

R E M E M B E R Y O U R

HOPE

2 Peter 3:14-18

Introduction

- Peter closes his second letter with a reminder of his appeal to live holy lives, spotless and blameless, and at peace with God.
- He also reminds them that God is patient in coming back because He wants to save as many people as possible.
- Peter says false teachers distort the truth because they don't understand Paul's theology.
- He reminds them to be on guard against false teaching and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Make every effort to be at peace with God

2 Peter 3:14-15

Spotless

- Peter closed his letter by calling his recipients “beloved.” He wasn’t writing to strangers; these were people Peter dearly loved.
- “Beloved” was more than just an adjective; it was their identity.
- Many of the New Testament writers used this term of endearment as a title for God’s people.
- It was a significant title from the Old Testament prophecies about God’s relationship with Israel, comparing to marriage (Hosea 2; Romans 9:25).

Spotless

- When we become believers, God calls us His beloved.
- We have a new identity as beloved children of God.
- Whether we are broken, undeserving, rejected, or don't feel worthy of love, God's love defines us from now on.
- He pours out His love on us so thoroughly that our very identity changes to "the one who is loved by God." That is who we are (1 John 3:1).

Spotless

- Those of us who are defined by God's love for us, whose identity as children of God sets the pattern for our lives, are “waiting for these” (3:14).
- “These” refers to the events of the Day of Judgment – the punishment of the wicked and vindication of the righteous.
- If your relationship with God defines your life, then it is characterized by waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus.
- Our relationship with God is our hope.

Spotless

- As we wait, Peter said we are to do two things.
- He repeats two things he has already said in this letter (Peter believes repetition is important for learning):
 - Be diligent to present ourselves to Him without spot or blemish and at peace (3:14).
 - Count the patience of Jesus as salvation (3:15).

Spotless

- The only way we can be spotless and without blemish and at peace with God is by the righteousness of Christ, not our own good works.
- Justification is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time declaring a sinner righteous (Galatians 2:16).
- Imputation - we take on Christ's righteousness as our own. When God looks on us, He doesn't see our sin. He sees us spotless in Christ.
- Our righteousness, what makes us "blameless and spotless" before God on the Day of Judgment, is found in Christ and Christ alone.

Spotless

- But we also see that Peter encouraged them to be diligent to live holy lives (3:14), to grow in holiness, which is sanctification.
- The goal of the Christian life is to grow to be more and more like Jesus.
- Peter also reminded them to count God's patience in waiting for the Day of Judgment as His way of saving more people.
- Peter also adds that Paul wrote the same thing in his letters (Romans 2:4; 3:25; 9:22; 1 Timothy 2:4).

Spotless

- By this time, the letters of Paul had been copied and circulated throughout the Church, and Peter's audience would have been familiar with them.
- It was important for Peter and Paul and all of the New Testament writers to stress that they all preached the same Gospel, the same Christ.
- Paul wrote that whether you followed him or Peter or Apollos didn't matter because they were all following Christ (1 Corinthians 3).
- Liberal theologians have tried to argue that Paul's theology differed from Peter or James or John. Peter teaches they agree with one another (3:15–16).

Spotless

- Peter and Paul both wrote that the reason Jesus was “delayed” in coming back was to give us an opportunity to bring more people into the kingdom.
- As we wait, our mission is twofold: our own sanctification and bringing as many other people as possible to come to know Jesus.
- These two things should be our primary focus and mission as we walk this earth, looking forward in hope to Christ’s return.

Believers should know God's Word in
order not to be swayed by false teachers

2 Peter 3:16

Scriptures

- Through the centuries, people have struggled to understand the writings of Paul, and indeed many heresies have started by a misunderstanding of Paul's theology, just as Peter described.
- Martin Luther struggled with some of Paul's writings, but once he understood them, they changed his life and the whole Church forever.
- Luther's wrestling with Paul's doctrine of justification by grace through faith resulted in the Protestant Reformation.

