think of all the series he's done about life on earth and all the rest of it. Extraordinary. And yet, I remember hearing him in an interview speaking about his school head master with utter scorn because that man used to speak to them about the Christian faith and his Christian faith in the school chapel.

[28 : 29] And David Attenborough said, how can a man of such learning believe such nonsense? But I say, how can a man with such learning like David Attenborough who observes the extraordinary complexity of life on earth, the wonders of nature?

How can he fail to see the hand of God? As the psalmist says, the heavens, the sky, the night sky declares the glory of God. But he can't see it.

He deliberately forgets this fact. The world did not just happen. The world was created by the word of the living God.

And indeed, if it all were chance and nothingness and coming from nowhere and going nowhere, then we shouldn't listen to any words by Richard Dawkins or David Attenborough or anybody, because that's just nonsense and chance and meaningless nothing.

Not intelligence. But the second thing that Jesus and his apostles clearly believe is the fact of God's powerful judgments in history.

[29 : 40] And here in verse 6, it's the flood that's mentioned. But back in chapter 2, he mentioned others, including the judgment on Sodom. God's word, verse 5, created the earth, but verse 6, God's word destroyed the world that then existed.

The word in verse 6 is different from the one in verse 5. It's not saying he destroyed the earth, but it says he destroyed the world of men. It doesn't mean the whole of planet earth. It wasn't the whole of planet earth that was destroyed, that perished, but it was the world of men who existed then.

But thirdly, you see, just as they are clear about these things, then verse 7, they are just as clear that by the same word, the whole of the heavens and the earth will be judged one day.

Indeed, Peter is clear the only thing that is holding that back is God's word. It is keeping the earth in existence until that day. By the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment.

So just as God has judged unmistakably in history, in the flood, in Sodom's destruction, in many other things, including the things Jesus himself speaks about.

[30 : 59] If you were reading our daily readings this morning in Luke chapter 13, speaking of exactly that, judgments that Jesus himself spoke about in his day, and of course the great judgment that Jesus spoke of coming on the whole nation of Israel in AD 70, where it was destroyed by the Romans.

Every single one of these happened in history. And just so, just as surely, Peter says the whole world will be judged by Jesus to end history.

And on that day, verse 7, there will be a final destruction of the ungodly. He says those who scoff, those who reject the true God and his true word.

And that, says Peter, Christ's apostle, is the truth of God in Jesus, which scoffers deliberately overlook. They suppress it. They hide from it.

And they say things like, there's probably no God, so stop worrying and do as you please. Well, dare you put all your trust in the scoffer's word? Probably. Dare you?

[32:08] Dare you risk your eternity on such a flimsy wish? Peter says that is cavalier self-deception.

It would be a colossal mistake, he says. And that is what the Lord Jesus says repeatedly. Don't listen to the siren voices of the scoffers, says Peter.

Don't do it. They twist the scriptures to suit their own sinful desires and the desires of others like them. That's the clear motive behind their deeply cynical message, but it is a colossal mistake. It's very plain speaking, isn't it, from Peter, from Christ's apostle. I guess if Peter put that on social media today, he'd be branded immediately a bigot, an extremist, far right.

Peter, the far right speaker. That's what you are today, isn't it, if you say things like that? But friends, in the face of real danger, stark warning is what's needed, isn't it?

[33:14] It's plain speaking. But we shy away from it, don't we? We want to be polite, we want to be inoffensive. But you see, there comes a time when that becomes culpable.

When to fail to give a warning is a negligent thing, a wicked thing, even if some people are offended by it. Some of you will have been to Australia, and you'll know that down under people tend to be a bit more blunt than we are up here in Britain.

And you see it in their road signs. You know, we have for a no-entry sign, a one-way street, just a very subtle, it's just a red circle with a black bar, no words. Remember the first time I was in Australia seeing one just like that, and it was halfway down a motorway slip, and it just says wrong way, go back.

It's very Australian, isn't it? Wrong way, go back. Well, maybe if we had those slips in the AM8, we wouldn't have people sometimes driving onto the motorway, the wrong side, into oncoming traffic to smash them to pieces.

