

Jesus is Coming – How then shall I live?

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Preacher: Ben Traynor

[0:00] Have you ever stumbled? Have you ever stumbled? I remember last summer we were visiting up at Haddle House for one afternoon. The sun was shining. It does happen. It's a lovely day today.

And we were there with the kids in the play park at Haddle House. If you've ever been there, it's kind of off to the side down near the water. And the play park there is a little bit uneven. Even. Or actually, from what I'm about to tell you, it's incredibly uneven. I think next time you should go, you should take a hard hat and be very, very careful. Wear sturdy boots.

And as I was standing in the park with our kids playing and all these other children and parents out there on a summer's afternoon, there I was, up on one bit of the park and a huge, let me say, huge, massive hill down to the other bit of the park. You've just got to see it. It was massive.

Okay, no, it wasn't. It was tiny. Less than the steps down here. And I put my foot down to walk down this little bit of path, ignoring the steps probably that I should have taken.

And next thing I know, I'm on my back. I'm on my back. Now, don't worry. Thankfully, it was my ego that was more bruised than my body. I was okay. I lived to tell the tale. But there I was. I'd slipped. I'd stumbled. And there I was on the ground.

[1:17] Have you ever tripped? Have you ever slipped? Have you ever stumbled? Have you ever gone to put your foot out and found that the ground that you're about to put your foot onto is not as strong?

It's not as stable as you thought that it was. Well, Peter is writing to these churches, to these group of churches, and he's worried that they're going to slip. He's worried that they're going to stumble. Not tripping over a rock or a path or something like that, obviously, no, not some stone or some grass, but spiritually stumbling. Spiritually stumbling, that they might stumble in their faith, but putting their spiritual foot forward and finding that ground beneath them isn't the strong, solid ground of Christ and the gospel. Now, they haven't yet. They're going well. You would have seen that in what we just read. They're going well. This church is strong. They haven't put a foot onto less strong ground yet. But he's concerned that they might, and he wants to encourage them to keep going. If you have a Bible with you, if you have a paper copy, turn to chapter 3, verse 17, chapter 3, verse 17 and 18. The last two verses of the whole letter actually give us that sense of the letter there, and it's a good summary of the letter. So let me read it to you, 2 Peter 3, 17 and 18.

Peter writes this, Did you see it? That's the letter all over. That actually is a summary of the whole letter.

Do not be carried away by lawless people or lawless teaching. Do not what? Fall from your secure position. In other words, do not slip. Do not slip and wobble and fall from your secure position, but grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what Peter's writing to tell them.

Now, before we go any further this morning and come to the few verses that are before us in chapter 1, I want to tell you this morning that all we're going to do together is count to three. We're just going to count to three. Number one, the first thing I want to tell you this morning is what the whole letter is about, and we need to know that to get a sense of how these Christians would hear it and how it's going to help us. So firstly, what's the whole letter about? It's about not losing our stability, not falling or slipping, losing our stability, but rather growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there you go. I've already given it to you. Our first point already done this morning, and we're just getting going. Fine. So there's our first thing. Okay, second, two, two. As we count to three this morning, what I also need to give you is two contextual clues, two things that are going on in the lives of these churches and the life of Peter that help us to understand the letter. We can't get the most out of chapter 1 without understanding what's going on in the ground. I wonder if

you've ever done that before, picked up letters from someone and tried to read them, historical letters. You can do it. They're published letters of lots of people.

[4 : 38] You kind of wonder how they feel about it, right? They write all these published letters, and out they come in books and journals later on. But without the context, they don't often make much sense. Well, we need two clues here, two clues as to why Peter writes to these churches. And let me give them both to you. The first one is that Peter's about to die. Peter's about to die. We read that in verses 13 and 14. Just scan your eyes down again. I think it's right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know it will soon be put aside as the Lord Jesus has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure, you will always remember these things. Now, no, Peter isn't taking some kind of stab in the dark about his death here.

