

# What are You Waiting For

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     2 Peter 3, verse number 11. Now, before we get there, let me just point out something to you so that as Josh is reading, you are connecting some dots that we're going to try to connect during our time together.

So this might be especially helpful if you're taking notes. Notice in your Bible some words that are repeated. First of all, we're going to notice the word dissolved.

Dissolved. You see that? Verse 11. It's again in verse number 12. Notice the words waiting for in verse 12, and again in verse 13, and again down in verse 14.

Notice the word beloved. We mentioned it twice last time. It's three times in our text today. Five times in chapter 3, he uses this word beloved.

Four of them to refer to the church that he is writing to. And then I want you to notice one more. Notice the word count, which is in verse 15.

[ 1 : 1 0 ]     And then throw your eyes back up to verse number 9, and notice the word count up there. These are important, repeated words that will help you connect, I hope, with our text today.

So here's Josh. He's going to read 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 11, and down through the end of the chapter. I'm going to read from NIV too, so some of the words might not be exactly what Jeremy described, but they'll still be there.

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 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.

But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 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 you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters, his letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do other scriptures, to their own destruction.

[ 2 : 3 5 ]     Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard, so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position, but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be glory, both now and forever. Amen. Father, we are grateful to have your word. Blessed Holy Spirit, would you please come and be with us, as you have already been with us in our time of worship, as we have lifted our hearts, as we have lifted our voices, perhaps some have lifted their hands, and we have put our attention and affection on you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Thank you for the words that we just sang together, of Jesus, our Redeemer, our Victor, the great Overcomer. We have so much to be grateful for, so many wonderful reasons to gather together for worship today.

As we now turn our attention to the preaching of your word, would you please help us to listen carefully and to discern, to test whether these things are so, and then to believe and obey.

We ask, Father, that we would not leave this place unchanged, but that who we are as we leave this time of worship would be someone who is more deeply grounded in their faith, more convinced than ever of the return of the Lord Jesus, and more excited about His glory and what it would look like for us to give Him glory in our lives right now.

[ 4 : 20 ] We ask this for Your glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and for our good in Jesus' name. Amen. Consequences shape choices.

Every parenting book will tell you this. Consequences shape choices. But think about it a little more broadly than just parenting.

If you remember the pain of a broken arm and the frustration of having to wear a cast during the time of the year when you would like to be active, then you are less likely to climb that tree again, or perhaps less likely to climb up on your roof and try to clean your own gutters.

If you have felt the sting of a ruined relationship, then you will tend to choose your words very carefully.

If you have had to explain a bad test grade to your parents, or perhaps tell your spouse about a rough one-on-one meeting with your supervisor, then you will likely study more diligently next time, and you will act more professionally when you are at the office.

[ 5 : 35 ] The consequences of past behaviors shape your choices in the present. Now, in our text for today, Peter makes a similar but opposite argument.

Here's what I mean by that. It's similar because he says that we should allow something to shape our choices right now. But it's opposite in the sense of rather than talking about past consequences, Peter calls our attention to the future.

And he says, I want you to remember what is coming, what is going to happen, that Jesus will return. And let that shape your future.

Peter wants us to live right now in light of something that hasn't happened yet. That can feel hard for us.

But faith that is fixed on the future is the kind of faith that produces holiness and steadfastness and growth.

[ 6 : 43 ] And so I want to encourage you, as we wrap up 2 Peter, to anticipate the end, to grow in grace until then.

So in order to connect with this text, let's just back up a bit and let's start in verse number 9. Plus this will let you catch that word count and also an extra time with the word dissolved if you're taking notes in that way.

Look at verse number 9. The Lord, The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

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.

Remember the scoffers from last week. Scoffers rationalize since the world has continued as it has always been. God is not going to intervene.

[ 8 : 04 ] Jesus is not going to return. We can do whatever we want. Scoffers rationalize. But Peter stirs followers of Jesus not to rationalize, but to remember.

What do we need to remember? That God's patience has a purpose and that that purpose is our repentance.

repentance. We are in the last days, even though we are not necessarily at the end of days.

Jesus' return is imminent. It is unpredictably near. He will come like a thief in the night. And on that day, the world as we know it, Peter says, will be burned up and dissolved.

Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus will return? Do you believe that the world, as you know it, will be burned up? This is an important question because everything else that Peter has to say in the rest of the letter hinges on whether we believe that Jesus will return.

[ 9 : 21 ] Here's what I mean. Look at verse number 11. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved.

In other words, Peter says, since this is true, since Jesus will return, since the world as we know it will be dissolved, don't bother continuing reading if you don't believe this.

Everything else hinges on this. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved. What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 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.

But, according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Most modern English translations turn verse 11 into a question. It's a rhetorical question, right? Since the world as we know it will be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be?

[ 10 : 48 ] It's rhetorical. We should know the answer to this by now. But, the Christian Standard Bible is an exception and translates it this way, and I do think it's helpful. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be.

Peter's point is apparent. What you believe about the future shapes your behavior in the present. So, if we believe that Jesus will return and the world as we know it will be burned up and dissolved, what sort of people should we be?

