

# Being On Guard & Encouraged

July 9, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "Being on Guard and Encouraged." Thank you to Geoff, Earl, Janet, Paul, and Ed for being part of the video. The scripture reading is 2nd Peter 1, 3 to 8. Happy birthday this week to Earl and Jon.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning everyone. Welcome to the services of the Church of Christ here in Beamsville. Glad you are here to join us today. In the book of Isaiah, God is, well He's challenging these people that have been rebellious. He calls them disobedient children. He talks about the fact that they've trusted in the strength of places like Egypt instead of trusting in him. And they are hiding, he says, under falsehood. And this is what he comes back with. So this is what the sovereign Lord says. "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation. The one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic." God's reassurance to them that he is in control, that they don't need to worry about what's going on in the world around them and trust in human might. Instead they need to trust in him. He has laid a cornerstone that is precious to him and has been tested.

This morning I have a few announcements. Dorothy and Len, 68 years anniversary today. Oh that's great. And we have a birthday. I know John's not 156 because that's Canada. So how old are you? 93 years old next week. Ed, can you lead us in happy birthday? Can you lead us in happy birthday Ed, please? Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear John. Happy birthday to you. Next, many more. Yes we have a note that Ruby had a fall and broke her pelvis. So she's in hospital. So keep them in your prayers and I'm sure that Art would appreciate a call to pass along to her. Also Mike's friend Roy has had his surgery and is still recovering from cancer so please keep him in your prayers. He's actually home now? Excellent. That's a start. Okay, thank you.

All right, let's go to God in prayer. Father, we rejoice this morning that we have the opportunity to meet together to celebrate the cornerstone that you planted for us. Father, we don't have to fear anything because we know that we are loved just as he is because he has given himself for us. We celebrate this morning. We break bread to remember the grace that he brought, the sacrifice that he made and the power, Father, in which you raised him to newness of life. We thank you and we celebrate. We celebrate anniversaries and we celebrate birthdays. We ask that Father, you be with those of our number who are continuing to recover and we ask a special prayer for Mike and for Ruby as they mend. Father, we walk with you because you have loved us from the beginning and we celebrate this morning for that reason. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, we pray. Amen. [Music]

## Communion

Have you ever thought of this as perhaps being true? Unexpressed gratitude may be perceived as ingratitude. I'll repeat that. Unexpressed gratitude may be perceived as ingratitude. Well, that's a little words of wisdom. I thought that up myself. But the truth is, I think that that can be the way it is in life. Husband and wife, you know, she may always make the meals because she's always made the meals. I'm not being stereotypical here, but as a receiver of a meal, even though I received many, it would be nice if I said to my wife, "Thank you for dinner." And when I wash the dishes, then maybe it would be

nice once in a while for her to say, "Thanks for doing the dishes." Right? It's not that it's her job or my job. It's that we're helping each other and we're appreciating the efforts of the other person and verbally acknowledging it, if not every time, then certainly from time to time. Everyone likes to be appreciated, but despite knowing this, we sometimes don't express it to people. Being grateful requires us to be consciously aware of our blessings and the kindness of others. Expressing gratitude is a gift you can give someone, acknowledging and appreciating them for who they are and perhaps for what they've done.

So scripture talks about thankfulness. Colossians chapter 2 verse 6, "So then, just as you receive Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives for Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 3, 12, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another. If any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, songs from the Spirit sing to God with gratitude in your hearts." That's what we're doing this morning. We just finished singing three songs. Do we have gratitude in our hearts as we sang them? And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. So we're giving thanks to God the Father through Jesus, who we're honoring now as we meet around this table.

