



The Second Coming Mentality: 3:10-18

Last week we talked about the difference between the perceptions of the early church and our church, some two thousand years later. The chief difference of course is that the early church had central in their minds that Christ could return any day. In fact, having this expectation was one way the church was inspired to live their lives with urgent godliness.

Urgent godliness simply means cleaning up your life and getting right with Christ because He will come back any second. Think about when someone important is about to visit your home for the first time. In expectation, you pick up the home, clean the bathroom, dust the furniture, and mop the floors because you don't want that person to think you're a slob. There is urgency! I did that with Machele when we were dating. I washed and put sauce and gravy off the cupboards, and I even bought some air freshener because I wanted to make an impression on her. In the same way, when we live with the thought Christ may come today, there is an urgency to clean up and get your heart right with God.

The problem we fight here is familiarity. When I had Machele's approval; I started to clean up with less precision. I started to neglect the spaghetti stains on the cabinets and the ring around the bathtub. We fight that same kind of problem when it comes to the return of Christ. We become used to the pattern that he has not returned. He did not return yesterday. He did not come back the day before. The month before. The year before. In fact, Christ has not come back in a long time. What happens is that we clean up less. We lose that desire to impress him on his arrival.

There is no longer that eager expectation.

This is one reason Jesus and the apostles emphasized that we need to be ready. Christ can return in any moment. Today I want to look at some reasons practical ways we can train our minds to think of the Day of the Lord.

1. View Earthly Things from God's Perspective

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

When you view life from God's perspective you realize Jesus could come any moment. You realize that the world as we know it can change drastically. In many ways, the terrible natural disasters we have seen through the media are like foreshadows of a reality that will occur at any moment on a much larger and destructive scale. The Bible tells you that Jesus will come like a thief.

When I was a teenager, my friend and I used to spend the summers camping in my backyard. We made a large pit where we had our nightly campfire. On one of these nights we talked about Jesus—though we both weren't Christians. We looked at each other and asked the question. What if Jesus came back tonight? We laughed for a second but then we became frightened. We put out the campfire and sought security in the tent. I guess we thought Jesus couldn't get us in there once it was zipped up. My friend and I modeled how people who haven't accepted Christ would react if he suddenly came. We both realized at that moment we weren't

ready. We had not lived our lives with the reverence we should have. Now here's the deal. The return of Jesus is great news for the believer. But for those who have rejected him, it is not good news at all.

The Day of the Lord is a day of great judgment. The earth will be burned and dissolved.

Now there are a lot of people who spend their lives building their fortune. They have nice houses, nice cars, and their lives are spent accumulating more things. There was a popular bumper sticker when I went to high school that said, "He who has the most toys wins." But this is not true if you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. He who has the most toys without Christ loses. In fact, they lose everything, including their lives.

So we should live our life looking at the world from God's perspective. The nice houses, the nice cars, the nice careers, though they are worth admiring, will not last.

The formula of the world says, Your Performance + Other people's opinion = Your Self-Worth. That is the great lie by the great enemy. In reality, your worth rests in the performance of Jesus on the cross and the opinion that really matters is not other people's; it's God's.

So hold on loosely to the things you have. Take a step back and realize that knowing Jesus is what really matters. Everything else will vanish instantly. In the end, that's what Jesus meant when he said that the treasures we should be storing up are those that have a heavenly purpose.

2. Look forward to Your New Home

11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

As Christians, we must understand that this world is not our home. Once the present world is burned, there will be a new home for God's people, it will be a perfect place where righteousness is permanent. Peter says we are all waiting for a new home. It has yet to be built.

Machele and I recently had a new home built. While we were going thru this process there was a great anticipation. The process went like this.

- a. Choose the home.
- b. Get the permits
- c. Excavate the land
- d. Put in the foundation
- e. Do the framing
- f. Put on the siding
- g. Install the electrical
- h. Put in the plumbing
- i. Do the cement
- j. Put in the installation
- k. Finish the drywall
- l. Texture the walls
- m. Put in the door framing
- n. Install the cabinets and counters
- o. Put in the flooring
- p. Paint the interior
- q. Paint the exterior

With each step we would drive by the property to check on the progress. Sometimes we were so eager we would drive by the site on a daily basis. There was an anticipation.

In the same way, Peter says Christians should hasten toward and anticipate their new home that is being prepared for you.

Now some of you have never had a new home being built and you wonder what that would feel like. Others of you may have homes that seem to be falling apart. Still others of you may have never had your own home and you look at other homes and wonder what it is like. Well all the homes you see of others will not last. But if you have accepted Jesus in your life, you will have a home that will not decay. You will have a home that surpasses any home you have ever seen. It is good to anticipate with an earnest desire what your home will be like. Peter says there will be a new earth and heavens.