Well, Peter tells us we should be the sort of people who are holy and godly. And Peter says, this will hasten the coming of the day of God.

What does that mean? Because it sounds like our holiness and our godliness can somehow speed up the return of Jesus.

like how you might turn back one of those old school timers on the hot tub at the hotel or if you have a sauna, maybe it has the old timer turned back or on a rotisserie oven which I never expected that illustration to get so much traction but here we are.

[ 12 : 21 ] Is that what Peter is talking about? That you can sort of turn back the timer on God's timetable of when Jesus will return?

There is tension here. There is tension here. So let's be humble and let's be discerning and gracious. God is sovereign. We know that that's true and he has set a day when Jesus will return and yet God works through his people.

So as Jesus says in Matthew 24 when we share the gospel and as Peter says in chapter 3 and verse 9 as we repent and as he says here in verse 11 and 12 when we pursue holiness and godliness we become part of the means that God has provided which will lead to the day when Jesus returns.

Hasten does not mean that we change God's timeline. It means living so mindful of that coming day that when it arrives it's as though we've ushered it in.

Here is an imperfect illustration consider a play or a musical that is written and directed by the same person.

[ 14 : 02 ] You all have one in mind? You all are musical people? Because the author of the play and the musical and he's the director he knows how this musical is going to end.

He knows what the final scene will look like. But as the director he invites the actors and the actresses and the stage crew and the tech crew and the choreographers and most importantly the pit orchestra.

He invites all all of these people to come together and each to do their part that needs to get done. and as each one does their part that needs to be done what is happening?

The musical is progressing scene by scene by scene by scene and at some point we arrive at the end where the author and the director knew we were going to be all along.

The end is not being edited. It's being brought to life. Hastening doesn't mean that we are changing God's plan.

[ 15 : 21 ] It means that we are finding our place in it, participating in God's plan. Not speeding it up, but stepping up into lives of holiness and godliness.

Waiting for Jesus' return then is not like waiting at the DMV. It is not a passive endeavor. Waiting as Peter understands it and throughout the New Testament, waiting for Jesus is an eager anticipation that produces action.

What are we looking forward to? What are we anticipating? Well, God promises new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

I didn't know how much I needed this little verse until about halfway through this week. I needed to be reminded that we are heading for a place where righteousness dwells.

In light of the world that we live in, in light of the sin that still surrounds us, and the sin that still infects us, how does this sound?

[ 16 : 45 ] A new heaven and a new earth where there is no abuse, no injustice, no wrongs that need to be righted, no truth that goes undisclosed, no negligence, no apathy, no deception, no pride, no guilt, no shame, no darkness, no sin, no suffering, no death, a place where righteousness dwells.

That's what we are looking forward to. And with our faith fixed on God's promise of that future, notice how Peter exhorts us to live right now in the present.

Verse 14, therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, for what? for Jesus to return and for the world as we know it to be burned up and dissolved and made new, for this place where righteousness dwells.

Since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish and at peace.

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation. Now, if you connected the dots just before Josh read, then you've already seen this.

[ 18 : 36 ] Back up, the false teachers. Peter describes the false teachers as blots, blemishes in chapter 2.

But here, in contrast, he urges something different of God's people. we are to be without spot, without blemish, and at peace.

Quite a contrast. And he makes a second contrast, back up into chapter 3 and verse 9. False teachers count the delay in the timeline, that God has somehow been gone absent, that he is negligent.

They count it as a delay. But Peter says, no, you should, in contrast, count this as salvation.

It's patience that leads to salvation. What does that mean? Well, since God's mercies are new every single morning, then every day is an opportunity to repent and go again for greater Christ-likeness.

[ 19 : 46 ] every day is a day that you can be at peace in your relationship with God. How? By making your calling and election sure, as Peter says in chapter 1.

How? By diligently pursuing what Peter tells us in chapter 1. Virtue and knowledge and self-control and steadfastness and godliness and brotherly affection and love.

And Peter is not going off script with this exhortation. I find it so fascinating how he writes this down. Paul is apparently teaching the same things.

Look at verse 15. Be diligent, count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.

There are some things in them in Paul's letters that are hard to understand which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures.

[ 21 : 07 ] Notice two points about Paul's writings. The first one, so happy about this. He says some of Paul's writings can be hard to understand. They're just hard to understand and they're particularly hard to understand when you're committed to twisting Paul's words, trying to make them say something that they don't say or trying to unsay what Paul has said.

Those who are ignorant and unstable twist Paul's words that way into false teaching and it leads to their own destruction. Notice the second point that Peter makes about Paul's writings and this one is implicit but I think also very fascinating.

Notice at the end of verse 16. Do you see the word there translated scriptures? This word is always used in the New Testament to refer to the Old Testament.

Testament. What is Peter doing? He is implicitly taking Paul's writings to the churches many of which we have now and elevating them to the status of Old Testament scripture and saying you need to listen and obey and respond to the things that Paul has written to you.

Why? Because those are scripture. Fascinating. Fascinating little side point, little sidebar that Peter has there.

