

6. Standing until the Last Day

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[0 : 00] page 1020 in the Visitor's Bibles. And tonight our subject is Standing Until the Last Day.

Peter's writing all about living through the world's last days, but his focus ultimately, of course, is on the last day. And his purpose, above all, is that the people he writes to will be standing all the way through and still standing at the last day.

Our last study, as I said, in this very timely chapter about living through these world's last days and being ready for that day, the great day of judgment, which Peter says in verse 10 very, very clearly, shall come like a thief.

Come when you don't expect it, he says, and therefore you've always, always got to be ready for it. It's not something we can put off to another time. And last time we saw how Peter tells his readers that they are to be ready.

What kind of people ought we to be, he says, in verse 11. Well, we saw that he wants us not to be passive people, but always, always to be active.

[1 : 25] Active in purity. Verse 14. Diligently striving, he says, to be found spotless and blameless. Fit, that is, for our new home, which is the home of righteousness.

Only righteousness dwells there. And that's what we are to be striving for. Active in purity. Active also, he said, in patience. Verse 15. Grasping that the delay in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is for the purpose of salvation.

Back in verse 9, he says, God is giving time for repentance. And therefore we, as God's people, are to be actively patient. That is, gospeling all the time.

Seeking to use these days as the time of salvation. Count the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Just as Paul does. These are the days to be urging the gospel upon people.

We are to be actively patient in that way. And thirdly, he said, active in progress. Growing, as verse 18 says, in maturity. Through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[2 : 34] The great emphasis there is on an always active response. We're not just waiting. We're not just sleeping. None of it's going to be automatic. None of it's going to happen just by default.

If we sit back and put our feet up. No, we have to be active. But although Peter is telling us always to be active, not everything he tells us is what we might call positive.

Because in addition to this positive encouragement, is at the same time a very clear negative side. A clear warning. Look at verse 17. He's saying to us, take care.

Be very careful lest you should lose your own stability. Take care. Do not go that way, he says. But rather, verse 18, go on and grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

And these last two verses of the letter really summarize and focus the message of the whole book. And so, it's good for us, and it's a good way to end our study, by just focusing on these two things.

[3 : 40] That just clarify, in a nutshell, as it were, the message of this whole letter. I want to do so under two headings. Peter reminds us here of two things.

Firstly, the constant peril that we always face. But secondly, also the constant protection that we do always have. He gives us both a real warning and a real encouragement.

And the true gospel always gives us both of those things, not the one without the other. And so we must be very careful to pay attention to both of these things. If we are going to be people who ourselves are not destabilized, as Peter says.

But rather, if we are to be people who are found standing firm, right up until the last day. And indeed, standing on that day. So let's look at verse 17 first and try and digest its message.

It's all about the constant peril. The danger that even faithful people in the Church of Jesus Christ, the Evangelical Church of Jesus, we might say, even they can lose their stability and be carried off into error unawares.

[4 : 52] 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.

That's a very negative verse, isn't it? The big word, not, is right there at the heart of it. And we tend not to like negative teaching.

We don't like that kind of thing. We want to have a positive message, don't we? And that's understandable. We often say that. We must be positive. And there's a right sense in which that's so.

But the Bible, let me tell you, is very, very full of what I like to call necessary negatives. Necessary negatives that are, in fact, vital for our own personal well-being and for the well-being of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Now, it only takes a moment's thought, doesn't it, to realize that negative commands are often very, very useful indeed. I don't know if you ever use online maps, like Google Maps, to get driving instructions.

[6 : 01] I quite often do if I'm going somewhere where I don't know where I'm going. And let me tell you, I have found these instructions not especially helpful. Because you're driving along and it says, you know, go for 2.3 miles and at the junction turn left.

And then go for another 3.6 miles or whatever and at the roundabout go right. And at the traffic lights do this, that, and the other, and so on. But the trouble is that you're going along the road and you're looking at it, well, is this the left turn or not?

Have I gone the right distance or not? And many times I've tried to use Google Maps and find myself turning too early, for example. Or perhaps missing it and turning too late.

And I thought to myself, how much more helpful if these commands included necessary negatives. Go on for a bit but do not turn at the first one just after the pillbox because that's a dead end. It's the next one you want. Or as you're going round by roundabout, do not go off on the one that you think you need to go off at, but wait, it's actually the one afterwards. Or don't go down the second fork of the road.

