

- So this week – we are going to finish our journey through 2 Peter, and as I said last week, I believe we have extracted just about every ounce of juice out of this letter.
 - Having said that – that’s not really an accurate statement because as we know, Gods Word is like a kaleidoscope.
 - It's blue – it's blue green – it's yellow – it's red.
 - If you read and study it once – you get one thing.
 - You read and study it again, and you get something else.
 - What’s fascinating is how I’ll be having a conversation with someone over a particular scripture and they will say, have you ever studied the Gospel of John – the 3rd Chapter?
 - And by the way this just happened this past week.
 - And I will say, yes – you mean the story of Nicodemus.
 - And they will say yea, and I will say – what about it?
 - And they will say, did you know... and almost always they will tell me something I never caught when I previously taught through the book.
 - And like I said – this just happened!
 - And honestly, there is no other book of antiquity that can brag of such a thing.
 - Not the Koran – not Shakespeare – nothing!
- God's Word is so powerful that one passage can convict a person of one thing, and at the same time – the same passage convicts another person, but in a totally different way!
 - It reminds me of a time when I was teaching through a book or letter – I can’t remember which one it was – but after the service, a person ran out the door crying.
 - And I had no clue as to why.
 - So, I called that person later that day and said, “are you okay?” And they said – “Who told you about my situation?”
 - I said – no one. I don’t know anything about your situation.
 - And they said – “someone must have told you”. I said – I promise, I do not know what you are talking about and if I did, I promise you – I wouldn’t lie and say I didn’t.
 - And they said, “Well – it was as if you were speaking directly to my situation this morning”. I said – I promise I don’t know anything about it! And furthermore, if I did – I would never do that. And that’s the truth.
 - A truth - I want everyone here to know and understand!
 - I will never use this pulpit to push an agenda or highlight something a person in our congregation may be going through.
 - I will also never use the pulpit to voice frustrations within our fellowship.
 - I can’t stand it when preachers do that, and I won’t be a party to it!
 - So just remember that, especially if you think I am preaching at you.

- If you share a situation with me in confidence I promise you – It will stay between us. And that's all I'll say about that topic!
- Moving on, this morning as I said, we will finish Chapter 3 of 2 Peter.
 - And it's been an interesting journey.
 - As Peter calls these believers, and believers everywhere, to mature spiritually.
 - Peter (as we know by now) is writing this letter to this group of believers – calling for them to mature.
 - But also sending them a warning – as well as encouraging them to “keep their eye on the prize” (at least that's what Paul calls it)
 - “Keep their eye on the prize” – as it relates to keeping the main thing the main thing.
 - Keep their eye on the prize as it relates to remembering specifically – that this earth is temporary.
 - Matter a fact – it's so temporary I would call it disposable.
 - Which means, it's a throw away.
 - We know this to be the case because one day Peter and Paul, among others in scripture, tell us exactly that this earth and its works will be burned up.
- Believe it or not, those words made up part of Peter's closing parting words of encouragement to this church.
 - Having said that, his words of encouragement are not encouraging words – at least in the way we think of encouraging words.
 - It was Spiritual Encouragement – which is a type of encouragement that starts with the end in mind!
 - Which by the way is the best type of encouragement.
 - I say it's the best type – because it encourages us by letting us know how the story ends.
 - It's kind of like a prison sentence really, where the only encouragement a newly convicted person may receive, is knowing that on a certain date he or she will be released, and it will all be over!
 - So letting the church know how this thing all ends, is Peter's way of encouraging this church.
 - And by extension, that's his encouragement to us as well.
- You see, Heaven is our destination folks (not earth) – and heaven is a perfect place, with a perfect Father, where we will forever serve and praise Him for eternity.
 - No sickness – no pain – no heartache – no let downs
 - No depression and no pharmaceutical companies needed. No doctors needed.
 - A place where all believers will live eternally – in perfect harmony!
 - And that may not seem like encouragement – at least as it pertains to the here and now, but it is.

