

How To Live a Full Life in Christ

1 Peter 1:13-16

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, June 25, 2017

Alright. This morning, we're in a series called "The Suffering Church" and we're in the book of 1 Peter. So if you would like to turn there with me, to the book of 1 Peter, we're talking about how the church should handle pain and suffering. I've been your pastor for six months now, and this is one of our first series, because you can't go very far in the Christian life without suffering. Amen? You can't go very far as a believer without experiencing pain. Try to do something for God and it will be painful. If you haven't had pain in a while, go with our folks to do some evangelizing and it will be a war within your soul. You go to counsel someone, same way, pray for someone, same way. The Christian life is painful.

I told you last time, childhood is painful as well because you're growing all the time. There's constant change in children. You put your child in the crib at night and you get up there in the morning and it looks like he's physically changed overnight, you don't know who the child is. Childhood is like that, you're constantly developing, and the Christian life is that way too. Same way in a church. In a church, there's constant growth and change. I've heard people ask me since coming here, "Do you like it?" And I say, "I like it very much, it's a wonderful church. I'm so privileged to be here." But it's new, which means we're constantly developing. People come up and ask, "How are we gonna handle this?" And I say, "Well, we've never dealt with that before, I don't know. We've got to figure it out, figure that out." Or they say, "What are we gonna do with this problem over here?" And I say, "Well, let me get back to you, that's the first time for us to deal with that." That's church growth. It really stretches you and causes you to think. Someone asked me the other day, they asked me a real deep doctrinal question about end times. And I said, "Well, is it in the book of 1 Peter?" They said, "No." I said, "Well, then I haven't studied that for 15 years in seminary, so let me get back to you." But that's why we're in this series because we want to grow. We want to be ready to suffer in a God-honouring way, and we're doing this in the book of 1 Peter.

To get us started this morning, I'd like to ask a question to get our minds on the passage, "What are you filling your life with?" If I were to follow you around to work or school, if I were to come with you to the farm or the office, what would you say is consuming your life? What's taking the most of your time? Scientists have determined that the average person sleeps about eight hours a night, which means that if you do the math, you sleep about a third of your life away. If you lived for 75 years, 25 years of that will be spent sleeping, which means that when it's all said and done, you don't have much time left. Time is very valuable to you, it's very precious, so what are you doing with it?

To say that with an illustration, I have a bottle of water with me up here on stage, put it right here, and let's say it's full of your life, full of your time, what would be in it? What would we see in the bottle? Can I take a guess at what we would see for some of you? Can I take a guess at what would be in here if we filled this with your time? Some of you, if we filled a bottle full of your time, it would be full of work. Would you agree with that? You got a bottle full of work. If we looked inside, we would see you at your desk or at your table or in the shop. If we picked it

up and turned it around and examined it, we would see you on the phone or in a conference or in the field working. That's what you do, that's who you are. Psychologists define it as a workaholic. People out in the street would call you a busy bee, you're always making money, always on the job. You're like the bumper sticker that says, "I owe, I owe, it's off to work I go." Or like the other one that said, "My job ate my life." Some of you are letting your job eat your life.

But I'm guessing some of you are different from that, so can I take another guess at what you're filling your bottle with? Some of you, you go to work, but you don't fill life full of work. You fill it full of other things like games. Your life is spent on fun and games. If we were to look into this bottle, you would be always be on the computer, always behind a book, always watching TV. Every waking minute is spent following your favourite team or watching your favourite show on Netflix. The Globe and Mail website recently did a study that found that Canadians spend about 30 hours a week in front of the TV, comes to about four hours per day. Other studies have said that the average school child by the time he gets out of grade school will have watched more television than he will have spent talking to his father in his entire lifetime. And for some of you, that's what your life is full of. Your routine is to go to work, come home, watch TV, go to bed, go to work, come home, watch TV, go to bed, go to work, come home, watch TV, go to bed.

Can I take one more guess at what some of you might be filling your bottles with? How you might be spending your time? Some of you might be spending it on possessions. You're spending it on stuff that you have, toys, big boy toys, grown up toys that cost lots of money. You spend all your time on your car or your boat or your house. Every waking minute goes into your iPhone or your Blackberry. Do they even have Blackberries anymore? Okay, Richard has one, so if you want to go see that, go see Richard. It comes with a long cord and plug it into the wall, antenna that goes up there.