Do you remember at the end of John's gospel? At the end of John's gospel, what happens? The Lord Jesus restores Peter, and he tells him how he's going to die. He tells him. Jesus has told him. As he says in these verses, he knows when death is coming. He knows how death is coming. And for these Christians, you can imagine how massively destabilizing that would be as the apostles begin to die off and be killed off and be martyred. That those who were with Jesus, those who walked with Jesus and heard Jesus and saw that all the Lord Jesus did are no longer with us. You can see how vulnerable they would begin to feel. It is what we heard from Peter. Is that right? Do I remember it properly?

Did he really see that about Jesus? Any of us, I think, would feel a sense of loss, don't we, when a mentor or a colleague at work leaves? Someone we've always been able to go to to show us what to do. Certainly in places I've worked, it's always been secretaries and receptionists, wonderful, wonderful people who've been there for 20, 30, 40 years. And when they say they're going to retire or leave, everyone says, what are we going to do now? Even after five minutes, they're through the door. They know exactly how the place works inside out and back to front.

They've got it all sorted. And when they leave, what now? Or think of sports. Those of you who like sports, think of Manchester United. Alex Ferguson leaves. What are we going to do now? They're probably still asking that question, right? What are we going to do? He's gone.

How much more for these Christians, for these churches, the apostles, those who are with Christ are being killed. They're no longer going to be with us. And so Peter writes, if you like, a last will and testament in this letter, here's what you need to hold to. Here is the solid ground of the teaching that we have about the Lord Jesus. Here's where to stand. And they're going to need it, especially for this reason. And here's our second of the two. Here's our second of the two. The second reason that these Christians are vulnerable, and that is inside the church, there is false teaching.

[7 : 33] This letter is full of Peter referencing false teachers. False teachers are inside the church. And he has to write to tell these Christians what is wrong with their teaching and where to stand.

Now, that was already hinted at in 317. And so Peter wants to deal with it. At 1 Peter, the opposition is mostly external. In this letter, the opposition, the trials for this church is internal. The Bible often talks about false teaching with the picture of wolves among sheep.

These false teachers, wolves, they come among sheep to destroy them. But here's the thing. Wolves don't come into churches looking like wolves. A wolf among sheep is easy to spot if it's a wolf. You drive into the countryside 10 minutes from here, 15 minutes, and you see a whole field of sheep. If you see a wolf in there, you're going to notice it very, very quickly. But know what do wolves do? Wolves come among sheep dressed as sheep. They dress up. I wonder if any of you here have read *The Last Battle*, the final book in C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Last Battle*. What we'll write at the opening of that book, the first scene, you meet a monkey called Shift, who's evil, a real bad monkey, evil. And you meet his friend, a very gullible donkey, a very gullible donkey called Puzzle. And Shift and Puzzle are standing by the river, and down this river floats a lion skin, a lion skin. And if you know anything about Narnia, the one thing we're all going to know, I guess, is that the hero is Aslan. Aslan is the king. But what does Shift do? Shift says to Puzzle, let's get the lion skin. Let's put it on you as a donkey, and let's pretend that you're Aslan.

Let's pretend that you're Aslan. And so that's what they do. They put the lion skin onto the donkey, and he just comes out at night when there's just enough light to dress up, to pretend to be someone he's not. And he sends the Narnians into disarray and into chaos, and all kinds of evil comes, their own destruction. And it's very sobering to know that, as in Peter's day, false teachers climb into pulpits, wear robes and dog collars, and all sorts of things climb into pulpits and take on Christian

language, and teach things that lead people astray. And it's so destabilizing, right?