[ 22 : 42 ] So mindful that scripture can be twisted. Peter summarizes this entire letter first negatively and then positively. Look at verse 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 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Knowing this beforehand beforehand, in other words, since you have been warned about false teachers, since you've been warned about those who will twist Paul's writings, since you've been warned about the destructive end of the enticing temptations of the false teachers, since you have been alerted to the dangers of apostasy and you've been instructed on how to make your calling and election sure, knowing this beforehand, since we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells, take care, Peter says.

Take care. Don't be swayed by any false teacher. Don't be carried away by their enticing temptations. Don't lose your own steadfastness grace in the gospel and instead grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In other words, anticipate the end to grow in grace until then. Lydia is planning to go to college this fall.

[ 24 : 57 ] She has not gone to college before. I know that may surprise you. She has not gone to college before and I am not quite ready for her to go just yet.

But, mindful of that day when she intends to go to college, she has registered for classes. She has submitted her housing application.

She is making some decisions about whether she is going to use an iPad or a computer for taking notes and writing papers. She is working to earn money to pay her tuition and soon, one of my favorite parts, we are going to order books and we are going to send her books down to campus.

We have discussed how we are going to need to take two cars to get the girls down to campus so that we can leave one car there. Soon, she will be packing and then she will be saying her goodbyes.

Why? Why is she acting this way? Because she believes that a day is coming. And because she believes that day is coming when she is going to leave and go to college, she is acting in a certain way right now to prepare for that day.

[ 26 : 14 ] She has begun to live like it will actually happen. She hasn't started college yet.

Her future has not arrived, but it is already shaping her present. This is what Peter has in mind for us.

This is Peter's summary of his entire letter. If you believe that the world is going to be dissolved, if you believe that Jesus will return, then let that future hope shape how you live right now.

Anticipate the end to grow in grace until then. what are you waiting for?

What are you looking forward to? What is shaping your behavior? Maybe it's just your next payday, or maybe it's the next promotion, or maybe it's the next dream vacation.

[ 27 : 27 ] What day is circled in red on your calendar, or at least in the calendar in your mind? Maybe it's the day that you graduate from high school, or the day that you're done with college, or the day that you get your dream job.

Maybe it's a day when you get justice for some wrong that was done to you. Maybe it's a day when you will finally be content and secure in a relationship.

What day is it that you are waiting for? Brothers and sisters, no day is more important than that day when Jesus returns.

And so if you are waiting for that day, if that's what you're waiting for, then let me ask the same question but with a little different inflection.

If that's what you're waiting for, then what are you waiting for? what sin is a spot or a blemish that needs repentance by God's grace?

[ 28 : 40 ] What priority is disordered and holding you back from growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus? What emotion is stronger than hope?

what distracts you from diligence? Through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, in other words, through an ever-deepening, ever-broadening, ever-maturing relationship with Jesus, God's divine power has given you everything you need for life and godliness.

What are you waiting for? Peter calls us to holy and godly lives. He warns us about the dangers and the destructive end of false teachers.

He reminds us of the vital importance and the reliability of the scriptures. And then here at the end of his letter, he lifts our eyes one more time, not just to the future, but all the way up, so we put our eyes on Jesus.

Read it again, verse number 18. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to him, to Jesus Christ, be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

[ 30 : 11 ] Amen. Peter knows what we need. He knows that we need more diligence, more diligent effort, but he also knows that we need more of Jesus in our lives.

It is not just diligent urgency that has captivated Peter, it is worship, and that's what he calls our attention to here at the end. Keep your attention and your affection on Jesus, and if you do that, you will glorify him.

You will glorify him. Jesus will return. He will split the skies, the heavens will roar, the earth will be dissolved, and we will enter into new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells, and I am looking forward to that, and I hope that you are too.

The consequences of past behaviors may shape our present choices, but how much better, how much more glorifying for Jesus when we anticipate his return and let that day shape our behavior today.

So what are you waiting for? If you are not yet a Christian, not a believer, not a follower of Jesus, what are you waiting for?

[ 31 : 41 ] Trust in this Jesus who loved you and gave himself for you. Trust in him today. and Christian, my brothers and sisters, don't wait for some special moment, some perfect moment to get serious about following Jesus.

Be diligent now. Make every effort now. Be a holy and godly sort of person right now. Remain steadfast in God's truth.

faith. Glorify Jesus with your life. Anticipate the end to grow in grace until then. Let's pray.

Father, we are grateful to receive your word. Thank you for the reliability of the scriptures. others. And thank you that you have seen fit to reveal yourself to us.

Not only in the scriptures that have been recorded and preserved and handed down to us, but also as we read in the book of Hebrews in chapter one, that you have been pleased to reveal yourself in the person of our savior, Jesus Christ.

[ 33 : 11 ] We are humbled, Lord Jesus, that you would humble yourself and come to this earth and die for the likes of us. You know our hearts.

You know our weaknesses. You know our temptations. You know our priorities that are disordered, and you know the emotions that can drag us around.

you know my priorities that are disordered, and my emotions that can drag me around. Good Father, please set our sights on this glorious day, and cause us to live right now, today, and every day that you give us in light of that day.

We ask all of this, giving thanks. It is in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.