In preparing for this sermon, I came across another study... Did a lot of studying for this, that was interesting... of Canadian stereotypes, which said that most Canadians park in the driveway, because their garage is full of junk. I don't know if that's true or not, but I did notice walking through my neighbourhood that everyone parks in their driveway in my neighbourhood. And some of you are living like that. If we looked into your bottle, you would always be in your garage tinkering. You got a bottle full of possessions. And we can mention other things that we could fill our bottles with.

But I bring this up to say that what you put in your bottle comes out of it in a trial, doesn't it? What you put into your life comes out of it when you suffer, when you shake it. If I were to shake this bottle, water would come out of it, right? Don't tell anybody I just did that. Why does water come out of it, because water's in it. I could shake this thing from now until eternity, milk will never come out of this bottle. Why? Because there's no milk in it. It's the same way with life. I've heard people say, "Boy, when that person went through a divorce, they became another person." No, they didn't. No, they didn't. It just took the divorce to bring that out of them. Or they say, "When that person lost their job, boy, they just flipped the switch and changed." No, they didn't. It just took a little shaking to get what's out of the bottle. So what you put into your life comes out of it in a trial. They say that what's down in the well comes up in the bucket, and what's down in your heart comes out when the heat's turned up. And if you put work and games

and possessions into the bottle, then that's what's going to come out of it, when you're in a trial. But on the other hand, if you put other things in the bottle, better things, more eternal things, then that'll come out of the bottle too.

And that's what Peter's talking about in 1 Peter chapter 1. The first chapter of this book tells us what to fill our bottles with for a trial. It tells us what should spill out of our lives when we're shaken up.

And I won't read it all for the sake of time, but if you notice verse 1 starts out, Peter says, it says, "Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Peter says this was written to Christians who were scattered. They were undergoing a trial. The word "scattered" here is *diaspora* in Greek, which refers to the time when the Babylonians and Persians took over the ancient world and dispersed the people from their homes. I've told you before that many of you moved to Canada by choice, these people moved to these areas by the choice of someone else, by force. They were made to move at the point of a sword. And the Persians took over Rome, and they scattered the Romans to Egypt. They took over Egypt and they scattered the Egyptians to Rome. They scattered people everywhere, and these folks were caught up in that. But Peter says in the first chapter of this book, I don't want you to focus on that. I want you to focus on other things. And just to review some of the things we've talked about, he wants them to focus on, in verse 3, he mentions the new birth. Verse 3 says, "You have been born again to a living hope, so focus on that," Peter says, "Fill your bottle with that." Verse 4 says to fill it with an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away. "Think about that instead of your pain," Peter says. Think about that instead of your suffering. Fill it with the protection of God in verse 5. Fill it with salvation in verse 9. Verse 10 says to fill it with the fact that you know more about all of this than the prophets do. "The Old Testament prophets prophesied of the grace that would come, but you have experienced it," Peter says. Verse 12 says, you know more than the angels do. This is a wild thought, and it should humble you to the dust to think that you know more about getting saved than the angels do, because angels can't get saved. They sin once and that's it, they're off to hell. You sin, I sin, and we are pardoned through the blood of Jesus Christ, and the angels watch that, and it just blows their minds. So fill your bottle with that, Peter says. Don't fill it with work and games. Don't fill it with possessions, fill it with the reality that you're going to heaven. What good are possessions going to be to you in the hospital? If you go blind and lose your hearing, what good is a car going to do you then? If you get injured and lose your job, what's your work going to do for you if you can't work anymore, and you've built your whole identity in that.

A friend of mine (I told you this before, a friend of mine's dad is a pastor) was a pastor in Tennessee, and he had a terrible accident and was not able to pastor anymore. And my friend said his dad just suffered because his identity was wrapped up in his job. Your identity needs to be wrapped up in something else. It needs to be wrapped up in Jesus Christ. And that's what Peter says here in this chapter. When you lose everything, what's left? And he tells these people, Christ is left. And Peter says, you need something better to prepare you for a trial and if you have it, here's what it'll look like. And this is what he talks about in the next couple of verses. So, if you're taking notes, in 1 Peter 1:13-16, Peter says, a full life in Christ is gonna look like several things. If your bottle is full to the top of the right things, of God-honouring things, eternal things, here's what it's going to look like.

