

# Walking with Jesus in a Weird World

## Building a Life of Integrity

Unedited Transcript

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Well, good morning, gentlemen. It's good to see you this morning. As I came up, this table up here, somebody over here went, "Yay." It's inspiring, really. Yeah, whatever, whatever. I was trying to fix it.

Hey, it's great to be with you guys this morning. How are you doing? It's a weird world we live in, isn't it? It just got weirder. Y'all notice that overnight? It just got weirder overnight and it's going to keep getting weirder. I wouldn't get too upset about it because in November, weird is going to take on a whole new level. That's what we're talking about. We're doing a series on 1 Peter right now. We're talking about walking with Jesus in a weird world. If you have a Bible, our passage today is going to be 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 10 to 21.

As you're turning there, I want to share a little story with you. This is a story about my glory days. Now, I know we just watched John Fogerty's song Center Field but I couldn't find a football equivalent of that so my metaphors are going to be a little mixed here. I want to talk to you about my glory days as a high school football player. How many of you guys played high school football? Yeah. Those were glory days, weren't they?

I played high school football in Lexington, Massachusetts. We were the Lexington Minutemen and I played Pop Warner for four years, I played junior high school football, and then I played high school football. Our high school started in tenth grade and I remember the first day of practice. I got there with high expectations. We started a week early, actually about ten days early before classes started, and we had this wonderful thing called ... Do you know what they're called? Two-a-days, exactly. They were called two-a-days. You know, I'm fourteen years old. I'm thinking this is awesome. I get to go play football six hours a day. We'd get there at 8:00, we'd play til 11:00, have a couple hours off for lunch, and then we'd play again from 1:00 until 4:00 in the afternoon. I was so excited.

By lunchtime on the second day, I couldn't walk. My thighs were so tight that I literally couldn't bend my knees more than like ten degrees. I lived about a mile and a half from the school which should have been about a fifteen to twenty minute walk home for lunch. The first day I was fine but the second day, it took me an hour and ten minutes to get home because I was walking like this, just like peg leg. Over lunch time, I kind of loosened up a little bit so I made it back in about 40 minutes and I wasn't late. That was high school football.

I remember we used to do these wonderful drills. At the end of practice, we would do these things that were affectionately referred to as suicides, sprints. You'd line up at the goal line, you'd run to the 10, you'd run back to the goal line, run to the 20, run back to the goal line, run to the 30, back to the goal line, all the way up to the 50 and back to the goal line. Then after your group was done, you'd stand

there, you'd put your hands on your knees, you'd puke, and you'd wait to go ahead. That's kind of what the process was. That was high school football.

We had these things that we would do. I remember every Monday during the season was film day. Film day was terrible. We would meet in the library. You'd have 40 or 50 guys all in the library and the coaches would spool up the film. We'd watch the game from the previous Saturday. We always played on Saturday mornings. We'd watch the game from the previous Saturday. The coach would say, "Good play there, Ramsay. Good play there, Colter." I'd be like, "All right." We'd run through the good plays and that was like the first five minutes. Then the rest, we would watch over and over and over again all the screw ups from the game on Saturday. The coach, they'd go Full Metal Jacket on us. "Who made that play? Who was that?" You'd be like hiding in the back like this. Then one of your buddies would go, "I think that was Clemmer, coach." I'm like, "Thanks, buddy," punch him the shoulder underneath the table.

My coach had this amazing grandmother. She could play football better than any of us. If you did something wrong, he'd say, "Clemmer, my grandmother can tackle better than that. What are you dancing with him? Just knock him over." That's what I had to deal with.

Now, our coach was a legend. His name was Bill Tie. Coach Tie. In fact, just a year or two ago, I got an invitation to go for the Thanksgiving Day game back up at Lexington for I think it was the 60th anniversary of Coach Tie's original coaching. He's in his 80s now. He's a great guy. He's kind of a Woody Hayes kind of guy. If he was unhappy with you, you knew about it. If you weren't sure, he'd grab your face mask and make sure that you knew, just for eye contact. Coach Tie was a little bit of a nut but super, super effective and super good at raising young men. He really looked at football as an opportunity to raise young men.