[7 : 07] It's rather confusing. Just wait, it's the third one you want. Now that's much more helpful, isn't it? When you have those negatives in place, it's much clearer. And negatives are so often necessary to get real clarity about what it is and what it isn't that we're talking about and what it is and isn't that we're to do.

And if clarity is important in driving instructions, how much more important is clarity of that kind in God's instructions for how we're to live our lives? And that is why God gives us both positive and negative commands.

And we're fools as Christians and we're very naive too if we ignore those. We must teach the biblical negatives. I'm tempted to go off on an aside here.

I think I will actually. Let me just turn to 1 Thessalonians just to give you an example here. This is some homework for you but 1 Thessalonians is one of my favourite examples of a book with necessary negatives.

It's absolutely full. Just let me give you a few and then you can count up all the rest for homework. Chapter 1 verse 5 Our gospel came to you says Paul not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

[8 : 22] Do you see? Not this but that. Or chapter 2 verse 3 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive but just as we've been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel so we speak not to please man but to please God.

As you know nor with a pretext for greed. God is witness nor did we seek glory from people. Do you see all those negatives? He's giving clarity as to what their motive really is.

Let us fill up that. Look down to chapter 2 verse 13. We thank God constantly for this that when you received the word of God which you heard from us you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is the word of God.

Not just as our word but as God's word. Or chapter 4 verse 13 one we know very very well Brothers I don't want you to be uninformed about those who are asleep that you may not grieve as others who have no hope.

Or chapter 5 verse 4 But you are not in darkness brothers for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light children of the day. We are not of night or of the darkness.

[9 : 37] So then let us not sleep as others do but let us keep awake and be sober. Do you see the necessary negative this is not what you are to do because you are not like that at all. But this is how rare to be because this is what we are like.

Great clarity isn't it? Read through 1 Thessalonians later on you'll find literally dozens of Paul's clarifying statements about how not to think but how we are to think.

And that's what Peter is telling us here. We are not to go the way of error he explains how but rather we are to go the way of safety.

And we've got to understand that these warnings as well as these encouragements are vital for us. I was speaking not long ago to a minister who had gone to be minister at a church which had had a long evangelical history but in the months and years before he had gone there the church had drifted into all kinds of problems all kinds of error.

And he said to me it took me some time to understand how this church that had had so much sound gospel teaching had got into such a mess. And then he said I realised at last what it was.

[10 : 58] They had been taught all the positives but they'd never been taught any of the negatives. And therefore when difficulty came when choices had to be made when clear cut decisions had to be made about the way of gospel truth they were not in a position to think clearly because they'd never been clearly taught God's way is not that way but this way.

And if we're to think this way and do this as Christian people then the implication is that we must not do that and not go those ways. And that was enough for the ruination for the near ruination of a solid congregation.

So God's negatives his warnings are very necessary. And we know that that's true even in our own lives. I was in Sydney in January several times I was walking around Sydney Harbour and there are all kinds of areas there where there are lovely beaches and so on but you find these big warning signs that say no swimming sharks and yet you look around and a lot of people are just disregarding these going in swimming.

I have to confess I went swimming myself in one of these places although mostly I went to places where there were shark nets. But I did tend to think to myself well this is just a bit overhyped really is that sort of warning really necessary?

And then when I came home just about a month later I read several times in the newspapers about reports of swimmers being got by sharks exactly in these places in Sydney Harbour. So there was a very real purpose to those negative warnings.

[12 : 39] And God's warnings to us his big do not signs in the scriptures are there for the same purpose for our protection for our good.

The necessary negatives that God gives us in his word in fact have a supremely positive role. Now Jesus himself often warns us in rather negative fashion.

John 16.33 for example in the world he says you will have tribulation you will have trouble and strife and hardship. That's a big negative isn't it?

Not the sort of thing that makes you popular saying to your followers that kind of thing follow me they're going to hate you and it's going to be hard. Don't think you find a politician saying that.

But what a positive comfort it is to us when we face exactly these things and we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ himself told us that we would exactly face them.

[13 : 45] What an encouragement to know that these things are not outside his plan and his purpose. And sometimes that trouble from the church comes from outside the church in persecution and in opposition of many kinds.

