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(This transcript has been lightly edited from the spoken word for clarity.)

Greetings to you. It's so good to be with you. Praise the Lord. For several days, I have been travelling since I arrived here, and I have been enjoying meeting many saints while visiting several places; I hope you can hear me okay. I will try to remember to speak slowly! If I speak too fast, then signal me like this.

I would like to share something that's been stirring in me for several months. I believe the Lord has given me this burden for this trip—to share some particular things from the epistle of Second Peter. Please open your Bible to 2 Peter. I have been doing a careful study of Second Peter. I believe that I have a word for all the churches at this hour. I think you will see this as we proceed.

If I could put a title on Second Peter, at this point, I would put a title like this: *“Pursuing holiness in the light of Christ’s coming.”* Brothers and sisters—including me—we need to pursue holiness because Christ is coming, Hallelujah, He is coming! So, I will select certain verses in 2 Peter. I shared some of these verses in Tema the other weekend. I will review a little of what I shared in Tema from Second Peter chapter 1, but I want to touch on all three chapters. 2 Peter 1:1 reads: “. . . to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours . . .” or the same value. You and I have the same quality of faith as Peter and the other apostles. This verse likely refers to our faith in Christ, which began at conversion. Yet, when we review the role of faith in the New Testament, we see that we can exercise all the faith we need to live the Christian life and all the faith we need to serve the Lord. That’s encouraging.

Verse two talks about grace and peace multiplied to you in the full knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. This knowledge is an intimate knowledge of the Lord. The Greek word used here indicates our participation in the Lord. As we seek and draw from the Lord, that’s when we get grace and peace. We live in a difficult world. Grace and peace only come through our intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ. Now verse three. I will make it simple; God has granted to you and to me everything, **everything, everything** (with emphasis) pertaining to life and godliness. We received this when we were born again. Do you believe that Christ’s life contains everything pertaining to life and godliness? When we were born again, Christ became our life.

What Peter is trying to tell us is this: he is showing us in chapter one that this life must develop and grow. That is, as this life develops, we are becoming more holy. We are becoming more conformed to the image of His Son. How does this happen? Well, verse 4 says something interesting, “Through these He has given us His precious and

magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires". The idea is that yes, we have Christ in us, but we must increasingly share His life—draw upon it in dependent faith—to be part of our living. As we do that, we are sharing in the divine nature. Yet many times this happens through the promises. The promises and the word of God. The word of God and the promises of God are absolutely critical to our Christian growth.

Look at 1 Peter 2:2: "Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow." So, again, the word is pointing to growth. The end of this verse in 1 Peter says that we grow *unto* salvation. That's what it really means in the Greek text. There are things in First Peter that relate very much to things in 2 Peter. On the one hand, we are already saved, but the growth of Christ's life in us is the growth unto salvation. It's a salvation in the future. Chapter one of First Peter talks about "receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls." So, we are seeing some of that idea in 2 Peter. How does the word help us grow? I will just mention a passage, but won't read it because of time. I believe you all know 2 Corinthians 3—when we read the word with unveiled face with our heart turned to the Lord, then we grow from glory to glory. That's another confirmation of this principle.

I would like to turn to the verse James 1:21, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." And the next verse tells us that we must also be doers of the word. In order to grow, we must use the word of God. We must have the word of God every day. We must read and learn to meditate on it, pray it, and study it. But whenever we come to the word, to get the benefit of the word, we first need to clean up anything in our life that is wrong, putting away wickedness and filthiness. If we are honest and open to the Lord, He will enlighten us concerning what is wrong in our lives. Then number two, we must receive the word with meekness. We must be open to hear whatever the Lord tells us and asks us to do. Meekness means no resistance to God. I give up my way and my plan, and I am open to hear the Lord for His way and His plan.