And so when Jesus instituted this feast, could you imagine it was the Passover they were observing. The Passover lamb, you know, the escape from Egypt, the the angel of death. We know all that. But while they were eating, Jesus took bread and when He had given thanks. Wow, I wonder what that prayer was all about. Can you imagine? I wonder what that prayer was all about when He gave thanks. He's thanking God for yes, you know, being with the children of Israel as they escape bondage as they the Passover lamb, but He was becoming the Passover lamb very shortly. What kind of emotions? What kind of double language? What kind of double meaning was He praying and the disciples were listening and they didn't all get it because after the prayer, you know, he he had to specifically say to his disciples, take and eat, this is my body. See, they knew the old Passover significance, but they were not aware of what the new significance was shortly going to be. So he gave thanks. Then he took the cup and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying drink from it all of you. Well, He says that to us this morning as we meet around this table. That's still the message that we we will give thanks. But we also understand the significance of that sacrifice for humanity and for us as individuals.

And so this morning as we go from this place, perhaps we think about Jesus and the sacrifice now and we are thankful. We don't fully understand it. We don't fully comprehend the significance, but we need to be thankful. But as we go forth, are we thankful to God in our daily lives? Do we stop and pause and say thank you, Lord. And so let's express our gratitude not only to one another, because I think the passage spur one another on to love and good works. See, how do you spur? It's probably encouragement. And part of that encouragement is likely thankfulness for what they have done in the past. I appreciate you because you have done this. And that in and of itself, that thankfulness expressed encourages the same person to do more of the same. And so we know that within our families. We know that hopefully within our church community. But maybe God likes to hear it on occasion as well in our daily lives, not just as we made around the table. So just some thoughts. Let's pray.

Dear God, we are so thankful for your great plan and the fact that it involves each one of us. That you would care enough about mankind in general that you would send Jesus into this world. But that specifically he would die for each person here this morning. We pray that you will help us to live thankfully for this sacrifice and help us to express that thankfulness to others. We thank you for these emblems, the bread and the fruit of the vine, which represent his body and blood that was shed on the cross of Calvary for the redemption of each one of us. We pray you help us live grateful lives in Jesus name. Amen. [Music]

## Song Leader Comment

One observation from our trip to Ireland. It's a whole island of minimalists. They have little houses. They don't have basements. They don't have garages. If you're in their houses and we were in a few houses of Irish folks when we were there, they don't have a lot of stuff in there. Well, we live in a culture of more and Earl has reminded us to have more thankfulness and gratitude. This song that we're going to sing is about a whole bunch of mores that we would be wise to have as opposed to being consumer more.

## Reading

### 2 Peter 1:3-8

Our reading this morning is from the second book of Peter chapter one verses three to eight. His divine power has given us everything we need for the godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge and to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness and to godliness mutual affection and a mutual affection love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our lord Jesus Christ.

## Sermon

Good morning. On one Sunday morning in a September she, Sean Christie, was walking his dog along a footpath by the side of a river, the river Waff in Yorkshire, England. The path wound upwards and as the bank rose sharply away from the river looking up Mr. Christie saw another man on the path at the top of the hill about to come down. The path wasn't really wide enough for both of them. This happens all the time on walks in the English countryside. One walker finds a place to move to the side to let the other pass. There'd be a smile, a greeting, maybe a word about the weather, but the man on top of the hill wasn't walking. He was on a Segway. That two-wheeled chunky electric scooter-like device that you'd sometimes see being ridden by sightseeing tourists around cities or security guards in shopping malls not often on country walks. Mr. Christie later described seeing the figure on the Segway back up slightly off the path, inviting the dog walker to continue past. The man wobbled and then disappeared from view. Mr. Christie went look over the edge, looked over the edge down the steep drop at the bottom 40 feet below was the Segway, the man not moving face down in the river. Mr. Christie called the emergency services, but there was nothing they could do. Man had died of multiple blunt force injuries. The body of the Segway owner was identified.

It turned out he just didn't own a Segway. He owned Segway, the company. And that story made headlines. Owner of Segway dies on Segway. Segway maker killed on one. Segway boss dies riding one off a cliff. You can't openly poke fun at accidental death of a 62-year-old man while being courteous to a dog walker. But still, Segways were kind of a joke. Do you remember the Segway? We've seen them around. George W. Bush famously tumbled off one. Their dorky, uncool image had recently been reinforced by the comedy movie Paul Blart, Paul Blart, Mallcop, in which Kevin James plays an out of shape Segway-riding security guard with delusions of grandeur. That the boss of Segway had ridden the Segway off a cliff was a kind of new story that made you suppress a guilty chuckle.