Everybody wanted Coach Tie as their guidance counselor. I got him as my guidance counselor my senior year. I was sitting there with a group of guys and he was saying, "You should go to the Coast Guard Academy," and give all the stuff out. Then he'd say to the next guy, "I think community college would be a good start for you and then you can get into the state school." He kind of kept me for last and he said, "Clemmer, I got to tell you something. You're a smart kid, your grades are good, your SAT scores are good, but I really wouldn't count on playing football at a Division I school. You'll get murdered." He said, "Find a good academic school, small school that has a football team. Go do that. You can still play football but you really need to focus on your academics." That's what I did. I went to a little school and I still got murdered on the football field but that's a story for another day.

Coach Tie had one, what seemed at the time, to be a weird idiosyncrasy. He didn't allow us to talk on the bus on the way to away games. I'm a sophomore. I made varsity my sophomore year and so I'm so excited and there are four or five of us that are on the travelling team. We're going to go get on the varsity bus and we're laughing and joking. You put all your stuff on in the locker room and grab your helmet and shoulder pads. You carry those with you. We're laughing and joking and we step up onto the bus and we're talking and one of the seniors looks at us and goes, "Shut up!" All right. It got just quiet just like this. We went and we found seats and we sort of sat there and nobody's talking. Everybody has these intense looks on their face. Everybody's on the bus and Coach Tie gets on the bus. I'm like, "Oh, I get it. We're supposed to be quiet so Coach Tie can give us a speech." Coach Tie gets on the bus, sits down in the front seat, taps the bus driver on the shoulder and says, "Let's go." That was it. That was the speech on the bus.

The whole way to the game, we didn't talk. Then we played the game, we lost, and the whole way home we didn't talk either. I thought, "Man, this is such a weird thing. I mean, just really quiet." For three years, I rode on that bus to every away game and we never said a word. Deathly quiet on the bus. You know, I didn't get it at first, especially as a sophomore. I was like, "This is stupid, man. We should be getting hyped up. We should be getting excited." Over time, I began to realize what the purpose of the silent ride to the next game was. The purpose was for us to get our minds right, for us to prepare for the battle that we were about to go into. Coach Tie knew that on that bus ride he needed to start to help us young men who were boys get serious about what we were about to do. The best way that he knew of to do that, and it was very effective in retrospect, was he made us be quiet. He got us out of our comfort zone and he made us be quiet so that we could prepare our minds for the battle that we were about to face.

Everything Coach Tie did for us as a team had a purpose. He wanted to prepare us for what lay ahead. The two-a-days, they molded us into a team. They taught us a lot of football plays in a short period of time. They got us into shape for a long season. Film day made us think about what we were doing, made us take responsibility for the way we played the game. I realize that everybody got yelled at for screwing up. He didn't single anybody out. Everybody got yelled at for screwing up but everybody also had a moment, at least one moment, during film day where the coach would look at you and say, "Hey, Clemmer, good play," and make you sit up a little bit straighter. Everything had a purpose. That ride, just to get those distractions out of our minds, to help us focus on what we had ahead.

Coach Tie is an awesome coach. I hope he's watching this.

Today, we're going to talk about our series, **Walking With Jesus in a Weird World**. We're living in times, I feel a little weird. There's political upheaval, there's mass shootings, there's international conflicts, but, you know, I got to tell you, this is nothing new. We've had politics and crime since Cain and Abel. I know Christians today, we might feel like we're under attack, our morals are being challenged, our values are being challenged, maybe even mocked out in the public square. That's nothing new. Nero used to burn Christians at the stake, cover them with tar and set them on fire for sport. Getting mocked a little bit on Facebook, relatively speaking, not so bad. At the same time, we're in a world that's changing, that's treating us differently than maybe we've been used to in years past. This is why it's so important for us to have a solid ground, solid foundation to stand on. That's what brings us to our passage this morning.

Turn to 1 Peter chapter 1. As you turn there, let me pray for us.

Father, would you speak to us this morning through your word? Thank you, Jesus, that you took a man like Peter, a normal blue collar guy, and you changed him dramatically. You made him into this amazing leader, the rock that you built the church on. Lord, as we read his words this morning, as we study them, would you speak into our hearts, Lord? Would you help us to see how we can prepare our minds for the battles that you have ahead of us? Lord, we lift this morning up to you, ask that you would use it for your glory. In Jesus name, amen.

