

Dont' Be Carried Away

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Date: 28 February 2021

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[0 : 0 0] Peter, and you'll remember that the book of 2 Peter is a letter. It's a letter written by a man named Peter, and he writes it to a church somewhere in the Roman Empire in the 60s AD. And he writes it with one hope, one goal. He wants these people to grow. And you know by now he wants them to grow in two ways. He wants them to grow in grace, and he wants them to grow in knowledge.

We're near the end of chapter 3. Today we have only two Sundays left in 2 Peter, this Sunday and next Sunday. And so we're coming to Peter's conclusion. Remember we've been talking about the false teachers in chapters 2 and 3. That's why knowledge and grace are so important to Peter, because both of those things are under attack by the false teachers. And the last two weeks we've taken a look at the end of the world. Two weeks ago I asked you what is the end of the world going to look like, and we saw that it's going to include the world being stripped down and then remade.

And then last week we asked not what is the end of the world going to look like, but why do we care? About the end of the world. Of course the answer was that the end of the world is part of how we think about and what propels us to live lives of holiness and godliness. Peter is finishing his letter now, and he's going to give us his final thoughts. In fact, we already kind of saw one of them in verse 14, because one of his final thoughts is that we would be diligent to be found without spot or blemish. Now we're moving on to verses 15 through 17. And in 15 through 18, the very end to this letter we're going to see two basic thoughts that Peter gives us. This week it's going to be negative, next week's positive. In other words, this week it's what we don't do, next week it's what we do do.

This week, don't be carried away. Verse 17. Next week, verse 18, grow. Now of course we understand why he would tell us not to be carried away, right? Because we've seen in the last two chapters we have these false teachers. So we want to make sure if there's false teaching, we're not taken in by it. However, there's a problem that comes up in this section. We've seen right at the beginning of chapter 3 that we look to the Bible as our ultimate authority, but what happens when people look to the Bible as their ultimate authority and come to different conclusions about it? How do we know that something is false teaching or not? How do we know if someone is, what Peter refers to here, as twisting? There are some things, verse 16 he tells us, that the unstable twist to their own destruction. And so we see this principle here, people twist the scriptures. How do we know when that's happening? What do we do with the fact that many people read the Bible and come to all sorts of different conclusions? What do we do with all the different denominations? In fact, if you were to Google right now, any pastor who's prominent, and then add the words false teacher, there's probably someone out there who thinks he's a false teacher. It's not hard to find. In fact, that's what happens when you become famous. Someone attacks you as a false teacher. And so how do we sort through all that? What do we do with that? How can we avoid twisted interpretations? How can we stand firm? I might add another question to this. How are we supposed to pick a church? How do we know this is a church that's going to allow us to stand firm, that we're not being taught things that are false and incorrect? Now, you might be thinking, why would I need to know that? I've already picked a church. I trust the doctrine, hopefully, of this church. I don't listen to other teachers. Well, I want you to think about a few things.

First of all, some of you are going to move. I'm going to say something shocking and radical. In five years, many of us won't be here. When you move, you may have to pick a new church.

[3 : 36] I also want you to do the thought experiment of how many people in this room will be here in five years? How many of you were here five years ago? What does it take to keep a church on track, teaching the right doctrine?

Well, it takes us over and over again, time and time again, returning to what it is that we believe, protecting what God has given us in his word. And so it's with that that we're going to head into this section. Now, sometimes when we head into tougher sections like this one, I give you my strategy coming up, and here's our strategy going in.

We're not going to talk about verse 15. The reason we're not going to talk about verse 15 is we've already covered it earlier in this chapter. It's just talking about the idea that God's delay in coming is not a delay, but it's due to his patience. We covered that extensively earlier in chapter 3.

What we are going to do is focus on verses 16 and 17, and we're going to look at two things. First of all, number one, there are people who twist the scriptures. There are people who twist the Bible. Number two, we need to stand firm.

Those are the two things we're going to look at this morning. Some people twist the scriptures. We need to stand firm against that. I'm going to give you a little bit of explanation and a lot of application. And so as with that, I invite you to turn with me to 2 Peter chapter 3.