The Segway hype started with the much-shared news article in January 2001 about a mysterious leak from the world of publishing. The story was about a book proposal that had been offered to publishers in the strictest of confidence. Harvard Business School Press had bought the rights to the book for a quarter million dollars. The book was about invention currently being worked on yet not revealed to the world. And that invention, it was the mystery. The book proposal didn't say. The Harvard Business School Press had bought a book without knowing what the invention was. The literary agent who sold it to them didn't know. The book's author knew, but he couldn't tell. He'd signed a non-disclosure agreement with the inventor, Dean Kamen. Kamen had made his fortune in medical devices. He developed the world's, "World's first drug infusion pump, portable insulin pump, and portable dialysis machine." Now he was making something else, something so important he'd invited a writer to document it for posterity, the process of making it. The book's author wrote in the proposal that it would profoundly affect the people who would live. In December 2001, nearly a year of hype and jokes and increasingly wild guesses, the time had finally come for it to be revealed live on Good Morning America. Dean Kamen wears jeans, a blue work shirt. He stands awkwardly next to a curtain flanked by the show's hosts. It comes out. All right, are you ready? I'm ready. I think it's time. The curtain reveals a Segway, a deck to stand on, two big wheels on either side, a waist-high handlebars rising up from a center pillar. There it is. What does it do? This is the world's first self-balancing human transporter. Kamen explains, "You think forward, you go forward. You think backwards, you go backwards." And then Diane Sawyer seems distinctly unimpressed. Is that it? You can't beat it. But that was it.

Jimmy Heselden was born in 1948 in the English city of Leeds. He grew up on the Molten Marr public housing estate, a place where money was scarce, prospects were grim. A writer describes his life in his family's house around time Jimmy was born. A suet-encrusted kettle simmering on the flat iron resting beneath the hearth. Earthenware milk cooler, chimney rods, loaf tins in the oven, bread cakes the size of hubcaps cooling on window seals. Like most young men, he grew up in that estate. Jimmy left school as soon as he hit age 15. He worked first as a laborer, then a coal miner in the 1980s. The coal industry collapsed. Jimmy, now in his 30s, was one of the many who lost his job. But he did get some money, redundancy money, and he used it to start a business in sandblasting. Jimmy holidayed with his family at a caravan park in the northeast coast of England. Year by year, the caravans were getting closer to the sea. The stretch of coastline was eroding more quickly than any place in Europe. Every year, a couple more yards of land slipped away. Houses were built safe distance inland, now being abandoned as cliff edge crepe- crept ever nearer. And finally, the land beneath them would crumble into the waves. One way of trying to shore up coastlines is with gabion. An idea that stretches back to ancient Rome. Gabions are cages made with once with wicker and now with wire mesh and are typically filled with rocks. You can stack them up, build retaining walls. Jimmy came up with the idea for a better gabion, a flat pack wire mesh cage, easy to transport, unfold, erect, and with a heavy duty liner so you can fill it

up with whatever you have on hand, not just rocks or gravel, sand, mud, whatever happens to be nearby. It expands like a concertina to form a container. In 1989, he took out a patent, came up, set up a company called Haskell. He made his first sale to a water company that wanted to shore up some collapsing walls of a canal. Promising start, Jimmy thought it might make a nice little sideline to his sandblasting business. A simple idea. As soon as you see it being used, you get it.

