



May 22, 2016
1 Peter 1:22-2:3
Pastor Larry Adams

The Hope of God's Word

Hi Everyone. My name is Larry Adams and I want to take a moment to thank you for reading this message. At Golden Hills we are committed to exalting Jesus and preaching the Word. Your downloading of this message is a great encouragement to us, as we know that our ministry is going out to spread God's Word all over the world.

We want you to know, too, that in no way do we intend these messages to be a replacement for your involvement in a good local church, where, sitting under the authority of pastors and other teachers, you can learn to worship, grow and serve and be engaged with a body of believers where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We realize also, that some of you may be in areas of the world where there is no local church. Therefore, we hope these messages you are using, to gather with your family or other believers, or people from the community that it will be a great encouragement to you, as you hear God speak into your life, helping you to become disciples who are true, reproducing followers of Jesus Christ.

If you have your Bible today, I'd like you to turn with me to 1 Peter 1. We're going to be reading through chapter 2, verse 3. As we continue on in our series, *Living Hope in a Hopeless World*, Peter was writing to a group of persecuted Christians who were suffering for their faith. They were a lot like you or me. They had never seen Jesus, yet they believed in Him. They didn't see Jesus' death, but they continued to believe in Him because they had a word, a message that they had believed, the same message that has come to us, it's called the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe it. It sustains our faith. But as they were going through difficulties, what they needed to know is, *can I really continue to trust this word? Is it really true? Can I put my hope in this?*

Peter writes them this whole letter, reminding them of how to have a living hope and in this section, he focuses on the hope that we can have because of God's word. Here is the way Peter records it (1 Peter 1:22 – 2:3):

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

"All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever."

And this is the word that was preached to you.

² Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Let's pray together: *Lord this is Your word. And it is truth. In a world of so many voices, where the values that we share are shifting like sand, it's nice, it's reassuring, it's encouraging to have a word that*

never changes, a word that is absolute, a word that is true. All of humanity will be held accountable for this, whether we recognize it or not. So we thank You for the hope that can be ours today, who have believed. May You encourage us today in this living hope, as we learn the hope of God's glory. We thank You, in Jesus' name, Amen.

The word of man is unreliable, not because they intentionally lie, and not always because they are trying to deceive; sometimes we just don't get it right. I'm not right all the time, in fact I'm wrong a lot. It isn't because I try to lie, because I don't and I don't try to deceive. It's just that I don't know everything, so I say things, and I plan things, and I espouse certain things, and they don't come to pass because I don't control them, and I don't know all these things. Humanity has a voice that is pretty unreliable, because it is limited.

I was reading a piece in *The Futurist* magazine, written by a writer named Laura Lee. She was talking about some of the worst predictions of all time, by very knowledgeable and gifted people. Like this one, for example:

- 2000 years ago, in A.D. 100, a man by the name of Julius Sextus Fontinus, said, "Inventions have long since reached their limit. I see no hope for future developments." 2000 years ago he was saying that!
- Or how about this one by journalist Junius Henry Brown, in 1893: "Law will be simplified over the next century. Lawyers will have diminished and their fees will have been vastly curtailed." Now I thank God for lawyers – they've been a huge help to me and our church many times, but that guy was really off the mark!
- How about this one, by computer scientist, John Van Neuman, who wrote this in 1949 (some of you are using computer equipment that was invented in 1949!), but anyway, he said, "It would appear that we have reached the limits of what is possible to achieve with computer technology."
- Or one of my favorites: from Alex Lute, President of the Lute Vacuum Company (I've never heard of it). He was quoted in the *New York Times* June 10, 1955 – "Nuclear powered vacuum cleaners will probably be a reality in ten years." Nuclear powered vacuum cleaners! That would be wonderful! I have a radioactive vacuum cleaner!
- How about this one: Bob Metcalf, *Info World*, 1995. He wrote this: "I predict the internet will go spectacularly supernova, and in 1996, catastrophically collapse."

