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Living In Anticipation

2 PETER 3:10-18

Introduction

1. I imagine all of us have had something in our lives for which we waited expectantly.
2. Perhaps in your mind, it seemed like it just couldn't get here fast enough.
3. All of our children and grandchildren went through that phase in life when they couldn't seem to open the presents fast enough.
4. I have known of students who had on their phones a timer which counted down the days, hours and minutes until they graduated from high school?
5. It is our anticipation of what is inside the package or what the future holds that makes everything leading up to that moment special.
6. As Peter concludes his last letter to the Christians in Asia Minor, his focus is upon our Lord's return and what it holds for those who are His faithful.
7. This morning, as we look at these last nine verses, I would like for each of you to consider this important day, what it will entail, how we are to live in preparation for it, and Peter's final words of exhortation for us all.

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I. The Coming "Day of the Lord"

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10, NASB95)

A. ITS SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED NATURE

1. Jesus spoke about this aspect of His return (Matthew 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-

40) :

“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.” (Matthew 24:43–44, cf. Luke 12:39-40, NASB95)

2. The apostle Paul also stressed this fact (1 Thessalonians 5:2):

“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” (1 Thessalonians 5:2, NASB95)

3. Jesus Himself even said that He did not know the time (Mark 13:32):

“But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” (Mark 13:32, NASB95)

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B. ITS DESTRUCTION

1. The destruction which will take place on that day is beyond our ability to comprehend.
2. Peter did his best to describe the indescribable.
 - a. When we are describing something to someone we use imagery with which they are familiar.
 - b. How would you or I describe something which no one has ever seen?
3. As he does this, his main purpose is to focus our minds on the climax of history. He points to three things which will happen:
 - a. “The heavens (i.e. the sky) will pass away with a roar” (“great noise,” NKJV; “loud noise,” HCSB)
 - b. The “elements will be destroyed with intense heat” (NASB95).
 - 1) Other translations render this as . . .

“The heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved” (ESV)

“The elements will melt with fervent heat” (NKJV)

“The elements will be destroyed by fire” (NIV84)

“The elements will burn and be dissolved” (HCSB)

2) Possibly reference to sun, moon, stars, heavenly bodies (Compare Mark 13:24-26)

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.” (Mark 13:24–26, NASB95)

- c. “The earth and its works will be burned up (“exposed”, ESV; “laid bare,” NIV84)

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II. The Moral Imperative It Places Upon Us

A. THE LIVES WE SHOULD LIVE

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,” (2 Peter 3:11, NASB95)

1. Knowing that all of this is going to happen, does it make a difference in the way we live our lives? It should!
2. Our expectation of the Lord’s coming inspires us to live holy lives (cf. 1 John 2:28).

“Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.” (1 John 2:28, NASB95)

3. If you and I do not believe that life is going anywhere, then do we truly have anything to live for?

4. However, if we know that life is moving toward a final destination, that of our Lord's return, then everything changes.
5. There is a truth which Peter seeks to communicate to us here — people matter more than things — God is concerned with you.
6. How you and I live our lives in view of our Lord's coming is of supreme importance.
7. The only principles worthy of guiding our lives are those set down by God:
 - a. "Holy conduct" — behavior that brings glory to God because it reflects His nature and being.
 - b. "Godliness" — fearful, silent, awe-filled wonder that accompanies the life of faith.

**Then sings my soul, my Savior- God, to thee:
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!**

(Author: Carl Gustav Boberg; Translator: Stuart K. Hine (1949))

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B. THE WATCHFULNESS THAT SHOULD DEFINE US

"looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" (2 Peter 3:12, NASB95)

1. As Christians, you and I are expected to look for the coming of our Lord.
2. Jesus Himself told us to watch.

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3. We are also to hasten its coming. How do we do that?
 - a. Through our own repentance and obedience (Acts 3:19-21).

"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God

spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.” (Acts 3:19–21, NASB95)

b. By living righteous lives ourselves (1 Peter 2:12).

“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12, NASB95)

c. Prayer — Specifically for God’s kingdom to come (cf. Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 1:13)

“For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” (Ephesians 5:5, NASB95)

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,” (Colossians 1:13, NASB95)

d. Evangelism (Mark 16:15)

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15, NASB95).

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C. THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR NEW HOME

“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3:13, NASB95)

1. When Peter wrote these words, he knew no more than the O.T. prophets did about how God would accomplish this or what it would exactly look like.
2. What he did know and what we should take away is that it will be the permanent home of righteousness (Isaiah 60:19-20; Revelation 21:27).

“No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will

the moon give you light; but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory. Your sun will no longer set, nor will your moon wane; for you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be over.” (Isaiah 60:19–20, NASB95)

“and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Revelation 21:27, NASB95)

3. All evil will have been destroyed.

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III. The Diligence To Which We Are Called

A. “BE FOUND BY HIM IN PEACE”

“Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,” (2 Peter 3:14, NASB95)

1. Because you and I are looking for “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” we must “make every effort” to be prepared for our new home.
2. “The appropriate lifestyle of a follower of Jesus does not just happen; it requires effort”¹
3. In Romans 5:1, Paul said that you and I as Christians “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
4. As a descendant of Abraham, Peter understood “peace” to mean completeness or wholeness, which from a moral perspective meant someone without spot or blemish, just like the sacrificial animals which were offered to God under the old law.

¹ Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006).

Slide 9**B. RECOGNIZE GOD’S PATIENCE AS YOUR SALVATION**

“and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,” (2 Peter 3:15, NASB95)

1. As we noticed last week, the mockers kept asking “Where is the promise of His [the Lord’s] coming?” (v. 4).
2. God’s delay in sending His Son back is not the result of any inability or moral fault of His own.
3. Instead, it is because He is a merciful God and continues to hold the door open for those who might repent.
4. You and I are to see “the patience of our Lord as salvation”
 - a. Salvation for those whom Peter was addressing.
 - b. Salvation for the millions of people down through the ages, the names of which we do not know.
 - c. Salvation for ourselves.
5. Do you know someone today who is still lost in his or her sins?
6. If so, you are thankful for our Lord’s patience because you want that person to have time to come to the salvation which Christ offers.

Slide 10**IV. A Final Exhortation****A. BE ON YOUR GUARD**

“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,” (2 Peter 3:17, NASB95)

1. There is no place for complacency in our lives as Christians.
2. Coming to Christ is one thing; living faithfully in Christ is another.

3. To drop our guard is to be “carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from [our] own steadfastness.”
3. In verse 16, Peter spoke of those who distorted some of Paul’s teachings, which he said they also did with “the rest of the Scriptures” and this “to their own destruction.”
4. Jesus was constantly warning His followers to “take heed,” “watch out,” “be on your guard” (Mark 13:5,9,23,33).
5. It is vital that we know what we believe and why we believe it.

Slide 11**B. GROW !**

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18, NASB95)

1. If you go back to the beginning of this letter, you will find Peter asking that God multiply “grace and peace” to the Christians in Asia Minor through “the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord” (v. 2).
2. In the following verse (v. 3), Peter adds that God’s “divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.”
3. He then tells us that this is made possible “through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (v. 3b).
4. There you have it. As you and I “grow in the . . . knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” He multiplies “grace and peace” in our lives!

Conclusion

1. God does not want anyone here this morning to be lost.

2. His desire is that all of us might come to repentance — that we might realize we are going the wrong way in our lives and that we turn back toward Him.

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3. There is a great day coming — it is the day when, as Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God.”
4. I can’t tell you what all of this is going to be like, but I promise you this — there will be no mistaking what is happening.
5. The question is simple: “Are you ready?”