

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with ever spiritual blessing in Christ. Amen.**

<sup>8</sup> But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

<sup>11</sup> Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup> as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

<sup>14</sup> So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. **This is God's Word.**

**Dear Children of God,**

The message of the Old Testament lesson is, **“The Day is Coming.”** The day is coming when God will rescue his people from captivity, when he will forgive them for their sins and when he will send his messenger to prepare the way for the promised Savior. And yet, as Isaiah proclaimed this message to the people, it would still be 100's of years until it was fulfilled. But that fits well with the section of scripture before us today as we consider, **“What kind of people we ought to be.”** Peter points out that as Christians, we should be, **“People who do not abuse God's patience”** and **“People who look forward to a new world.”**

I. Peter begins by telling us, **“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.”** Obviously he is telling us about God, but what exactly does he want us to understand? God is not bound by time like we are and so God's timeline is quite a bit different than ours and that is sometimes hard for us to deal with because we have become a society that can have things almost instantly.

Yet, consider the promise of a Savior, God made to Adam and Eve. They thought it would be fulfilled with the birth of their first son, Cain but even though Adam and Eve lived over 900 years, they did not see the fulfillment of this promise. Or consider Abraham and Sarah, whom I mentioned last Wednesday. God promised them a son and yet it was 25 years before the promise was fulfilled. Sarah had given up on the promise but rejoiced when she gave birth to Isaac. And now we have the promise of Jesus that he will come again on Judgment Day, but it has been 2000 years since he left and we still haven't seen the fulfillment of this promise.

As we consider how God views time and his promises to his people, Peter goes on to explain, **“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”** There are so many people who need to hear the gospel message – who need to hear about Jesus and how he lived and died for us and our sins. And so the Lord isn't dragging his feet, rather he is showing

great patience with mankind – with you and me. And so we don't want to abuse that patience by wasting our time of grace or ignoring God and his Word. For no one knows what God's timeline is and when he will return.

**“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”**

It is so easy to put things off for another day and then we never get around to doing them. Many have done that with their spiritual life and have put their souls in jeopardy when their life unexpectedly ended. There's a commercial out about identity theft and it states that it's not a matter of whether your identity will be stolen or not – because it will – it's just a matter of when. And then that commercial goes on to encourage you to protect yourself – to be prepared. Well, that's what Peter is doing here for us too. It's not a matter of whether Christ will come or not – because he will – but it's a matter of being prepared for when it does happen.

**“Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.”** As we prepare, Peter tells us to live holy and godly lives. I know that I'm not holy because that means to be perfect and I am far from perfect and you are all in the same boat with me, but we are in a lifeboat – we are perfect in God's eyes because we are forgiven. Christ has given us a life preserver of perfection through the faith that is in our hearts and that is what enables us to live a “godly life.”

Once again, that doesn't mean our lives will be perfect, but it does mean that we should try and recognize the temptations that come our way and make an effort to resist them. It means that we should try and change our situation so that we aren't constantly going back to those certain sins that are so hard for us to resist. That's not easy because our friends and sometimes family encourage us to indulge in a sinful action or way of life.

But God has promised to be with us and to help us in our struggles to change. We all want God in our lives and so seek him and make him an important part of your life. Give up those parts of your life that are ungodly and ask him to help you to travel a better path. As you struggle with life and your sins remember that God has given you the solution to your sin in his Son and he will help you to make changes so that you can live a godly life.

So as you leave here today, go with a joyful heart that has been forgiven and as you begin a new week, consider just one area where you might struggle with temptation and try to make changes in that one area and ask God to help you. Then you will be ready for his second coming and even look forward to that day and the new world he promises all believers.

**II. “As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.”** I would guess that every child is eagerly waiting for Christmas and looking forward to the presents they will receive – that day can't come fast enough. That's really how we want to look forward to Judgment Day – knowing that Christ will return and bring us into heaven and it will be like getting the best present ever – a present that goes beyond anything we could ever imagine and it will be great. So how do we speed it's coming?

We can't change time but we can stay busy living for the Lord. You all know that as you stay busy, time goes by so much quicker. As you live for the Lord, fulfill those roles that God has given you. Be the best husband and/or father that you can be or the best mother and/or wife. Be the best grandparent or the best student or the best employee or friend that you can be. Be a faithful servant of God. Whatever role God has given you, do it to the best of your ability and live for the Lord, guided by his Word and motivated by his love for you.

And look forward to the new heaven and the new earth you will eventually experience. Some people wonder about that phrase of "new heaven and new earth." Maybe think of it in this way. The Apostle John was pastor at Ephesus for a while but then was exiled to the island of Patmos. Only a few miles of water separated him from Ephesus and the people he loved but that was a barrier he couldn't overcome. But in the new heaven and the new earth there won't be any barriers separating God's people as there are now. The old will be destroyed and all believers will dwell in one place – a perfect place in the presence of God and his glory. A place without sin or the effects of sin – a place of righteousness where everything will be right with God including you and me.

And so Peter ends this section by telling us, **"So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him."** Even though we are told to make every effort, God is the one who has done the work for us. Our effort is in staying close to him by making use of his Word and sacraments so that the Holy Spirit can continue to work in your hearts and bring you the peace of God and a yearning for this perfect place that is ours through faith.

So what kind of people are we to be? There's a story about a Christian pastor who would look up to heaven before he would go to bed every night and say, **"Perhaps tonight, Lord?"** When he woke up every morning, he would say, **"Perhaps today, Lord?"** We know too that perhaps tonight/today, tomorrow or the next day, the Lord will come again.

Knowing that, let us be spiritually alert, making Christ the Alpha and the Omega of our lives, the first and last reason for our existence. Waking, let us offer Him our day; sleeping let us commit our souls into his care. Let us begin and end each day with Him until the day of His return, when this life will end and the next will begin. **I can hardly wait, can you? Amen.**