

- We are here to finish up our teaching and journey through 2 Peter, and today we will be studying a portion of the final verses of the 3rd Chapter
  - Some of what we've learned so far, is 2nd Peter is a very short letter – only 3 Chapters long – and we began this letter on June the 24th of this year.
  - I believe we have managed to extract just about every ounce of juice we could out of Peter's writings, and we did so with some 17 teachings – and between today and next week that will put us at 19 total teachings for this letter.
    - Which means, after next week – and over this past 11 years, we will have taught through 19 Books of the Bible.
    - 6 Old Testament & 13 New Testament
- Now before we jump into the final verses of 2 Peter 3 this morning, I would like to do a quick re-cap of where we have been with this letter.
  - Maybe better said – I want us to review at a high level what we know about the context of the letter (which is key).
  - We could say what the theme and or purpose of the letter was.
    - Remember, 2 Peter was written to a group of people (primarily Gentile believers) – who were residing in or around Asia Minor.
    - Today the area known as Modern Day Turkey!
  - And as we've learned, 2 Peter was believed to have been written in or around AD 65-68 – which was right before his death.
  - 2 Peter was also believed to be the last letter ever pinned in the New Testament.
- I am not going to spend a lot of time rehashing the introduction of this letter. If you weren't here for the introduction, I want to encourage you to go to our website and listen. Having said that, I do want to highlight one thing – (one very important thing). And that is the purpose of the letter.
  - If you take all 3 Chapters of 2 Peter and melt them all down into one main purpose or theme it would be this: 2 Peter is "a call to action" for Christians everywhere.
    - To Grow and Mature Spiritually.
  - This call was not just for obvious reasons, but it was a call to mature and grow – so that they, and all future believers could combat false teaching as well as combat the coming Apostasy of the Church.
- And what is the coming Apostasy of the Church?
  - It's when the church falls away in the last days
    - Essentially – you could say it falls away and abandons its faith!
  - Which leads us to a question: Were those people who fell away ever actually saved to begin with?
  - Which then leads us to another question – If someone falls away from their faith now/today, even before the "End of times", were they ever really saved?
    - It's an important question to consider and if you've ever contemplated that question, well you are in luck this morning because I have the answer.

- The answer is – who knows – who knows?
- Only God knows the heart of a man!
- What we do know is that in the last days, “The church” will be full of people, and many of those people will not be saved.
  - And that’s certainly scary to think about, but not as scary as my next statement, which is – according to scripture – the church will not only be full of people who are not saved.
  - But it will be full of people who think they are saved – but in reality they are not!
    - We know this to be the case because in The Book of Revelation, the church is believed to be pictured throughout history in the 7 letters, written by John to the 7 churches which resided in Asia Minor!
  - So, as I said – when you study the characteristics of each one of those churches you will clearly see how each church, and its characteristics, pictures the church throughout history.
  - With the final church being the church at Laodicea – which represents our current church age.
    - Meaning, its characteristics represent our current Church age.
    - What were its characteristics of that church? Let me read it to you.

**Rev. 3:14** “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

**Rev. 3:15** ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

**Rev. 3:16** ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

**Rev. 3:17** ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

**Rev. 3:18** I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

- What we just read was a description of the church of Laodicea at that time, but it could certainly be said that this church would be a pretty good representation of our modern-day church.
  - And so – as I said – if you go back through all 7 churches you can read and study their characteristics – you can match them up perfectly with the church’s behavior and characteristic throughout history.
  - And as we just learned they all culminate with the Church at Laodicea.
    - And when you study that church further you will discover that it was a church

that was booming, but it was neither hot nor cold – but lukewarm.