The Segway could hardly be different. When Time magazine's writer got off after his first ride, he was amazed, and he asked Dean Cayman to explain how it worked. Cayman's reply, he wrote, involved a bizarre load of equations. When Britain's military of defence saw Jimmy Hesselson's new type of collapsible retaining wall, they realized straight away that they had uses for it far beyond shoring up canal walls. They could use it in war zones, they thought, as quick way to build protective barriers around anything you needed. They placed a big order with Jimmy's company and took the retaining walls to the first Gulf War in 1991 and they worked brilliantly. The traditional way for armies to build protective barriers is with sandbags. Filling up the sandbags is time-consuming, exhausting. Constructing a typical wall of sandbags might take 10 soldiers a full day. To make the same size of wall out of Jimmy's containers took 20 minutes, two soldiers and a digger. It saved the lives of soldiers like Sergeant David McGregor from Texas, who was caught up in a mortar attack in Iraq in 2004. In July 2008 in Afghanistan, India's diplomatic staff received a tip from an American intelligence source that the Taliban planned an attack on their embassy in Kabul. They quickly threw up defensive line of sand filled containers around the compound walls. A few days later, a suicide bomber rammed the car packed with explosives into a diplomatic vehicle outside the gates. The embassy itself was largely unscathed. The sand filled containers absorbed the blast. A senior official later expressed no doubt the barrier saved the lives of all of those in the compound.

When Jimmy dreamed up his idea, he thought shoring up coastlines against erosion and it turned out it did work for that and for building other kinds of retaining walls such as garden landscaping. Also containing fuel spills, creating barriers against sediments to help wetlands regenerate and make walls for temporary housing after natural disasters and flooding. In 2005, as Hurricane Katrina bore down in New Orleans, workers raced to fill the gaps of the levees. They built a wall of these containers along 17th Street. It survived the storm. A nearby concrete wall did not. As it sat in a caravan park by the seaside, Jimmy had thought his idea of a flat pack barrier might make him a bit of income on the sideline. Two decades on, he's featured in the newspaper's list of 400 wealthiest people in Britain.

Dean Kamen prepared to launch the Segway. His team met with investors and advisors. What's the product values proposition? Why would anybody want to use it? The marketing director seemed a little stumped. Kamen waved the question away. When people looked at the Segway, they shrugged or laughed. Not everyone, of course, some people loved it until they heard the price. Dean Kamen had burned through so many money to make the Segway so great that he had to charge nearly \$5,000 for the entry level version. It was far too much for most. 20 years on, the Segways aren't made anymore. After some changes in ownership, the Segway brand now sits with a Chinese company. They make electric scooters that have the name Segway on them, but they're just regular electric scooters. What does a man like Jimmy Hessel then do with a couple hundred million pounds from his barriers? To start with, he creates jobs. Jimmy built his factory next to a public housing estate where he'd grown up. Not much had changed. There was still grim reputation of poverty and unemployment. Jimmy recruited kids who had left local schools. Youngsters, he'd said, who'd grown up with a lot of role models. He recruited older workers too, like him, who'd been a redundant later in life. They feared they'd never

work again. He paid them way over the going rate. No wonder they felt loyal in return, worked hard for him. When war broke out in Kosovo, the United Nations ordered a load to protect their forces. Jimmy's workers delivered the order ahead of schedule. Jimmy decided to thank them by taking them on a vacation all to Spain.

Jimmy gave millions to military charities with no publicity or fuss. He set up a foundation to work on projects in his local community and gave tens of millions to that. Jimmy bought an 18th century mill over the river. He employed teams of workers to convert it to his dream house. They made a water wheel work again, but the dream house never quite got finished because Jimmy and his wife, Julie, were happily, perfectly happily, to live in a small lodge on the work site. And Jimmy kept getting distracted by other ways to keep his workers busy. He even built a donkey sanctuary, amongst other things. Kids from local schools would come for day trips. He built a replica of Stonehenge because why not? He built a museum for classic cars, whereas in Dean Kamen's case, he decided to cut his losses, put the Segway up for sale, and Jimmy Heselden bought it. A few months later, one Sunday morning in September, Jimmy took his off-road Segway out for a scooter by the river near where his dream house was. He cruised the hill, who looked down to the path to see a man walking his dog up it. The path wasn't really wide enough for both of them, and unfortunately, we know what happens. Jimmy Heselden's funeral wasn't held in a church. They put up a big marquee on the industrial street of his factory. Two thousand people turned out to pay their respects. Most were local, one notable man from Texas. Sergeant David McCrader explained, "I'm here to pay tribute and thanks to the man who saved my life through his product." If it wasn't for Jimmy's barriers, my wife and children would have only a flag to remember me by. As a bugler from the Yorkshire arrangement played at the Last Post, a thousand green balloons floated upwards towards the sky, bearing the words, "A hero of heroes." Just a few days had passed since those headlines about Jimmy's accident. Segway boss dies riding off Cliff. It might have looked like a darkly ironic footnote and an absurdly overhyped invention, but everyone at Jimmy's funeral knew that wasn't the real story. It wasn't the real story at all.

