

The Supreme Beauty and Compelling Power of a Life Well Lived

Our Identity in Christ

By Ty Blackburn

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Providence Church
2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Turn within your Bibles to 1 Peter 2, we're in chapter 2. We come to a new section this morning actually of the letter of 1 Peter. The first section is always important to interpret the Scripture in context and in light of the surrounding context helps us understand the true meaning of a particular passage and so I want to take a minute to remind us of the overview and then also how this passage fits into it. Remember Peter's writing to believers in the first century who are experiencing increasing cultural opposition, increasing social hostility, the beginnings of persecution and soon to be really an explosion of persecution. A year after Peter writes, massive persecution breaks out in the Roman world and so he's writing to strengthen believers who are living in hard times that they would stand firm. That's his main purpose, stand firm, rooted in who you are in Christ. And so that's his purpose. Now what he does is we can divide his book really into two parts. The first part which we finished last Sunday, chapter 1, verse 1, to chapter 2, verse 10, is really the theological, primarily theological content, primarily doctrinal. The second half we turn to today in chapter 2, verse 11, all the way through chapter 5, verse 14, is primarily practical.

So the first half or the first part is theological, doctrinal, and the second half is practical. As he's helping us stand firm, he knows we, first of all, we need to know what to believe and then we need to know what to do. You see the theology and the practice, and like I said, it's not 100 percent, the first part is only doctrinal. There's practical instructions, but primarily the overwhelming emphasis is theological in the first section and the overwhelming emphasis in the second section is practical. The first section he's determined to tell us what God has done for us in Christ. In the second part, what we are to do now in light of what God has done. In the first section, knowing what God has done helps us understand who we are. We've talked a lot about our identity in Christ because Peter is hammering home the fact that if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you are a part of the people of God. Your identity and your status has forever changed. So you need to know who you are. If you're going to stand firm, you need to know who you are and that's what he's nailed down as a foundation in this first section. But now if you're going to stand firm, you need to know what you're to do or another way of saying this, what you're to do is why you're here and that's really what this second section deals with. Why you and I are here. What's our purpose? What are we to be about?

And these two verses we're going to look at this morning, 1 Peter 2:11 and 12, really serve as kind of a rubric over the second part of the book. That is, this is a really important section to understanding the whole book because these verses lay out really the theme of the rest of the book, verses 11 and 12, and the theme I'm going to encapsulate in a title, the title of today's message is "The Supreme Beauty and Compelling Power of a Life Well Lived." The supreme beauty and compelling power of a life well lived. He's basically going to say in this section, live the life that you're called to live. He's going to talk about how to do it. You're here to live a life that will make known the God that you know. You're here to live in such a way that God's glory is on display. You are here to live in such a way that people can see in your life, in the just day-to-day things that you do, they can see the goodness of God. They can see his excellency in the way that you live. You're also supposed to testify about him. He's going to get to that. It's very instructive that when he comes to the second, you think about it, the first half is know who you are, the second half is know how you can make a difference. How are you to make a difference in the world? This is what we're turning to and he doesn't begin with helping us with our gospel presentation in words. Now, clearly, he's going to talk about that. The Bible makes that clear. We are to be witnesses. Wherever we go of the work of Jesus Christ in our lives, we're to testify to the truth that we know. But what he does here is he says, "Listen, the first thing I want to talk to you about, if you're going to make a difference for the Lord, if you're going to take the message that God is good, that you can trust Him, that you should love Jesus, if you're going to take that message to a lost and dying world, you must be determined to live that message."

The power, the beauty and power of a life well lived. He's going to talk about how the Christian life, the truly authentic Christian life is the best way to live. It is incredibly beautiful and that even though the world hates it at first glance because they hate God, they hate every reminder of God, we talked about that last time, they love darkness rather than light so they don't want to see the beauty and goodness initially but he's saying there's something amazing when a Christian in face of opposition, in face of hostility lives out the gospel. It is an amazingly compelling force in the world that it does something to our message, it authenticates our message. So it's first and foundational.