[10:03] It's so destabilizing. You hear of a pastor, of a church leader, teaching something, and you think, well, hang on. I thought the Bible taught X about this subject. But they're saying now it's Y, it's this, it's confusing. And so in this letter, Peter has to write to keep these Christians on solid ground that they would not stumble and slip and be led away by false teaching. And in this letter, there are four main bits of false teaching, if you like, that are evident. The first one in chapter one, if you have the letter open, you can scan it. But the first one, and what we're going to come to this morning, is that holiness doesn't matter. This false, the teachers are saying to the church, live as you like, live as you please. Holiness doesn't matter. You don't need to be like Jesus.

The second one, and what we're going to come to this evening, the second bit of false teaching, is that the Bible is myth. It's made up. It kind of belongs to once upon a time, kind of fairy tale stuff. And we're going to come to that this evening. And Peter has to say, no, the Bible is God's word. It's Scripture. It's solid ground to stand on. In chapter two, the false teachers come and say, there's no judgment. There's no judgment at the end. Live as you like. You don't need to believe the Bible because there's no judgment at the end. God's not coming to judge you.

And we're going to see a little bit this morning, and especially in chapter three, it stems from this.

They say that Jesus isn't coming back. They say there's no return of Christ in power.

So those are the four main things that Peter needs to write to root out. But I think all of those bits of false teaching, there's good reason to see they're all tied together with one. There's one main thing that's going on, one main bit of errant teaching or false teaching. And it's a bit like Jenga blocks. You know the game Jenga with the wooden blocks? If you take out one of those, the rest of the blocks, you find which ones are loose, don't you? Well, because that one came out, this block is loose, and that block is loose. And before you know it, the whole tower comes what? Crashing down. Comes crashing down. And the one main block that they've gone after is the return of Christ. They say Jesus isn't coming. Let me read to you chapter three, one to four. Dear friends, Peter writes, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

[12:22] Verse three, above all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come.

False teachers will come scoffing and following their own evil desires. And they will say this, listen to what these false teachers say. Where is the promise of his coming? Where is the coming he has promised?

Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. They're saying Jesus isn't coming. The sun rose today. It will rise. It will set tonight, and it will do the same tomorrow and tomorrow because it's done it for all these last 30 years.

And so Peter has to write to encourage them, no, the Lord Jesus is coming. He is coming. It is a central doctrine of faith that helps us to keep the course and to know that Christ is coming.

So if you like, all we're going to do this morning, and we're going to do it again this evening, is sit with our diaries out. To sit with your diaries out. I don't know if teachers do that in school anymore. I still remember being in secondary school, and they called it a personal planner or something like that. At the start of every lesson on your desk, we want to see a calculator or a pen or a bit, and we want to see your planner, your diary. And if you like, all we're going to do is sit with our diaries out, our iCals, our Google calendars, our filofaxes.

Anyone still use a filofax? Paper diaries? Maybe. We're all electronic. Whatever it is you use, we're going to sit with them out, and we're going to sit them out because what we need to understand is that written into the diary of the universe, written into the diary of the world, and therefore written into each one of our diaries, and of every human who has lived, is living, and will live, is the day that Christ will return. The event, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[14:15] We don't know when it'll be, but dear friends, the Lord Jesus is coming. He will return in power. These Christians that Peter's writing to, 30 years have passed, and they're anticipating it.

For us, 2,000 years has passed, and we're anticipating it, but the Lord Jesus will return. So this evening, we're going to look at the question of how can we be sure, can we be sure Christ is coming? But this morning, the first half of this first chapter that we read this morning, the question before us then is, how shall we live? If the Lord Jesus is coming, how then shall we live? It's true of anything in our diaries, isn't it? Think of anything you have in your diary this week. It will affect how you live. I need to be in this place at this time to meet someone for lunch. I need to get a suitcase out of the loft in order to pack it for camp or vacation. It changes the shape of our week, of our

month, perhaps.

Well, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ should change the shape of our lives, and he wants these Christians to be ready for that, that they would not slip and forget it and all the implications that come from it, but they would stand on the solid truth of the teaching of Christ. So three, we're counting to three. One, what is the letter all about? Not slipping, standing firm. Two contextual clues.