The first thing is this: it will look like preparing your minds for action. If you want to live a full life in Christ, you need to prepare your minds for action. Say that another way, a full life starts with a full mind. I've been doing a little studying of cults, and it's one mark of cults that they tell you, turn off your mind. And the idea is that you don't think, we think for you. Peter says Christianity is the exact opposite of that. God gave you a mind to use it. And I'd say God gave you a book, the Bible, to read it, and think about it, and dwell on it, and meditate on it. All these things are things of the mind. And if you read on in verse 13, this is what it says, it says, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action." That word "therefore" refers back to all Peter had said so far in this book, "Since you have a new birth and an inheritance, since you have protection and salvation, since you know more about all this than the prophets and the angels do, therefore prepare your minds for action." That word prepare literally translates "gird up the loins of your mind". The ancient people wore long flowing robes that went down to the ground and before they could do manual work, they had to gird them up. They would pull them up and tie them around their waist. Peter says, do that with your mind, prepare it for work, prepare it for action. Don't be vegged out on the couch watching TV all day, he says. Ain't nothing wrong with TV but TV will kill your mind if you put enough of it in there, right? Don't spend all your time playing video games or doing things that are mindless, prepare your mind for action. John Calvin says a Christian should keep his mind disentangled from the things of this world. Sin, laziness, worldly philosophy, dirty jokes. We should keep our mind disentangled from all of that. John MacArthur says that,

Sin is first incubated in the mind, by engaging the inner faculties, mind, emotions, desire, imagination, sin works directly on the soul, and biases it toward evil. Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny. Evil thoughts and mental laziness are the groundwork for all our other sins.

That's a total opposite of what the world says, isn't it? The world says, "Don't think, we'll think for you." Another way to say this is, "Be on the alert." I can't tell you how many Christians I have met who are not mentally alert, they're asleep. I mean they're just out of it, and the first thing comes out of their mouth is always a, "Huh?" or a "What?" They're not even awake. They're asleep in their studies, asleep in their prayer life, asleep in their evangelism. So that when trials come, they're totally unprepared. When sickness comes, they're completely caught off guard, as if you would go through all of life and never get sick, as if no one ever died. Thomas Edison said that 5% of people think, 10% of people think they think, and 85% of people would rather die than think. There are people who would rather die than think. Peter says, do not be one of them.

I remember talking with a pastor friend of mine when I was in seminary, and I told him I was so tired from studying all the time. I had never studied so hard in my life. I don't know that I'd ever actually even studied before going to seminary. And he told me, he said, "Jeremy, we have to get smarter." He said, "We have to learn more about God." Christians are always learning more about God. The battle of the Christian life is, there's always a part of you that wants to spend all your life around people, and pouring into people, and loving people, and serving people. And then there's part of your life that just wants to spend every day with a good book in a corner, right? That's the Christian life. We want to learn the Scriptures and we want to pour them into people. Our minds need to be prepared for actions. One of the Puritans said, we study ourselves

to death and we pray ourselves alive again. We work ourselves to death for Christ, for His people, for His glory, and we pray ourselves alive again.

Let me say all this another way, Christians are busy people. I can't tell you how many times I've talked to someone in this church who has said, "I am so busy, I have so much going on right now." That's a good thing, that's a great thing. You want to be... You got one life, one chance, to prepare for eternity, make it count, be busy. Just be busy with the right things, Peter says. Make sure you're filling your bottle with the things of Him. In his book, "Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life" Donald Whitney says it this way, he says, "Christians are by nature of what they are, busy people. It's always been so, call to mind the heroes of the faith, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, Susanna Wesley, George Whitfield, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, they were all disciplined and busy." And Whitney says, "In my own pastoral and personal experience, I can say, I've never known a man or a woman who's come to spiritual maturity, except through a disciplined and an active life." Godliness always comes through that. Listen, if you're busy this morning, I want to encourage you, you're on the right path. Just be busy doing the right things.

And it leads to the next way to live a full life in Christ, and that is to keep sober in spirit. Prepare your minds for action. And if you're wondering what kind of action are we talking about here? Peter says it's a sober action. Keep sober in spirit. Fill the bottle with serious things, sober things. Life is serious, and to fill it up wisely, fill it up seriously. If you read on in verse 13, it says, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit." The word "sober" originally referred to restraining yourself from alcohol or drunkenness, but it came to refer to anything that was unhealthy to your soul; anything that hindered your walk with God. You guys know this, anything can hinder your walk with God if it's used for sinful purposes. Work, games, possessions, those are all fine and good unless you use them for the wrong things. Does that make sense? They're all fine unless you make an idol out of them. Keep sober about that, Peter says. Be serious about it. Another way to say this is, don't build your life around things that have no eternal value. Don't fill your life up with things that won't really matter when you're dead and gone. Several months ago, a friend of mine sent me an article from Tim Challies website called "A Clean House and a Wasted Life." I want to encourage all the moms in this room maybe to read that. I think it would be encouraging to you. But in it, Challies says that a clean house is a good thing and we all want that, but it becomes bad if we build our lives around it. I've got two little boys, that it's their mission in life to mess up my house. And so we were reading this and we're real challenged by this, but it says (it's kind of long, I want to read this to you 'cause I think it really puts this in perspective)