Now there are some people who are not sure what Peter means when he says the earth will be set on fire and destroyed. The debate is whether the earth will be annihilated like planet shot by a phaser on Star Track or if the earth will merely be purged.

I hold to the earth being purged and refined by fire for several reasons. The most convincing reason is what is discussed in Romans 8:19-23

19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

What Paul is saying is that the creation, which is a reference to anything God has created, the earth, the stars, the plants, the animals, etc., await redemption. In Genesis we are told that God cursed the creation and in Revelation we are told that curse will be lifted. Everything God created was considered "good by Him." The problem is that sin has corrupted His good creation. Like CS. Lewis once said, sin is spoiled goodness. What Peter has in mind here is a purging with fire. Like the ancient world was purged of sin by the flood, so this world will be purged of sin by fire. Once it is purged of sin, then God can once again dwell with His people. The New Earth will be a place of righteousness.

And for those of you who have lost loved ones who were saints, the exciting part is that you will experience these new heavens and new earth together for first time in your newly resurrected bodies. Imagine that, being with your loved ones and experiencing this new home together for the very first time. In the end, this is all part of God's wonderful plan for His children once the Day of the Lord rolls around. So what are we to do in the meantime?

3. Seize Each Day that God is Patient

14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. **15** And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, **16** as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

We have to learn how to seize each day by the way we live and with the mindset that each day is another day for people to come to Christ. Peter says to be diligent to be without spot or blemish and at

peace. The idea of being without spot or blemish refers to making yourselves presentable when the Lord returns. Making sure you are not involved in a lifestyle that is displeasing to the Lord. The idea of being at peace can refer to having peace with God...but it can also mean others. In a sense, if we are not at peace with others, use each day to move toward that goal. If you need to seek forgiveness work towards that. If you need to forgive someone, make it a mission to do so. Peter tells us that this world as we know it will change one day instantly, like a thief in the night. We can't just let the years pass by without taking any action. When Jesus comes, you want to be without spot or blemish and at peace.

Why? Peter says because each day that passes should be viewed as another day for salvation for others. When I went to the waterfront on Tuesday to pray and study, I watched a lot of people walk by. I thought to myself, it is quite probable that many of these folks have not experienced the salvation of Jesus. A lady who walks her dog. A Jogger or another who is riding their bicycle. Younger and older people. We should all recognize today is another opportunity to take advantage of the patience God is displaying and share not only what Jesus has done in our life; but also the gospel.

The reality of what Peter is talking about can happen at any moment. Each day is a golden opportunity. Let's not be like the false teachers Peter writes about that say, Where is this second coming; each day is like the one before. Instead, let's have a sense of relief that we have another day to lead people to Christ.

Now some of you say, well I am pretty intimidated to do that. That is where spiritual growth happens. We learn how to share and trust God to do the rest. Peter who writes this was once intimidated? In fact, he was afraid to share with the Gentiles and then God brought the apostle Paul along. Peter witnessed to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles. Here, Peter, who is about to die makes it known to his readers that he and Paul are on the same team when it comes to the Day of the Lord. What he is in a sense saying is that when I die, you can trust in the teachings of my beloved brother in Christ, Paul. Don't listen to the false teachers, listen to those who knew Jesus.

Paul concurs, that each day is another opportunity for us to grow in godliness and sharing our faith because presently God is being patient. As a church, we have to make it our ambition to take advantage of God's great patience. In the end, His desire is that everyone will come to saving faith. So look at people from God's perspective. Today is another day where people can be saved. Each day is also another opportunity for us to grow as men and women in Christ. This brings me to my final point.

4. Actively Grow in Truth and Grace

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 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

There are two types of churches. Those that emphasize Truth and those who emphasize grace. One is in danger of becoming legalistic and turning people away from the faith. The other attracts people but waters down the Bible.

I find it only fitting that Peter ends his letter by encouraging them to grow in both truth and grace. Truth allows you to know God's will and be anchored. Grace allows you to have empathy and minister to people. As Christians we should always be growing.

You grow in truth by reading your Bible and being a part of Bible studies. You grow in grace by helping people and sharing with them about Christ. Each day is another opportunity to grow in Christ. In the end, as Peter says, Jesus should get the glory in your life. He has earned that because he died for your sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried for three days, and rose from the dead

according to the Scriptures. We are saved only when we put out trust in those works and recognize that Jesus is our Savior.

There was a time when you did not know that or you choose not to believe it. But with each passing day God demonstrated His patience which leads to salvation. You are a living testimony of the patience of God that leads to salvation. My hope is that we would long for others and take the chances necessary for others to know Christ. Seize the day because we are not promised another one. Jesus could come any moment. Make every effort to be growing in the knowledge and grace of Jesus.