Now this doesn't mean that, in fact, there's a verse, one of my favorite verses that since I was called to ministry that's ministered to me is Ezra 7:10. Ezra 7:10. Ezra who led the people of God and returned to the Promised Land and then to the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the fifth century BC, it says that Ezra was a scribe and the hand of the Lord was upon him. The hand of God was upon him. How do you get the hand of God upon you? The hand of the Lord was upon him, Ezra 7:10, "For," because, "he had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, to practice it and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel." Three things. He had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, he had set his heart to practice it, to do it and then to teach it. Do you see that? Doing is logically before the teaching. Not temporally. It doesn't mean you wait to tell people about Jesus until you feel like you're doing well enough spiritually. No, not at all. But it's saying in God's economy, logically, you need to work and you need to be so committed to living it, that's going to make the message more powerful. But you're still supposed to tell it. You're never going to feel

worthy. If you wait on that, you'll never tell anybody about Jesus. So you're not to do that, but you're to understand that it is seriously important how we live and that there's something about a life well lived that frames the gospel, that gives just authenticating power to the message that we preach.

So the supreme beauty and compelling power of a life well lived. Let's read verses 11 and 12 of 1 Peter 2.

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Let's pray.

Our Father, as we come to You this morning, we come to praise and honor You. You are worthy of all glory and honor. You are perfectly good in all Your ways. You are great and greatly to be praised. We come as unworthy people to You. We confessed earlier, Lord, our hearts are so easily ensnared by sin where we need Your grace and the power of Your word to continue to transform us through the renewing of our mind. So, Lord, use this time to that purpose for the glory of Jesus. We pray in His name. Amen.

So, the surpassing beauty and compelling power of a life well lived. These two verses are so important we're going to spend at least this Sunday and next Sunday on them, Lord willing, but today we're going to focus mostly on verse 12. I really can't wait to start preaching verse 11, but I want us to see the big picture of what these verses do and then we're really going to try to unpack the rich wealth of what verse 11 is talking about, abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. I want us to see it in the larger context.

He's telling us that we are called to live in such a way that we say no to sin, we say yes to righteousness by the power of grace in such a way that our behavior, our conduct becomes a compelling force to call people to faith. That's the picture he's painting here in these verses and so I want us to consider this sermon today under two points. The first is the surpassing beauty of a life well lived. It's going to be pretty easy to guess what the second point is if you wrote down the title. The surpassing beauty of a life well lived. There is a striking contrast and emphasis in this passage. It's talking about, first of all, practical living. Do you see that? I mean, abstaining from fleshly lusts is talking about how you live. Not what you say, but how you live.

And then verse 12, this emphasis becomes even clearer. Your behavior, the key word "behavior" there in verse 12, some translations say "conduct." The NIV says "live such godly lives." And the idea is this word "behavior" has been a key word in 1 Peter already. He used it three times in chapter 1, same root word in 1:15. He said be like the holy one who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior. I mentioned that it's mostly

doctrinal in the first section. It's got some practical stuff in the first section too. Mostly doctrinal. Be holy in all your behavior, the same word, and the word is "conduct" or in the Greek literally this word means "to turn again," and so the idea is you go this way and you turn and you go this way and you turn, basically it's talking about how you live. Think about the different things you do in a day. You know, get up in the morning, you get ready. You may answer a text or a phone call. You may send some email. You get ready to go to the office. You eat breakfast. You go to the office. You may have to stop at the store on the way, stop to get gas. You do this, you do that, you do this, you do that. Think of all the things you do in a general, in a normal day and he says in all of those turnings, turning from one thing to another to another thing to another, to this person to that person, in all of that conduct yourselves in such a way that it is excellent. That's the NASB I'm reading. It says, "keep your behavior excellent." The NIV translates this word "excellent," this adjective for behavior or life, "live such good lives." The ESV says "keep your conduct honorable." No matter what we do, we're to be living and the root idea of this word, actually it's a key word in the passage, is the idea of goodness. In fact, it's the same Greek adjective twice or noun twice in the passage. Keep your behavior excellent, that adjective, and then also good deeds, that adjective. Good works or good deeds. Those are the same Greek word. It's the Greek adjective, kalos.