[4 : 50] We're going to start at verse 15, and as we come to this, you can turn in your Bible. It's printed near the end of your worship guide. Maybe you can bring it up on your phone. Regardless of where you are reading, remember that this is God's word.

And Proverbs chapter 30 verse 5 tells us that every word of God proves true. He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. And so that's why we read now, starting at verse 15.

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks of them of these matters.

There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures. You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we thank you again for your word that you've given to us.

[5 : 58] And we ask you again for your help, that you would speak clearly through your word, that you would show us our need for your grace and the gospel, that you'd show us how you meet us at that point of need, and most of all, that you would show us Jesus Christ, that we would see Him as more beautiful and more glorious than we did before we came here this morning.

We thank you that we don't have to earn these things from you or prove anything to you, but instead we ask simply in the name of our mighty Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you are a runner or a cyclist or you're someone who likes to hike, you might be familiar with the phone app called Strava. And what this app does, it's all around the world, and it's an app that allows people to track their activity.

So if you go out, turn it on, everyone can see how many miles you went, how fast you are going, they can pull up your exact route and see where you ran. And so people enjoy this, right?

It's sort of its own form of social media for people to encourage each other and impress each other with what it is that they're doing to stay active. Now, if we have this, of course, there's a tremendous amount of data about where people are out doing all sorts of activities.

[7 : 18] And a couple years ago, in 2018, Strava, this app, decided they were going to release a heat map. In other words, they were releasing a map of the world that shows the places where people were using their map and the routes that they were taking.

Now, some of you might realize where this is going. If you're in the military, there was a lot of heat in places that the U.S. government did not want anyone to know about.

There were soldiers going out on secret army bases, forward operating bases, and they were using this app and recording their activity. And suddenly, those installations were exposed to the world.

In fact, there were some CIA black sites that became public. People were at these sites. They decided to go for a run, recorded it on their watch. Now, this happened to occur mostly to West.

It wasn't just the U.S. There were some other militaries that got exposed by this. And surprise, surprise, it was mostly Western armies who fell prey to this. Turns out that the Taliban, when they go out on their exercise runs, they don't turn on their app to track it so they can share it with other jihadis.

[8 : 22] And so the military world was very embarrassed by this because their secret installations had been exposed. It also highlights something good for us, right? A heat map shows us where people have gone over and over and over again.

It shows us what's reliable. If there's a place where people are running over and over again, that must be a good route, right? That must be a place we can trust. Either for good or for bad, heat maps show us where there's a focus, where there's something that happens by people over and over again.

As we come to this passage, we have two principles. Remember I told you in our principle, our first one is that there are people who twist the scriptures. Verse 16, we're talking about Paul.

He says there's things that Paul writes that are hard to understand. Many of us agree with that. And there are some things in these letters that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction.

In other words, there are people who interpret the Bible in a way that's wrong. And it's not just that it's wrong, it's dangerous. And so that raises a question for us. How do we know if the Bible is being interpreted in a way that's dangerous or not?

[9 : 31] Who should we trust? Who should we not trust? And I'm gonna suggest to you this morning as people who live in 2021, one of the primary ways that we determine whether we trust an interpretation of the Bible, whether we know something's being twisted or not, is whether or not there's a heat map to back it up.

And I'll explain that to you in a few ways. First of all, when someone's interpreting the Bible for us, we should ask ourselves, when they provide this interpretation, this doctrine, is this something that the church has agreed about throughout time and around the world?

Is there heat around this interpretation? Is this what the church has believed throughout the centuries? Is this what the church around the world believes? If not, we should be suspicious of it.

If not, we should have some humility. Why is it that we are suddenly smarter than everyone else who's ever lived? How are we more competent than other Christians? How are we the ones who have this special insight that the Holy Spirit, for some reason, has never caused anyone else in the history of Christianity to see?

There needs to be, when we look at doctrines, when we're assessing whether something's true or false, there needs to be a heat map around it. We want to see other Christians at other times and other places in agreement with us.

