

Let us find rest in the gospel of Christ and open up with prayer. Father God, we say it every week, but we really are a grateful people. We are humbled by you. We set ourselves before you with open hearts and open minds. We pray that you take your place as the pastor and the teacher of this church. Lead us in your word today. May eyes be opened, may hearts be softened, may repentance occur, and may your kingdom grow. Lord, we thank you. All thanks be to you. You opened this place in, I was just asked this morning, Lord, you opened this place in 1849 and you still want it open. Amen. Thank you, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray for your guidance today in all things. Amen. Be holy as I am holy, the Lord declares. Throughout scripture, in the Old Testament and the New, holiness is quite a simple word. It does mean, as you probably know, set apart. And when we talk about it scripturally, we're talking about two levels, if you will, of holiness. In a bit we're going to say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, three capital H's, Lord God Almighty. He truly is one of one, if you will, as we say today. When we are called to be His holy church, His holy people, we see that from the beginning of scripture through the end, as the Israelites were called to be holy by their behaviors and all that the Lord had set down, we are called to be holy as we submit ourselves to the will of God through Jesus Christ, empowered by His holy spirit. There are spirits in the spiritual realm. There is one that is set apart as holy and that is the one that we call God's holy spirit. So in the concept of holiness, we're going to open with Leviticus. If you know anything about me, it's one of my favorite books of the Bible. But this is all about being set apart in the land of Canaan and the world as God's chosen people. I'm going to start in Leviticus and move through these scriptures. You're going to be listening for that concept throughout. Leviticus 19 verses one through eight. The Lord also said to Moses, give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. Each of you must show great respect for your mother and father. You must always observe my Sabbath days of rest. I am the Lord your God. Do not put your trust in idols or make metal images of gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God. When you sacrifice a peace offering to the Lord, offer it properly so you will be accepted by God. The sacrifice must be eaten on the same day you offer it or on the next day. Whatever is left over until the third day must be completely burned up. If any of the sacrifice is eaten on the third day, it will be contaminated. I will not accept it. Anyone who eats it on the third day will be punished for defiling what is holy to the Lord. Picking up what he's putting down, you're different, he's saying to the Israelites, and will be cut off from the community. That is the idea and we get a real flavor for how significant this is to the Lord God Almighty. It's a thing. We are called to be holy. Let's hear what Jesus has to say about this. Mark chapter 8, beginning with verse 31. Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things, be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan," he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's." That's one of the key phrases there. "You are seeing things from a human point of view, not from God's." How can you see things from God's point of view? By living in His will. That makes you completely different than the profane world, the secular world. Then calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the good news, you will save it. And what do you do and what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? If anyone is ashamed of Me and My message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when He returns in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." You're living a holy life indwelt by God's Holy Spirit, living in the will of God and submitting your will to His. All of those things should set you apart, Jesus says. If you are unwilling to do that, that will be recognized by Him. You may be trying to fit in and not be as Christian-y or whatever you might be thinking, but that is know this and take an account of, "Fire Lord and Savior, be holy as I am holy." Whether you're sitting in

church or whether you're in line at the DMV, "Be holy as I am holy." If you're unwilling to do that, again, we see the significance of this. And then beyond the cross, the Apostle Paul writing in Romans 12, and this is a scripture that pretty much we all know and it's one of our favorites, one of mine, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind He will find acceptable." When we go back a couple thousand years to Leviticus, "Make those sacrifices unto the Lord acceptable to Him." If it's not done correctly, it will be unacceptable to Him. The concept is the same. The idea is exactly the same. Scripture is not random. Our Bible is not random. It is put together exactly the way it's supposed to be put together. And who God is doesn't change from Genesis through Revelation. The exact same wording only a couple thousand years later. So you, "Let them be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind He will find acceptable." This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Now let that rest. Let those words rest. There's a lot to think about there, and there are dozens of more examples. When we got together, I think Tuesday night for prayer, I think at that point in time I had 47 scriptures that I was trying to root through. It's amazing. And then you get on these in scripture and you're looking for holiness and boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, before you know it, it's three hours later and you've gone through every part of the Bible and it's holy, holy, holiness, holiness, holiness. I see it everywhere now. And I would urge you to do the same. Salvation is at the core. It is said that everything in the Old Testament points to the cross and everything in the New Testament points back to the cross. It