There are two words that are translated "good" in the New Testament. There are two main words for translating "good." And they're used quite often, both of them. One word, agathos, which is not here, speaks of goodness in the terms of the benefit that the good brings to you. Something is good because it's beneficial. Something is good because it blesses you. Okay, that's agathos. This word is kalos which these two words, there's a lot of overlap in the semantic range of these words. They mean "good or excellent." Yes, they both do but kalos has a slightly different nuance to it. Whereas agathos would mean benefit, the word here twice in this passage is kalos and the idea is beauty. Something is good in that it is beautiful. It is the aesthetic quality that is striking, pleasing. You see it and it's attractive. That's the idea here. Keep your behavior excellent. Keep your conduct honorable. They're translating words though they're talking about a goodness that's evident to the eyes. People are looking at you and what they see, they see goodness. They see something attractive. They see something beautiful.

As I said, it's also the word for because, as they slander you as evildoers, reading on down verse 12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good works, as they observe them, glorify your Father who's in heaven." They observe your good deeds. Same word, kalos. You're beautiful. You're good in the sense of aesthetically beautiful. They look at your behavior, they look at your deeds and they see beauty.

Now they don't initially respond that way because they call you evildoers. The emphasis on doing and action is there in they slander you as evildoers. "You're people who are doing evil." This is what unbelievers think of us. At certain levels, I mean, if you press any unbeliever long enough, they're going to think that you're an evildoer in some way. You're an evildoer in your oppressive standards that you have. The way that you restrain good natural, I'm talking about how they would see us, "You restrain good natural

impulses. You tell us to deny our hearts." A person wants to, you know, to enjoy sexual relations with many different people, the Bible says that's bad. The Bible says it's much better to live a monogamous, heterosexual, married life with one person your whole life that this is aesthetically much more beautiful. Now they don't think that so when they initially look at you saying that and even advocating that, even if you're not saying it out loud, you're living it and it's convicting power. The testimony of your righteous life is offending them and they see you as an evildoer.

An evildoer, this phrase evil, there evildoer, is that which is bad by nature. That which is bad by nature, essentially not as it ought to be. They look at us and initially they think we are not as people ought to be. We are unnatural. We are destructive. Our behavior is hurtful and destructive. Our views are hurtful and destructive. That's why they call us haters. That's why they call us homophobic, transphobic. They think that we hate people because we live a different way. They think that we're opposed to their well-being because we're living a way that they find completely unattractive initially. Initially unattractive because it goes against the lusts of the heart, the natural desires.

But what Peter is saying is even though it appears to be, it appears that we are living lives initially they think that are bad and this idea against nature, injurious, they think we're living like that, they will keep looking if you keep walking in holiness, keep striving to be more like Christ, they will keep looking until they finally experience a total transformation. Not everybody, but some people are going to experience a total transformation where they then glorify God. They're going to be, the witness of your life is so compelling that they go from slandering you, speaking against you is the idea, the word slander, speaking against you, attacking you as someone who is against nature. I mentioned last time that the Romans said of Christians that they were basically enemies of humanity. Nope, they haven't declared war. Christians are just loving God and preaching the gospel and yet they said they're enemies of humanity because initially that's how the unbelieving world looks at it. They see us going against the grain in such a dramatic way. They can't imagine what it would be like to live that way. But the reality is you and I as we conform our lives less and less to the lusts of the flesh and more and more to the will of God, we are living life as it was intended to be lived by the Creator. We are living as he made us to live. The truth is we are living in exact accord with our nature as God intended it. And when you do that, there is something that happens. It is becoming visible that God's way and God's nature and God's will is best. This is the beauty of it. The surpassing beauty of this life well lived.

It's interesting, I mentioned they look, the word he uses in verse 12 "as they observe them because of your good deeds as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation," this word "observe," I'm reading the New American Standard, other translations just say "see." I think "observe" is a better translation of this word because the word is not the normal word for "see." It's an intensified word made up of a preposition, to look upon with the verb optuo, optuo, o-p, like optic nerve, opt, and it means "to look upon," it means "to gaze upon; to fix your eyes upon; to watch; to inspect." So he's saying keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so the thing which they slander you as evildoers, the thing that they're saying that you're so wrong about, that's the thing they're

fixated on. You're saying that you should live this way because of your life and maybe because you've testified to them about it too, they're slandering you and yet as they look at that and they keep looking at it, they cannot deny the intrinsic beauty of it.