Now, let's look at verses 5 through 7 of 2 Peter chapter one. These verses talk about the development of Christ's life in us. Verse 5 starts this way: "Now, for this very reason"—which is referring to sharing or partaking of the divine nature in our life—God says we first must apply all diligence. You cannot grow if you are sloppy; you cannot grow if you are haphazard about it. To be diligent means you are very serious and intentional about your growth in Christ. You are making constant effort, and you are careful in your effort. So, what do we need to do to be diligent about our growth? It is not self-effort to develop these virtues. I am not trying to copy Christ with His love, His perseverance, or His kindness. Our diligence is to seek the Lord. Our diligence is to go after Christ. We do not use our power to achieve things for God. We do not use our willpower to do things for God, but we do use our human will. We should use our will to seek Christ in prayer or His word, and receive grace, supply, and life from Him. Wherever we read the word, our heart

should be in dependence, seeking after Him. When we read the word, our spirit and heart should be exercised, depending on Christ and drawing from Him. We are branches in the vine, so we have to get the life from Christ.

Let us say we come to a meeting. We should not be there just to watch the outward activities. Instead, our focus should be toward the living Christ with an inward attitude: “Lord, I need you, I am looking to You today. I want to be here with You today in this meeting. I need You to be with me to build up the body of Christ.”

So, let me talk about these virtues when they begin to develop. First of all, these virtues do not develop like number one, then number two, and then number three. All these different virtues belong to the life of Christ. They are all part of His life, but some virtues take longer to develop into maturity. ***Think about rose (a beautiful flower), when it is in the bud stage and begins to open, you can see a lot of the outer petals. You can see inner petals also, but those petals are not as fully visible. Their visibility will come later as it grows, right? When the flower is fully open, all the petals are there in full maturity.*** This illustration pictures the growth of the virtues in chapter one here.

As we seek the Lord, the first characteristic God will be working on to develop fully is ‘moral excellence’. When a person first gets saved, he begins to realize some things from God’s light. Some things he is doing are wrong. Maybe he is lying, maybe he is gambling, maybe he drinks a lot, maybe he has a sexually immoral lifestyle. God wants to change this so that we have the highest standard of morals and ethics—Hallelujah! Moral excellence is the morality of God’s life lived out in the practical issues of human life. Then you see that the next quality of life is knowledge. This is spiritual knowledge of God’s character and His ways. This knowledge will come primarily from the Scriptures as we read them and perceive God’s character and His ways. As we add knowledge, our moral excellence and Christ’s character will be expanded into new areas of our life. With more spiritual knowledge, more life comes, and the more our living will change. The next virtue is self-control. This is the discipline exercised over one’s life, the discipline to live in line with God’s requirements and character. Of course, even though it is termed self-control, it doesn’t mean that you are controlling your lifestyle. It means you and I are open to the Holy Spirit to control your lifestyle *even as we continually trust in our identification with Christ*: “Thank You, Lord, I have died with You on the cross to sin. Thank You, Lord, I have been raised to walk in the newness of life. Thank You, Lord, I am dead to sin, but I am alive to God in Christ Jesus. *Trusting in our identification with Christ is a great secret to making His life become more real in us.*

Perseverance is the next virtue. Perseverance has to do with how we go through trials and troubles. When trials and troubles come to our life, *do we get knocked out of the Christian life by them? Do we get so discouraged that we don’t want to go to the meetings? And we can’t open up to the Lord with a full heart?* Trials and troubles are actually one of the greatest helpers to your Christian growth. They help us depend more on the Lord, and *God is using them so that we will learn to take Christ to persevere and to keep faithful to Him* in the midst of difficulties. Did our Lord have any trials and troubles?

He was opposed by the Jewish leaders. He said He didn't have a place to lay His head. He was accused of being Beelzebub. Jesus had some disciples who sometimes were a test to Him because they didn't understand what He was trying to tell them. Yet, **He persevered to do the Father's will.** The best definition of endurance or perseverance is in Hebrews 10:35. The Greek word for endurance in Hebrews 10:35 is the same Greek word translated as perseverance in 2 Peter 1:6. The recipients of the Hebrews epistle had suffered a lot of trials. And in Hebrews 10:35, the readers are told that they have need of endurance so that when they have done the will of God, they may receive God's promise. **Perseverance means this: we go through trials with an attitude to do the will of God.** We may say, "Father this terrible thing is happening in my life, but by your grace, I am not going to be knocked down. In this trial, I want to learn from you, and by your grace I want to do your will."