- And God said – for that reason, He would spew or vomit them out of His mouth.
- Now, if you do a deep dive into the meaning of Hot/Cold – and Lukewarm – you may or may not be surprised to find out that Hot would represent those who are saved.
  - Cold would represent those who are not saved.
  - And if that's the case, then what in the world is Lukewarm?
- For years many of the preachers in my life – taught that Lukewarm was just another term for “backslidden”.
  - But – if you apply one simple rule of *Hermeneutics* to the interpretation of the plight of the church at Laodicea (that being the rule of logic) – you will clearly see why that can't be the case.
  - This lukewarm group isn't just some group who has spiritually regressed and have fallen away.
  - This group is different. God said – I would rather you be – hot (saved) or cold (not saved).
    - But you lukewarm guys – are neither!
    - But how could that be?
- Well - If you do a study on this lukewarm group, you will discover this group is a group who thinks they're saved but they are not.
  - Which is why God said – I would rather you be hot or cold.
  - Because if you're hot, you're saved – and you know it.
  - And if you are cold – you're unsaved and you know it.
    - But if you are Lukewarm – you don't know what you are.
    - Which means you are deceived!
- The second reason I believe this lukewarm group to be a group who thinks they are saved but are not, lies in a study of soteriology – which is the study of salvation.
  - Meaning how salvation works, who initiates it and who finishes it.
  - Which (as we know) is none other than God Himself.
    - Having said that, we also know we can regress spiritually.
    - I am sure we've all experienced it, and the writer of Hebrews warned about spiritual regression when he said this in Hebrews 5:11-12

**Hebrews 5:11** Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

**Hebrews 5:12** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

- So, clearly, we see where believers can regress spiritually
  - But for those of us who believe in God's sovereign hand in matters of salvation, coupled with the testimony of scripture –
  - Which clearly speaks to God's ability to keep us and hold on to us – until the end.
- What the Gospel of John says – when Jesus Himself told us in John 6:37, Of all that the Father gives Him, He doesn't lose any of His sheep.
  - That tells us that a spiritually regressed Christian doesn't lose his or her salvation
    - Even though logically speaking, we know there are highs and lows in our Christian Walk.
    - But God doesn't spew or vomit His children out of His mouth.
  - And since the act of spewing or vomiting (in the context of Revelation) – is speaking specifically about the Church at Laodicea, and more specifically about the people who are not saved – the only difference in those who are Lukewarm versus those who are Cold is deception!
- Now, the question that looms in my mind when studying all of this is – How does that happen?
  - Well, first, it is prophetic – the scriptures tell us it will happen.
  - But to be more specific, it happens because the mechanism that saves an individual, that grows a believer spiritually, that mechanism has been abandoned!
    - And what is that mechanism?
    - It's the Teaching of God's Holy Manuscript.
  - But why has it been abandoned?
    - Well – believe it or not, it hasn't been abandoned on purpose.
    - It has slowly happened over time.
    - But why?
- Well – really it traces its origin to one thing: the thing I call “The Spirit of Evangelism”, or “The Spirit of seeing people saved”.
  - This movement in and of itself was great – it is great!
  - But when the church begins to dumb down God's Word – or use it as a side-bar of some sort or even worse, not use it at all.
  - And in it's place uses praise and worship as a means of outreach – essentially entertainment – which is then followed up by some message that more mirrors the world or a motivational speech.
    - Which has nothing to do with God's Word!
  - That's when the trouble starts – and it's because of this extreme “hyper focus” on evangelism (which started some 50 years ago by the way)
- It's because of this movement – more specifically – the “Do whatever it takes to get people into church movement”. That's what's caused the abandonment of God's Word.

- And it lines up perfectly with what Timothy said would happen in the end of Times.
- Listen to what Timothy wrote in 2 Timothy 4:1-3 – Preach the Word

**2 Tim. 4:1** I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

**2 Tim. 4:2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

**2 Tim. 4:3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

- It's a simple concept to understand.
  - In our efforts to reach people for Christ, we began bending the messages, so they were more palatable.
    - Easier to digest.
  - And we invented new and improved ways to reach people for Christ
  - And nothing wrong with the intent or spirit of that – other than you can't abandon the mechanism that convicts the individual and then grows them spiritually!
- That's the reason the church becomes Apostate, and the reason people abandon their faith is because
  - Either A – they weren't saved to begin with.
  - or B – they were saved but they never matured.
- Now back to the question, if someone abandons their faith does it mean they are not saved?
  - Once again, no one knows who's saved and who's not – salvation is between the individual and God.
  - And it's not my job to make that determination.
  - My job – is simply to teach you God's Word.
    - And let you and God work out the rest.
  - I will say however, that if a person's life has zero sign of spiritual fruit.
    - If I were that person – I would be concerned!
  - But as I said, the short answer is – I have no clue who is saved and who is not!
- Having said all of this, the central theme of Peter's Second Letter, along with many other letters in the Bible, is to warn believers.
  - To grab their attention
  - To say to them – Hey, look up here, there is trouble brewing.
  - And you need to be prepared – you need to grow up spiritually so you can combat it when it arrives!