In fact, most of these verbs, almost all the verbs in the verse are present tense Greek verbs. Remember, Greek present tense is not so much about the time of the action as it is the kind of the action. Tense in Greek is more about the kind of action and the Greek present is continuous action. So he's saying basically, he uses a series of present tense, "Beloved I am urging you, I'm urging you," you see urging is continuous action, "I'm continually urging you as aliens and strangers to keep on abstaining," another present tense infinitive, "to keep on abstaining from fleshly lusts which waged war against the soul," and in this verse 12 actually, it looks like an imperative, "Keep your behavior," it's actually not. It's a participle, "Keeping your behavior," literally. "Keeping your behavior, continuously keeping your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so in the thing in which they are slandering you right now continually, you're keeping your behavior continually excellent, they're slandering you continually at the same time, they may because of your good deeds as they observe them," and here's the one verb that's not in the present tense, it's in the aorist, "glorify God in the day of visitation." You're hearing the continual pleading of the Scriptures to abstain and you're to keep on abstaining from fleshly lusts and you're keeping your behavior excellent. Even though they're slandering you continually, you keep on keeping on, trusting God, fighting against sin, loving the Lord, choosing the good, and at some point at a point in time as they continually are observing you at a point in time, they suddenly will glorify God. The power of that consistent witness will overcome them.

Now we know God's purpose in election stands, not everyone is going to respond this way but he's trying to tell us, "Listen, we cannot overestimate the power of godly living." We want to see our loved ones come to Christ and many of us are genuinely broken-hearted over them as we should be, but we don't realize that one of the most compelling obstacles to their believing is our own ungodly conduct. We're saying believe in Jesus, he'll change your life, and we're saying that from a life that doesn't appear to be that changed. Peter's saying this ought not be that way. We have to, now again, it doesn't mean if you have a changed life that they're definitely going to change. No, it's not saying that, but it's saying listen, there is something powerful. This is a weapon that we are not using. Godly living frames the gospel. It makes it attractive.

Turn with me past Hebrews and James, James and Hebrews to Titus 2. What we're going to see Peter's going to do, what Titus is doing and what Paul is doing in writing Titus, and what Paul does in Ephesians is he's going to talk about, listen, the Christian life is to be a changed life and you're to try to bring the change of what Jesus has done to you in every area of life. What we're going to see just for a minute back to 1 Peter, don't turn back, but just hang with me for a second before, I got you to Titus a little early. So what he's going to do is he's going to say this is the rubric for living, you're to understand the surpassing beauty and compelling power of a life well lived and so live a life well lived so that it will have this beauty and this power, and then he's going to talk about in the various areas of life to do it, in your relationship with the civil government 2:13 to 17. He's going to

talk about the relationship of slaves and masters, that is in your employment relationships and your business relationships, verses 18 and following. Then in chapter 3, he's going to talk about the marriage relationship and particularly how the marriage relationship works with unbelieving spouses and the compelling power of godly life on an unbelieving spouse. And then he's going to talk about our relationship with basically he's going to talk about in the body of Christ and then he's going to talk about our relationships directly with those who are persecuting us.

So he starts it off with this rubric which says, listen, you must understand the beauty and power of a life lived for the glory of God. Now Paul's making the same point in Titus 2, I'm talking about the attractiveness of how it makes the gospel attractive. Amazing word he uses in Titus 2:10. Let's look at verse 9, "Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith." Why? Why are they to be dealing with, I mean, God's not dealing with the injustice of slavery in this passage. Now it's going to come out of that. The gospel transforms culture over time. It does. It changes culture every time it is introduced into an area. It changes the culture massively but it does not do so by instilling a desire to overthrow governments. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." When he's there before Pilate, and Pilate's saying, "Don't you understand I have power to kill You?" "You have no power over Me which has been given to Me by My Father, and if I wanted to, if My kingdom was in this world, My servants would be fighting but we're not fighting because My kingdom is not of this world."