You have noted surgeons to Queen Victoria in 1873 saying, there will never be surgeries within the abdomen. These people weren't lying, they weren't trying to deceive. They weren't naïve. They were sharing what they really believed, but the problem is, you can't put your hope in the word of man because they don't see everything. Their view is very limited.

That's why it went on at the end of this article to say, "Aren't you glad that your faith does not rest on human words, but on the sure word of God." That's what Peter was writing to these Christians, to help solidify their living hope. You haven't believed just anyone; you've believed God.

We are in a series of messages from 1 Peter called *Living Hope in a Hopeless World*. One of the reasons there is so much hopelessness, is that people don't know whom to believe. Whose word do you trust? Who has the solutions we can count on? What do we put our hope in that will not let us down? Peter told these suffering Christians that their hope is not rooted in the word of men, but in the living and enduring word of God. He said (vs 23): "23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

The word 'living' means actually alive. It's operational. It's able to effect change because it is working. 'Enduring' means it is incorruptible, unchanging. It has always been and it will always be, *reliable truth*. He tells these believers that even in their trials, they can have a living hope because the word they have trusted, upon which these trials have come, is the very word of God. So Peter reminds them that our hope is rooted in the truth of God's word.

Why does God's word give us such hope? Peter tells them: Because God's word is eternal truth and God's word is what helps us to grow up.

We can put our hope in God's word because God's word is eternal truth.

Peter said (vs 22-25)

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

"All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever."

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Many people today believe that God exists to serve them. We may not couch it in those words, but even many Christians believe that. In fact, all you have to do is listen to how they speak when God doesn't meet some expectation that they think God ought to meet. Most people believe God exists to serve them. Which is why they often treat God's word like Pandora Radio@.

If you are not familiar with Pandora Radio@, Herschel York, pastor of Buckram Baptist Church in Kentucky and Associate Professor and Dean of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was once writing a piece where he said this:

One of the marvels of the internet age is a thing called Pandora Radio@. When you listen to a radio on terrestrial or satellite radio, you have to listen to every song played. You can change the channel, but you can't change the song. You're stuck with whatever you're given. But that's not so on Pandora@. On Pandora@, you can put in different singers, bands, songs that you like, and they will use an algorithm to parse the music that you list. So the algorithm will ask, is this rock? Soft rock? Hard rock? Is it antiphonal? Does it have a guitar lead? Does it have a front man? You see, it analyzes what you like, and then it can incorporate other similar songs and artists into the mix. By each song, Pandora@ puts a "thumbs-up" sign and a "thumbs-down" sign. If you click on the "thumbs-up", it will put in more songs in the mix, just like the one you're listening to. If you click the "thumbs-down" it will take that song out and offer you new songs to consider. We live in an age where customization of lifestyle and belief has become the norm. Pick your own God. Pick your own Bible. Pick your own beliefs. Pick your own gender. Pick your own whatever. It's the norm. This is often the way we approach the Bible. We tailor and customize our view of scripture, and ultimately our view of God. It's like we have our own internal algorithm all the time, sorting through and processing the biblical data, to say, oh, I'll accept this part, but I don't like this one. Or I'll preach that part, but I could never preach this. Or I'll believe this over there, but I'm never going to believe that.

It's like we have our own customizing of what we want to believe, and what we don't. People, the word of God doesn't change. It isn't customizable. It is relevant for every culture and every generation, because it is the same eternal truth in every culture and every generation. You can't pick and choose what you like, it's an all-or-nothing kind of thing. We may not understand it all, but you cannot change it. You see, that's what Peter was teaching, to encourage these Christians to remember that their hope was based on the eternal, unchanging truth of God's word. That's why he said (vs 22-25):

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

You have purified yourselves by obeying the truth. That word 'purified' is the word for 'moral cleansing.' You have been morally purified by drawing close to God, whom you have obeyed by listening to His truth. It's written in the present tense which means the new state in which you are now living, because you have been born again by believing and obeying God's word, and this word has purified you. It draws you closer to God. It has a purifying effect.

