

Living the Whole Gospel Story



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2nd Peter 1:12-18

September, this month, marks the 50th anniversary of the death of JR Tolkien. Many of you are probably familiar with him from his works, like The Hobbit and also The Lord of the Rings. Maybe you read the books, or more likely, you probably saw the movies. John Stonestreet was interviewed about the life and legacy of JR Tolkien. In the interview, he talked about one of the motivations that JR Tolkien had for writing The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings is because Great Britain had lost its story. Now, they had just gone through World War I, World War II, they had gone through the pains of that, and now Great Britain is secularizing; they're losing hope and they're losing faith in God. They've seen the evils of war and they're trying to bring themselves back from that. What do you do in a post-war culture? Tolkien, CS Lewis, and others saw Great Britain going in the direction opposite of God, and so what JR Tolkien decided is Great Britain needs a new story. He could look back at the Greeks, he could look at the myths, he could look at the way myths and stories work, and they teach us that they're not true. They didn't actually happen but they teach us truths. They teach us how we are to be what's good, what's

evil, and what's courage, what you should you do, what should you not do, what it looks like to win, and what it looks like to lose. And what he realized is human beings need stories. That's why we go to the movies and that's why we read books. That's why we tell each other stories because we need stories to know who we are, where we come from, where we're going, what the point all of this is. Stories help us see that and root us in that. JR Tolkien realized Great Britain has no story now. So he decided to build middle earth, a place that would be an escape from reality, a story that would set above Great Britain's story so they would begin to see there is evil, there is heroism, there is virtue, there is goodness, and there is courage, and these little hobbits go on this adventure. So he built this whole world to tell Great Britain a new story.

Part of what Peter's doing in this letter is he is reminding Christians of the story of the gospel because it's really important that we also know the story of the gospel. That we know the story of the Bible, that overarching narrative, because honestly, we find our lives, we find our identity, we find who we should be, who we are meant to be, in that gospel story. And so Peter is going to remind us of this not just little story, but he's going to remind us of the whole gospel story. I think that's really important for us to remember, the whole gospel story, because sometimes we only remember a part of it. We remember that Christ died for us and Christ rose again for us, and that to us is the gospel. But we forget there's another part of this story, and the other part is the King is going to return. The King is coming back. If we remember the whole gospel story—yes He died, yes He rose again, but also He is coming back to set up His Kingdom—then it will change the way we live right now. We won't just live right now for right now, we'll live right now in light of the King who's going to return. We live right now but we actually live forward, and that's really what our whole series through 2nd Peter is all about. In verses 12 through 18, Peter's going to remind us of what we already know, remind us of that whole gospel story, so it will stir us up, it will wake us up to live forward.

Scripture

"Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you

have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we ourselves heard this very voice borne from Heaven, for we were with Him on the holy mountain."

I don't know if you caught it in the reading, but there is an urgency to Peter's message. The urgency is he is about to die and we're not exactly sure what situations he's in. Perhaps right now he's in the Mamertine Prison and he's waiting for his execution, where he will presumably be crucified upside down. Maybe that's coming in just days and he knows it. Perhaps he's just reflecting on the prophecy that Jesus gave him at the end of John when He told him you are going to die for my sake—people are going to stretch you out; they're going to dress you in a way you don't want to be dressed, alluding to his potential crucifixion, his martyrdom. We don't know exactly where Peter is and how soon he's going to die, but Peter believes that it's soon. Imagine if you knew tomorrow was your last day on earth. What would you say to those you love during those last moments? What would you say to your spouse, to your kids, to your grandkids, to your relatives, to sisters, brothers, mom, dad? Well, Peter is in that moment. He knows his last day is coming soon. Here's a man, with urgency, telling these believers a few things. Let's look what Peter says to these Christians.