The apostles are about to die, and there's false teachers in the church, and now we're going to count three things then. How do we then live if Christ is coming? Three things. And I should say, by counting to three that way, you'll notice, really, we've got a six-point sermon this morning. But if I say that we're just counting to three, I think it makes it a little easier, right? We've already had three points, three to go. So Jesus is coming. How then shall we live? The first thing the apostle Peter tells them in this letter is that we should receive Jesus. We should receive Jesus. The very first way to be ready for the return of the Lord Jesus is to actually not do anything. It's not about what you do. It's about who you are. It's about who you have received. It's about trusting what God has done for you and receiving Jesus, receiving faith in Jesus. Look at verse one of chapter one for me. To those who have through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours. And verse three, his divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who has called us by his glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. Being ready for that day in the first instance is not about what you do. It's about what's been done for you. It's not about what you do. It's about what you receive. It's about who you receive. It's about receiving the righteousness of Christ in the Lord Jesus. So how are we ready for that day? We receive Jesus. We're Christians. I wonder if you can imagine this. After the service this morning, I come up to you and say, look in my pocket here, and I'm sorry, I'm going to disappoint you. I don't have this.

[17:38] But I pull out my pocket and say, I have two tickets or a ticket to the final of the men's 100 meter at the Olympics. Or pick an event. What is it you most want to watch in the Olympics over the next couple weeks? I have a ticket for it, and it's for you. Take it. Everything is paid for.

Everything's done. Your travel, your transport, your hotel. You've got the best seat in the house, the best seat in the stadium. All for you. The food's laid on. The drink is laid on. Absolutely everything. And I just come up to one of you and say, here it is. Here it is. It's all done. It's all paid for. It's all done. It's yours. What is there left to do? What is there left to do? Well, nothing. Just receive it, I guess, and say thank you. Peter tells these Christians in verse 3, remember, God has given you everything you need. Everything you need in the Lord Jesus for your salvation and for godliness. Everything you need. So you don't need to move from that. You don't need to move from the gospel that you've received from us. Christ has made you totally ready for that day.

So there's no need to move your foot onto any other ground. And dear friends, how precious, how precious it is for Peter to say that. How precious it is for Peter to remember that.

The glory of what Christ has done and living in that every day. How precious for him. Why? Well, what did Peter do? Peter denied Jesus. Peter abandoned Jesus right there at the end. How many times do you think Peter had to recall that the grace, the righteousness of his Lord and Savior that he had received? How often do you think he had to do that? I think the Lord, I think Peter had to remember what the Lord Jesus had done for him every day. Every day. And dear friends, we are no different. We're no different. To stand firm on the solid ground of Christ, to grow in knowledge and grace, is to remember the gospel every day. Every day. We never outgrow it. We never get too old for it. Indeed, I think all of us would say the most mature Christians that we know that we can think of are those who bask in the light of the glory of what Christ has done for them. Remember the gospel and all that Christ has done.

And note this. What kind of faith have these Christians received? What kind of faith have they received? Look at verse 1 with me. He says there, they've received a faith as precious as ours.

[20:14] Now, the ours there were the apostles. He's saying you, Christians, have received a faith as precious as ours as the apostles. But perhaps a slightly better translation would be, you have received a faith of equal standing of ours. It's the same. It's the same. Dear brothers and sisters, do you know this morning that your faith is the same as that of Peter? It's of equal standing before God as the apostle John or Paul or any of the apostles. That of every other believer. Dear friends, let me encourage you this morning as we think about standing on the solid rock of Christ and not slipping

that there are no second class Christians. There are no second class Christians. I know my experience when I fly, it might be different for you, but you walk onto a plane, and we did this a little flying back to the States. You walk on a plane and you see the sign, there's business class or whatever it is up over to left. They look at your ticket, no sir, you're that way, not that way. And then you walk through that and it's kind of whatever the next thing is, upper economy class. They've got all these upper and then middle economy class. You keep going. You're onto the eighth steward. No, sir, you're actually lucky.