is the salvific history, our scripture, the salvific history of humans. It is what it means to be a human. If you truly want your identity, you find your identity in Christ. You find your identity in Christ as you submit to his will and you are saved. Let's find salvation in the Psalm, shall we? Psalm 27. And again, as you experience the whole week's worth of teaching and preaching here, it begins on Tuesday morning. We're turning on the lights and then Thursday morning and also with the written devotion in the Georgetown Weekly and all of those thoughts then come together on a Sunday morning, that's sort of the entire experience and it gives a little glimpse of the process as well and the scriptures that I move through and the things that I'm thinking. So we've read Psalm 27, if you have listened to Turning on the Lights. The Lord is my light and my salvation, so why should I be afraid? I've read this many times before and I said, "You could have something like the Holy Bible and have one, if you could, and have one page and one verse, there it is. The Lord is my light and my salvation, why should I be afraid?" Now there's a whole lot that goes along with it, which is why we have all of the rest of the Bible, but that is the key. And that is the point and purpose of 1 Peter that we just spent weeks in. Don't be afraid. Things are happening now, guess what? It's going to get worse. Don't be afraid. We hear Paul say, "You have the very power that raised Christ from the dead, living in you, why should you be afraid?" Don't be afraid is a theme throughout scripture. Hundreds of times, do not be afraid, do not fear, because the Lord is with you. It's there hundreds of times because that's how weak we are, right? I will not be afraid. And then someone yells at me for sounding silly or being a Christian, "Oh, I am afraid, okay, I'm sorry." And we go through those cycles that again are recorded all throughout scripture. But here is the simple statement from the psalmist, and it is a psalm of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation, so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident. And we can talk about David being king, David, and literally having at times armies surrounding him and enemies attacking him. We can talk about the spiritual warfare that every Christian goes through every minute of every day to try to turn your eyes away from the cross and your heart away from Jesus. We don't live in a post-Christian culture, we live in an anti-Christian culture. This is a thing, as the kids say. The one thing I ask of the Lord, the thing I seek most, is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections, meditating in his temple. For he will conceal me there when troubles come. He will hide me in

his sanctuary. Love it. That's why it's called a sanctuary. And there's a literal place sanctuary, and there's the sanctuary of his peace and of his will. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer, here's that word again, sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music. Give me as I pray, O Lord. Be merciful and answer me. My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming." Do not turn your back on me. Do not reject your servant and anger. You've always been my helper. Don't leave me now. Don't abandon me, O God of my salvation. Even if my father and my mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. Teach me how to live, O Lord, to be holy. Leave me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me. Do not let me fall into their hands, for they accuse me of things I've never done. With every breath they threaten me with violence. Yet I am confident I will see the Lord's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Wait patiently for the Lord. I love that song. That's the Gospel. Hundreds of years before the Gospel. And it's just amazing. Right? Now we're going to read the Gospel. And this is from John chapter 10, beginning with verse 10. You're going to hear the same things over and over, because the Bible is one unified story and it all points to Christ. Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things." I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned, but the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life. For this is how God loved the world. He gave His one and only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in Him, but anyone who does not believe in Him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on the fact that God's light came into the world. The people loved their darkness more than light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it, for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants. That is salvation through Christ. And that is, again, you want three dozen examples? I can give you three dozen examples. You can find four dozen. Five dozen examples. Salvation through faith. Salvation through making yourself a living sacrifice. And then moving forward in that life of holiness, not being afraid of who you now are. The old man is dead, gone, not worried about him or her anymore. The new man or woman lives and is not afraid to live. Because of this, they are not afraid to die. Let's go to Romans and talk about preaching after the cross. Here is our Apostle Paul again in Romans 10. Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. That is what we read in Leviticus. But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven to bring Christ down to earth?' Don't say, 'Who will go to the place of the dead to bring Christ back to life?'" In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand. It is on your lips and in your heart." And that message is the very message about faith that we preach. We're not doing the Leviticus thing anymore. We're doing the faith in the risen Lord. Did God do what He said He would do and provide the Christ, the Messiah, the sacrifice? Did He do that? Do you believe that? If you believe that in your heart and you profess that with your mouth, you will be saved. Come on. I'm up here. Come on. If you believe that in your heart and you profess that with your mouth, you will be saved. Thank you very much. It gives us energy. If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the scripture tells us, "Anyone who trusts in Him will never be disgraced." And it goes on a little bit. I got to read this part because this part, this is the church. This is why we're here. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. I've often said when people talk about Christians being phobic of this and exclusive of that, no, the exact opposite is true. Christianity