Let me read this passage and then we're going to go through it. It's kind of got three sections to it. We're going to focus on the middle section but let me read the whole thing to you starting at verse 10, "Concerning the salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were

serving not themselves but you and the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things which angels long to look."

When he says to them, "It was revealed to them they were not serving themselves but you," he's saying they were not themselves but you, the people that this letter is written to, the Christians that are scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, many of them not Jewish. They were not Jewish Christians based on where these locations would be. Many of them would have been Pagans, non-Jews, Gentiles, Pagans who became Christians as the church was spread out. If you look in Acts, there's this repeated pattern of Christians meet, they build up a church, they get persecuted, they scatter. All the places they get scattered to, they build up a church, they get persecuted there, they scatter. That's how God spread his church in the early days was through persecution, through suffering. These people that he's writing this letter to, they're really used to suffering. They're really used to being persecuted for their faith. He's speaking to them and he's saying the prophets realize they weren't prophesying for themselves, they were prophesying for you. We see why that might be comforting for them in a second here.

Verse 13, "Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct since it is written, 'You shall be holy for I am holy.' If you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God."

Let's look at this passage. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to sort of split into three parts. We're going to talk about building a life of integrity. I want you to think about what integrity means. If you're a Star Trek fan, you know they always talk about the ship's losing structural integrity. What does that mean? It means it's falling apart, it's going to fall apart. When we're talking about building lives of integrity, what we mean is we mean we're building lives that hold together based on the principles that we believe in, based on scriptural principles that we believe in. A life of integrity means that the life that you live is consistent with what you say you believe and consistent with what the Bible says. When the scriptures, when the Bible, and our beliefs and the way we live our lives, our behaviors, Bible belief and behaviors, are all in sync with each other, then we're living a life of integrity. Everything's in sync.

First of all, we're going to look at this first section. We're going to talk about how one person sows and another person reaps. Then we're going to talk about girding the loins of your mind, if that hasn't gotten your attention. Then finally we're going to talk about being redeemed. We're going to spend most of the time on girding the loins of your mind, mostly because it's a men's study and girding your loins sounds like something that men should talk about so we're going to do that.

Let's start with how one sows and another reaps though. Just look at this first section here. He says, "Concerning the salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the person of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you."

What he's saying here is when the prophets started, the spirit of Christ comes to them and starts revealing things to them and they're going, "This is awesome. The messiah's coming." They're thinking he's coming like now, like soon. They're prophesying about all these things and they're living in a time of suffering as well. As they're prophesying the sufferings of Christ, it makes sense to them that this is going to be coming now. What Peter's saying is as the spirit of Christ revealed more and more to them, they realized that they were not prophesying for themselves, they were not talking to the people of their day, they were talking to the people of Jesus' day, that they were preparing, that they were getting the words down, they were preparing not for themselves but for the people to come.

Why would Peter make such a big deal out of this? Because these people are suffering, these people are living in an unstable world. Peter's like, "Look, God knew that this day was coming and he so well prepared for it that, hundreds of years ago, he started having his prophets speak words that were for you today. Hundreds of years ago, the spirit of Christ inhabited prophets so that they would share things that you would actually witness." Partly it's meant as a way to reassure them.

For us, this principle applies to us sometimes too. You're a dad, you got kids, sometimes you do things for your family that you're not going to see the benefit of. I invest in my kid's lives so that my grandkids reap the benefits, so that my great grandkids reap the benefits. I speak into their lives as God leads me to so that generations down the line, there's a benefit to what I do. How much more so, God the Father who loves us and made us is going to prepare his people for the coming of Christ.

Very simply, Peter's just saying, "Hey, God's had you. For hundreds of years, he's known the situation you were going to be in. Hundreds of years ago, he had his people speak this." Then he says, "You know how cool this is? You know how cool this is that you got to see this?" Look at this in the last verse of this section in verse 12. In the last phrase, he says, "Things into which angels long to look." The good news sent from heaven, things which angels long to look. The imagery here, the language is almost like the angels are stooped over looking down in anticipation like fans at a game. You're just so eager to see. Even the angels were excited to see Jesus come. Even the angels longed to see God in flesh walk on earth and redeem his people. That's how cool it is. One sows, another reaps. God knew centuries in advance what the Christians were going to go through.