So God doesn't deal with a frontal assault on justice issues like we might want him to, what he does is he deals with sin issues, transforms hearts, which changes relationships, and fundamentally from the ground up changes the structures of society. It's a much better way. And so this is what he's doing. He's saying, "Listen, I'm not here to deal with the injustice of the culture right now. I'm here to deal with the fact that you who think you're being treated unjustly, you are sinful and bound for hell. You need Jesus Christ." You get social justice and you go to hell. What does that matter? You get the judgment you deserve because you're an oppressor, but you don't understand the gospel. What does that matter? I mean, it's positive, of course, but from an eternal perspective, what does it matter? Salvation. This is what God is focused on. This is why you come to passages like that that say this, and he's going to do the same thing in 1 Peter. He's going to say live in such a way that your life well lived in whatever station you find yourself, in whatever circumstances you find yourself, your life well lived is a compelling, irresistible force of a testimony to say Jesus is King and Lord. He changes everything.

So he says, not pilfering but showing good faith, not being argumentative but being well pleasing. Why? Verse 10, "so that they," that is the bondslaves who are being urged to do this, "so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." He's saying live this way so that you will adorn the message. We preach Christ, but he says you need to adorn it with a life of godliness and humility. And the word "adorn," the verb there is the Greek word, verb, "kosmeo." Kosmeo, we get the word "cosmetic" from that. Make it beautiful. Cosmetics enhance the natural beauty and draw it out. He's saying the beauty of the gospel is inherent but your behavior can help people not be distracted by it as cosmetics well done. I'm not trying to give a lesson on that, I don't know anything about

it except to know that what you're trying to do is draw attention to the natural beauty, the eyes, or to the complexion, or whatever. That's what cosmetics do if they're done rightly. And so what we're doing is we're living in such a way that we're focusing the eyes of people who are looking, who are watching, on the one thing that is truly relevant to them and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ and we're showing them this gospel is true. Our lives are stamped as a stamp of approval saying, certifying, "Look at this person. How can they live like that? How can they live with this kind of gentleness and tenderness and humility in the midst of people who are so mean to them?" It's Jesus. They really know that, they know the living God. They know he's at work in their lives and they know that to live for him is the best thing to do, that to please him is the most joyful thing to do, that to value what he values in the same level that he values it is the very best thing for our souls.

That's why Christians are marked by joy, second fruit of the Spirit. Fruit of the Spirit, love, joy. They know us by our love? Yes. Love is self-giving, sacrificial, willingness to bless others. That's different. The world doesn't know that. The world only knows the kind of love that has a fishhook in it. I'll give you something but I want something in return. The Christians can say I'll give you something because of what Jesus has given me. There's no fishhook in it. I'm more than satisfied with Christ. But the second fruit of the Spirit is joy and it's the happiest place to be. In Christ sin is forgiven. Eternity waiting. Fellowship with God a daily reality. No matter what you find yourself against, you are in the Lord and the Lord is with you. And if the Lord is with you, who's against you? So you can go through each day joyfully anticipating, "What has my Father got for me today? What is He laying out for me today? What good work is He laying out for me?" And as they see you doing that, your joy becomes beautiful and attractive and it frames the gospel. That's the surpassing beauty of a life well lived.

Second point, the compelling power. Back to our text in 1 Peter 2 in verse 12, the focus is on the transformation that happens to the unbeliever. This unbeliever goes from who's observing carefully your good deeds, your excellent behavior, this unbeliever goes from being a malicious slanderer to being a repentant worshiper. They slander you as evildoers. That's what they're doing continually. They're not just occasionally, it's in their heart continually slandering you as evildoers. Yet they see your life, they see your actions, they puzzle over it, they think you're a hater, they think you're malicious, and yet your actions say something different. It causes them to question.

You know, the reality that we're just living as God has intended is such a powerful thing and the messages of the world, the lies are so great continually. I mean, just think about the lies related to purity, sexual morality. From the earliest time that we become aware of these things as young people, we're being lied to. We're being told that sex is all about pleasure, it's all about choosing for yourself and getting for yourself and having multiple partners is the best way to live, that that's what makes you a man or that's what makes you a woman. That's just heterosexual sex and then you add in homosexuality, the same thing. Still, it's just living for pleasure yourself and whatever you want to do. You define sex however you want. You let your heart guide you. And people end up operating their lives in a way that is going against their very foundational structure of the soul. This is what we're going to talk about more next time. The lusts of the flesh war against the soul.