The next virtue is godliness. This is a life lived in reverence of God. It's an attitude developed in the life of a believer of great devotedness to God, and it brings a desire to be well pleasing to Him. ***This virtue comes out of trials and perseverance. Eventually, a saint who has been so troubled and bothered by trials, that he comes to the place where the thing of supreme importance to him is to live a life devoted to God, to be well pleasing to the Father.*** Then brotherly kindness is the love of the brethren, expressing practical acts of kindness, care, and service toward them.

The last virtue is love—God's love, which is the unselfish love toward all men. I love them for their benefit. I want to help them with what is beneficial to them with no expectation of something in return. Verse 8 says this: when we develop these qualities, this is how we become fruitful and useful to the Lord, Hallelujah! It's not just by being busy, busy, busy. **I may be very busy working for the Lord, but that may not bring any fruit for the Lord. Fruit for the Lord in His work comes from the development of Christ's life within you.**

Verse 9 speaks about a negative possibility, namely, that a believer might lack these qualities. You may not see these qualities coming out of their life. There are three problems noted here: (1) blindness: This means a lack of seeing spiritual realities. The things of God have not taken hold of him in his daily life. He doesn't seem to have any sense of spiritual realities in his life, such as seeing God's work, or seeing God's hand, or understanding God's work. Sometimes I meet a brother, and all he talks about is sports; spiritual realities are not on his radar. (2) shortsightedness: This means a saint is only looking at the affairs of this life—his family, her job, her children, or young people thinking only about college and getting married. We do have to take care of these responsibilities, but we should not be looking only at these responsibilities. **This is shortsightedness: just to see your daily life, just to see the affairs of this human life. It means that you are not looking at the need to be prepared for Christ's coming. You are not watching for the Lord to come; it's not a reality to you to prepare for that.** You can still be going to the meetings, but we need a vision of Christ's coming. We need the vision of the coming Judgment Seat of Christ and of the kingdom

of His glory. **If these things are real to us, our daily living will be changed. It will change our priorities.** It will change how I use my time, and it should change how we use our money because we are stewards of God's possessions. The money I have is not my money. The time I have is not **my** time. God has entrusted to me all these things in order to be a good steward. Maybe I think I just need to give ten percent and everything else is for me to use. This is a wrong thought. God owns everything. We had better listen to Him concerning how He wants us to manage His money. (3) Forgotten our cleansing from our former sins. This is related to our shortsightedness. We have become focused on our lives in this world and its affairs that we have forgotten our cleansing with God's intention to make us holy people, those whose lives are consecrated to Him.

In verses 10 and 11, there are a lot of things noted, but am going to try to be short. Let us read verses 10 and 11, "Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble. For in this way [if you are developing in the virtues of Christ], the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."

Notice this: verses 12 to 15 are a kind of parenthetical thought. In those verses, he is talking about reminding them of these things. But verse 16 is actually connected back to verse 12. Verses 12 to 15 are reminders about being ready for an entrance into the kingdom. Verses 16 through 18 are about Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. This is a preview of His coming kingdom. So, when verse 11 talks about the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the context here means He is talking about the coming of His earthly kingdom.

We don't have time to get into all the details, but I have other proofs why verse 11 is not talking about the kingdom of eternity. It's talking about the one thousand-year kingdom of Christ. The word in my Bible is translated eternal. The Greek word is *aionias*, which comes from the word age. There is no Greek word that explicitly means eternal. **When you go to a Greek lexicon for this word, it means an age of some undetermined length.** It might mean eternal. When this word is used of God, it means eternal. He is the eternal God. I have a literal translation done by Young's Literal Translation of this verse. "For so, richly will be super-added to you, the entrance into the age-during [that is, age-lasting] reign of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Verses 10 and 11 connect two ideas: Growth in the life of Christ and participation in the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ. We must grow in His life to qualify to be in the Lord's kingdom of one thousand years.

I have so much to cover, but I don't have the time. But now we are going to read Peter's words about prophecy. Let us read verse 19, which comes after the vision on the mountain. 2 Peter 1:19: "so, we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed. You will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." Peter is saying that we need to pay special attention to the prophetic scriptures—the scriptures talking about the Lord's coming. When we pay more attention to them, something will happen to us. We live in a dark world, but these

scriptures will be a light for us. They will be a light of hope, and they will be a light of attraction. They will be a light increasing our desire. And the more we pay attention to the prophetic scriptures, something will happen in our hearts. The day of Christ will become so real that it will be as though it arrives in our hearts. And the morning star, Jesus, will arise in our hearts. You will only have this experience in verse 19 as you spend time in the prophetic word.