The first thing he's going to tell them is to remember. Notice with me in verse 12. It says, "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have." He says okay, I'm about to die so I want to remind you of these qualities. Now what are these qualities? We've just had two sermons where

he's laid out the qualities he's been talking about and they're those supplements of our faith. We have faith in the Lord Jesus, but our faith should be growing. Our faith should be supplemented with a list of things. Actually, there are seven different supplements beginning in verse 5 where he says that our faith should be supplemented with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Those seven things that are going to grow out of our faith, he says, I want to remind you of those qualities, and I want you to remember those qualities, and I'm going to do it always. Then he says something interesting—he says though you know them and you're established in them. Okay Peter, if we know them and we're established in them, then why do you have to remind us of them? So why is he reminding us? Why is the last thing he does is to remind us of what we already know? Well, I think it really opens up one of the keys to the Christian faith. We don't always need to learn something new; we often need to remember what we know. I mean, we're a people who love new things. We like new apps, we like new plans, new diets, new gadgets, new books, new podcasts, new things. If I can just have a new thing then I'll be helpful. Like at the end of the list of seven, I'm sure some of the people are like... *Could you keep going? We need a few more things to supplement our faith. Just keep listing and we'll get 30 or 40. Just keep giving us new information.* Peter is saying no I gave you information, now you need to actually remember and do what I just told you.

See, we always want to know more because we think by knowing more then we're obeying Christ. Often, what we need to do is to remember what we already know and to actually do those things. Now, you've probably seen this if you have kids. You tell your kids to do something, like picking up their room. Then an hour later, you go to their room and it's not picked up. What do you do? You go to your kid and say, "I told you to pick up your room." What's their response? "I know." *"Okay, you didn't pick it up."* "Yeah, I know." *"So you need to pick your room."* "I know, you already told me." *"Then go pick up your room!"* There is a disconnect to our kids. They say yeah I know, I got it, but there's a problem—the room is still messy. They haven't obeyed what they know, so knowing is not enough. I think that's what Peter is trying to show this early church, these early believers.

They're like, yeah, we got it...virtue, self-control, but they're just doing whatever they want. They don't need to know something new; they need to remember what they already know. I think for so many of us, we're looking for something new and flashy. We come Sunday after Sunday with our journals open, which is good, but we're thinking I need something new, I need a new word, I need a new truth. We're always looking for the new thing. But you know, I think God created it so that we would meet every week, not just for the fact that every Sunday you'll learn something new; in fact, in most Sunday sermons you're going to learn absolutely nothing. You're like, why'd I come back? Because even though you don't always learn something new through the preaching of God's Word, you will be reminded of what you already know so that you'll then go and actually do it. See, part of preaching is not teaching new things; part of preaching is reminding us of old things, the things we already know that we aren't doing. So Peter is saying I know you know them, but I just want to remind you again of these faith qualities.

Then Peter says in verse 13, "I think it right, as long as I'm in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus made clear to me." First, he wanted to remind them and now he wants to wake them up. Again, he's about to die, so he says I think it right, *as long as I am in this body*, to stir you up. How's he going to stir them up? By way of reminder. Not by teaching them some new things or giving them some new doctrine, he's going to stir them up by way of reminder. What does it mean to stir up? Well, the same word is used when Jesus is asleep in the bottom of that boat. Remember that? When the waves are coming and they think they're going to die, they run down and they stir Jesus up...they wake Jesus up. They want Him to wake up so He can calm the seas because they think they're going to die. So to stir you up means to wake you up, that you are sleepy, you are apathetic. In other words, somebody needs to jar you, stir you, and wake you up to what you already know so that you will start living in it.

I've seen this play out whenever deer season comes around. My sons get really excited because they want to go hunting. They're into it. Crider will talk about it the night before, "We've got the stands up, everything's

scouted out, and we know where the deer are. Wake me up at five o'clock. I'll be ready." He's super excited, lays out his clothes, gets everything ready, we have the meal ready, and we know where everything's going to be. He goes to sleep that night thinking about what's he's going to do the next day. The problem is when I walk into his room at 4:45, 5:00, and I start nudging him, "Hey Crider, it's time to wake up." Do you know what he does? He does not wake up. He just rolls over and pulls the covers over his head because all he can think in that moment is it is warm, dark, and cozy. I can't like turn on the lights because Finn's asleep and he doesn't want to go hunting so I'm trying to wake him up without waking everybody up. I mean, it's 5:00 in the morning...he has no desire to get up at all. He is completely asleep. So what I have to do to wake him up is to prod him, push him, and pull the covers back, slap his face a little bit, and say, "Hey buddy, we have to go hunting." In about 15 or 20 seconds of him completely not wanting to get up, all of a sudden, his eyes will just pop open and it hits him it's hunting time, and he will leap out of his bed. But then I have to calm him down, "Hey, we don't want everybody to get up we just want *you* to be up." He is now completely awake because he remembers what we're about to do. See, he wanted to sleep because sleep feels so good—it's early, it's dark, and it's warm—but when he remembers what we're about to do he's wide awake, he's passionate, he's ready. He can't wait to get in the woods to try to hunt a deer.