Let's talk about this girding the loins of your mind. Why did I call it this? Look at verse 13, "Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded." This phrase, "preparing your minds for action," in the original Greek actually says, "Gird up the loins of your mind." That's kind of weird, right? It's Peter, it's a little earthy sometimes. What do you think "gird up your loins" means? It's like strap on your armor. One of the images that would have come to these people's minds is they wore these long robes. If they wanted to run, they had to pull the bottom of the robe up and they would tuck it into their belt so that then their robe was above their knees. Then they could run. In the story of the prodigal son, it says the father hiked up his robes and ran to his son. That's what they literally mean. He pulled up his robe, tucked it into his belt so that he could run freely. What it means is get rid of the distractions, get rid of the hindrances that are going to not let you be prepared for what you're coming up to. You could say this in this metaphor, "Get on the bus and shut up." We got to get the distractions out of the way so that we're prepared for what's going ahead. In a very real way, that's what Peter is talking about.

What are we preparing our minds for? Let's look at three things here. We're preparing our minds with hope, we're preparing our minds with holiness, and we're preparing our minds with reverence. Hope, holiness, and reverence. He says, "Being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Hope is not wishful thinking. We messed hope up in the modern language. We've messed hope up. Hope is not about wishful thinking. It's about expectation. It's about certainty. When I put my hope in the grace of Jesus Christ, what I'm saying is, yeah, you know what, life's tough right now. Things aren't going the way I want, but my hope isn't in my present circumstances. My hope isn't in my own ability to survive. My hope is in Jesus' redemption. My hope is in God's grace. My hope is in that, eventually, I know that I'm going to be with the Heavenly Father and all of this earthly stuff is a distraction, is just going to pass away. I can survive, I can strive, I can thrive in the struggle because my hope isn't in what happens now. My hope is in the future. This is an intellectual thing. This is something you've got to sort of be convinced in your mind about, in your head about, in your thinking about. How are you thinking about things? Do you get consumed with the next decision, the next strategy? Are you strategizing constantly, conniving constantly to figure out how to make your circumstances better or instead, you're putting your hope in the power of God?

Then he says this. He says, "As obedient children, don't be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conducts as it is written, 'You shall be holy for I am holy.'" Now, I don't know if you noticed this but the word holy keeps coming up over and over again. Be holy, be holy, be holy. He says, "As obedient children, be holy." What he's talking about here is he's like if you look at the descriptions of God all throughout scripture, the one attribute of God that's talked about more than any other attribute of God is his holiness. What does his holiness mean? Well, it's his purity. It's his perfection. It's his integrity. What Paul is saying to these people here is you need to be holy as God is holy. How do you do that? Well, he starts out, "As obedient children, don't be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance."

Let's look at some other scriptures that talk about this same thing. You don't have to turn there, but look at Romans 12:2. It says, "Don't conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," girding up your mind, preparing your minds. Ephesians 4:22 to 24 says, "Put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self created after the likeness of God," and what? "True righteousness and holiness." 1 John 3:3 says, "Everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." We put our hope in God that purifies us and helps us to be holy, to be obedient.

For many of us, you know what I've realized? For many guys that I've talked to, we've sort of acquiesced. We're like we're going to be the best we can, we're going to know some Bible verses, we're going to go to church, we're going to be in a small group, all that stuff, but maybe there's this one area of our life that we've just sort of accepted that it's not going to be a righteous area of our life. We're like I'm good at 95% of things and this other thing here, you know, it's hard. It's like this pernicious sin and I can't seem to get rid of. Maybe it's vulgar language. You drop an f-bomb once in a while, what's the big deal? Maybe it's your temper. I'm great but people just know there's certain things they shouldn't do that's going to set me off. People have learned that about me and it's okay. Maybe you don't look at porn that much, just once in a while. I know I shouldn't look at it at all but it's just once in a while. It's not that big a deal.