[10 : 49] And so, I'll give you some examples, right? Remember, in this letter, these false teachers are attacking the idea that Jesus is coming again to judge the world. They are attacking the idea that there's a place that's called hell that exists, that's a real place where people are going.

Well, how do today we counter that? One of the ways we counter it is we say, look, that's actually not what the church has historically believed. That's not what the church around the world has believed.

That's not what the church throughout history has believed. And so, this is a novel interpretation, right? This is something that's been rejected by the church over and over again. People will say things like this, well, that's just your interpretation, right?

Yeah, that is just my interpretation. It's also the interpretation of the church throughout the centuries. So, chew on that. There's a subset of the heat map as well.

So, we have our heat map when it comes to the church around the world and throughout history. We also have our heat map when it comes to whether there's an overlap between the heat that someone's giving you and the heat of our culture.

[11 : 54] In other words, there's a temptation. One of the reasons we might take up an interpretation of the Bible that pulls away from what the church has normally taught is because our culture is also attacking that very same truth.

So, for example, it just so happens that we live in a culture that is very egalitarian and is obsessed with sexual freedom. So, surprise, surprise, it might happen that someone interprets the Bible in such a way that's very egalitarian and pushes for all sorts of sexual licentiousness, sexual immorality.

Remember, that's another issue that's huge in the book of 2 Peter. Well, we need to be suspicious of that, right? We can see the heat overlap. We can see the overlap between what our culture is teaching and what the interpretation that these people are giving the Bible.

It's very convenient when you come up with a new interpretation that somehow agrees with the idols of your culture. So, that's another way we look at the heat map. We assess whether someone is a false teacher or not.

We assess, remember, we're pulling all of this from verse 16, whether they're twisting the scriptures or not. We should be suspicious of interpretations of the Bible that happen to please and love everything our culture loves.

[13 : 08] Now, I'll give you a caveat. Because we live in a world that's filled with people who are made in God's image, there's times when our culture is going to love things that the Bible also loves. So, this is not a uniform rule.

I'll give you one example. Right now, we live in a culture that is very opposed to racism. Guess what? The Bible is also very opposed to racism. So, we don't just say, well, the culture likes this, therefore, we're going to throw it out, right?

We have to do both heat maps. What we do is we look and we say, has the Bible always cared about that? And we can see, when it comes to races, God's the one who created diversity in the very beginning, Genesis 1 and 2.

We see slavery as something that the Bible speaks about, even in places like Exodus, chapter 21. There's a ban on man stealing. We see it in the New Testament. Philemon gives us hints of where the Bible is headed in terms of these things.

So, we don't always say, well, the culture loves that, so it's wrong. But if the culture loves something, and someone's going to an interpretation that also loves that, and it goes against, again, our previous heat map with the Bible and the church has taught for centuries, we need to be very suspicious.

[14:12] That's a sign we're dealing with someone who is twisting the scriptures. Another way we can suspect it, remember, again, these are things that are aligning with what these false teachers are doing in 2 Peter.

Those are two things they're attacking. They're attacking Jesus' second coming. They're attacking the sexual ethics of the Bible, what Jesus himself taught. Well, another thing we can do is we can look at what people have to gain from their teaching.

So, I had a professor in seminary who said one test you can do is see what non-Christians, who are scholars, believe the Bible is teaching. Now, this is going to sound a little bit counterintuitive, but I want you to track the logic with me.

If you're a Christian, and you believe that the Bible is your authority, sometimes you have an incentive to interpret it incorrectly. Because then you get out of the moral bind, right?

I believe the Bible is authoritative, so I have an incentive to believe that it doesn't teach something that's hard, because then I get out of it. If someone doesn't believe the Bible is true, it doesn't really matter whether the Bible teaches something hard or not.

[15:16] So, they can say, yeah, yeah, Paul actually did teach this about sexual ethics, and I don't care, because Paul has no authority in my life. Right? There's actually sometimes an integrity that comes with people who study the Bible who are not Christians.