If you live according to the lust of the flesh, you are devastating your inner man. That's what the text is saying. To do what the world says to do destroys your very internal system of understanding your life and the world. It is not harmless. It is destructive. That's what the text says.

God made you. He knows how you are meant to work. You and I are meant to work either as single all our lives for the glory of God or married to one person all our lives for the glory of God, and that sex is intended to be in the context of a covenant commitment, a covenant relationship. And it is meant to be something beautiful and precious. It is not dirty, not as God intended it. It's his idea. Satan didn't invent it. God did. God made the sexual relationship, this beautiful intimate union between a man and a woman, he invented it, a communion that is so deep and rich of giving to your spouse and serving them and two people doing that, celebrating each other in intimacy. That is glorious and beautiful and what the world does is say take what God gave you as something glorious and beautiful and trash it. Throw manure on the bed. Ashes all over the place. Pour gasoline on the fire. Light it and now get down in bed and lie in that. That's what sexual sin is. That's what even the desires of the flesh that you allow to happen in your heart and you don't fight against, they're warring against your soul.

Now when you and I, by God's grace, hey, we are all wicked sinners aren't we? We can confess to how we have shared in these things. Yes, our hearts are perverted. In and of ourselves there's nothing good in our flesh. But we've learned that, listen, Jesus Christ delivers, he delivers us from sin. He sets us free to live life as it's meant to be lived. He gives us back all of the gifts that he gave us originally now in a beautiful way and it's a battle day by day, yes, to say, no, like he says continually in verse 11, abstaining from fleshly lusts so that you can have something better.

It's not about what you don't have. That's what the world thinks. The world thinks Christianity is about what you don't have. They're wrong. Christianity is about what you do have. You have Jesus and if you have Christ you have all things. Everything that he created is to be used for his glory and your good. He's the one that made food pleasurable. He's the one that made sex pleasurable. He's the one that made everything in life, every pleasure in life God created forth out of the goodness of his heart for those he created. And our message is God is good. As he said in verse 9, we're to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness in his marvelous light. We were in darkness. We were living like fools. We were drinking out of polluted fountains. We were eating disgusting food. And now we've seen God has shined the light of the gospel into our hearts. We've repented of our sins, placed our faith in Christ and found that in Christ we have every treasure of wisdom and knowledge in Christ.

And the unbeliever slandering you as an evildoer will over time, as they observe your good deeds, you living according to the way God said to live and you serving them, good deeds, good works, acts of service that are beautiful and it's the word "kalos" again. Good, beautiful, aesthetically pleasing. In the face of their slander, you treat them with kindness. In the face of your slander, you know they may not be outwardly slandering, you but you know that they just behind your back they're probably talking about you all the time. You've probably even heard they talk about you all the time. You just keep

entrusting yourself to God, realizing that they're in the dark, "Lord, help them," and you just keep loving and serving and he's saying what's going to happen is they're going to glorify God in the day of visitation. It's important. This this clause here is one that in the original, I don't think the translations are getting this right in most of them, and the key thing they do is they put in the definite article "the" before "day of visitation." It says they will glorify God in the day of visitation. The definite article is not in the original text. Literally, it says they will glorify God in a day of visitation. It's important because I think the "the" there is used like in the Old Testament in Isaiah 10:3, same idea, the day of judgment there is the word actually could be "visitation" there. It's Hebrew but the Greek word that translates it in the Septuagint, remember the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, is the same word you find here but it doesn't have the definite article here. It does in Isaiah. And the day of visitation is the day when God shows up to judge the world.

This is not talking about that day, though. I don't believe it's talking about that day for a couple of reasons. First, is that the definite article is not there. It's saying "in a day of visitation." And this idea of visitation is an important concept theologically. It is actually the Greek word here is a "episkope" which is like our word Episcopalian. It's the word translated normally "overseer; elder; overseer." This is the word. In the day of visitation. Here it's used, though, to refer to the time where the overseer comes back and visits. So in a day when the overseer comes to visit, it's in a day when the person in authority comes to check on how things are going. That's the idea here.