You probably heard this saying before that "a clean house is a sign of a wasted life." I thought of that saying when I spotted this proverb, "Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox." Proverbs 14:4. According to this proverb, life is messy. I love productivity, at least I love productivity when it's properly defined. But if you are productive, you will accumulate mess. You cannot focus all your time, attention, gifts, energy, and enthusiasm toward noble goals while keeping every corner of your house tidy. The pastor's desk will be crammed with books. The baker's counter will overflow with pots, the mechanic's hand will be stained with grease, and the home at times will be messy and full of clutter. We could as easily say that one

desires a neat and tidy house, just as the ideal stall would be clean. However, a clean house might just as well be a wasted house for there is no productivity without some kind of mess behind it. Like so much else in life, you cannot have it all. You can't have perfect order and perfect productivity. You can't have a house that is warm and inviting while having every dish done and every sock laundered. Of course, this isn't to excuse laziness, but you need to understand that orderliness can reach the point of sterility. Is a clean house the sign of a wasted life? No, not at all. But it's not the sign of a well-lived life either.

Can any of you relate to that? I thought that was real encouraging. Does anybody have a messy house? Do you want one? I can send you some people who can help you with that. A lot of our families in here could, right? You see this is what Peter is talking about, keep sober about those things. Be serious with how you handle everything in life, even the cleanliness of your house. Keep it in perspective. One of my professors used to say that he likes to picture himself on a rocking chair at the end of his life and every day ask the question, "Will I be happy then with how I'm living now?" When I'm at the end of my life and I can't do it again, will it really matter that I had a clean house? Of course not. Then why should it matter now? When I'm 80 or 90 or 100 years old and I can't do anything else again, my life has been lived and all I can do is reflect back on it, will it really matter that I made \$200,000 a year at work? Will it really matter if I had the latest iPhone or watched the latest TV show, will it really matter if I had a garage full of junk? It's not, then it shouldn't matter now. Don't make a big deal of it now. Pour other things into your bottle and that leads to another way to live a full life in Christ and we're gonna fly through this one. Fix your hope on Jesus. We talked about this a little before in the weeks past, but prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, and fix your hope on Jesus.

If you read in all of verse 13, he says, "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." If you're reading along in the passage here, you notice there's a progression of thought, a full life starts with a full mind. Then it leads to a sober one. And then it leads to a hopeful one. Christians have hope. We're not down in the dumps all the time. We're not miserable people. I told you last time about the two farmers who were walking through a field and one said, "Hey, look at all the beautiful cows!" And the other one said, "Yeah, but look at all the cow patties." We don't look at the cow patties all the time. We see other things too, good things, hopeful things.

That phrase, "the revelation of Jesus Christ," is another way of saying "the return of Jesus Christ" or "the second coming of Christ." The first verse of the book of Revelation starts out, "The revelation of Jesus Christ." That's the same expression here to remind you to live in such a way that you'll be ready for that day. Live in such a way that you'll be ready for the events in the book of Revelation. Your hope is there, your confidence is there, and you need to live like you're ready for it. Jonathan Edwards said he was resolved never to do anything, which he would be afraid to do when he heard the last trumpet. We need to do that too, friends. That's how you live a full life in Christ. We live every day with the reminder that you're gonna stand before a holy God and answer for your life. One day, you'll live with the reminder that the one day the books will be opened, and God will go through, an omniscient God, a God who knows everything, sees everything, will go through everything you've done. Jesus says in Matthew 24, He says "Be on

the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming... For this reason, you must also be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." Jesus says, in light of what's to come, be alert, be awake, be ready for it. Don't go to sleep, He says. Don't veg out and let life pass you by. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, he said, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first." And then later on in chapter 5, he says, "So keep sober and be on the alert."