- Because if we will just pause for a minute and think about it, we will realize our life is on a timer – it's on a countdown.
 - And every day we live is one more day closer to our death.
 - One more day closer to Heaven.
- And so – we are living in a temporary state, as I said. Much like prison sentence.
- And soon – much sooner than you even realize, it will all be over!
 - But not for the believer.
 - For the believer, instead of saying soon your life will be over, the Bible tells us soon your life will begin!
- Which is interesting to think about because honestly – when we pray for a believer to be healed, or we say to ourselves – “today was a good day because I woke up on the right side of the grass”
- Or when a preacher writes a New York Times bestseller book called, Your best life now!
 - If I am being completely honest nothing could be further from the truth
 - Our best life is not now. It will never be now.
 - Our best life is yet to come! And it will be amazing when it arrives!
- It will be so amazing that when you die, I promise you would never want to return to this earth.
 - Which is what has always led me to say, when I die – do me favor, don't try and pray me back to this life!
 - Because I assure you that if God said, do you want to go back – my answer would be a resounding no!
 - I have no interest in returning to this dying earth!
 - With all its problems – sickness and pain!
 - And with that – I'll digress on this topic as well!
- Anyways moving on – today we will finish our teaching this morning in 2 Peter 3. And we will pick back up with verses 10-18, so we stay in context.
 - Once again – before we read this, remember Peter is making a shift in his topic or methodology.
 - Where initially – he warned this church about the false teachers who would be emerging from within the church.
 - And from there, he then moved into addressing the mockers – who were mocking these believers saying, where is this Messiah – I thought you guys said He was coming back, but ever since the fathers fell asleep He is nowhere to be found – so where is He?
 - And that statement is (as we know) what led Peter to say the following in verses 8-9

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.

- You could put a few themes with those verses if you wanted to, but the one theme that stands out in my head is that God's timing is not our timing.
 - We must remember God is doing something – and He's still doing something right now today as we speak.
 - Which means Peter's words to this church apply to us as well.
 - So remember, with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day!
 - From there, Peter now makes his shift into his encouraging words.

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.

- This morning as we finish the 3rd Chapter of 2 Peter, I would like to break these 8 verses down into 3 main parts or topics or themes if you will.
 - Beginning with Peter's statement about "The day of the Lord".

- I touched on this a few weeks ago and I won't spend all day on it. I just want you to understand what "The day of the Lord" is.
 - And maybe – more importantly what it is not.
 - First – let me start with what it is.
- The day of the Lord is speaking specifically about Christ's Second Coming.
 - His first coming was when He was born – along with the life He lived here on earth.
 - It was a time of Grace and Mercy.
 - A time in which Jesus came to teach and educate people on God and Himself
 - A time when He came to set up Apostles, all for the purposes of establishing His church.
 - All for the purposes of establishing an institution that would spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - And an institution that would provide a support system for all believers.
 - And finally, an institution that would educate believers on who God was and is, i.e... His Character – And once the realization of who He is sets in, the byproduct is that believers grow and mature.
 - And then of course, as believers mature, they will then help expand the church naturally – all by way of God drawing men to Himself, through those same believers.
 - Believers whose lives are being lived in a Holy and Godly Way!
 - And sure enough, backing up what I just said, Peter says the following in verse 11.

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 other words, now that you know the Lord is not slow about His promise as some would count slowness, and now that you know – He is coming.
 - That God is patient as He is waiting on the last person to be saved, that will ever be saved on earth.
 - And now that you know that when the Lord comes, it will be like a thief in the night.
 - Now that you know He is going to destroy this entire planet along with all its works.
 - Another way to say it might be, now that you are educated, then live your life in way that reflects that reality
 - Which is how? Well, let's read it again – verses 11-14