You've got a seat on the plane here. Just keep going right into the back there. Dear friends, that is not the Christian faith. That is not what the Lord Jesus says. No, the Lord Jesus looks at you, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and says, here, come and have the best seat at the table with everyone else. Come and sit here. It's wonderful, isn't it? Isn't it wonderful? One faith, one body, one church for whom Christ died to save. So dear friends, if this morning your faith is feeling wobbly, if it's feeling like you could stumble, remember Christ has given you the same faith as the apostles have. But you say, but Ben, I'm not like them. My faith doesn't feel as strong as theirs. How could I have done what they did? I'm not sure that I feel as strong as them.

But I think Peter would respond to you exactly how he's responded to these Christians. But you're not justified. You're not made right before God by the strength of your faith.

You are justified by Christ, by the Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep who came and said, come. Dear friends, remember faith is only the instrument of our justification. The grounds of it is the Lord Jesus. So it is not the strength of it that we are to be concerned of. It is the object of it. It's Christ. You are his. He is yours. And let that be your encouragement this morning. And dear friends, if you're here this morning and you feel weighed down by sin, you feel weighed down by sin, maybe you've strayed away from Christ. Maybe spiritually you know in your own mind this week you have slipped. You've done things that ought not to have been done.

[23 : 03] Remember, always there's grace. There's always grace, always restoration. You're not a second-class citizen or child before him. Come to Christ and be forgiven. Think of the picture of the father in Luke 15, the father of the prodigal. Do you remember standing there on the hill looking for his son, arms wide open, ready to kill the fattened calf and clothe the son again? That is God before you this morning. The father says, come, come, and rest in all that Christ has done for you.

But dear friend, let me say this before we move to our second point. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, if you're here this morning and you wouldn't say you're a Christian, you don't know the Lord Jesus, my dear friend, I'm so pleased you're here. But dear friend, I have to say to you, you are not prepared for that day. You are not ready for Christ's return. You will meet him. It is in your diary. It's in all of our diaries. We will meet Christ, but you have no one to stand between you and your sin.

No one who has taken your sin from you and clothed you with his righteousness. So dear friend, come to the Lord Jesus today. That's why we had read earlier that parable read so well by Daniel. Did you see it? Not everyone was ready to meet the bridegroom. And some were told, no, stay out, you're not ready. So dear friend, if you don't know the Lord Jesus, come to him today and you're ready to meet him. So how do we get ready for Christ's return? We receive Jesus. We belong to him. We're a Christian. We take his righteousness on us. We live out our union with Christ. It's wonderful. It's what's all been done for us by grace and mercy. But the second thing Peter says then is we need to pursue holiness. We need to pursue holiness. Chapter 1, verse 5. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness. So this very reason is what? That you are a Christian. Because you are a Christian, make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge. Verse 6. And to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness and to godliness mutual affection and to mutual affection love. Let me just read that same sentiment for chapter 3, verse 11. In chapter 3, verse 11, Peter says this. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. Because Jesus is coming, we are to live out holy lives. Now it's so important, the order here. The order here is so important. It is not holiness first. It does not pull up your bootstraps to look good for him ready. No, no, no. It's because we've received the grace of the gospel. Because we are Christians, we are to pursue holiness. He's saying because you're in Christ, work hard to be like Christ. Because you're heading to heaven, work hard to be like what it'll be like when it's there. Pursue holiness. Dear friends, go back to the ticket analogy. Go back to the ticket analogy. Now that you've been given a

ticket to the men's 100 meters final at the Olympics, you have that ticket. All is done. All is prepared. All is made ready. Accommodation, food, it's all there. But what do you need to do? You receive it and then, well, you get ready, don't you? You've not earned the ticket. It's been given. It's completely yours. It's free. But because you have it, you need to get ready. You might need to cancel a few things in your diary or reschedule one or two things. But perhaps you go to buy a team GB t-shirt or whatever it is you're going to be supporting there in that event, right? You make ready for it. It's all been done, but you want to live in light of that. Now it changes the shape of your week or the next couple of weeks, whatever it is. You're going to get ready.