When you read the end times and what's to come, the reaction in your heart should be comfort and it should be alertness. It's in the Bible to wake you up. We haven't talked a lot about that in this series, but we've talked a lot about hoping in Christ, so I won't say more about that here, but other than just to give you another way to live a full life in Christ, do not be conformed to your former lust. It's what Peter goes on to say in verse 14, "Do not be conformed to your former lust". He says, "As obedient children," in verse 14, that uses the same phrase, "Do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance." Peter starts off this verse by calling them obedient children, it's kind of interesting. To the world, these people were aliens. To the world, they were nobodies from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia... They were people that were scattered to kingdom come. I told you if you look at a map, those territories, it's about a 300,000 square mile radius in those areas. It's the size of British Columbia. To the world, these people were nobodies but to God, they were children, they were family. And now he says, you need to live like it by being obedient, particularly by being obedient when it comes to the issue of lust.

The ancient world was a very lustful place. It was consumed with sexual sin and adultery. I've heard people argue that the reason Christians are so against the sexual sin is just because that's just culturally. That's culturally how the Bible... That's the biggest bunch of bologna you could ever hear. The first century world, when it came to sexual immorality was about 100 times worse than it is now. Almost all the Roman Caesars were either gay or bisexual. Nero, Caligula, Julius Caesar, all those men were that way. Most of the Roman gods were the same way. Zeus, Hercules, Apollo, they all... You could read about them committing lewd acts. The Greeks also kept boy slaves in their homes for sexual purposes. Plato actually defended that in his book Symposium. He says you can do that as long as it's honourable, so Plato thought that was an honourable thing to do. Egyptian folk tales talked about lust. Babylonian temples were full of lust. Certain cities were synonymous with lust. A Corinthian girl was another name for a prostitute. You guys have read the book of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. And you read that book and you think how could a church be that messed up? They were that messed up because the world around them was that messed up. One ancient author said that Ephesus, the whole city, was fit to be drowned over this. He said the way you can solve the problems in Ephesus is just to drown everybody. And Peter's readers came from this world. These aliens from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia used to be consumed with lust. It was yours when you lived in ignorance. "You didn't know any better," Peter said. "You had no idea that God demanded something else of you, but now you do and don't live in ignorance anymore," he says. Now you worship the true God, so don't be conformed to your former lust. "Sex is for one man and one woman within the bounds of marriage," Peter says. He doesn't go into all that here, but that's behind all this. He says, "You guys know that, now live like it."

And I think if Peter were writing to us today, he would say the same thing. Amen? I don't have to tell you that we live in a very lustful society today. When I said the world in the first century was 100 times worse, I don't know that it was that much worse. It was worse, but I mean, just turn on the news or the TV, and this is exactly what you will see, you will see lust. I remember when I was a kid, I saw one of the first, I think it was one of the first Coca-Cola commercials, they used sex as a selling point. I remember wondering, "What does that have to do with Coca-Cola?" as a kid. And now, it's everywhere. It's been determined that something like 4% of the internet is pornographic. But when you add in all the other stuff the number goes higher than that. Same thing for television. It's almost as if the world has nothing else to talk about. It's almost as if we have nothing else to vote on but this. Every time a vote comes up, here, or in the United States, it always has to do, it seems like, with transgender or homosexual issues. As if there's nothing else to talk about. Can I just say that this is not moving us forward as a society but backwards? Can I just say that we're not becoming more modern because we think like this, we're becoming more ancient, more old fashioned? This stuff has been around for centuries. This stuff has consumed societies way before our time and Peter warns us here not to get caught up in that. "Don't go back to that way of life!", he says. "Don't fill your bottle with lust."

It's interesting this is the only sin Peter mentions by name here because nothing consumes your life quicker than lust. I mean nothing fills up your bottle quicker than this. Give in to lust and it will fill up everything. It will destroy you. One minister said that living for lust is like waiting three hours for a three-minute ride. You think about it and think about it and fantasize about it and then, it's over. You just wasted your life for a cheap thrill, three-minute ride. The proverbs say it turns you into a loaf of bread. Sit in front of a computer and watch pornography and you're no more useful to God than a loaf of bread. Turn on a soap opera, same thing.

Can I warn you not to give in to this sin this morning? Can I encourage you not to be conformed to your former lusts? Listen, it's a very sick world we live in today, but it was a sick world these people lived in too. And there's hope in Christ, there's victory over this sin, there's a way out of it.

And that leads to the next way to live a full life in Christ, and that is to be holy. This really summarizes all we've said so far. If you want to live a full life in Christ and fill your life with things that matter, be holy. A full life is a holy life. That word "holy" means "to be set apart for God." And if you read on in verses 14-16, he says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but live like the Holy One who calls you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior..." "All your behavior" means everything, "because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" Writing to these people that were from such a terrible world, Peter says, "You can be set apart from that. You can be different. You don't have to be caught up in the lusts of the world, you can be holy in all your behavior."