It's the same thing that the Lord's brother, James, was writing about in James 4:8: “⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

It's the same thing John was writing in 1 John 3:2-3 “² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”

The evidence of this, Peter said, is that you are loving each other deeply from the heart. You didn't used to do that but now you do. This came to you, he said, this purifying effect came to you by obeying the truth. The word 'obeying' means 'to put yourself under the authority of what you hear.' That's what we want our kids to do, to put themselves under the authority of what we're telling them because they believe it.

Peter said if you put yourself under the authority of God's truth, it is producing this in you. 'Truth,' is the word for 'objective reality.' It doesn't shift; it doesn't change. It's an absolute. You've believed this, Peter said. You were born again; you were transformed. You were made new and this word you believe is eternal truth.

Peter quotes for them the words of the prophet Isaiah, who 700-750 years earlier, had been saying the same thing to another generation of people who needed to put their hope in God's word. He quotes it in vs 24-25:

²⁴ For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Men in their schemes, Peter said, all the glory that they've built, it is passing away. The people are like grass, and their glory is like a flower – it doesn't last. How many people invest their whole life in things that are fading and will one day be gone? Peter said, the word of God is forever, and this is the word that was preached to you.

That's the word you are hearing, he is telling them, and that's the word we're hearing today. The divinely inspired, faithfully transmitted word of God.

Near the end of his life, the apostle Paul was in a prison cell because of his commitment to Jesus. He is writing what may have been the last letter of his life to his young son in the faith, who was leading the church at Ephesus at the time, Timothy. He tells Timothy, remember, if you are going to live for Jesus in a pre-Christian world (or if we are going to live for Jesus in a post-Christian world), it's not going to be easy. Not everyone is going to like it or accept it. The thing that will keep you strong is, you have your hope rooted in a word that is truly from God. 2 Timothy 3:10-17 –

¹⁰You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹²In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Men did not write the Bible. They may have held the pen, but God was doing the writing. Yet, there are still people today who don't believe that, who don't know that this word is faithfully given, faithfully recorded, faithfully transmitted. I was sharing earlier, I had a boss when I worked for the park department up in Washington. He was a good, old red-necked boy, and I got along great with him because I grew out of the same stock. He was the kind of guy, if you were working in the park department, you didn't have your shirt on, he would walk up, grab you by the chest hair and rip a chunk out, just to get your attention. One of those kind of guys. I used to share Jesus with him. He would say, "You believe that nonsense? Where do you get that?"

I'd say, "I get it out of the Bible."

"You believe that?"

"Yeah."

I remember asking him, "Where do you think the Bible came from?"

I'm not kidding, this is what he said: "I think a few drunk guys got together for a weekend. They wanted to invent a religion and a god and that's what they came up with."

"You're serious? You really believe that?"

You know, it's hard to deal with that kind of ignorance. But there are people who have differing views of God's word and they don't put stock in it. They may not be as radical as his, but they don't have an accurate picture of what the Bible is.

I remember when I was at college, studying Greek and Hebrew (which I don't highly recommend to anybody, unless you like personal punishment and late nights, but anyway ...). Our professor was one of the guys who wrote the concordance to the NIV Bible, a brilliant language scholar. I remember we came back from Spring Break, and he said, "On Spring Break, I went to the museum of London."

We said, "Wow!"

He said, "Yeah, they've got the full scroll of the book of Isaiah, rolled out on a glass case from 200 B.C., from the Dead Sea Scrolls."

Isaiah would have written that about 700 or 750 B.C., so there was a 500-year gap. We said to him, "Dr. Goodrich, you read the language. Did you read the scroll?"

"Absolutely! I read it all."

"What did the scroll say?"

You know what he did? He picked up his Bible, turned to the book of Isaiah, and he said, "This is exactly what it said."