See, that's what Peter's trying to do to us. He's trying to remind us we are sleepy. We are warm and cozy in our own flesh, and we just wake up tomorrow and we go about our day. We live our life how we want. We make decisions based on what we want. We look into the future for how we want to live. We're just in this slumber, sleepy, flesh led state of life, and Peter is trying to grab us and shake us, and say remember the story, remember what's actually happening in your life—the King is coming back, you have a mission to complete, wake up! He wants us to have that eyes open moment of life is not just about me; life is about King Jesus. It's having faith in Jesus and having your faith grow because of Jesus. See, he wants us to be stirred up. How does he stir us up? By reminding us of those faith supplements and letting our faith lead to virtue, self-control,

love, brotherly affection, and all of those things. He's trying to wake us up and stir us up.

Notice that Peter's urgency is "as long as I'm in the body," "since I know the putting off of my body will be soon." He knows he's going to leave this place soon. He knows he's going to die soon. It's interesting the word he chose for body because it literally means tent. I'm about to put off this tent. And the Apostle Paul would also speak of our bodies as tents. If you go to 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, he talks about our lives in this present moment are like tents. Our bodies are like tents. They're temporary; they're not forever structures. But what we're longing for is when Christ comes back, we're going to get a house. Our body that is wasting away is dying; it's going to be replaced with a body that is going to live forever.

I had to teach New Covenant's chapel service about a month ago, and I used 2nd Corinthians chapter 5. I talked about our bodies now in this life is like a tent and how tent camping is fun, but after three days, you're ready for a house, you're ready for a shower, you ready to do something different. And the difference between camping and living in a house, that's the difference between this life now and the life to come. I actually brought in my hike pack and I set up a tent on stage, and I had the kids come help me put the tent together. It was a very visual sermon on this life is great, but the next life is even better. I packed up the tent and it went fairly well. Then I was supposed to teach on Wednesday night for Dad because he was in Brazil and I was trying to think about what to do. Katie was in that chapel service and she says you need to do that tent for the adults. I say, "I don't know, I don't know if adults are going to go for a tent up on stage. It might not translate that well." And she says, "You're talking about our bodies getting old and dying. I think that'll translate better to the adults than it did to the kindergartners." So on Wednesday night, I brought in the tent and actually had some of the adults come and help and they were slower than the kids. We weren't nearly as agile than the kids! It was just a slower process. But I had this tent up and got to tell them this tent represents this life now. It's good, God gave it to us, and we should enjoy it. Our bodies are like a tent—they're temporary, they're not permanent. But when Christ comes back, we get a resurrected body that's

going to be a house, a permanent dwelling. How much better is a house than a tent? A house has a shower, a tent doesn't! You could see a room of adults connecting the dots that this life is good but the next life is even better.

Peter is drawing them into that saying I'm about to put off my tent. He's trying to say this isn't the permanent ending of me; instead, I'm going to where I'm always meant to be; I'm going to put on a permanent house and it's actually better. So he's reminding these Christians, as he's getting ready to leave, that they need to remember the gospel story too because they're going to put off their tent and they better be ready for the new dwelling. They're going to have to actually long for that. So Peter knows he is dying and he wants to remind them of what they know. He wants to wake them up so they will lean in and do the things that they know.

I think Peter also wants them to outlast their leader. Notice what he says next, "And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things." It's sort of redundant. I'm going to remind you, I'm going to stir you up so that you can recall these things when I die. Notice he says that his departure is coming. That word, departure, it's actually his exodus. Which takes us back to the story of Israel when they were in captivity, and through the exodus, God rescued them from Egypt and brought them into the Promised Land. He's saying my exodus is coming, I'm about to depart from this world to go to the world that I was made for, the world where King Jesus is going to rule and reign forever. He is reminding them, in his departure, of their own exodus... *You guys are also going there as well, and when I leave, I want you to be able to recall these things, I want you to hold onto these things.* So what's he trying to say? I want your faith to outlast me is what Peter is saying... *I'm dying, I'm not going to be here anymore, so I want your faith to outlast me.* Now, imagine you're the early church and Peter is your pastor. Peter was with Jesus, he knew Jesus. Any questions you have, you could ask Peter, what would Jesus do here... *Could you help me out? You probably know what He would do because you were actually there.* Peter's a pretty cool guy to have around, whatever you need. If things aren't going good at home, "Hey Peter, could you come over for a minute? My wife

needs straightening out.” “Hey Peter, could you come deal with my husband?” “Hey Peter, could you come deal with my kid?” It's very easy for Peter just to be the on-call savior of all of your problems. But Peter's saying I'm about to leave and you're not going to have me anymore, so he is preparing them for his leaving so that their faith would outlast their leader.