But conversely, if you've been given a gift like that, you've been given a gift like that and you're doing nothing to get ready. In fact, on the day of the event, you're packing other things into your diary. You've scheduled other things. You're going to be out the country somewhere else. Well, someone might say, hang on, do you really understand what you've been given? On this day, you're meant to be there on this wonderful trip to see the Olympics or to do this thing, whatever it is, but you're rescheduling these other things. It would make people watching on think, do they really understand what they've been given? Do they really understand what they've been given?

And so Peter encourages them to pursue holiness, to pursue Christ-likeness, to be ready for Christ's coming. And that's what the language means there in verse 10. Put your eyes down to verse 10.

[27 : 41] What does Peter say? He says, you need to confirm your calling. He says, therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never what? You'll never stumble. Election and calling are big Bible words.

And they speak of God's sovereign choice to save a people for him. Utterly free to do so. He does it out of mercy and love. But if God has sovereignly saved us and he's done it from all eternity, how is it that we can confirm that? How is it that we are to make it more certain?

Well, one commentator says this. The question there in verse 10 of to confirm it or to add to your faith or to confirm it, to make certain, the question is to whom? To whom? To God or to us?

Well, it's certainly not to God. God knows from all eternity who he has elected and called. He's known that from all eternity. The names that are written in the Lamb's book of life. He knows who he's chosen. And therefore, it is to confirm it, if you like, to us then. To give us assurance and to help us that we would not stumble. Let me try and illustrate it this way. I wonder if you've ever had that moment in life where you know that something's happening, but a moment maybe comes where, oh, if that happened and it feels real. Imagine, say, you're expecting someone in your family or you're expecting a baby. And you know your wife is expecting, but it's that first visit to the hospital for a scan. And it's lying there in the hospital and the sonographer comes and you get the scan and you think, ah, at that point you think, wow, this is really happening. My wife will probably tell me that I'm still, with five children later, still kind of waiting for the penny to drop on that, all right. But in that moment you think, wow, this was always real, but it confirms, wow, this is really happening. Or maybe it's applying for university. You know you've got your place.

You've got your place in halls, but it's the day that the official letter comes or the key comes to your room in halls accommodation. And you think, wow, this is really happening. I can't believe it.

[29 : 59] Or confirmation for a job or a new house or whatever it is. The reality is there, but something happens and the penny drops. Maybe it's the ticket that comes in the post for the Olympics, right? This is really happening. Peter is saying to them, he's saying to us, Luke, when we pursue love, when we pursue self-control and godliness and all these things he lists here, when we pursue Christ-likeness and holiness, never perfectly, never perfectly, with all the ups and downs of life. It is evidence of God working in our life, though. When something happens and we can think, wow, a year ago, six months ago, five years ago, I know in this situation I would have done that. I would have gossiped. I would have clicked. I would have got angry. But now I see how the Lord has helped me to walk away, to turn the other cheek, whatever it is. We praise God that he is working in our life. We praise God for that. And it should encourage us to keep going. So, dear friends, when you see the fruit of the Spirit working in your life, praise God for it and be encouraged by it.

So, very practically this week, let me encourage you to do this, that list of things there that Peter has for us in verses 5 to verse 7. Let me encourage you, verse 5 to 7, for this week, pick one. Pick one for the week or pick one every day and ask that the Lord would be working that in your life. Let me encourage you to do that. Pray this week that the Lord would add to your faith goodness or add self-control or add perseverance or godliness or mutual affection or love, that the Lord would help

us to grow in these things. Dear friends, Martin Lloyd-Jones, the great pastor down from Westminster Chapel in London, he used to say this, Christianity is a faith that sweats. It sweats. We should be working hard as we look to become like the Lord Jesus, not to save ourselves, but because we want to be like him. Peter knows the road is bumpy. We won't do it perfectly, but we ask for the Spirit's help to grow in grace. Dear friends, let me ask you one question before we go to our final point, our final point.

