

What Sort of Person Ought We to Be!

Preparing for Eternity

II Peter 3:14-18

INTRODUCTION:

There is a poem that sits on my bathroom vanity that I see every day. It reads:

ILLUSTRATION:

"This is the beginning of a new day.
God has given me this day to use as I will.
I can waste it or use it for good.
What I do today is important, because
I am exchanging a day of my life for it.
When tomorrow comes,
this day will be gone forever,
leaving in its place something I have traded for it.
I want it to be gain, not loss; good, not evil;
success, not failure; in order that I
shall not regret the price that I paid for it."

Before Pentecost, Peter was an impulsive man. He often said or did the right thing at just the right time and then followed it by saying or doing the absolute wrong at the worst of times.

Peter was the one who denied Christ three times during the crucifixion before the rooster crowed. Peter was the one who tried to walk on water and began to sink when his faith wavered. Peter is the one whom Jesus called "Satan" when he took Jesus aside and rebuked Him for telling them that He was going into Jerusalem to be killed and rise again on the third day. Peter is the one who cut off the right ear of Malchus, a slave to the high priest, when they came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But he was also one of Jesus' inner three (Peter, James, and John). He was called by Jesus from a life as a fisherman and lived with Him and was taught by Him to be a fisher of men.

Now Peter is in prison and knows he is living his last days. The Romans are going to crucify him. Peter demands for them to hang him upside down because he feels that he is not worthy to be crucified like Christ.

So Peter is sitting in prison. And just like the poem that I just read, Peter wants to maximize the time that he has left to prepare Christians for eternity. So he is writing this second epistle with everything that he has.

In this epistle he wants all Christians to know that Jesus was Who He claimed to be (the Messiah and the Son of God). Peter said, I lived with Him and was taught by Him and I witnessed His miracles with my own eyes. I saw Him crucified on the cross as He had foretold, and witnessed the supernatural events during His death on the cross (the earthquake, the darkness in the middle of the day, and the veil in the temple torn from top to bottom). I saw Jesus, in person, after the resurrection, and I witnessed Christ's glory during His ascension into Heaven. Where I even heard the voice of God saying "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased"! I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD!

Many people believe that there is an afterlife. Many of us believe that there is an eternal heaven reserved for the children of God. The problem for many is that they have heard of heaven so many times that the thrill of living eternally with God in heaven has faded away. We get so caught up in our daily lives, that we fail to reflect by our lives how glorious that day will be! Heaven is by far greater than anything here on earth because it is eternal. Everything in this world is temporal and will go away.

How would the world react if the cure for all cancer was discovered and the treatment for it was free and the treatment had no side effects? Can you imagine the excitement that would accompany such an event?

Peter reminds us that the Lord's return CAN be the most wonderful thing that we will ever experience. He pleads to us to rekindle our excitement for the Lord's return and be prepared for it.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 3:14-18 (NASB)

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ 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.

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Notice that Peter begins the last six verses with the word "THEREFORE". In these verses he is going to summarize what he has just written.

Remember in verses 8 - 13, Peter reminded us that Christ IS coming again like a thief in the night when we least expect it and the heavens and the earth are going to be destroyed by fire. Then he **exclaims** to us "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be!" Not as a question, but as an exclamation.

In our scripture text this morning, Peter, knowing he is about to be killed, is going to remind us one more time **how to be prepared for eternity**.

BODY:

I. LIVE IN EXPECTATION.

2 Peter 3:14a (NASB)

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things,

What are we looking for?

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NASB)

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² 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! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

What are we looking for?

A. That Christ IS coming again!

The same Jesus that fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah of the Old Testament and performed all of the miracles around Peter and the apostles. The same Jesus that died on the cross and resurrected from the grave three days later as He had promised. The same Jesus that Peter saw ascend into Heaven in glory. This same Jesus has promised that He is coming again. Although it may seem that it has been a very long time since He made that promise, **do not be deceived! HE IS COMING AGAIN!**

What are we looking for?

B. That the heavens and the earth are going to be destroyed by fire.

Most people try to find meaning in life by building something that will carry on their legacy even after they are gone. They try to acquire wealth, possessions, prestige, power, and success.

Peter's response is this: Don't waste your time with all of these material things, it's all going to burn up.

The lesson from verse 11 is this: the only things that are going to survive the fires of judgment on this earth are the spiritual attributes of holiness and godliness.

If we truly comprehend that this life is temporary and if the heavens and the earth and all of its belongings are going to be destroyed by fire, and the unrighteous are going to be eternally separated from God with gnashing of teeth and in torment, **what sort of people ought we to be!!!**

What are we looking for?

C. That there will be a new heavens and a new earth.

There will be a new heavens and a new earth where we will live in the presence of the glory of God free from all sin and unrighteousness! **Oh, an additional bonus, "IT WILL BE FOR ETERNITY!"**

There is an old saying that applies here. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last."

