



Sermon Growth Guide

January 17, 2020

Here We Go! - Hold Fast & Keep Growing

1 Peter 1:10-21

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:13 “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”

Big Idea: Value #2 Hold Fast: Stay founded on Scripture and centered on Christ, who holds you steady. Value #3 Keep Growing: Learn to grow, and when your life changes, give God the credit.

Foundations

This week we look deep into values 2 and 3 of **The First Pres Way - 7 Values in our Pursuit of Jesus**.

Hold Fast and Keep Growing. Two values to keep us rooted in the truth. We are warned to watch out for deceitful teachings and to stay alert and watchful. In addition to our main passage this week, consider passages such as Hebrews 13:9: “Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.”

How do we stay steadfast? How do we keep growing in Christ? By anchoring ourselves in the community of God’s people around God’s Word.

The Bible. Sixty-six books written by 40 authors over 1,500 years in three different languages, with 63,779 cross references across all those generations. Totally unique among every book ever produced, divine. The Word of God to you and me, to us, God’s people, to stay steadfast and keep growing.

Gathered together with your circle, open your time of study in prayer. Ask the Spirit to guide and guard your spiritual formation, your growth in Christ.

Understanding God’s Word

How is the child of God instructed to live throughout verses 13-16? Where do we anchor our hope, the focus of our heart?

In verse 17 the Christians are given the title “foreigner.” How ought this aspect of your spiritual identity affect your earthly allegiances?

What was the cost of your redemption in verses 18-19.

Applying God’s Word

Peter exhorts the believer in verse 15, “but just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.” Identify one way in which you can ask God to plant you and grow you in His righteousness even more? With your circle, encourage one another and pray for one another for the areas identified.

Witnessing God’s Word

God’s people are called “oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor,” (Isaiah 61:3c). Spend time interceding for one another. Pray that you would be rooted and grow as an “oak of righteousness” so that you would display the splendor of heaven to the world around you. Thank God for this amazing calling on your life.

Hold Fast and Keep Growing. We are in the second week of a sermon series called *Here We Go!* aligning ourselves again around the **First Pres Way: 7 Values in Our Pursuit of Jesus.** I can't think of a more timely message for us than this: Hold Fast and Keep Growing. (On January 20) the next President of the United States will be inaugurated at the Capitol, which is still literally under repair from the day that shocked us all. As a pastor, I must address that within the mob we saw Christian symbols, flags, the name of Jesus hanging down from the baluster—and some of these symbols made it into the chambers. I am not called to be your expert in politics, or elections, but I am called into the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christian involvement in the January 6th attack is the most upsetting misrepresentation of Jesus Christ I have witnessed. I'm not making a political statement. I'm not making an election statement. I'm talking about Jesus, who He is and what the world thinks we mean when we say His name.

Hold Fast and Keep Growing. Two values to keep us rooted in the truth. Can a Christian be deceived? Is it possible for us, as believers, to get wrapped up in stories and half-truths that pull us into confusion? You bet. The Bible is full of exhortations: "Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings," says Hebrews 13:9. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). These fit right in with our key verse today, "Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming" (1 Peter 1:13). We are warned to watch out for deceitful teachings and to stay alert and watchful. "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there

by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming" (Ephesians 4:14). These are charges made to Christians, to believers, not unbelievers. Christians can be deceived. If you find yourself waving a Christian flag in a crowd that is attacking police, defacing property, or building gallows on the Capitol steps, brother you have been deceived. We all grow deceived. In this and in other things. Good news. You don't have to stay there. Truth has been revealed.

Hold Fast: Stay founded on Scripture and centered on Christ, who holds you steady. This is our second value. Hold fast to the Word of God. Stay rooted in the truth. Jesus holds on to you when you worry that you are slipping and can't hold on to Him. It's related to the third value, **Keep Growing:** Learn to grow, and when your life changes, give God the credit. That last bit is a reminder to share the story. When God is glorified, lives are transformed. We talked about that last week. Worship changes who you are. When your life is transformed, be sure to give God the glory. When God is glorified, lives are transformed. When lives are transformed, God is glorified. Tell the story. We can be deceived. We, even we, are susceptible to the allure of deceptive half-truths that make our itching ears glad. Is there deception pulling at your heart? Leave the news stories; I'm talking about every part of your life. We can be tricked, deceived. Are there any half-truths or outright lies in any part of your life holding you back from fullness of life in Jesus? Hold Fast. Keep Growing. Stay rooted in the Word of God.

Peter tells us to set our full confidence in the Word of God. "Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of



Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things” (1 Peter 1:10–12). That’s the inspiration of Scripture Peter is telling us about. The Bible. The Holy Scriptures. Sixty-six books written by 40 authors over 1,500 years in three different languages, and it speaks with one divine and authoritative voice. The prophets looked to see Jesus. Angels longed to see the victories of Christ and long to see their fulfillment still. You and I, we have it in our hands and on our phones.