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,

- So, because you now know all of this, live your life in a Holy and Godly manner!
 - Hastening the day, which means expecting the day.
 - This word is a verb – it means to live your life in a way that you are anxiously awaiting His arrival.
 - And so, the question for all of us sitting here this morning is – are we living our lives this way?
 - I would say the answer would be – not to the level we should be, and I include myself in this statement as well.
 - But why?
 - Because life keeps having a way of grabbing our attention, through the shiny things.
 - Things that (to be honest with you) do not matter considering how this thing ends but somehow keeps sucking us in like gravity – life has a gravitational pull on this world we live in!
 - And why – because this earth belongs to the enemy!
 - Meaning it is cursed, and as a result this world as we know it has been handed over to Satan temporarily.
 - Which tells us that the enemy is never going to allow our minds to get quite enough – to realize what’s at stake, because as my old secretary used to say, there is always something in life taking the joy out of living.
 - Which means – it's up to us to recognize what’s going on.
 - To be cognitive and aware and do something about it!
 - And what should we do about it?
 - We should set aside time every day for God.
 - I call it – giving God your “Firsts Fruits”
- First Fruits is a concept of giving God a sacrifice – by beginning your day by giving up the most valuable asset you have: Time
 - By praying and studying.
 - And we should do that (if possible), before our day gets going!
 - That is our only defense against getting caught up with the shiny things of this life.
 - I know I sound like a broken record, but that’s the truth.
 - If you want to live a Holy and Godly life, then you must get intimate with God.
 - And the only way to get intimate with God is to get to know him – by setting

aside time everyday to spend with Him

- That's truth and testimony of the scriptures!
- And if you question that statement – I would tell you to take a 21-day First Fruits challenge, in which you get up every day, and before you do anything else such as check your phone, watch the news, check emails etc.
 - Instead, when your feet hit the floor, go straight into your quiet time with God and do it for 21 days straight without missing.
 - And just see what happens! I promise you – it will change your life!
- Moving on – so Peter mentions “The Day of the Lord” and this day is described by other names in the scriptures as well.
 - The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord
 - Or the day of Yahweh or the Day of Christ
 - And what we know about this day is that this day is the day of Christ's second return
- Now, when I began talking about “The day of the Lord”, I told you I wanted to explain what that day was and what it was not. So let me be clear:
 - This day has nothing to do with the rapture of the Church, where Christ returns partially – when He snatches out His Bride from this earth, right before the tribulation –
 - Christ's second coming is different, and it will not be like the first time He came to earth because there will be no Grace and Mercy.
 - This day will be dark, and it will reveal a side of God that most people don't like to think about – much less talk about.
 - Which would be the side of Him, that is made up of both judgement and wrath.
 - It will be a day that culminates at the end of the 7 years of Tribulation
 - A day that will end with God slaying His enemies
 - Casting Satan, the Anti-Christ, the False Prophet and all those who don't believe into their final destination. Into a place the scriptures call Hell!
- Now, I realize this is not a popular statement, but guys it's the truth and what's interesting about all of this is that God (even though this day is coming) – God is still showing us Grace and Mercy, for now, as we wait.
 - But how is He doing that?
 - Well verse 15 tells us how – listen to it one more time

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,

- Paraphrasing in context here, Peter is saying that because God has not yet returned, and because you are not dead, you can still be saved! There is still time.

- The flip side of that being, that once He returns – it's all over.
- There will be no more opportunity for Salvation.
- That's why Peter says, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.
 - He means be thankful "you mockers" that He hasn't returned yet because you still have time to repent and be saved.
- And so with all that said, I would be remiss if I didn't ask everyone in here this morning, are you saved?
 - Have you repented – and have you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins and save your soul?
 - If the answer is no, then do me a personal favor and take the card that is in the pew in front of you and check the box that says salvation
 - Put your information on it, place it in the offering plate and let me call you to discuss or catch me after the service and let's talk!
 - And then for those of you who have made a profession of faith – by repenting and asking Jesus to save them.
 - If you haven't been baptized, then give us the honor of filling up the baptistry and baptizing you!
 - This baptistry is screaming for water!
 - So let me do the honor of doing that for you!
 - And for everyone who is a believer –
 - Do me another favor and ask yourself the question, am I living my life in a way that reflects what I say, what I believe?
 - In other words – am I living my life in a Holy and Godly way?
 - And if that's not the case, I would like for you to consider a rededication of sorts
 - A re-start – and if you want to talk about that, then put that on the card as well – or simply follow John's instructions in 1 John 1:9 where he says:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- Peter's instruction to this church was simple.
 - Because you know how this thing ends – live your life accordingly.
 - In a Godly and Holy way!
 - His instruction to that church still applies to all of us sitting here today
 - I mean seriously folks, what are we doing?
 - We know how this thing ends, and we know the world we live in will soon be burned up.
 - So – if we truly believe that, then we should strive to live Holy and Godly lives!