What sort of person ought we to be! LIVE IN EXPECTATION OF THESE THINGS!

II. BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND IN PEACE.

2 Peter 3:14b (NASB)

¹⁴...be diligent to be found by Him in peace,

What does Peter mean by having peace?

We are told that we should seek peace with all men and that we should seek an earthly peace and goodwill toward all men. But this is not referring to an earthly peace.

The peace that we are seeking is the assurance of our salvation and the confidence that we no longer need to fear death. Physical death for the sinner is eternal separation from the presence of God. Physical death for the Child of God is the stepping stone between this life on earth filled with sin and the new heavens and the new earth that is being created for us where we will dwell in the pure righteousness of God and all of His glory!

2 Peter 1:10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

What sort of person ought we to be! BE DILIGENT TO LIVE IN PEACE!

III. BE FOUND SPOTLESS AND BLAMELESS.

2 Peter 3:14c (NASB)

¹⁴...be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

We know that we live in a world of sin and that we all have sinned. We continue to sin even when we try so hard to avoid it. How can I possibly be "spotless and blameless" when Jesus comes again.

That is the good news or the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are all lost in sin when we reach the age of accountability of realizing that we are sinners. The natural reaction is to think that I will start living a good life and find favor with God. I will work hard to earn a living for my family. I will live a moral life avoiding the pitfalls of adultery, stealing, swearing, and drunkenness. I will treat my neighbors fairly and help the poor and needy. Surely, God will see all of my good deeds and let me enter Heaven.

But the scriptures tell us that our good works, no matter how good they are, can never save us. The only way we can be found spotless and blameless before God is by accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior by repenting of our sins, being immersed in baptism for the remission of those sins, and living a new life for God. Our salvation is not anything that we can earn. It is a gift from God.

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NASB)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

What sort of person ought we to be! BE FOUND SPOTLESS AND BLAMELESS!

IV. REGARD THE PATIENCE OF OUR LORD TO BE SALVATION.

2 Peter 3:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation;

One of the last things that Jesus told Peter and the apostles was..

Mark 16:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶ He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

We were born into a new life in Christ to proclaim the Gospel to a dying world. Jesus spent His entire life doing the will of God and working for Him.

John 9:4 (NASB)

⁴ We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

We must realize that our life on earth is very short and we are not guaranteed a tomorrow. We should regard the poem that I read at the beginning:

When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something I have traded for it. I want it to be gain, not loss; good, not evil; success, not failure; in order that I shall not regret the price that I paid for it.

Peter reminds us that God is not slow about His promise of Christ coming again. He is patiently waiting for the last of His sheep to come to repentance. It is our responsibility to proclaim the Lord to everyone until He comes.

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

What sort of person ought we to be! REGARD THE PATIENCE OF OUR LORD TO BE SALVATION!

V. REMAIN STEDFAST.

2 Peter 3:15b-17 (NASB)

¹⁵...just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷You 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,

Peter spent the entire second chapter warning us to know the scriptures and be able to discern truth from false doctrine. We should know the scriptures so well that we can "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

What sort of person ought we to be! REMAIN STEDFAST!

VI. GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

2 Peter 3:18a (NASB)

¹⁸but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Grace is defined as unmerited favor. It is blessings that God gives to you despite the fact that we do not deserve them. But it is going to come through an increased knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Christ has granted to us everything that you need for eternal life and everything that you need for godliness in this life. This includes the scriptures by which we can learn the way to live our lives, the free gift of salvation, and the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. As we mature in Christ, the spiritual attributes of **holiness and godliness** that we need to escape the fires of judgment will grow within us.

What sort of person ought we to be! GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!

VII. TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

2 Peter 3:18b (NASB)

18...To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

As we discussed in the last couple of messages, we have so much to be thankful for. Just remember that every possession and every talent that we have, we have because God gave them to us. He has promised to supply all of our true needs. Because of His love for us we can have the assurance of salvation. This is the greatest gift that could ever be given. Let us never forget and give God the glory for ALL of His blessings.

What sort of person ought we to be! GIVE GOD BE THE GLORY!

CONCLUSION:

I hope you have enjoyed this study of I & II Peter as much as I have.

Jesus IS coming again.

Our world as we know it is going to be destroyed by fire along with all of the treasures that are on the earth.

God is preparing a new heavens and a new earth for those who accept His free gift of salvation through His son where we will live with Him for eternity.

Are you ready to die? Will Christ's second coming be a **glorious event** or will it be a **terrifying event** for you? If you do not have the peace in your life that you are a child of God, why not get ready today? God has not promised us a tomorrow!

If you need to place your faith in Jesus Christ and obey His command to repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of those sins, I plead with you to come forward this morning during the invitation hymn and accept Christ's gift of forgiveness and salvation.

He is Lord!