If this morning we call ourselves Christians, but we know in our hearts we don't want to be like Jesus, we have to ask ourselves why. It is a good diagnostic question for our hearts. I call myself Christian, but do I want to be like Jesus? Do I want to be like my Savior, the one to whom I will meet in glory face to face? And if we've stopped praying that, Lord, make me like you. Lord, put sin to death.

Then this morning, ask the Spirit to help you to do that, to put sin to death, and that you would become more like him. So receive grace, pursue holiness, and very briefly at the end, know that your reward awaits you. You get ready for that day by receiving the Lord Jesus, pursuing holiness, and by knowing that your reward awaits you. Verse 11, you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Receive Christ, walk in his ways. You will make it home. All of grace, all of grace, never of works, but all of the mercy of God who has saved you and holds you, and he will, he will lead you home. If you belong to Jesus, know that he will see you safely home. The image in verse 10 and 11 here is that of a crown.

[33 : 33] Think of a crown that awaits a marathon runner as they cross the line. Think of the medal that's placed around the neck of a soccer player who wins the World Cup or the European Championships or the gold medal in the Olympics. Dear friends, if you belong to Jesus, you will receive your reward and eternal life.

A couple of weeks ago, I was listening to the radio, Radio Scotland. I think it was a Monday morning, and I think over the weekend had been the Edinburgh Marathon, and anyone here who's run a 5 or 10k or whatever or a marathon, one of the things that everyone looks forward to at the end is the medal, medal. And this person was phoning up national radio, right? National radio broadcast across, I was going to say the world. I don't know if Radio Scotland goes to the world, but across Scotland.

And what did she say? She'd finished the marathon, but there was no medal. They'd all been taken by the people that finished before her. They hadn't made enough for those in the race. And let me tell you, this person, she was so angry. She was so upset. No medal. I put in all the work that they did.

I did all these things, and there's no medal. Dear friends, the Lord Jesus, for all who are his, each one has a crown, has a crown, a medal waiting for you, waiting for you. Let that encouragement, that Christ is there waiting for you, that when you see him face to face, he's ready to receive you. Let that spur you on to keep going. If you're weary, if you're tired, if you're feeling battered and bruised this morning by life, then let Peter hold this great hope of heaven before your eyes.

[35 : 10] Jesus is waiting, provides you entrance into his kingdom, into his eternal home. He's waiting, waiting at the finish line to crown you. Keep trusting Jesus. Keep following him. Keep heaven before your eyes that you would keep on the solid ground of Christ. He will, he will lead you safely home. Dear friends, Jesus is coming. It's in all of our diaries, and until that day, or until he takes you home before that day, love the Lord Jesus with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love him.

Receive the Lord Jesus. Bask in the glory of the gospel that he has given you everything you need for eternal life and life, all of his grace and mercy and love. And in light of that, pursue holiness, holiness. And remember the Lord Jesus is waiting with open arms, ready to welcome you into his presence forever. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank you so much that you are coming again, that you will come in power to make all things new, to create a world in heaven and on earth where there will all will be perfect and right and true.

And we pray that until that day comes, in this time between your first and second coming, help us to live remembering that day, trusting firmly that you will come. And as we wait, Lord, help us to bask in the glory of the gospel, that you have saved us. Help us to pursue holiness. Lord, make us like you, ready our hearts for heaven and help us to live with heaven before our eyes, knowing that

because we are clothed in your righteousness, you will take us home. So keep us near to you, keep us close to you, that our feet would never slip, that we would stand firmly on the rock of Jesus Christ, our great Savior and King, both this day and evermore. Amen.