We live in a time when truth is often not what it seems. How do we, especially in faith, live in times like these, where truth is not often what it seems? If you have your Bibles with you, 2 Peter chapter 1, starting at verse 3. And by the way, it didn't occur to me until actually this morning. Don may come back next week and do 2 Peter. I didn't click to me at all that this would actually fall perfectly in his series of New Testament epistles. I hope he says the same thing as me, but if he doesn't, he's probably right and you can just forget. It's fine. Or this might be just different thing entirely. That's a fine. Anyway, it was totally unintentional. Starting verse 3, his divine power has given us everything we need for Godly life through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness through these. He has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them we may participate in the divine nature and escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires for this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness and to goodness, knowledge and to knowledge, self control and to self control perseverance and perseverance, godliness and to godliness, mutual affection and to mutual affection. Love if you possess these qualities increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters make every effort to conform, to confirm your calling and election for if you do these things you will never stumble and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I would argue that the big idea of 2 Peter, the big urging thing that he is trying to get across to his readers is here in chapter 1, verses 5 through 8 specifically. How to live as Christians, how to have confidence in Christ, especially in a time that is challenging. God gives us the ability verses 3 and 4, it is not our own ability that gives us this this this ability or rather it's God. There is a warning in verse 9 that if you don't do these things you're nearsighted and blind and we forget that we've been cleansed from our past sins, that we forget the gospel. And then there's the promise, if we do these things we will never stumble, we'll receive a rich welcome into the king the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Verse 12, "I will always remind you of these things even though you know them and it is firmly established in the truth that you have that you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body because I know that I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me and I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."

As a young preacher I remember talking with church folks, you'd go and have lunch or have coffee out or whatever and one of the things that I would often do is ask, you know, what do you want to hear from the pulpit? What are topics that are of interest to you? What styles that are interesting to you? That kind of thing. And one of the things that would come up more than once was I want to hear new things. I want to hear things that I haven't heard before. I think there's a place for hearing something you haven't heard before. I think there's a place for new insights and certainly the Bible is full of new insights. If you've read it lately you've probably come across something that you went, "Wait, that's in there? I don't remember that being that, that being in there". I do that all the time. But there's also a place for being reminded of something you already know. But sometimes that reminding is the most important thing that you need at the moment, that I need at the moment. This sermon is not a sermon I don't think that will be new. I don't think you'll learn too many new things, maybe the history of Segway. You may have known that already, but that's unlikely. Maybe. But from scripture, things we already mostly know. But nonetheless, it is important that we remind ourselves of them. We refresh our memory because we know there will come a time when we are unable to refresh our memories in the same way.

It's important to be encouraged. It's important to be warned. It's important to be empowered. 2 Peter 2. But there were also false prophets, verse 1, among the people. This is what's difficult or what's challenging about the situation. Just as there will be false teachers among you, you will be secret, they will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereignty, a sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. Christians will listen and follow false teachers. How will these teachers operate? Verse 18. For they mouth empty, boastful words, and by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They have empty words that appeal to people's sinful desires. Verse 19. They offer false freedom. They promise them freedom while they themselves are slaves of depravity. For people are slaves to whatever has mastered them. Verse 20. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing Jesus, Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than when they were at the beginning. They come from a background, or some come at least from the background of faith, but have now become entangled in sin and overcome it. It, in my mind, this brings the imagery of the wolves in sheep's clothing. How to resist? Chapter 3, verse 14. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience

means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with wisdom that God gave Him. Remember, Christ is coming.