- That is all believers' call to action.
 - And all you must do to get started – is repent of that fact and begin the process of prayer and study daily.
 - That's it! And God will take it from there!
- Moving on, next Peter says this – re-reading verses 15&16

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.

- We touched on this earlier and I won't belabor the point, but Peter says – regard the patience of the Lord as salvation.
 - Once again he's saying, because there is still time, because the Lord has not returned yet people still can repent!
 - So, in that way, regard His patience as salvation – from there next he mentions Paul.
 - He says just as Paul says, according to the wisdom given him – he wrote to you.
 - The same thing I am teaching you.
 - Some of which is hard to understand – and for that reason the untaught and unstable distort.
 - Just as they do the rest of the scriptures, and they do so to their own destruction.
 - Essentially guys – God set up the church to be run by a plurality of Elders.
 - At least one of these men should be gifted to teach.
 - He should be the teaching elder i.e... the Pastor.
 - Which means this elder must be ready to spend the majority of his time in prayer and study.
 - And because his gift is that of teaching, he should be able to answer any question you may have regarding the scriptures.
 - Or let me say – he should be able to study the question and get you the answer.
 - Which means he should also be able to eliminate confusion in the mind of the believer if he is truly called to teach and preach.
 - Problem is, many preachers today don't know this or they know it and ignore it.
 - Which is a real issue because if you don't have an Elder Teaching Pastor inside the church, it's a real issue because of what Peter just said – where untaught and uneducated men distort the scriptures.
 - The only way an untaught and uneducated man can distort the scriptures is when the people they are teaching don't know what they are being taught.

- And so, you can see the danger when there is no teaching Pastor!
- People are led down all kinds of rabbit holes!
- And they don't even know it's happening.
- Next, we will close out here.

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.

- Verse 17 is just a continuation of what Peter just said in verse 16, but he adds something in – he says "Be on your Guard".
 - Peters' words should be etched in our brains.
 - Be on Guard, be aware, be cognitive, be vigilant.
 - Another way to say it is to be on the lookout.
 - Keep your eye out looking for the wolves in sheep's clothing.
- And then he finishes with a few words that may not seem like a big deal, but it is the crux of my entire ministry. Listen to it one more time.
 - verse 18 – I Peter, will pray for your safety and your prosperity here on this earth. May you find favor in this life and may nothing ever happen to you. Amen – Amen!
 - Is that what it said?
 - Nope!
 - Think about what I am saying here – Peter is warning these believers about the impending dangers that lie waiting in the weeds.
 - He has warned them about the false teachers.
 - He has given them feedback on why the Lord hasn't returned.
 - All so they can speak boldly against these Mockers.
 - Because Peter knows, the enemy is closing in on this church
 - That's why he wrote the letter in the first place, and as I have said – his call to action for these believers, and by extension to all believers, is to Mature so they can ward off the wiles of the enemy.
 - And once again – how do you do that, you mature.
 - And how do you mature? Well let's read verse 18 and you will see.

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.

- Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Here's what's interesting about this statement.
 - Peter's prayer and or statement is the same prayer and or statement Paul makes.
 - It's always the same prayer.
 - May you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.
 - And why – because that is how you mature.
 - It's that simple – and there is no other way!
- If you want to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ and if you want the Lord to say to you one day, well done my good and faithful servant, then you must mature – and that process is always the same.
 - If you want to grow, get to know God in an intimate way – that's it!
 - And that's why Peter ends this letter the way He does because that's the last thing he wants them to remember!
 - And the same holds true for us – Amen – Amen!!