- And so what we know (from a historical context), is that the church Peter is writing to is a young church.
  - And even in its infancy they are already dealing with the world pressing in on them.
  - As these false teachers slowly try and make their way into this fellowship.
    - Which is what caused Peter to (not only warn them) about these men – but also describe them in detail!
- Peter said these men will look much like the false prophets of the Old Testament – the only difference being between them and the false teacher of today is that the False Prophets of the Old Testament moved in from the outside, teaching about other pagan religions.
  - Working diligently to lead God's People off track by promoting other religions all together!
  - Whereas these false teachers, on the other hand, would emerge from inside the church.
    - With the exact same goal in mind, but with a different methodology.
    - Maybe a more effective methodology.
    - Which was that of twisting and distorting of God's Word.
  - And so the message was a simple one – beware of these people.
    - Be on guard – be diligent.
    - Know GOD'S WORD.
    - For that is the only way you can know if someone is a false teacher.
- And Peter's message to them – is the same message to us.
  - We must be students of God's Word.
  - And we must, as Paul says, “Keep your eye on the prize”.
    - Don't lose heart and don't lose your focus.
    - Remember to keep the main thing the main thing!
    - Don't get caught up in this life and what it has to offer.
    - But keep your focus – remembering how this all ends!
  - And by the way, when you're down and out spiritually speaking, I want you to reflect on today's verses – because Peter's encouragement to those believers (applies to all of us sitting here today).
    - And as we know, encouragement is what led Peter to write the end of Chapter 3.
  - He wanted them to reflect on how this all ends!
    - And that brings us into today's final teaching of 2 Peter, where my NASB Bible entitles this section *A New Heaven and New Earth*.
    - No disrespect to the writers and translators of the NASB, but I came up with my own title – which is not much of a title – but it drives home the point.
  - And that is – Be of good cheer, because it's going to get a lot worse before it gets

better!

- And why do I call it that?
- Because as we know, the whole reason Peter is writing in the first place was to promote spiritual maturity – and to both warn and encourage these people.
- And so – with all that said – his parting words of encouragement look something like this.

**2 Peter 3:10** 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.

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

**2 Peter 3:12** 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!

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

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

**2 Peter 3:15** 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,

**2 Peter 3:16** 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.

**2 Peter 3:17** 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,

**2 Peter 3:18** 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.

- Now – we are going to finish this morning with verses 10-11.
  - But before I break all of this down for you this morning, let me say, the Apostle Paul echoes the exact same sentiment in his writings that Peter does.
  - When he, after setting up churches in Asia Minor, these churches began experiencing persecution.
  - Paul said – and I will paraphrase here (but in context).
    - Don't worry – it gets worse before it gets better!
    - But be of Good Cheer – soon you will die and get to go be with your Father who is in Heaven.
    - And that my friends – is what's called the "Blessed Hope".

- And believe it or not – that is encouragement to the believer.
- It is – if you embrace the truth of that reality!
- You see, when you finally come to grips with how all this ends, it's a very spiritually liberating thing!
  - Because it changes the way you look at this life!
  - It will also cause you to pause in times of trouble and say to yourself – God is Sovereign and totally in control.
  - Ultimately – I'm not going to be here very long anyways!
    - For that reason – I choose to live my life in keeping with the old Hymn that says "It is well, it is well with my soul".
    - Amen – now moving on
- From here, let's exegete and expound on the remaining verses of 2 Peter 3, verses 10 and 11

**2 Peter 3:10** 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.

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

- In verse 10 Peter references a time he calls "The day of the Lord".
  - He says it will come like a thief in the night.
  - Which simply means, no one will know when it happens.
    - There will be no heads up or warning. It just happens.
    - And to further expound on that not only will humans be clueless when it happens – not even Jesus will know.
  - And we know this to be the case because of what He said when He spoke using the parable of the fig as an illustration – listen to what Matthew wrote in Matt. 24:36-41 (By the way – remember this is Jesus speaking).