This is the first time Peter quotes from the Old Testament in this letter. He'll go on to do it ten more times or so. Here he quotes from Leviticus 19, to remind us that our goal as believers is to be holy. Another way to say this is: Your bottle is going to look different from the world's bottle. What you will put in here is going to look very different from what everyone else in the world puts in here. Thomas Watson said it this way, he said,

It is an evident principle of life that dead fish swim downstream but living fish swim upstream. To swim against the common stream of evil is proof that you are alive. Let us be lilies among briars. Sin is never the better because it's in fashion. God will not say on the last day that you sinned with the multitude, but you'll go to heaven. No. He will say, "If you sinned with the multitude, you go with the multitude." Let us keep pure among the dregs and be like lamps that shine amidst the terrible darkness of this world.

Peter says the same thing here, "You swim upstream, you are a lamp amidst the darkness."

By the way, some people think that they're going to be holy in all their behaviour on their deathbed. You guys ever met someone like this? You witness to them, you share Christ with them, and they say, "Well, I'll take care of that when I die. I'll take care of that when I get sick." It's the idea is "I'm gonna live like hell, and I'm gonna go to heaven at the last minute." Well, here's the thing, friends, you don't know when your last minute is. I mean, you don't know, you may not make it to your deathbed, you may just die. And then what are you going to say to God? Jesus told the parable of a man who thought like this in Luke 12, he says,

The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?" 18 Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?"

My friends, you don't want to hear God say to you, "You fool." I can't think of anything worse than that. And here, Jesus says, God will say it if you fill your barn with earthly things, worldly things, things that don't matter. You want to fill it with holy things, with things that are going to last when you die, and to do that, Peter says, "You need to prepare your mind for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope in Christ, do not be conformed to your former lusts. And be holy. To get ready for a shaking, this is what you have to do: you need to be set apart for God and swim upstream. You need to think deeply about the Lord, deeply about His Word, deeply about your life. You need to be serious and hopeful and pure.

A little girl once asked her mother, she said, "Mommy, is Jesus coming back soon?" To which the mom replied, "Yes dear." The little girl said, "Today?" "Yes, dear." "Any minute?" "Yes, dear." And after thinking about it for a minute, the little girl said, "Then Mommy, can you comb my hair?" Now that sounds a little silly, the point is good. You need to be ready. You need to have your bottle filled to the top. Maybe some of you would say you're not ready this morning. Your life is consumed with all the stuff we just talked about and nothing else. To the point that all you think about, all you live for, is games and toys and possessions. Can I remind you, it's not too late to change that? Can I remind you, it's never too late to get ready to stand before God and fill your bottle with something else? Jesus came to save you, He lived a perfect life and died on the cross so you could be forgiven. God had punished Him unto death for every sin you would ever commit and He raised Him back to life so that you could be raised in Him and live a full life. Will you do that this morning? Will you come to Christ? We're gonna hear the testimonies

of several people here in a moment who have done that, who have come to Christ and want to demonstrate that in the act of baptism. Will you come to Him this morning if you haven't? John Piper tells the story of an old man who came to the pastor after a service and he said, "I wasted it, I wasted my life!" He said, "I drank it away, I lusted it away, I squandered it away and now I can't get it back." Friends, don't waste your life this morning, don't squander it. Your life is precious, your soul is precious, your time is precious, give it to Jesus and He won't waste it. Give it to Him and He will make it count for eternity, amen? "Only one life, will soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last." Let's pray.

Father, we do pray for Your help this morning in just taking Peter's words here of, we could just say, of urgency. There's not a man, woman, or child in this room who knows when they're going to die, and there's not a one of us who knows what tomorrow holds. All we have is this moment. Lord, we pray that You'll help us to make it count. Help us to fill our bottles up with things that do matter to You. We get so side-tracked by the things of this world, we get so side-tracked with stuff that's thrown at us in the news and on TV and all these other things. Lord, help us just to filter our minds through Your Word and to please You in that. Lord, I pray for those here this morning who are born again that this would challenge them to do more things for You, for Your glory, for Your honour, to have right motives in that.

I pray for those who are not saved and they hear about this kind of life and they say, "I don't have that. My life is not lived that way." Lord, I pray You would bring them to conviction, repentance of sin. We pray You would be honoured this morning in our baptisms, Christ would be exalted, and we pray that all this in His name. Amen.