We also have to have a faith that outlasts our leaders. Leaders are good, we need leaders, we have leaders, it's God's gift to give the church leaders, but leaders are leaders; leaders are not saviors. That's a very important thing for all of us to remember because there's only one Savior. See, your leader cannot say to you I will never leave you and I will never forsake you, because your leader can die, they can move, they can also fail big time. We've seen it all over the place. If your faith is wrapped up in a leader, a pastor, a Sunday school teacher, a small group leader, a mentor, if your faith is wrapped up in someone else who doesn't have the name Jesus Christ, your faith is in crisis. No leader, no pastor, no Sunday school teacher, no small group leader, no mentor can say to you, I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you and I'll never fail you; only Jesus can say that.

So yes, they are thriving under Peter's leadership, but he's going so he says you need to remember Jesus Christ, you need to make sure your faith is rooted in Him, not in me. So, I just want to ask you—do you have a faith that can outlast your leader, can outlast your pastor, or outlast your Sunday school teacher? Or, in every moment, do you have to call that one person that then comes and rescues you? There will be a point where you can't call that person. Either they're not available or they're dead. That's just reality. You know who you need—you need King Jesus. He will all ways be there for you. So yes, use your leaders, love your leaders; your leaders want to help you but they're servants, they're helpers, they're sages, they are not saviors. Only Jesus is a Savior. Peter is preparing a people to make sure he's not the savior but Jesus is.

Then notice when he is preparing for his departure, Peter says this, “...that at any time you may recall these things.” So my question is what are these things? He's has talked about these qualities I think are the seven faith supplements, and now he says these things. I think these things are

different than the seven faith supplements. I think these things are what he's going to talk about next, and that these things, it is the whole gospel story. It is the whole message of Jesus Christ. That's what he wants us to recall and remember, even when our leaders aren't there to remember who Christ is, what He did, and that He is coming back. So what are these things? It is the gospel story. It's the whole gospel story.

Let's just look at what Peter says. The first thing we're going to see is the gospel story is nonfiction. It's actually true. The whole thing is true. Notice what he says in verse 16. We're going to learn about the message that they made known to the people. "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." So Peter has been preaching a message. It's the power and coming of Jesus. Jesus came and He's also coming. It's this message of the gospel. He's proclaiming it to the people. He wants them to know it and grow in it, believe it, and be changed by it. Then he gives a negative...he says we didn't give you this message out of a cleverly devised myth. Now what is a cleverly devised myth? Well, Peter would've been very familiar with myths. I mean they're in like Roman Greco culture. They have all the Greek gods and all the mythology. What do myths do? Well they're stories; they're supposed to teach us about reality. Like, here's how the gods got here, here's how we got here, here's how you should live under the gods, here's how you should live a good life, and here's what a virtuous life looks like, and here's this god to please. They are stories that they would've told their children and their children's children to define the world and reality. That's the way myths work. That's the way stories work. They're not true stories, but they're supposed to teach us true things.

We also are a culture with stories. We use stories to teach our kids true things. Like the little boy that cried wolf, right? That's not a true story. There wasn't actually a boy that cried wolf three times, and then the last time his parents said you're just making this up and then he got eaten by the wolf. I don't think that story is really true, but it is true that kids should not lie. So we have a story, we have a myth that teaches truth and we tell that to our kids really to scare them not to lie. It didn't really happen but they have truth in them and we want our kids to know the truth. You

should tell the truth and not a lie. We have a lot of good stories and we actually need stories like the Chronicles of Narnia. They are great stories that actually teach true things, even true things about God, even true things about the gospel, but they're not true themselves. Aslan is not a real lion, but he can teach us some things about Jesus. That's why we go to movies. We love stories, stories change us, stories make us feel things, stories compel us, they urge us.