So he's saying that this person will be so compelled by your witness that when God comes into their life, when God shows up in their life, when God visits them and brings himself to them in a way of what you see in the Old Testament as you look at Isaiah and other places, the day of visitations, the day when God shows up to judge and to bless, or sometimes it's more just more blessing. But God is showing up in person and everything's going to change. I think what he's saying is, "Listen, your compelling witness is going to be used when God makes Himself known to them through circumstances, difficulties, blessings, whatever it is." He's going to may come in judgment. He may bring them through something critically difficult, sudden, a trial, sudden tragedy. He may show up that way or he may show up in some incredible blessing that causes their heart to overflow. But when he does, they're going to know he's real and they're going to know it because of your compelling testimony.

And when that happens, what's happened is they they have come to Christ because the other reason I think it's not talking about like unbelievers just glorifying God and acknowledging in the day Jesus comes back, that he was right all along and we were godly and they were wrong. It's not that because the verb "glorify" all the time it's used in the New Testament, almost 50 times, is a believer's acting. We glorify God. Unbelievers don't glorify God. They have to bow the knee to God but to glorify God means to have a proper estimate of him. In fact, the idea of the word glory in in the Greek New Testament, it comes from a verb which means "to appraise; to value." It means to look at something, to consider it, to appraise its worth. And so when you glorify God, you look at God, you appraise him and you value him appropriately, accurately. You have a proper estimate of God, his goodness, his majesty, his greatness.

So what he's saying is if we live our lives, if we keep our behavior excellent, if we do good deeds, there will be unbelievers who are slandering us now but soon in the day God shows up in their life in some way, they will bow the knee and they will worship Jesus Christ and they will say, "Lord, all of my slander was wrong. I saw in this brother or sister, this person who lived before me, that You are good and now I know and I bow the knee and I say, yes, You are everything that You ought to be. Your word is perfect. Your Son is glorious." And the testimony of believers' lives has empowered that. God has chosen to use that. He could save everybody just by going poof, right? But he works through means. He lets you and I share the gospel and speak the message. It's amazing that God does that. I mean, he puts it in our mouths. What business do we have of handling eternal things for the salvation of people that's going to mean whether they go to hell or heaven? How can that possibly, how can we do that? Who's adequate to such things? But not only that, the quality of our life is part of that and he chooses to work through you and me.

So this gives a lot more motivation for why you need to live holy lives. You don't need to just put off sin because it makes you feel bad. I mean, you should hate sin because God hates it but if you want to think on the human realm, you should put off sin because it's hindering other people from seeing the beauty of Jesus. And when we get that, things turn around. And so what happens is, listen, we're never going to be perfect but as little by little you're laying aside sin and you're doing good, that itself is something the world can't do. They can change one bad habit for another. Yes, they can. That's what AA is about and other things like that. And, you know, praise God, his common grace, he's helping people to put some really terrible things aside. But they can't change like we can change. We can lay something aside by the power of Jesus Christ and the cross. We can lay it aside and become the complete opposite. That's what the power of God does. And so as you and I do that, then our witness is confirmed and strengthened and established. This is what God is saying. What are we to be about? We're to glorify God. How do you glorify God? You live lives of excellence and beauty by the power of Christ for the glory of Christ and God, help us do that.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are for the privilege that You have given us in Jesus Christ. We thank You that, Lord, Your gospel, the good news of salvation, is available to any who will repent and believe, that You have said that You do not desire any to perish, but all men to come to repentance, that You want all men to be saved. So, Lord, I pray for those that are here that do not know You in a saving way that today they might repent and believe the gospel, they might trust that You are good and that You are worthy. Jesus has made that super-abundantly clear forever, how lovely You are, how good You are, that You would give Your precious Son to save sinners like us. Father, we pray that You would make us more faithful in our lives, give us diligent hearts to fight sin, and make our testimony stronger, and even as the days grow darker, may we grow brighter because of the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the word. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.