It hasn't changed. In all those transmissions and everything else, God has overseen its transmission. That's why, when Peter was writing his second letter to this group of people, he wanted to remind them that their hope in the word was secure, because it wasn't the word of men. In 2 Peter 1: 16-21, he wrote

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the majestic glory, saying [remember on the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James and John were there and they heard the voice?], "This is my Son whom I love, with Him I am well-pleased." [You don't forget moments like that.] "We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven, when we were with Him on the sacred mountain. ¹⁹ We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

You see, Peter is writing this because he knows that the further people get from a source of truth, the easier it is for them to believe a lie about that truth. There were people, even in that day, who were beginning to say, the Bible isn't faithfully committed; the Bible isn't faithfully transmitted; the Bible isn't faithfully recorded. Peter was saying, "We were there."

It's like people today, trying to tell us that the Holocaust didn't happen, or JFK wasn't killed in Dallas. There are people trying to convince people of that! But the problem is, there are still some of us still alive who were there! So you're never going to believe that garbage when there are people around saying, we saw it! We heard it! These people are trying to deceive you. Peter is saying, we were there;

we saw it; we heard it; it is faithfully recorded. You know that word you are believing? It's the same word God gave to us. It is eternal.

People, in whose word are you putting your hope? You are listening and trusting *somebody*. Are you putting it in mine? I hope not! The voices of the culture? The intellectual elite? Or are you trusting in the word of God, which is eternal truth?

Peter said, you have trusted this living and enduring word. It is eternal truth. You have a living hope that is secure.

Not only because God's word is eternal truth, but we can put our hope in God's word because God's word helps us to grow up.

Peter said in 2:1-3 –

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Christian life isn't just a destination, it is a journey.

It has been called the greatest rescue mission of World War II: Operation Halyard. Dave Harvey, in his book, *Rescuing Ambition*, tells what happened:

Late in the war, American bombers were sent on dangerous missions over southern Europe to cripple the Nazis' oil supplies. Hundreds of crews, flying tin cans, soared through the storms of anti-aircraft shells. Many American pilots were forced to bail from their shot-up planes or they would perish. [By the way, next weekend, Lord willing, we are going to remember the ones who didn't make it (Memorial Day).] The injured airmen drifted by parachute into occupied Yugoslavia, expecting to be captured or killed. Instead, on the ground, remarkable rescue teams were already in place. Serbian peasants took it upon themselves to track the path of these floating flight crews. Their sole mission was to grab the flyboys and bring them to safety before the Nazis arrived. Risking their own lives, the peasants fed and sheltered the downed airmen. These rescued men were in friendly hands, but they were still on enemy soil. They still had to escape. The story of what became known as Operation Halyard builds toward a daring mission, a secret landing strip, and clandestine evacuation plan. Amazingly, those Serbian peasants rescued every single American airman who landed – over 500 in all. Here is the fascinating part of the rescue: traveling to the evacuation site, the airmen had to spend weeks following these Serbian freedom fighters. They had no idea where to go. Only the freedom fighters knew where the evacuation site was. Despite the profound language barriers, the direction, the pace and the destination were all in the hands of their rescuers. The men had been saved from their enemy, but their real journey had just begun. They still had to walk to know freedom.

The story of Operation Halyard, sheds light on an important spiritual reality: to be rescued from something sets us on a path *toward* something. For the airmen, it was a journey of survival. For us, it is a journey of faith. The one who saved us is now calling us to walk with Him. It is non-negotiable. Though snatched from spiritual death, we soon realize that the Christian life isn't an arrival, it's an adventure.

Christ rescues us, then points us to the path of following Him. It is a path toward growth and maturity and Christlikeness. It is a path away from sin and toward Jesus. It's called growing up. And the word of God is essential to that growth. That's why Peter was calling these Christians to remember that in all that they were facing, if they would stay close to God's word, God would use those things to grow them up in Christ.