So Peter is saying that gospel story that we told you is not a cleverly devised myth, it's not a made up story; it's a true story. A lot of us will be around people, and perhaps you are this person, who views the Bible in the same way you view the boy that cried wolf. There are stories in the Bible, stories that teach truth, but the stories themselves are not actually true. I mean, think about something like Jonah and the whale. It's a great story about obeying and listening to God, and if you don't, you'll get swallowed by a whale and spit out so you better obey the first time. They believe it's a great story, teaches some great things, but it's not actually true...there wasn't a guy that got swallowed by a whale and then spit back out. Or we go to Genesis and talk about the garden and a snake and the fall. Yes, you should listen to God and not Satan, but there's not actually Adam and Eve, there's not actually a snake. They believe it's just a made up story so that we can agree we should obey God and not obey Satan...the story isn't really real. Then we have a story about a baby that was born who is supposedly the Godman who lived our perfect life, who died the death that we deserve; He rose again on the third day and then He's coming back on a white horse to be the King forever. Well, that teaches us some things, it makes us feel good about our guilt and shame, but it's just a story, it's not real, it didn't really happen—that's how some of us view the Bible—like we shouldn't really think that Noah's a real guy who built a real ark. Peter's saying the story that we have in the Bible, this meta-narrative of Scripture, is not like other myths. They're not made up people to teach us good truths; it's actually true. The stories are true. The people are true. The whole thing is true. The whole Bible, it is nonfiction, it is historically accurate. Yes, the Bible teaches truth, and the Bible is actually true, it's both of those things. This isn't Narnia, this isn't Lord of the Rings, this is the actual story. As C.S. Lewis says, "This is the true

myth." It works like a myth because it teaches us what we are to do, what we're not to do, and how we should live, but it's an actually true myth. The things actually happen. Christ is real and Christ is coming back.

So we see that the gospel is nonfiction, and then we also see that the gospel is rooted in history. That story is rooted in history. Notice what Peter says, "...but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." In other words, Peter's saying we gave you this story, but it's not just a made up story; we were actually there. Where is he at, what is he talking about when he tells that? It's the transfiguration. Notice what he says in verse 17, "For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I'm well pleased,' we ourselves heard this very voice born from Heaven for we were with Him on the holy mountain." Peter is talking about the transfiguration of Jesus. Jesus took three disciples up on a mountain and they were very suspicious that he's not just a guy, He is the Godman because they saw him do things that only God could do. Then He goes on this little camping trip with them and He is like...Hey guys, I just want to show you something...and His deity showed forth through His humanity. His face became bright as the sun. His clothing was white like no one could bleach. They can't even explain what's really happening but they're seeing the glorious King who's not just a suffering servant. He is the exalted King of glory. They saw it; they witnessed it. And now Peter is trying to tell these people about the coming of Jesus, His power and coming... *We saw a glimpse of it on the mountain and I'm telling you it's not a myth, not a fable, not a legend so you'll live right. Your King is actually coming, so you need to live right. He's actually coming, He is actually the King; this thing is actually true. We were there and we saw it with our own eyes.* There are eyewitnesses. This means this was a historical event. Peter could prove it. He was actually there.

See, sometimes you're told something that just makes you think no way! Have you ever been told something that you think there's no way that happened? And then somebody's like, "Dude, I saw it. I was there. It really happened." That happened just last night for me. We did the axe throwing competition and if you were to tell me that this guy, Efride Lynch, was

going to win the axe throwing championship, I would've said no way. He's in my Dgroup, he's one of my good friends, I love Efride, he's awesome, but he doesn't really look like an axe champion, does he? If you just look at Efride, you're not thinking like axe champion. There were a few dudes there with these massive beards who just look like they grew up with an axe, like they shave with an axe. They just look like axe champion material. So Efride doesn't really look like an axe champion, he's wearing like a beat shirt or something. Who wears a beat shirt to an axe throwing championship? Not only that, but he got there late so he skipped all of practice, and we practiced a bunch. We all had several rounds of practice. So when he shows up, I says, "You haven't even practiced, do you just want to set this thing out?" He's like, "No, I'll throw." I'm thinking there is zero chance he's winning this thing, but he did! Do you know how I know? Because I was actually there, I was standing behind him when he is hurling these axes. John Kyle was giving everything he could, but they're just all smacking the target and falling, and Efride was like throw-boom, throw-boom. We're all going nuts; we're all celebrating. I can say to you that Efride is the axe champion because I was there, I saw it, I witnessed it. It was an historical fact because I saw it with my own eyes. Yeah, unbelievable but it happened!