And sometimes God has to shout to us, doesn't he? Wrong way, go back, repent. He has to shake us up to recognize the truth about the cynicism, about the motivation that really does underlie the claims and the teaching of those who in fact are twisting the scriptures.

[34:43] to their own and to other people's sensual desires. It doesn't matter how dripping with honey that message is. It doesn't matter how full of the language of love, of affirmation, of inclusiveness, of breadth, and all these nice words.

It doesn't matter how positive it seems to be. It doesn't even matter how sincere and well-meaning such people seem to be. Peter says they are making a colossal mistake because they overlook the fact, the necessary fact, that this whole creation is currently being held only by the word of God for a judgment that is to come and for the destruction of the ungodly.

Which is a more offensive thing? Think about this. You're standing by the roadside and you know that just around this blind bend a bridge has been washed away and the road will plummet into a great ravine.

Which is more offensive? to shout stop, to warn people, to jump out and wave your arms and go back, go back?

Or to smile and wave and go, bon voyage, lovely to see you. And which is more offensive and more culpable for us in the church of Jesus Christ today?

[36:22] Join the scoffers in the message of deliberate suppression of the truth, to acquiesce in a cynical message that is twisted, that is trimmed, that is blanked out, to suit the appetites of the world around us, to affirm what people want to hear, to make us popular and have a good reputation, to tell people about a God who will never judge and will never look down on them and will never ask them to be anything other than who they want to be.

or to speak the truth of Scripture plainly in a way that will undoubtedly offend many, but is the message that will save many from that disaster and eternal loss.

See, that is our choice. It's not a choice between being polite and being offensive in our manner. Don't misunderstand. We're called to sincerity. We're called to honesty.

But of course we're called to speak with respect, with dignity, with love, and so on. There's no place in the Christian church for boorish rants and bullying and all that sort of thing.

It's not a choice between politeness and gratuitous offensiveness in our manner, but it is a choice between scoffing skepticism, and scriptural sincerity.

[37:55] It's either or. It's one of those or it's the other. And again, that doesn't mean unintelligent or belligerent, simplistic Bible bashing.

Of course not. Peter himself tells us, doesn't he, if you look down to verse 16, that some of the scriptures are hard to understand. He's speaking about Paul's letters, and that's true, isn't it? We have to work hard to rightly handle and understand, but not, not to twist them, as some people do, he says.

But the real truth so often is actually this, isn't it? That it's not so much that many of the scriptures are hard to understand, but it's that they're hard to take, because we don't like what we're reading. It's not the bits of the scriptures I find hard to understand that cause me most difficulty at all. It's the bits that are plain as a pike staff, and I don't want to understand, and I don't want to do.

I suspect that's true for most of us. And it's certainly true, you see, of those who are teaching falsely, who Peter calls scoffers, whether they admit it or not, whether they believe it or not.

[39:08] That's their clear motive. That's what shapes their cynical message, their own sinful desires. Well, they're making a colossal mistake.

Look at verse 16 again. Look at those words. They're ignorant, unstable. They twist the scriptures, says Peter, and they do so to their own destruction.

So don't be taken in. Don't fall for that kind of scoffing skepticism. That's the Apostle Peter's words for the last days.

That means it's Christ's words for us in the church in the 21st century here in Scotland. And we do live, don't we, in an increasingly vocal culture of scoffing, both outside the church and sadly also inside it.

Don't go that way, says Peter. And if you've begun to go that way, listen, it's the wrong way, go back.

[40:13] Go back to scriptural sincerity. What a word of gracious, loving warning. What a word of encouragement, isn't it?

From Peter, the Apostle, that the Lord has given us. Look at his last two verses. You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. Well, let's pray.

Amen. Lord, we're so conscious how easily led astray we are by our own heart's desires, those desires that make us want to hear things that we would rather hear than things that you want us to hear and that we need to hear.

So help us, we pray. Help us in a world of falsehood, in a world of deceit and deceivers. help us to have our eyes and our ears fixed where we know that true truth can always be found, where true life is the way, and where you alone are our teacher and guide.

[41:55] So help us, we pray, and arm us for the fight. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. may