In other words, remember that in the end, even the ultimate end, this world is Christ. Make every effort to be blameless, spotless, at peace. Remember our salvation and that God is very patient. Verse 17 and 18, therefore, friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away from error of the lawless and fall from your secure position, but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord, Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory in both now and forever. Amen. Be on guard, grow in peace, grace and knowledge, we live in a time when truth is often not what it seems. Just like the Segway story, sometimes we actually get the very opposite of what the truth is. It is not a joking tragedy that a middle-aged man fell to his death. It is a tragedy because a local hero fell to his death. This applies to faith, too. The truth is not always what it seems.

In Christianity, there are some forms of Christianity that preach, teach, things that are not consistent with truth. Right now, there are people who are out there saying things that are not necessarily reflective of Christianity in the name of Christ. And this is not a new thing. This is not a new thing. We've seen this all throughout history. But how do we live in an environment where even amongst some Christians, the truth of the gospel may seem surprising or shocking. How do we live when we encounter those people around us that may live in the world that is full of untruths, mistruths, half-remembered truths? Well, we don't always get it quite right. Do we act in, as I think our culture is saying today, act in strength? We get loud. We get angry. We tell them why they're wrong. We send them, "Okay, I'm going to say this because hopefully this is old enough that we don't do this anymore." Because we send chain emails. Do you remember chain emails explaining why all the things are right or wrong or whatever? Or, as I would suggest from Scripture, do we rather react to people around us with humility, with humbleness, with meekness?

On first blush, that may seem, well, that's not going to work. I mean, we've got so and so on the corner yelling about this and that or whatever. If I'm kind to them, if I love them, if I treat them the love of Christ, that's not going to change anything. And that's true if the power of my words and actions were my own. But as we learn from 2 Peter, it is God who gives us these abilities, not us. In your life, as in mine, I am a new father. Little Ellis is four years old. He is old enough that he decides to say no from time to time. Can you imagine? And I've heard from others that this trend continues. I can scarcely believe it. But as I think about being a father and parenting, and I think about some of the examples I've had and some of the people I've seen, you wonder, well, it seems like they did everything right. And yet, blank. Or it seems like they did everything wrong. And yet blank. There is a power and ability out there that thankfully is not solely based on me. And my hope for Ellis is that he grows up not solely based on my ability, because then we got big problems. And the same is true, I think, of how we treat each other and those who might oppose us intentionally or unintentionally around us.

So how do we live then in these difficult, compromising times, even with other Christians that we might disagree with? Chapter one, three through eight, and then 10 and 11. His divine power has given us everything we need for godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these, he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them, we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness, and a goodness knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, and to



godliness, mutual affection, and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities and increasing nature, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is near sighted, blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed of their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the internal kingdom that is of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Blessings on your travels in this world, and I hope together we can live out second Peter.

## Song Leader Comment

There is truth in this statement that it takes a village to raise a child. I think we're meant to live in communities where we're supporting and helping each other. And in this church, we are a community, and we care for each other and want the best for each other and help each other to be like Jesus.

## Closing

Thank you Paul for that reminder and that story that I'm sure will stick with all of us. Earlier I read from Isaiah, and now I'm reading from first Peter. "As you come to him, the living stone rejected by humans, but chosen by God and precious to him, you also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in scripture it says, "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Now to you who believe this stone is precious." Let's go to God in prayer.

Father, in our world of deception and false news, and Father people who don't understand you, help us Father to seek truth, the truth of your Son, and help us to be a reflection of the love that he had for the people of this earth. We thank you that we've been here today to break bread, to celebrate his great victory, and Father we thank you for the power with which you raised him. Empower us Father to distinguish truth from falsehood and give us more faith and more godliness and more love, that we might grow in Christ to be instruments of your peace. Father as we leave this place, we're recharged to go out into a world that needs to know your truth. Help us give us bold words and courage of heart to speak lovingly, but with warning as Paul reminded us. We need both sides of the equation. Father help us to love deeply the way your Son did. In his name we pray. Amen.

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