So, Peter says, “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming” (1 Peter 1:13). Alert. Fully sober. He’s not talking about alcohol here or anything like that. He’s talking about feeling confused, befuddled, foggy-headed. Disoriented like a kid at camp who runs across the field and spins five times with his head on a baseball bat. Dizzied. What do you do when you can’t find “north?” What do you do when you can’t figure out what sources to trust? Turn on this channel, click on that page, follow that email stream. What do I trust? Is there anyone to trust who will lead me to actual truth? The truth is pretty hard to locate. This verse says, wait a minute. Truth is right here. Set your mind clear here first. This Word of God, this will set your true “north,” this will be your reassociation with truth, the truth, the ultimate truth. Then you can walk back into the swirling fog and raging storm. You’ll be rooted and established in truth here. You will know again where your hope lies. “Set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed.” I don’t know about

you, but sometimes trying to figure out everything, who is right, who is lying, what is this conspiracy theory, who owns that news outlet, what is the real motivation, oh my goodness! I feel like I’ve come out of the spin cycle. Be alert and sober minded. Hold Fast. You know where your hope is set. “Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (Psalms 25:5).

Hold Fast and Keep Growing. They seem like opposite ideas in some ways. If you Hold Fast, that sounds stationary, still, unmoving. But Keep Growing sounds dynamic, active, like you need to get moving. Here’s an image for you. God gives us the image of an oak tree, a righteous oak. “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor” (Isaiah 61:1–3). Oaks of righteousness. Do you know how to grow an oak tree? It takes a minute. You don’t grow an oak tree by dipping an acorn in soil once a week for an hour. Or by dipping the roots of the sapling into water two or three times a year. Are you following? You grow an oak tree by resting that seed in the soil, abiding in that soil, marinating in that life-giving source, over time, through seasons. Through spring, through summer, through fall, through winter, the seed stays in the soil. It rests in it. It abides in it. The roots stretch out in the soil, reaching into the darkness for that next breaking in of minerals,



nutrients, new source of life. The tap root grows deeper and deeper down in the hidden places no one sees. The trunk, the branches, they grow while the wind presses against them. The heat, the cold, the driving hail, it all builds strength over time. Because the root bed is broad and solid. Hold Fast. Keep Growing.

It takes humility to Keep Growing. It takes humility to admit you don't know everything already, you have much to learn. "The more you know, the more you know you don't know." Aristotle said that. I'm grateful when I have a good book in my hands, and with each page I feel a little more ignorant. I see more of what I don't know, even as I'm gaining a little bit more knowledge. The Scriptures fill us with knowledge and reveal our ignorance at the same time. I'm grateful when I turn the pages of Scripture again and see layer after layer of understanding. It never ends. You cannot plumb the depths of the Word of God. You will never get there. Still each time you read, each time you meditate, each time you marinate in the Word of God, you are growing. There is information you need to believe. Jesus said once, "I say these things so that you may be saved" (John 5:34). There is knowledge you need to believe. Words you need to receive. Don't just dip into the Word of God from time to time. Get rooted in it. Get established in it. Go deep.

In the early church, even while Peter and Paul were still around, there were groups infiltrating the body of Christ who claimed to have secret knowledge, "gnosis." Gnostics pulled believers along by the nose, always promising that they would tell them more later, they would get the whole story next time, they would hear the real secret behind everything if they just came along. Christians got pulled into this. Again and again believers found themselves susceptible. Timothy was told, "Timothy, guard what has

been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all" (1 Timothy 6:20–21). Can a Christian be deceived? Humbly admit, we can. Stay alert. Stay rooted and established in the Word. Hold Fast. Keep Growing.

And when you wonder if you can, remember, Jesus is holding on to you. Why can we become oaks of righteousness? Because Jesus hung on a tree, the cross, for our sins. "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18–19). Your place in heaven, your rootedness in the Kingdom of God, your attachment to truth was won for you when you were lost in your sins by a Savior, Jesus, who died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins, on your behalf. You were in confusion. You were coming out of the spin cycle. Jesus knew what was needed to bring light to your darkness, sobriety and clarity to your muddled mind; He had to get your sins put away from you once and for all. "Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:21). Hold Fast. Keep Growing. Rooted and established, an oak of righteousness in a storm of tumult. Can we be deceived? Yes. And we are, all of us, to some extent. In some part of our lives we are buying into the lie and getting pulled out of the way of Jesus. Hold Fast. Keep Growing. By the cross and the victories of Christ, you are established as an oak, as strong as an oak tree, rooted in faith and hope and peace.