Now, I have to be careful about that, because we've talked about before in 1 Corinthians 2, there's some things only the Holy Spirit can help us understand. But what this professor pointed out is that when it comes to hard texts about gender and sexuality, people who are non-Christians are more likely to interpret it in a traditional way.

Why? Because they don't really care what the end result is. They're still going to do whatever they want. And so there's a variety of tests, things that we can use to figure out where true teaching is.

These are tools that we use when people come and they say things like, well, you know, there's just a variety of ways of thinking about it. And that's just your interpretation, but I have a different interpretation. Right? We all enjoy different flavors of ice cream.

And I'm just going to line up the options of biblical interpretation, and I'm going to pick the flavor I like most. Well, no, that's not how the Bible works. Right? There's a true interpretation and a false interpretation.

[16:24] Now, these false teachers, as we've seen, give us another test for how we identify false teaching, and that is the teachers have something to gain from it. Remember, we saw earlier these false teachers are greedy.

They are getting money somehow from their false teaching. And so that's another question you can ask when you're trying to discern whether someone's a false teacher. Do they have something to gain?

Sometimes this takes two directions. Either they're loosening the requirements of Scripture or they're tightening the requirements of Scripture. Someone who's loosening it has a lot to gain.

They're going to be able to do whatever they want, right? They're doing what's called tickling ears, so they're going to get a following. There's people who are going to want to hear what they have to say because it will allow them to do whatever they want.

The other thing false teachers do, and this is, so the first example I gave you, that's what the false teachers in 2 Peter are doing. They're loosening the requirements of the Bible. Sometimes, though, false teachers do the opposite thing.

[17 : 22] They increase the requirements of the Bible. You might ask, what does that person have to gain from it? They gain a lot of power. In fact, this is how cults work.

There was a cult, I won't name, that was very active in the 70s and the 80s and the 90s, and I was in a Presbyterian church, and there were some people who were involved in that cult. And I've met people since then who were involved in that cult.

There seemed to be kind of an overlap between some of the churches in our denomination and this organization. What they would do is they would give very detailed prescriptions for every element of your life. They created a new law, essentially.

And of course, these teachers gain power from that. Who are you going to find out the new law from? It's going to have to be them. Who are you going to pay to find out the new teaching? It's going to have to be them.

What happens if they're the only ones with the secret knowledge? Well, you're going to have to listen to them, right? So we're wary of false teachers when they violate what I'd call the narrow gate principle.

[18 : 20] What I mean by that is this. Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 7, enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction. And those who enter it are many.

For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life. And those who find it are few. In other words, the Christian life is a narrow path. There are some people who gain by making it less narrow.

There are some people who gain by making it more narrow. That's one of our tests of false teaching. So we have a variety of things. We've got our heat map we're looking at, right? Is there a lot of heat around this teaching throughout the history of the church and around the world?

There's a lot of heat. There's a chance, you know, we should probably trust that interpretation at some level. That doesn't make church history authoritative. It makes church history a guide. Gives us some humility as we interpret scripture.

Remember, scripture is our absolute authority. We also need to see if there's a cultural element that's causing people to interpret scripture in a new way. That's another kind of heat map. Is there an overlap between cultural heat and that person's interpretation of scripture?

[19 : 23] If so, we should probably be a little bit suspicious of it. Doesn't mean it's always wrong, but that's going to be a test for us. Is it something that encourages sin? Is it going to let this teacher live a lifestyle that's different from the Bible, what the Bible prescribes?

And finally, we kind of have this gate principle. Is this teacher making the gate the narrow way super wide, or are they making the narrow way even narrower? Now, you might wonder what this has to do with this passage.

What I'm doing is I'm giving you a little bit of explanation and a lot of application. How we assess what's twisted scripture is going to be slightly different than the people receiving this letter because we don't live in the 60s AD anymore.

And so we actually have the privilege of many years of church history to look back on. We have the privilege of seeing the Holy Spirit at work for millennium. And so we're able to use this variety of ways to look and say, okay, is this person twisting scripture?