We've been seeing that in the book of Acts. We were thinking about that on Wednesday evening in the prayer meeting when we heard news of a church in Nepal that had been raided by terrorists where believers had been killed right there as they met together just like this in a Christian meeting. sometimes that is the real danger that comes and that Jesus warns about. But often as we've also seen in the book of Acts often that oppression and danger comes from within the church.

And that's what Peter's been speaking about particularly in this letter. The constant peril that Peter is speaking about is a peril that can destabilize and ultimately destroy followers of Jesus.

And it's something that is peddled by very plausible leaders from within the professing Christian church. As we read in chapter 2 verse 1 there will be false teachers among you and they will smuggle in says Peter destructive heresies.

[15:00] They'll do it secretly. It'll be an assault upon the church of Jesus Christ but it won't be an assault with mortars and grenades and bombs. It won't be things that you can recognize immediately and take cover from.

It'll be rather like poison gas. There'll be no smell, there'll be no sound, there'll be nothing at all until it's too late and you realize just how deadly that attack has been.

That's what Peter's talking about and how accurate that is and has been seen to be throughout the history of the church. Destabilizing falsehood always comes, always comes clothed in the language of love and of inclusiveness and of affirmation and of progress.

All the positive buzzwords that people of our age love to hear. But don't be fooled says Peter.

Those kind of words can hide fundamental error and lawlessness.

That's what he says here in verse 17. They hide a sinister power to carry you away so that you will lose your own stability and in the end you also will become like them as verse 16 says.

[16:12] They are unstable says Peter and the end result is their own destruction. You see when your mind becomes totally unstable in the end you lose all balance don't you?

You crash to the floor. It's often what happens when people have suffered the illness of having a stroke in their brain. they lose their balance.

And very often the result is that what happens sometimes is when they lose their balance completely off their sticks they crash to the floor and perhaps they break their hip or some other bone like that.

That's what happened to my own father. He had a stroke. He did very well but one day his balance just wasn't good enough and he fell and he broke his hip and he never walked again. And that was really the beginning of the end. It's just what happens when you lose your balance.

And you see when we lose our own Christian balance when we lose the balance that we need walking straight in the gospel truth in the church of Jesus Christ that is exactly what happens too.

[17:23] Ultimately there will be a crash to the floor. And that's exactly what has been happening in recent decades all through the western world in the churches that we belong to.

Our biggest threat in the west where we don't have people bursting in as terrorists to gun us down in the churches our biggest threat is from inside the professing church and all over our own country as well as the western world that is what's happening and because of it we are in constant peril because of the secret incursion of what Peter calls destructive heresies and if people listen to them and if they follow them says Peter they will be carried away with the error of lawless people and lose their stability total instability which in the end will result in a catastrophic fall personally to Christian people but also I think institutionally to the churches.

if you doubt that anything like that could be so serious you just need to read again those verses that we read at the end of chapter 2 verses 20 and 21 they're very serious words aren't they?

for if after they've escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they're again entangled in them and overcome the last state has become worse for them than the first it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back says Peter.

That just reflects Jesus' own words doesn't it? that happens if you escape the world's defilements and then fall back into them it would have been better for you to never have known these things in the first place.

[19:14] Why is that so? Why is it so awful to be carried away like that? Well chapter 2 verse 1 that we read sums it up because such falsehood really is in the end a terrible sin a terrible rejection says Peter of the Lord Jesus Christ himself you see even denying the master who bought them it's to deny Christ as Lord as our master and it's to deny Christ as Savior as the one who bought us and that you see is the ultimate sin isn't it?

That is the ultimate rebellion for which there can be no forgiveness to totally and utterly rebel against and reject the grace of God and the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ and that's why Peter says it will inevitably bring upon you your own destruction you see how serious that is what he's saying is that people can still be calling themselves Christian can be having all the rituals of outward Christianity can be going to church can even be a leader apparently he says in Christ's church teaching and ruling in the church of Jesus Christ but at heart Peter says you have been denying the Lord and Master God the Son Jesus Christ himself because what you've done is you have stopped worshipping the real Jesus and you have substituted in your mind a Jesus of your own imagining