is radically inclusive. Christianity only recognizes two types of people in the world. Those who are living outside of the kingdom of God and those who are living in the kingdom of God and those who are living in the kingdom of God, seek every soul who is living outside of the kingdom of God. And that's what the rest of Romans 10 talks about. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord who gives generously to all who call on Him for everyone who calls on Him in the name of the Lord will be saved. How can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? How can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? How can they hear about Him unless someone tells them? How will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say how beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news. If you're afraid to live in your life of holiness, if you're afraid to live in the new person, generally as we read in Romans 12, if you're afraid to live that way, nobody will ever hear from you anyway about the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Yes, sometimes you're called to use words. But more often than not, you will be the only Bible that some people read. So be it. Live your life according to your calling. Live a life worthy of your calling. We're talking Second Coming, right? And you heard Romans 10 in Days of Elijah. The field is ripe, right? We can sit in our sanctuary and bemoan the world. And I do say that mess out there, I say that kind of thing all the time. And it is a mess. And people are a mess. And people don't know who they are. And they're seeking any kind of identity that can help them try to even grasp onto something like, "Who am I?" And then they find companions and companions. And all of that is meant to be in the Lord, right? Who are you as a man? Who are you as a woman? Who are you as a son, a daughter, a husband, a wife? Who are you? Ask Him. He's waiting to show you by the power of His Holy Spirit. Your identity is found in the Lord. How is that mess out there going to do that? We can bemoan it or we can say, "Look at that ripe field. Look at that ripe field." Satan is doing his work. And we're just sitting in church saying songs and we don't do anything else. That's not the way it should be. You should get out there. The happy are those feet and you should live that holy life being unafraid, speaking when necessary, doing always, and showing the light of the world in the darkness. That's what it's all about. And we can't be discouraged. We're like, "Okay." But they love their darkness, man. It doesn't seem to make a difference. We know that. We read it. We just read it. We know that. But Jesus doesn't say, "When you get out there and you start sharing My light and people shut you down, just stop and go home because it's really not worth it." No, He loves people. He loves people. He said last week, that's that Spurgeon saying, "How valuable must be a human soul when both Satan and God are in competition for it." They both seek it. So Romans 10, go do it. Now the Advent of Christ. We talk about that at Advent. We talk about the first coming. Born of a woman, fully human, fully divine. We go through the whole series of Advent and we talk about the attributes of God, the immutable attributes of God, the love and the peace and the hope and the joy that is only defined in His holiness. We talk about the second coming and it's going to be different. And I'll get to that in a minute. But the second coming, He's not coming in the form of a baby. He's not going to put Himself at the feet of humankind. When He comes again, let's just put it this way, there will be no doubt. There will be no doubt. There will be no little town in the backwoods, wherever. And nope, the second coming is coming to bring judgment upon His church. That's where it begins. And then upon all humankind. But let's go back to Daniel because thousands of years before this it was prophesied. Daniel chapter 7. As I was looking at the horns, now there's context here and if you take this home, the visions of Daniel are just amazing. And you have to do your own context here because I could go on for two hours about the prophecies of Daniel. It is really amazing. So as I was looking at the horns, suddenly another small horn appeared among them. Three of the first horns were torn out by the roots to make room for it. This little horn had eyes like human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly. I watched as thrones were put in place of the Ancient One and the Ancient One sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, his hair like purest wool. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from his presence. Millions of angels ministered to him. Many millions stood to attend him. Then the court began its session and the books were opened. The Book of Life. We read a lot about that in Revelation. I continued to watch because I could hear the little horn's boastful speech. I kept