Is this person pulling me astray? And of course, we see the importance of doing this because we're told, verse 16, when they twist the scriptures, they do it to their own destruction.

[20 : 33] There's a dangerous element to twisting the Bible. And so we need to have these principles in mind so that we're not taken off guard when someone comes and wants to try to pull us away by some new and novel teaching.

So we're getting, again, at Peter's summary at the end of his letter. He's giving us a negative command to make sure people aren't pulled away by false teaching. Next week, he's going to give us a positive command that we run after good teaching.

So that's our first principle. Our first principle is there are people who twist the scriptures. There's a variety of ways that we use to figure out whether someone's twisting the scriptures or not. There's a lot of helpful tests that we can apply as we navigate what's right and wrong.

I haven't said everything. Of course, there's a lot of other ways we could assess false teaching. I haven't said everything, but I've said something. Some of those are the most helpful low-hanging fruit for us when it comes to figuring out if someone is a false teacher.

I'll say this as well. We've talked about this before. In 2 Peter, false teachers hate accountability. So you look at the heat map, there's not going to be a lot of other people there keeping tabs on what they're teaching.

[21 : 44] If you're at a church, there's no transparency about the finances. No matter how good the teaching is, you should have some questions. You're at a church. This person's a wonderful teacher, not accountable to any denomination, not accountable to elders, not accountable to other churches.

You should probably have some questions. Go back to my reference about there's something to gain. There is something to gain by having no accountability. Okay, so that's another way we discern false teachers.

People talk a lot about the falls that happen in the church and the scandals that have happened recently. I won't say all of them, but many of them have occurred and been committed by people who had little to no accountability.

It's not fail-proof. It doesn't mean that someone with accountability is always going to be perfect or won't have a scandal. It just means the odds are a lot lower. So that's our first principle.

People twist the scriptures, beware. Our second principle, verse 17, do not be carried away. We're told this, you therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, you've been warned, you know everything I just told you, you know there are people out there who are looking to twist the scriptures for their own gain and to align with the culture around them.

[22 : 54] Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. So we're aware of the threat, we need to make sure we're on guard against it.

And that's our second principle. Principle one, people twist the scriptures. Principle two, be on guard. You know there are people who are looking to take advantage of you, don't be carried away.

Don't be fooled, don't be deceived. Again, I'm going to give you that principle. We're going to have a lot of application. Application one, simply apply everything I've already told you. Think critically about what people are teaching about the Bible.

You should ask yourself, does this person have something to gain from this? Are they making the narrow way less narrow? Are they making the narrow way more narrow? Is this person, have they capitulated to some of the idols of our culture?

Are they coming up with an interpretation that doesn't really appear on the heat map of Christianity? It's not always good for someone to tell you something new and exciting. Sometimes it's very helpful for someone to tell you something old and boring.

[23 : 58] I'll give you some other ways that we can stay on guard, we cannot be carried away. One of them comes to the way that we pick our churches and the way we run our churches. The lowest hanging fruit would probably be this, do they believe that the Bible is God's word?

Does the church that you're in believe that it has authority, that it's without error? Is the church that you're in holding fast to that truth? Remember, we're talking about twisting scriptures.

One of the first steps in going downhill is believing that the Bible is something that's a suggestion. It's man's record of his experience with God, not God's actual words. So we need to hold that as a foundational truth.

There are churches, right, that we disagree with on a bunch of secondary issues, and we also have a lot of unity with them because we agree on primary issues. One of them is the authority of the word of God. What does the church that you're in, what does the church that you're picking, believe about the Bible?

Okay, I'm going to give you a second way that we stand firm, and this is something we practice in our church. Does this church have consecutive, or what's called sequential, expository preaching? In other words, does this church pick books of the Bible and preach everything in that book?

[25 : 10] That's why we're going through the book of 2 Peter slowly. We've had multiple sermons on various sections because we're committed to preaching through entire books of the Bible. That protects us from being carried away in a couple ways.