not the real Jesus but a different Jesus that's not new in the church today that was going on way back then read Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 11 you've substituted a different gospel which is no gospel at all read what Paul writes to the Galatians pretty shocking isn't it to think that Peter the apostle of Christ is saying that there can be leaders and teachers in the church of Jesus Christ who in fact have so perverted the truth of God into a lie that they are doing precisely the opposite they are not serving Christ they are denying him they are not confessing and teaching him they are undermining him and acting against him we'd be thought most impolite if we were to say that that could be true of any of the leaders in our own churches today wouldn't we but he's just echoing the words of the Lord Jesus isn't he remember what Jesus says at the end of the sermon on the mount in Matthew 7 many will say on the day of Christ's coming Lord Lord we did all these marvelous things in your name and Jesus says I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness notice that word that's what he says there lawlessness carried away says Peter by the error of lawless people verse 17 you face constant peril in the church says Peter and take care lest you are carried away into the error of lawless people take care lest you should lose that essential stability that alone can keep you standing till the last day and so you need this negative command you need this warning let's just remind ourselves how Peter tells us we're to recognize those who are denying their Lord and Master well all the way through the letter he's been very clear hasn't he?

there are two telltale features first of all he told us in chapter 1 that these people discredit and disbelieve the genuine authoritative witness of Christ's apostles in other words they devalue the true apostolic gospel look back to chapter 1 verse 16 Peter says in that verse that their witness to Jesus is not myth it's reality it's eyewitness reality for we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty but these false teachers who so empower the church they write off the apostles accurate eyewitness testimony they write off the apostles explanation of the gospel and they say it's all wrong so they have their scholars who want to to what they say demythologize the gospel let's get back to the real Jesus the real Jesus of history as though there was a Jesus of history who was any different to the Jesus who is recorded historically in the gospels they constantly attack the doctrine of Christ's apostles the virgin birth the bodily resurrection and so on especially today of course the reality of judgment and God's wrath as we saw in chapter 3 verse 5 and following they conveniently bury all the facts that God has indeed judged throughout the era of scripture and the era of history well that's just what

Peter is warning us about here in verses 16 and 17 of chapter 3 I wonder if you just look at it again he talks about people who are twisting the scriptures to their own destruction and destabilizing churches and Christians as a result so that they too will be in real peril and danger of falling away themselves falling away from the faith that saves and that's always a marker says Peter of destabilizing error they might use all sorts of nice language all sorts of positive terminology but at heart they discredit and they disbelieve the apostles authoritative witness to Jesus let's forget Paul let's get back to Jesus they say that sort of thing they will not have the apostolic gospel well look where it leads says Peter it leads to instability and instability like that leads ultimately to collapse so what Peter is saying to us if you find yourself as a Christian believer in a church in a congregation where the leaders speak in that kind of a way then you are in grave peril constantly you're in real danger it's very serious it'll be deadly to you it'll be deadly to your family you are putting enormous obstacles in your way to you standing fast at the last day of Jesus if you ever find yourself in a church like that that is not a place to be if you want to be safe that's what Peter is saying so they discredit and they disbelieve the apostolic witness but secondly they despise and they disobey the apostles authoritative commands he says that in chapter 2 verse 10 they despise authority as people always do when authorities tell them to do things that they don't want to do and they especially despise the authority of the apostles commands it's interesting to notice in chapter 2 verse 10 that self-indulgent passion and denial of apostolic authority are very closely related those who indulge in the lust of the violent passion he says and despise authority but Peter calls us back rather to the commands that come from Jesus the Lord through his apostles chapter 3 verse 2 the commands of our Lord and Master through his apostles destabilizers you see want to abandon those commands they want to follow their own sensual desires but no says Peter so when Peter says in verse 14 be diligent to be found without spot or blemish they say no we want to satisfy our own sensual desires that's more important than following the apostles commands about how to live chapter 2 verse 14 said to us that they are insatiable for sin for both sexual satisfaction their eyes

are full of adultery insatiable for sin and they have hearts trained in greed isn't it interesting the juxtaposition of those two things sexual satisfaction and satisfaction of greed because both of those things have the same thing at their roots don't they covetousness desiring things for ourselves it's self worship covetousness