**Matt. 24:36** "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

**Matt. 24:37** "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

**Matt. 24:38** "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

**Matt. 24:39** and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

**Matt. 24:40** "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.



**Matt. 24:41** “Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

- Once again, we see the consistency of scripture played out as it relates to the end of time – and or “The day of the Lord”.
  - No one knows when it will happen except the Father who is Heaven.
  - Now I personally find this fascinating. I mean, I can understand the angels not knowing, but what about Jesus not knowing?
    - Wonder why God doesn’t reveal His plans to the Son?
    - Especially – when the Son is the main character in the event!
- Well – if you have ever wondered about this – today is your lucky day because (as always) – I have the answer.
  - The answer is – we don’t completely know. It’s a mystery of God – much like the Trinity.
  - What we do know however, is that Jesus’ resurrection and ascension and eventual return, mimics the same process of that of the Jewish Wedding festival.
    - In the Jewish wedding festival, a young man becomes betrothed to a young lady.
    - It’s basically like an engagement. Not exactly – but close.
    - The young man becomes betrothed.
      - But he doesn’t get to marry her right away.
    - Instead, he must return to (and here’s where it gets interesting), he must return to his Father’s House and do something – what is it?
    - He must prepare a place – to bring his new Bride home to which lines up perfectly with what Jesus says in John 14:1-3 – He said:

**John 14:1** “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

**John 14:2** “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

**John 14:3** “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

- So just like in the Jewish Wedding festival – Jesus goes to prepare a place for us.
  - And then back to this whole Jewish wedding process thing.
  - When the young man returns to His Father’s house, he must prepare a place to receive His bride.
    - Maybe he needs to add on an addition to his father’s house or expand a room or whatever it is – what we know is that it’s all controlled by His Father.
    - And – that’s the same thing that happens with Christ's Second Coming.

- The Son cannot return for His bride until the Father says everything is ready!
- Which leads us to our previous teaching here in 2 Peter, where the mockers mock the church and say – where is Jesus?
  - Ever since the fathers fell asleep, He hasn't returned.
- Now – of course what we learned a few weeks ago in 2 Peter 3:8-9 is that the father is waiting on something to happen before He sends Jesus back.
  - And what is it? Well let's read verses 8-9 one more time for the answer.

**2 Peter 3:8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.**

**2 Peter 3:9 The 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.**

- As I previously explained Paul says this same thing in Romans, when he mentions a phrase known as “the fullness of the Gentiles” – and how it must come to pass.
  - The term "fullness of the Gentiles" and verse 9 here in 2 Peter are essentially saying the same thing.
  - And that is the thing that triggers the Father to tell the Son to go get His Bride.
    - When the last person on earth who will be saved is saved.
    - That's what led Peter to say the following in verse 11 – one more time and we will close here.

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

- I want to close you out with this today – and I will expound on this more next week as we close out the letter.
  - One of our highest callings as believers is to that of Holy Conduct and Godliness.
    - Holy Conduct isn't just something you decide to do.
    - It's something you become.
  - The only way you can become more Holy and Godly – is to be transformed from the inside out by becoming more intimate with God.
  - And the only way to know Him in a more intimate and deep way is by studying His memoirs.
  - And what are His memoirs?
    - It's His Word.
    - That's where the "ah ha" moments of our lives come to pass.

- And that's where we see ourselves reflected clearly for who we are as a mirror.
  - But not just any mirror.
  - It's God's Mirror.
- And through it you will see true reflection of yourself like no other reflection you've ever seen before.
- You will essentially see yourself the way God saw you – prior to the covering of Jesus' Blood on your life.
  - And so, what's the application?
  - The application is simple. We must get back to the basics as a church and we must heed Peter's warning to this church as a warning to ourselves.
    - Be on guard.
    - Grow and mature – so that you will be equipped to handle all adversity, trial and tribulation.
    - And be of Good Cheer.
  - Remember – this thing is going to get a whole lot worse before it ends, but one day we get to be with the father in Heaven!
    - Amen – Amen!