First of all, we can't avoid hard things. Almost every book of the Bible includes sections that are really hard to preach. Almost every book of the Bible includes, maybe I could say every book of the Bible, includes commands that we don't want to hear.

When we commit to preaching through a whole book, we're committing to not being carried away. We're committing to not cherry picking only the passages that we want to hear. Remember I told you earlier when we talked about the false teachers, their negative was that they were downplaying hard doctrines or denying them.

Our positive is to make sure that we're teaching challenging and difficult doctrines. We know that we're not being carried away. We know that we're in a place that's firm and stable. Not 100% guarantee, but our odds are much higher when we're in a place where the Bible is regularly preached through an entire book.

It's not always exciting. We have passages that are more exciting than others, and it's also how we expose ourselves to the whole counsel of God. Another way, is there a confession of faith?

[26 : 31] Does this church summarize their doctrine somehow, or is it just up to the pastor each week to get up front and decide kind of what he believes from that passage? That goes along with there being accountability. accountability.

Is the church personality based? If it's based around one person and their ideas, that's also dangerous, right? That person could decide they believe something different. There's a reason, there's thought and intention behind a lot of the things that we do as a church.

There's a reason that I don't pray the congregational prayer every week. We have elders coming forward. A variety of elders pray the congregational prayer. We do that intentionally because we want to communicate that there's a lot of spiritual leaders in this church.

There's not one spiritual leader. And we do that because it's spiritually healthy. It protects us from being carried away. We're held accountable to one another. There are multiple shepherds in this church, right?

This church doesn't rise or fall on me. If we have a personality based church that's a dangerous place, it's a place where we're more likely to be carried away. I'll simply say this, in all of those things, those are our core, our foundation, right?

[27 : 37] There's lots of things that make churches attractive. Lots of reasons that people are drawn to a church. Maybe there's good music. It's a wonderful thing. We want good music. Maybe there's a wonderful nursery. That's a wonderful thing.

We want a wonderful nursery. But the question is this, at the end of the day, is this a church where I will be able to stand firm? Or is this a church where I'll be carried away?

I want you to think about it this way. If you're buying a car, I think I've used this illustration before, there's a lot of wonderful things about a car that you might buy. It might have wonderful cup holders that can hold the largest cup from 7-Eleven. It might have heated seats, which is wonderful in the Colorado winters.

It might have wonderful upholstery. There might be tons of storage room. It might have a hatchback in the back, so it's easier to throw in big packages from certain stores. Maybe it's a pickup truck and you love the bed. But at the end of the day, the question is this, can the car drive?

Can it take you from point A to point B? If not, nothing else matters. There are many wonderful things that we want to be true of our church, right? We want to have wonderful music. We want to have a great nursery. We want to have vibrant community.

[28 : 42] All of those things matter and at the end of the day, the question is this, is this a faithful church? Are we holding true to the Word of God? Are we teaching the same things that the Bible teaches?

I'll just say, as an aside, some people will be in churches that are unfaithful and they'll say, well, I'm just staying there just to be a witness. I'm just going to try to change things from the inside. Don't do that.

Don't overestimate your ability to not be carried away. There's a social element, right? There's a social element to what we believe. We can't help but be influenced by the people around us.

So we want to be in a church. Don't overestimate your ability to stand in the wind. In terms of churches, I'll also say this, there's no perfect church. So it's not that we're in a church that does everything correctly.

It's that we're a church that holds true to our primary doctrines. In fact, we have a confession of faith at this church and that confession of faith says explicitly the purest churches under heaven are subject to both mixture and error.

[29 : 47] So we believe as a church, part of our confession of faith is that we've gotten some things wrong. If we knew what those were, we would correct them. Right? No one of us understands the Bible perfectly.

No one of us gets everything right. And there's a path that's correct. We can stay away from false teaching. Okay, so both are true. We don't demand perfection.

We also look for help. Okay, finally, standing firm, you've picked the right church. What do you need to do next? You need to show up.

We get strong little by little. You know that you can build, you can grow fat in a week. If I decided this week that I wanted to gain 10 pounds, I'm confident I could make it happen.