Peter told them, you've believed, you've obeyed, you've been born again, but the journey isn't over, it is just beginning. That's why he said (2:1-3)

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.
² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,
³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The word "grow up" is the word for mature. It means to spiritually increase. As a child grows in matures physically, so you must grow and mature spiritually. It is the natural course of things. When a child doesn't grow physically, emotionally and in other physical ways, we know something is wrong; when a Christian doesn't grow spiritually, we know something is wrong.

Grow up in your salvation, he said. Salvation is an act and it is a process. When we confess Christ and receive Him into our lives, we are born again; we are saved. Peter told these Christians, you have been born again. You have believed. You have been made new. You have passed from death to life. But the salvation process is ongoing. You've been saved from sin's penalty, but now there is a process you've entered. It's a process of growing up to become more like Jesus. That process is called "sanctification."

Sanctification is a very big word to describe how we're moving away from sin and closer to Christ. Sanctification means we are being set apart from sin. Set apart for God. That's why our salvation is spoken of in the scriptures in three tenses. It can sound confusing. We've shared this before: the Bible clearly teaches, you have been saved. It also teaches, you are being saved. It also teaches, you will be saved.

People ask, well, which is it? I have been, I am or I will be? It's all! You are moving away from sin, living for Christ. You have been saved from sin's penalty when you believed and were born again. You are being saved from sin's power. That sin used to own you, but it's broken now. It doesn't own you anymore. You still sin, but it doesn't control your life (Jesus does). And you are being saved from that power. You will be saved when you are removed completely from sin's presence and it will no longer have any effect in your life. You have been saved. You are being saved. You will be saved.

The word of God is essential to that growth process. That's why Jesus, when He was with His disciples in the upper room at the last supper, the night before He went to the cross – He prayed for His disciples, for other believers and for you and me. He prayed for Himself. In this longest prayer of Jesus, He prays that we would be set apart (or sanctified) by the word of truth. Listen to this prayer. John 17: 13-20. Jesus, praying to the Father, says:

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them [set them apart] by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself,

that they too may be truly sanctified. [I have set myself apart for you, Father, to die on a cross, so that through me and faith in me, they too may be set apart for you.]

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. [Not just for the twelve in the room] I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message

That was Peter to believers there in Turkey. But that’s also to believers through the centuries, and it’s to you and me who have believed. We are the answer to His prayer. Jesus prays that we will be set apart for God and that we will grow up.

Part of what that sanctification does, this growing up process, is that the Spirit of God comes to live in us. He helps us to put off the old self and put on the new self to be like Christ. That’s why Peter said,

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1 Peter 2:1-3)

Get rid of the old and put on the new! People, we can’t do that in our own strength, only God can do that. And He will, as we crave the pure spiritual milk like newborn babies.

I have had three kids. Lord willing, sometime this week, I’m supposed to have a fifth grandbaby. I have watched babies nurse. Under most conditions, when things are healthy, they take to that thing naturally. They have a craving for it. Once they get it, they are off and running. It’s built in. That’s what Peter is saying. If you are really a child of God, there will be a natural inclination to desire God’s word, the pure spiritual milk of the word, because you know that you need it to grow.

The Spirit of God, when He comes to live in you, the word is the food of the Spirit. The Spirit of God in you craves this word. So don’t quench the Spirit. Don’t grieve the Spirit. You feed the Spirit.

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The milk of God’s word is what we need. But as you grow on the milk, this word also becomes the solid food. If a baby stays on milk too long, it begins to work against him. They have to have solid food to become strong and mature. The word of God is both the milk and the solid food. You see, that’s why it says in Hebrews (5:11-6:1a) to another group of Jewish believers who were being persecuted:

¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

⁶ Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity

There are a lot of folks who move away from this word because they don't want to become like Jesus. They don't want their lives set apart for God. Jesus said, this is the word which speaks of Me. The Bible is not primarily a handbook for life. It is not primarily a problem-solving manual. The word of God is the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is where we meet Him! That's why Peter said, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

That phrase, "now that you have tasted" is literally "if you have tasted," or "since you have tasted." In other words, if you have really tasted of this growth in your life, if you have really tasted of the goodness of God, you have drunk in what the word is and what it can do – you naturally crave more of that. You want more of the Jesus of this word.