Many of us, I would hazard against most of us, like one truly holy person in this room, I don't know who it is, it's not McCurdy, I can tell you that, is holy. The rest of us, we all have these things in our lives that we're not even holding on to, we've just sort of given up. My challenge for you and for me is there a sin in your life that you just need to purge, that you just need to say, "I'm going to get through this. I'm going to pray that God would take it from me. I'm going to tell a brother or two about it who can hold be accountable for it. I'm going to not accept it. If I fall down, I'm going to get up and I'm going to strive

even harder not to do that again, not to live in that sin again." Now, I'm not talking about legalism. That's not what I'm talking about. Here's the other side of this. We have gone so far, I think sometimes, to the grace side that we're like, "Oh, I know that's terrible but God's grace is sufficient for me." Yeah, sufficient for you to stop doing it. It's not sufficient for you to keep doing it and feel okay about it. That's not integrity. God calls his people to prepare themselves by having hope in him and by living holy lives.

Then the next thing is reverence. Verse 17, "If you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds," that's the holiness, "conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile." Now, this word, fear, is interesting because it's not like terror. It's not like a fear that comes from not knowing what's going to happen. Like if you're around a boss who loses his temper all the time, you live in fear that you're going to set him off. It's not that kind of fear. It's a respect. It's reverent fear. In fact, in the NIV, it actually says "reverent fear" just to help people understand. This is about awe, about God's awesomeness.

Do you live in reverent fear of God? Why is this important? Because this has to do with the condition of your heart, the motivations of your heart. If you don't, in your heart, love an awesome, all-powerful, all-loving God, if you just sort of think, "Well, I'm just going to through life and be a good person," you're not living in reverent fear of God. If you're more concerned like, "I don't want to look bad at work so I'm not going to say too much Jesus stuff. I'm going to put stickers on my car that make me look really politically correct. I don't want to offend anybody." That's not living in reverent fear of God. That's living in fear of man. The gospel is offensive. You got to decide. You can offend men by believing and living out the gospel or you can offend God by fearing what other people think of you.

This is a heart issue. This is a motivation issue. What are your behaviors motivated by? What is your actions around other people motivated by? Are you living in reverent fear of God? These are sort of these three aspects. This leads to a life of integrity. Hope, holiness, and reverence leads to a life of integrity. Here's our Big Idea. **A life of integrity is built on hope in God, holiness like God, and reverence for God.** A life of integrity is built on hope in God, holiness like God, and reverence for God.

Last thought here and that's the last few verses. It says, "Conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times and now," to the people he's talking to. "In the last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God."

I just want to focus on this word redeemed, that Jesus redeems us. You know, we like to use the word savior. Jesus is my savior and he is your savior, but he's your redeemer and those words don't mean the same thing. See, a savior saves you from something. He rescues you. That's what a savior does. He rescues you. What a redeemer does is a redeemer pays the price for you. Closing thought here, I just want to remind us all that when Jesus came as our savior and our redeemer, yes, he saved us from the wages of sin, he saved us from death, but he also paid that price himself. You want somebody to put your hope in? Put your hope in a God who would walk on earth and die for you. You want to be holy and pure? Be pure because there was a guy who walked on earth who was God in the flesh and was perfect on your behalf and yet did what? Still paid the price for your imperfection. You want to live in reverent fear of someone? It's easy to be reverent about somebody who would make that kind of a sacrifice for me and make that kind of a sacrifice for you.

I know these are weird days. I know these are crazy times. Let's live as men of integrity. Let's build our lives on hope in God, on holiness like God, and on reverence for God. Let's pray.

Father, it is a time of unsettledness, of instability, but, Lord, we live so in the moment. You live across the arc of time. Lord, you know that the times that we're living in are not unusual, they're not different than just about any other time. Father, help us to feel steady, help us to trust in a God that is unchanging, immutable. You're not capricious, Lord. You're not arbitrary. You're exactly who you say you are. You are holy, pure, and righteous God that we want to obey and that we want to be like you because you're holy. Lord, knit our hearts to yours. Help us to live in reverent fear of an awesome God so that we can obey you and place our hope in you. In Jesus' name, amen.