Scriptures

- By this point, Paul's letters had been copied and distributed throughout the whole Church.
- The early church considered them to be Scripture (3:16). Peter said, "as they do with the other Scriptures."
- Peter called Paul's writings Scripture, just like the Old Testament, the Gospels, his own letters, John's letters, and others.
- Paul did the same when he quoted as Scripture the passages from Luke in his letters to Timothy (1 Timothy 5:18).

Scriptures

- Peter recognized that because Paul's writings could be hard to understand sometimes, false teachers could easily distort and twist them.
- In this final warning of his letter about being on guard against false teaching, Peter reminded them how easy it is for false teachers to twist Scripture.
- One of the most effective ways Satan can deceive us is to take something true and twist it just a little bit or mix it in with a lie.
- Because it sounds close to the truth, people who are "ignorant and unstable" can be easily deceived.

Be on guard against false teaching by
growing closer and closer to Jesus

2 Peter 3:17-18

Grace

- Peter reminded them to be careful not to be carried away by the error of false teachings and “lose your own stability” (3:17).
- The Greek literally says to “be on guard,” like a military guard. We need to keep our eyes open, realizing that the Enemy will try to sneak in unawares.
- He will try to sneak into your life or worm his way into your life if you aren’t paying close attention.
- Paul wrote in Ephesians 6 about spiritual warfare and putting on the armor of God, Peter encouraged them not to lose stability, to stand firm.

Grace

- Throughout the Bible, God continuously tells His people that He will fight the battle for them; they just need to stand firm (Exodus 14:14).
- If we don't hold our position, we will fall to the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:11).
- The devil is a very real threat, but we can stand firm against him. We can resist him.
- When we do, for those of us who endure to the end, God will restore and establish us in His kingdom forever (1 Peter 5:10).

Grace

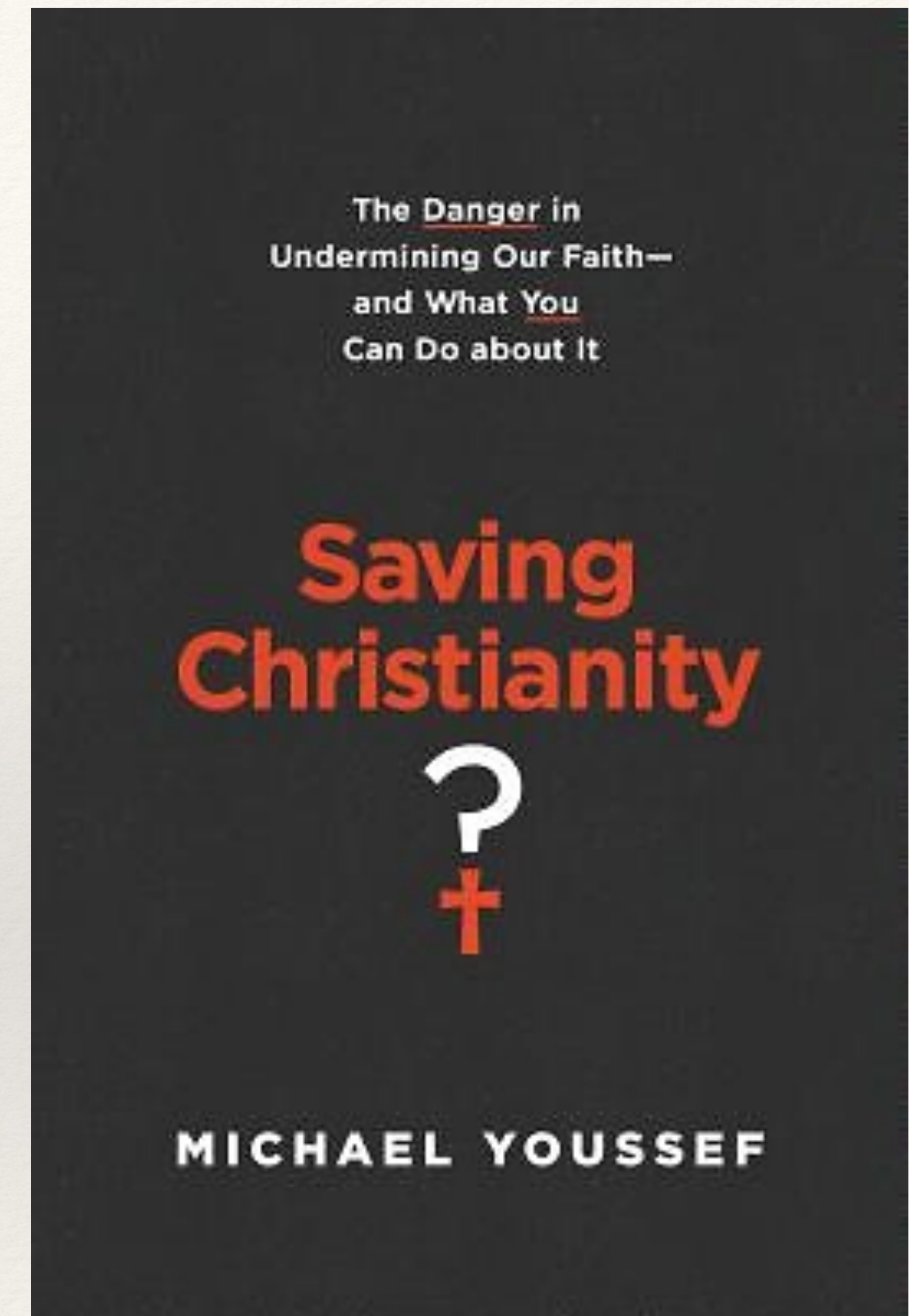
- In these closing verses, Peter let them know how they could stand firm: by growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.
- The way to recognize false teaching is by studying the truth.
- The way to resist the devil is to know Jesus more and more.
- Philippians 3:8-10 - “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order . . . that I may know Him.”