Like, I don't need to think very carefully about what my plan is. I'd go to Walmart, I'd buy a ton of ice cream, and I would just, I'd be disciplined. You know, I'd be focused every day, making sure I ate enough. I could probably show up next Sunday and have gained 10 pounds.

[30 : 50] I don't think it would be that hard. What if I wanted to gain 10 pounds of muscle? It would be impossible for me to do that in a week.

There's no way. The same is true, brothers and sisters, for us as Christians. We become strong little by little week after week. We become strong as we are exposed week after week as we're fed over and over by what God has to say in His Word.

We do not come to church to have our ears tickled. We're not here only when we're in exciting passage of the Bible. I want you to think for a second you're having a brain surgeon operate on you and you find out this surgeon only showed up for the exciting classes in med school.

And when he found out they were covering a topic that was boring or he sort of already felt like he knew it, he just skipped out. Do you want to see that surgeon? Life is a dangerous place.

We need all of God's counsel as much as we can get on our journey. If we do not want to be carried away then we know that repetition is what gives us strength.

[32 : 03] This is what every bodybuilder knows, right? You don't get strong by going to the gym once a month. That's not how I'm going to build 10 pounds of muscle. I get strong showing up week after week doing the work with a discipline and a practice and a focus.

not because I'm a legalist but because I know that is how I stand firm. And so the same is true for us.

We are not carried away when we know the whole counsel of God. We know the whole counsel of God when we're in a church that is giving us that week after week when it's exciting, when it's boring, when it's new, when it's repetitive, when it's things we don't know, when it's things we do know.

We are coming back because we want this to be true of us. We want to take care that we're not carried away with the error of lawless people. Of course, our Lord Jesus tells us the same thing.

He tells us in Matthew chapter 7 that building our lives on His word is like building a house on a rock. He says, Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

[33 : 16] And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell and great was the fall of it. We know what the rock is.

Jesus has given us the incentive, the motivation, the power that we need to follow His commands, to not be carried away, to not be taken in by things that are twisted because we know we want to be on the rock.

There's all kinds of people all the time who are trying to tell you what the next big investment is going to be, right? You might see these ads. If you had invested in Amazon.com in 1999, you would be this kind of millionaire.

If you'd invested in Walmart in 1992, you'd be now worth this. And if you pay us the appropriate amount of money, we'll tell you the next stock to pick, right? Those are predictions.

[34 : 24] What God gives us is not a prediction but a promise. If we knew now, if we knew then what we knew now, right, we would have invested.

We already know now what will be true in the future. That God and his word is the rock that we build upon. How much more should we be eager to build for it?

How much more should we invest in it? How much more should we want to stand firm? There's a couple of movies that have come out recently.

One of them is called The Dawn Wall. The other is called Free Solo. And they're about two climbers, each of whom is trying to climb El Capitan and Yosemite. And in Dawn Wall it tells the story of Johnny Caldwell and he takes seven years to figure out the appropriate route to actually be able to climb this wall all the way to the top.

Now if you're going to climb this wall, which route are you going to take? Are you going to take the route that's already been planned out or are you going to take a new novel route?

[35 : 35] Are you going to go try to figure out your own path? Brothers and sisters, when it comes to the Christian life there are people promoting and following all sorts of routes.

But when we follow after our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, what we do is we take hold of and grasp the trusted and firm, reliable route. The route that we find in God and His Word that has been proved by Christians before us for millennia and around the world.

We go with what is true because we want the route that is proven and safe. We want to build our lives not on sand but on the rock.

So that's why we take care that we're not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose our own stability. I invite you to pray with me.

Our Father in Heaven, we thank You that Your Word is our safe route. God, we ask that You would protect us and this church from false teaching and that You would grow us up to love Your Word and to know it when it tells us things that are easy and popular and when it tells us things that are hard and unpopular.

[36 : 51] We ask that You would do this by helping us to look to Jesus who we know is our rock and our foundation and we ask these things in His mighty name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.