It's like giving a kid a piece of candy or a sip of Coke – if you don't want them to like sweets, don't do that! Because once they taste that, they are going to want it again. Peter is saying, if you have tasted that the Lord is good, you're not living off somebody else's faith! You have experienced this! One of the signs is, you will crave it. You will want it.

But you see, since this is the revelation of Jesus, you can't keep coming back to this book if you want to go live with sin. You can't let the moral cleansing of drawing close to God be in your heart and mind because you can't stand it and go back out and do what you want to do. I think it was D.L. Moody who once said, "Either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book."

That's why so many Christians drift away from this, because they are not craving pure spiritual milk, because they are not really craving Jesus. So they keep falling. They are like the little kid I read about who graduated from his crib to a big boy bed, but he kept falling out every night. The parents would find him on the floor in the morning. So his mom asked him, why do you keep falling out of bed? The little boy said, I don't know, I think I just stay too close to where I got in.

That's why a lot of Christians keep falling. Spiritually, they are just staying too close to where they got in. They are saved, but they haven't grown. Because you can't grow apart from the word. It is the fruit of the Spirit and Peter said, when you have tasted of the Lord and His goodness, and you begin to see that growth happen in your life, it fuels the hope - the hope of God's word.

Bruce MacGyver is a retired pastor. He wrote an article some years ago in *Guidepost Magazine* called *Some Stories I Couldn't Tell While I Was A Pastor*. (Wouldn't you want to some of those!) Now, when you read that, your first thought is, *would he be saying anything about me?* (If you've been in his congregation.) Bruce MacGyver, Pastor Bruce, had a heart problem. On the eve of his open-heart surgery, he said to his doctor, noted cardiologist Dr. Dudley Johnson, "Can you fix my heart?"

The physician, known for being short and to the point, said, "Sure." And he walked out the door. That's all he said, on the eve before heart surgery.

Following the twelve-hour surgery, MacGyver asked Dr. Johnson again, "In light of the blocked arteries that I had when I checked into the hospital, how much blood supply do I now have?"

"All you'll ever need," replied the terse surgeon, and he walked out the door.

Upon his discharge from the hospital, MacGyver's wife, Luanna, asked the doctor, "What about my husband's future quality of life?"

Dr. Johnson stopped and paused. He turned and looked at her and said, "I fixed his heart. The quality of his life is up to him and his choices."

You see, God would say the same for us. We were desperately sick in sin. We had a deep heart problem. God, who is the Great Physician, has fixed our heart. He has made it new. We're been born again because we believe in His word. But we are on a process with God now. We're on a journey. The quality of this life is going to be based on the choices we make and whose word we listen to. Whom do we believe? Are we going to listen to the voice of the culture? Or are we going to listen to the loudest voice that we hear? Or are we going to listen to our friends? Are you going to listen to your pastor?

People are like grass. All their glory fades like a flower. But the word of God is forever. It's eternal truth. It's the means by which we grow up. It gives us a living hope.

That's why Peter said (1:24-25)

"All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever."

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Father, thank You for this reminder. In a world of syncretism and sinking sand, it's nice to know that there is one word that we can trust, that will never change. Lord, we don't understand everything that is in here. We just don't, but over time, You begin to teach us and You illuminate our understand, and You help us to see things we never saw before. Like these believers to which Peter wrote, God, we can go through hardship and trial and all kinds of things – disease, illness, relational failures, financial setbacks, even persecution – but if we hold onto this word, we will have a hope. Those who hope in the Lord will never be disappointed. Your word is truth. It helps us grow. I'm praying, God, that through this word, we will be a people that has a living hope in a hopeless world. We thank You, in Your precious name, Amen.