Grace

- Our goal and our calling is this: knowing Jesus.
- Because faith is about knowing Jesus, it doesn't happen with just a short prayer of salvation; it takes a lifetime of walking with Him.
- These are the final words of life advice Peter left with his beloved Church – grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.
- This is a life well-lived, a life focused on what matters, one that will lead to eternal life in heaven.

Application:

Saving Christianity?



Compromise

- Spiritual defection in the Old Testament
 - Moses - Exodus - Mt. Sinai
 - King Solomon - repenting in Ecclesiastes
 - Rehoboam , Ahab, and the Northern Kings
- Spiritual defection in the New Testament
 - John 6 - “a great crowd of people followed” Jesus, then later records that “many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”

Apostasy

- Insulate yourself against apostasy:
 - Remain faithful by knowing God's truth and by being skeptical of false doctrines.
 - Insulate yourself against unbelief by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.
 - Insulate yourself against bad influences.
 - Insulate yourself from falsehood by boldly sharing the truth with others.

“Saving Christianity”

- Two postmodern, progressive “Christians”
 - Brian McLaren - emerging church movement, postmodern “Christianity”
 - Rachel Held Evans - *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*
- Two prominent atheists from Christian homes
 - Dan Barker - Freedom from Religion Foundation
 - Michael Shermer - founder of Skeptics Society

Christianity Without Compromise

- The Church of the Apostles was a name given to it by the denominational leader as an act of mockery and derision.
- “In a post-Christian, post-truth culture that chases after false gospels and delusional beliefs, we continue to teach, preach, and bear witness to the biblical and historical meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
- The Apostles Creed provides another foundation for our faith.
- Three chapters: I believe in God the Father, I believe in Jesus the Son, I believe in the Holy Spirit.

The Danger in
Undermining Our Faith—
and What You
Can Do about It

Saving Christianity



MICHAEL YOUSSEF