Peter is telling these people, the gospel story, Christ is coming back; yes, it's unbelievable but it's real and I was there. So the question is how does the transfiguration confirm that Christ is returning? Well, in Matthew 17, we have the transfiguration, and it says this in verses 1–2, "After six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John His brother, and led them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light." It keeps going about the transfiguration but that's the event, that's what Peter saw, the deity of Christ shown forth through His humanity. He is shown to be the exalted King of glory. That's what Peter saw. Now how does that tell us that Christ is coming back? Well if you just look back in Matthew 16 in the verses before this, notice in verse 24 it says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." So that's the message about the cross...*Hey, there's a cross involved. I'm going to die on a cross. I'm going to rise again and if you*

want to follow me, you have to take up your cross, die to self to come and follow me. So the cross is mentioned, but notice the last thing that's said before the transfiguration, and this is not just Matthew, this is also Mark and Luke. All the writers put it in this order. The last thing that is said in verse 28 is "Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." So the Son of Man in His glory and Kingdom is going to come before they die. Then, just moments later He takes them up on a mountain and what does He do? He lets His deity shine forth through His humanity. He is transfigured before them. The Son of Man is standing on a mountain, on a holy mountain showing that the coming Kingdom is here and it is coming! So Peter says we saw in that moment a glimpse of what's coming.

See, the transfiguration is not about the resurrection; the transfiguration is about the return of Christ, the return of our King. Yes, Jesus came as a suffering servant to deal with your sin. He is coming back not as a suffering servant; He's coming back as the exalted King with a sword. He's coming back with a scepter. He's coming back to rule and reign where He will be King forever and His Kingdom will dawn. That's what's coming. That's the full gospel. So what's Peter trying to say to these people? I'm about to die, you're not going to see me anymore, and this is my last word to you, this is my last will and testament, this is the last thing you'll ever hear from me.

So what should you do? Please remember what you already know. Remember the gospel story that yes, Christ came, He died for you, He rose again for you, but remember the whole story because the whole story is Christ is coming back. The King will return, and because the King is going to return, it should change the way you live. See, we often think of the gospel in parts. Even the idea of Heaven—Christ died rose again so when I die can go to Heaven—and that's sort of the end of it. In some way we interpret that like I'm forgiven, and then when I die I get to go to Heaven, and I can do however I want. You ask someone a question about Heaven, is it like...do I going to play basketball, do I get to go hunting...? Heaven's like this place about you, because the whole thing is that's the whole gospel. You're going to die one day and go to Heaven and then Heaven is

this other world where you're going to do whatever you want because now you're in Heaven and not here. That's not the whole gospel. It's not that you're going to die and go to Heaven. It's that one day Heaven is going to come and marry the earth, and King Jesus is going to ride on a horse and He is going to return as King! He's going to set up His Kingdom forever and He will rule! That is the whole gospel story. Christ is coming back for His church, His bride; therefore what should I do? I should remember that and live forward in light of that. That's propelling everything I do. See, we're sleepy Christians just thinking right now is about right now. Peter's saying wake up and remember what you know—Christ died, He rose again, therefore supplement your faith with these things. Lean in because Christ is coming back. There's a King who's returning and the gospels ask the question, will the King find faith on earth when He returns? Will He find you faithful? Will He find you leaning in to the gospel story?

See, if I were to pick, I do love Lord of the Rings, and Hobbit is probably my favorite book. But if I had to pick one of the Lord of the Rings, I would pick Return of the King. It's probably my favorite just because it's the end. I'm not a fast reader so when I got to the end of it, it's like finally! I'm finally almost done with Lord of the Rings. It is a huge book series. So Return of the King means you finally get to the end so that's probably why it's my favorite. But also, it's a pretty epic ending. At the end, Aragorn comes and he is the returning king and he sets up his throne. He now rules, there's peace and prosperity, and everyone's cheering. He marries his bride and he rules as king forever over the land. It's a good story. It's actually a great story, but it's also not a true story. It's great, but it's not real. They're just made up people. But you know what Return of the King does? It reminds us of a greater story, the story of our King Jesus who comes and doesn't destroy a ring; our King Jesus comes and destroys death and sin forevermore. Our King comes and marries His bride, the church. Our King comes and sets up His kingdom where peace, righteousness, and blessing will flow forevermore where no more curse is found. It is a greater story, the story of the gospel. And that's what Peter wants us to remember and lean into. Your King is going to return, therefore live like it. Live like your King is coming back. It's not just a greater story; what's really great about it is it's also a true story.