[27 : 54] Paul says is idolatry it's self worship by satisfying my sensual desires my desires for money or whatever else it is they despise they disobey the apostolic commands all the ones that they dislike that is they're quite happy with the ones that they like but the ones that they dislike they won't have so we hear that all the time today don't we so when Peter the apostle in 1 Peter 3 has certain commands about how husbands and wives are to live together in a partnership that is godly they say well we're not having any of that thank you very much today or when Paul talks about the same things in Ephesians chapter 5 we say well we're not having that we can't have that far less when Paul has particular commands to the Corinthian church for example or in 1 Timothy about the appropriate way that men and women should relate in leadership in the churches heaven forbid we're certainly not going to have that in our churches today in the 21st century you see when you start to disregard and despise the authority of the apostolic commands in these and other ways then pretty soon all of the commands for biblical morality are up for grabs all commands about the biblical way to behave as

Christian beings are jettisoned and that's what we're seeing of course everywhere in the church today but hold on a minute Peter says it's not me you're rejecting it's not Paul and the others that you're rejecting by discrediting the apostolic witness and by disobeying apostolic authority you are denying the Lord and Master Jesus Christ himself because it's his message it's his commands the commands of our Lord and Saviour through your apostles chapter 3 verse 2 apostolic authority is divine authority and if you abandon that then what you are replacing it with is your own authority you become the one who decides or the vague and changing mood of a pagan world all around us that becomes the authority by which we judge the holy scriptures and Peter says don't you see that is what leads you only to destruction to a hopeless destiny of eternal destruction so you need to know that says Peter you need to not be taken in because you are and you always will be in constant peril from within the church shocking we don't want to believe it we want to say that cannot be right but that is what

Peter is telling us but he says you know this now about this constant peril you know it in advance he says in verse 17 knowing it beforehand so that you can be on your guard and here's the great encouragement so that you will realize that you also have a constant protection what is that well verse 18 has it plain and simply for us don't be carried away he says by falsehood and destabilized but instead grow grow in the rock like solidity that comes from growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ that's all the protection you need says Peter and then find in practical terms it's the very opposite of what the destabilizing false teachers want and want us to do they discredit and they disbelieve the apostolic witness to Jesus in scripture and they disobey and they want to abandon the apostolic commands in scripture but Peter says you are to know the true scriptures so that you are able to know the true savior you see that in verse 17 knowing this beforehand he says this refers back to what he's talking about in verse 16 where he's talking about the scriptures but these people are twisting including

Paul's letters even the hard bits we're not to distort them he says we're to trust them we're to receive these scriptures as the true grace of God and we're to stand firm in it as he puts it in his first letter you see Peter's whole letter here is all about knowing God through Jesus Christ our Lord knowing him in the only way that we can possibly know him begins the letter by saying it by multiplying to them the knowledge of our God and Jesus Christ our Lord and that's how he ends it here in verse 18 by saying grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ it's all about knowing the true Lord Jesus Christ and that's why the letter is also all about knowing and trusting and recognizing the true scriptures it's the true voice of our Lord and Saviour that comes to us clearly through his apostles and through the prophets of the Old Testament remember chapter 3 verse 2 remember the words of the prophets of the Old

Testament and the commands of our Lord and Saviour through your apostles the New Testament remember these things because in them you hear your master's true voice just like with the old gramophone records I'm not sure if the HMV label still has that little picture of the dog sitting by the gramophone and listening into the trumpet HMV his master's voice this dog wondering where on earth looking at this little black disc going round and round and hearing the voice of his master

coming to him on the one hand of course it's just a plastic disc a vinyl disc well these days it's a CD isn't it or it's an invisible piece of software or something let's just stick with the good old days on the one hand it's just a black vinyl disc and yet on the other hand that static black disc contains within it a permanent voice it can be heard it can be known it can be rejoiced in and that's what Peter is telling us about the scriptures yes on one level it is of course the words of men it's the words of the prophets and the apostles but as their words are heard just as with the disc it is the master's voice that is heard enriching us with knowledge delivering his great blessings to us nurturing us through grace and through faith the the gazette a while back that since my father died

[34 : 53] I've been listening to a number of his recordings on tape and I suppose it's a strange thing that perhaps not so many folks have that I have so many of these and his words are captured on them and they are preserved forever and although he is in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ rejoicing his words contained in these little boxes are just as real and as wonderful and as powerful to me as I listen to them as they ever were and likewise his words in writing as I read them things which can't ever be erased which are there forever and ever they speak with his voice and I hear exactly what he has said and continues to say you see that's what Peter is saying to us is so with the scriptures that every time we open these words of the apostles and the prophets every time these words are proclaimed his voice the unchanging unchangeable voice of our