I am going to say something briefly about chapters two and three. All of a sudden, Peter changes the topic and writes a whole chapter on false teachers. Why did he do this? He is predicting false teachers coming in among them. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, one of the biggest problems for the saints was with false teachers and their teachings coming in. They will get you off the path; they will ruin your spiritual life. In 2 Peter 2:1, he says that the false teachers will secretly introduce destructive heresies. Their teachings will destroy your Christian life. If you follow these false teachers and their teachings, they will ruin your Christian life, and I have seen it happen. ***The false teachers talked about here had two main problems. But note that first of all, they were living according to their lusts. And they were attracting others by their teachings according to these lusts.*** The lusts of these teachers in chapter two were sexual lust and money lust. Many false teachers are around today. Most of them will not teach that it is okay to do anything sexually. They know that such teaching will not be accepted. ***But are any of them teaching greed?*** Teaching prosperity? Teaching that God wants to make you rich? That God will give you as much money as you want if you have faith? This is false teaching from the devil. Christ wants us to deny ourselves and not to live according to our selfish desires. He wants to restrict our desires and live only according to God's will. But these guys don't want any restrictions.

In America, these false teachers are competing. Who can buy the most expensive ministry jet? One of these prosperity teachers has asked his followers to give him fifty-eight million dollars for a jet. And the followers will give him money because they think they will get money by giving him money. Run away from these false teachers; they will ruin your life. The Christians and the church must be on guard. The best antidote is to teach the truth.

I am only going to have time to cover one thing in chapter three. Verse one says he is writing to remind them. Verse two says you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets. Most of the prophecies in the Old Testament were about the Lord's second coming and the glory of the Messiah's kingdom of one thousand years. Then he says to remember **the commandment** of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. What was **the commandment**? It has to do with the prophecy. **The commandment**—which we find a several passages—is that **we must watch!** The Lord says **that we must watch. We must watch!** "Watch" means stay awake and stay alert. **We must watch for the coming of the Lord, preparing ourselves for His coming.**

I am going to give you three passages about watching. I will talk about the context of the verse. "Watch" also means stay awake so that you may avoid danger. Write these

scriptures down: Mathew 24:42, “Therefore keep watch, for you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming.” What is the context here? Jesus said one will be taken and one will be left. This is a selective rapture. It’s the rapture of the overcomers. If we don’t watch for the Lord’s coming, we may miss the overcomer rapture.

In Mathew 25:13, again He says, “Therefore keep watch, for you do not know the day or the hour.” That is the concluding word to the parable of the ten virgins. The parable of the ten virgins tells us that we must continue to prepare day by day over our entire lifetime to have the Holy Spirit working in our lives. This is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, accumulating more oil. The Lord Jesus may delay, as far as we perceive it, but when the midnight call comes, even if we have died—if we have spent our lives gaining the extra oil—we will go into the wedding feast with Jesus Christ. But the Lord says at the end of the parable: “**Watch.**” You must pay attention because I am coming suddenly, and no one knows the hour!

I will mention the final scripture in Mark 13 about the absent house owner. Let us say I am the owner of a house and all these (the audience here today) are the servants I have in my house. So, I leave to go on a journey, leaving my house and giving authority to my servants, assigning to each one his task. And all must be on the alert for the return of the owner of the house. So, the context here is what? **Faithfulness in duty while constantly watching for the Lord’s return.** Watching for the Lord’s return is a great help for faithfulness in duty. Remember the evil servant, who said, “My Lord’s coming is delayed.” So he began to mistreat the other servants and eat and drink with the drunkards. Brothers and sisters, I believe that we are very close to the end of this age. I could spend an hour giving you some reasons from the Bible for that. We must encourage one another: “Be ready for the coming of the Lord!” Let us remind one another, and let us all pursue growth in holiness so that we can be in the Lord’s kingdom. Praise the Lord!