watching until the fourth beast was killed and its body was destroyed by fire. The other three beasts had their authority taken from them but they were allowed to live a little while longer. As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor and sovereignty over all the nations of the world so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal. It will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. Maybe it's the man in me but I love that kind of stuff. I like to hear it. I want accountability. I crave accountability. I know one day I will be held accountable and that makes me live my life in a certain way every day. You read this powerful imagery of the Ancient One and the Son of Man and the Son of Man coming to the Ancient One establishing his kingdom forever over the earth. Sound familiar? It should. John, our buddy John, chapter 14, 1-7. It's going to say kind of the same thing but in a much more subtle way. It's not going to be that apocalyptic prophecy that we read but he's going to say the same thing in a different way. Here it is. "Don't let your hearts be troubled." This is Jesus. "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust also in me, the Ancient One and the Son of Man. Trust in God and also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you. When everything is ready, I will come and get you so that you will always be with me eternal where I am and you know the way to where I am going." "No we don't, Lord," Thomas says. "We have no idea where you're going. So how can we know the way?" Jesus lobbed them the perfect softball so he could answer them appropriately. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him." Where He is going, He is preparing a place. He says He will return to take us there. I love this book. I know, I sound ridiculous. I love this scripture. What's my favorite scripture? It's the one I'm reading at the present time. You know what I mean? What's your favorite scripture? 1, verse 6. I did a whole series on just these verses one time. "So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking Him, 'Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore your kingdom?' He replied, 'The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You will be my witnesses telling people about me everywhere.'" This type is tying together everything that we talked about today. Now read it again. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." Salvation. God's Holy Spirit living a holy life. "And you will be my witnesses telling people about me everywhere." Romans 10, sharing the Word of God, the right harvest field, through Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. If you ever wonder why I get the concept that we need to take care of this congregation first, it's because it's the airplane theory, right? If you've ever taken a ride on an airplane, they say, "If the oxygen drops, what do you do?" You put yours on first, so you're good, and you can take care of other people. If we don't know what we're talking about, then why in the world would I send you into a world to talk about Jesus? So we need to know what we're talking about here in Church Town, and then the greater Carlisle area, and then the eastern mid-Atlantic, and then the ends of the earth. But it begins with you and I being in the Word and knowing what we're saying, knowing who we are, right? After saying this, He was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see Him. As they strained to see Him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday He will return from heaven in the same way you saw Him go. Through the clouds." It's the same. It's literally the same verbiage. From generation to generation to generation, Old Testament, Jesus' words Himself, the Apostles teaching prophetic scripture. I mean, sometimes it's literally the same words and imagery that you have. But the Bible was written by man, and they just picked the books that they liked, and then they put them all together to make a political statement. "Shh, be quiet, boy." If you have no faith in scripture, that's a you problem. That's not a me problem. That's a you problem. It's not a God problem. It's divinely inspired, infallible Word of God. If we can't start there, then there's no point being here, because it means nothing to you. Not to you guys. You know what I'm saying.

Let's just finish with this, and then I'll be quiet before I get myself fired. This is my second letter to you, dear friends. This is 2 Peter. In both of them, I've tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. I want you to remember what the Holy Prophet said long ago, and what our Lord and Savior commands through the Apostles. Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days, scoffers will come mocking the truth and following their own desires. They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again?" We've read that promise several times today. "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again?" From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created. Time just keeps going on. Where is Jesus? They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of His command. And He brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. Then He used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood, and by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment when ungodly people will be destroyed. Those are powerful, prophetic words. They're not designed to scare you. They're designed to tell you the truth of the way history will play out. But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends. A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He's being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief, and the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. I'll stop there because I want to just reinforce that one concept. He's not waiting because He's silly or wants to watch us destroy each other for any other reason than to save as many human beings as possible. He will not come again until He is satisfied. We don't have a say in it. He is sovereign. We are not. We are the harvesters in the vineyard. Right? He is the planter of the vine. There's a lot more, and if you're interested in that, we can share those 47 scriptures with you. But I hope that I have at least whetted your curiosity to look at some of these things and to understand, as we try to do each and every week, demonstrate that scripture is one unified story. It's not random. It is divinely inspired. And we believe that the canon, as we know it today, was with God before it was written. He knew exactly what our Holy Bible would be. And He used fallible man to make it so. This is what we have, and that's what we believe. - That? - Yeah.