Lord and Master Jesus Christ is heard and he is teaching us and rebuking us and encouraging us and leading us on and on and we'll continue to do so right until the day of his coming and we have that constant protection says Peter of the word of our Master a living and abiding word as he calls it in his first letter that is the word that brought us to birth through which we were born again and now he says that is the word that will continue to lead us to glory all the way until Jesus comes we are in constant peril for what is the way of safety and protection from all that harm that can destabilize us that in the end can destroy the church and us with it well it is knowing more and more intimately the saviour as we listen to his gracious voice and are strengthened as we feed on his voice in the scriptures and when the scriptures are opened and taught faithfully and obediently the master's voice will always be heard can't be silenced and his instruction his correction his training in righteousness his strengthening his encouraging his power to call the dead to life will be at work and Peter is saying that is where our chief focus therefore must always be we must be letting his voice be heard heard loudly and constantly right till the end in our personal life in our church life in groups large like this and small as we meet together in training others as we train them to handle that same word and to pass it on we meet the error of those who are being submerged in the world by being ourselves submerged evermore in the word of our Lord

Jesus Christ that's our constant protection the peril is that we will be submerged by the world the protection is that we submerge ourselves in the unchanging word of God's power but you says Peter because you know this beforehand because you have the warning because you have the necessary negatives about the reality of these battles you will always face in the church you take hold of that real protection don't neglect the real task of going on and of growing on and on and more and more in the knowledge of the true Lord Jesus Christ the real saviour and Lord not the different Jesus not the different gospel that's no gospel at all and you do it says Peter one way alone by remembering by reveling in and by rejoicing in the true scriptures the words the apostles and of the prophets you immerse yourself constantly in that word says Peter because it is the power of

God for salvation and that alone is what has the power to protect you and to protect our church from instability that will only ever lead to disaster friends that has been a great word of direction and encouragement for me in these weeks and it ought to be for every minister especially as we face days of strife in our own denomination because we are faced with many things that we have to do meetings that have to take place discussions that have to happen yes actions that we have to take in all kinds of different ways but if we listen to Peter he will tell us the chief protection the chief protection is in continually and constantly opening the scriptures so that we will constantly be hearing the word of the true Lord Jesus Christ and if that priority task is neglected by me or our other preachers or the ministers and leaders in our other churches because we are so taken up with other things then we will be losing the real protection that God has given us

I find that a very important word to me personally this week but likewise it is important for you because the answer for every one of us to every assault on our Christian stability for every every assault that comes to us from outside or from within in our own Christian lives every answer is the

same we are to go on in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as we go on feeding on these great and precious promises that alone can lead us to glory and therefore whatever assault you may be facing in your life from within your own heart or from outside whatever it might be whatever actions you have to take your true protection and the true answer will always be that you also are growing the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ through feeding daily and weekly on his ever present living and abiding word so says

[41 : 15] Peter at the end of this letter be warned you are in constant peril we have an enemy he's like a roaring lion he said in his first letter and he's seeking to devour he is seeking to destabilize he is seeking ultimately to destroy you and me and our church and our churches be in no doubt about that and be alert and it begins when people within the church when leaders even in the church begin to discredit the apostolic gospel and to disobey the apostolic commands but it ends always in one place alone says Peter in denying our only Lord and Master Jesus Christ not to be alert to that is not just to be foolish it is to be naive indeed it is to be disobedient to the warnings that God has given us through Peter we are in constant peril but says Peter be comforted greater is he that is in you than is in the world you know the true grace of

God you have the true gospel of God and the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments so fear not stand firm in that and if you do that says Peter you will assuredly remain standing until the very last day because you will have all the constant protection that you need and if you keep listening to the voice of the master says verse 18 you will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to him says Peter be the glory both now and to the day of eternity amen let's pray Lord in days of strife and days of assault in days when we have to listen to your command to defend and to contend for the truth once for all delivered to the saints may you help us even in seeing these constant perils never to neglect the true and lasting constant protection you have given us in our master's voice in these words of scripture keep us we pray by keeping us devoted to them and make us strong until that day for Jesus sake amen to us to line to release money to so it love to anxious love to hole or perhaps no to