

Don't Forget the Second Advent

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Date: 31 December 2023

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[0 : 00] It would be great if you could turn your Bibles back to 2 Peter 3, although the verses will also be on the screen for those doing the live stream.

Well, I mentioned last month to the Wednesday service, a story that happened some years ago when I was working in another church. I've forgotten if I've told you this story before, but anyway, it was when my wife and I were having some people around for lunch that day after church. We had taken two cars so that I could go and get some bread rolls for lunch. And when I arrived home, I couldn't help but feel like we were forgetting something. And so I said to my wife, Michelle, I said, look, I've got the rolls, you've got the salad, we've got the two kids. And at that point, Michelle said, we've got three kids. I had forgotten my eldest, Tim, and left him at church. And so I rushed back. He was only six years old at the time. I rushed back and luckily there were still some people there, some other kids playing in the hall. I think they were playing soccer. And so I walked in as though nothing had happened. Tim, time to come home.

[1 : 07] Except he had twigged that something had happened because he came up to me and said, I thought you forgot me. At which point I said, I think I have a lolly in the car. Let's go and get it.

And to this day, Tim hasn't forgotten how I forgot him. But we do forget all things in life, don't we? Lots of things in life, that is. Maybe not children, but we forget people's names or things that have happened or even things that we have learned.

For example, I wonder how many can remember the passage we looked at on Christmas Day. It was only last Monday. And I keep forgetting which stories I've told you or not. But there is something Peter is desperate that we don't forget.

And that's the second advent. The word advent, as you know, means coming or arrival. We celebrated Christ's first advent just last Monday. And so I thought we'd look at his second today. And Peter is keen that we don't forget it so that we'll keep living in light of it. And keep persevering towards it. Remembering that it will be worth it. But he begins this chapter by saying, don't forget God's word.

[2 : 17] Point one in your bulletins, in the outline, and verse one in your Bibles or on the screen. Peter says, dear friends, this is now my second letter to you.

And I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. Peter says his letters are reminders because we forget things, don't we?

As I mentioned in my prayer earlier in the service, Peter even says in chapter one, verses 12 to 14, that he knows his readers are familiar with this stuff.

He knows that they're established in the truth. And yet he also knows that we forget. And so he wants to remind so they don't forget. Well, what is it that he doesn't want them to forget in particular?

Well, God's word through the prophets and apostles. So verse two, he says, I want you to recall, to remember, to not forget the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

[3 : 24] You see, he wants them not to forget the words spoken through the prophets like their word about the day of the Lord. The prophets spoke a lot about this day of the Lord, which we know as the day Christ would return to put this world right.

And nor does he want them to forget the command or the teaching of Christ given through the apostles. In light of the letter, it's likely the command to live holy and godly lives.

He doesn't want us to forget God's word about Christ's return or godly living. Why? Well, so that we might live those godly lives.

That's why in verse one, he says these letters are reminders to stimulate them to wholesome thinking, godly thinking. Why? Well, because living comes from what we think, doesn't it?

Godly thinking leads to godly living. In other words, Peter doesn't want us to fear God's word that we might live godly lives because there were false teachers trying to mislead Peter's readers by denying God's word and promoting ungodly lives.

[4 : 38] So verse three to four, he says, above all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come scoffing and following their own evil desires.

They will say, where is this second coming? He promised. Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.

In chapter two, these scoffers are clearly called false teachers and they denied God's word about Christ's return.

And they say, where is this coming? He promised. It doesn't exist. Everything just keeps going on and on and on. You know, one day to the next, one week to the next, one year to the next.

And the reason, though, they denied Christ's second coming was actually verse three. So they could follow their own evil desires.

[5 : 36] You see, they are connected. There's a logic to it. If there is no return of Christ, no day of the Lord later, we can live how you like now. Can't you?

After all, if Christ is not going to return, then what's the point of storing up treasure in heaven? You may as well just store up treasure on earth. If Christ is not going to return to judge the living and the dead, like we say in the creeds, then what's the point of living godly lives?

You may as well, verse three, follow your own evil desires. You see, these scoffers denied God's word about the second advent and with it judgment day in the new creation so that they could follow their own evil desires instead.

But they've not only denied God's word, they've also deliberately forgotten what God's word has already done. Verse five to seven. So he says in verse five.

And they deliberately forget that long ago, by God's word, the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

[6 : 50] By these waters. Also, the world at that present time was deluged and destroyed. But by the by the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly.

You see, in verse five, God's word has already created the world in the past. And we heard it in our first reading, didn't we? From Genesis. Remember, God created the world, heavens and the earth. But at that time, in verse one of Genesis, it was the world was formless and there was just water everywhere. Then God said, used his words, let there be light.

And there was light. And so God's word created not only the water, but then the world out of that water, as Peter says here. And in verse six here, God's word has already judged the world with water.

What do you think Peter's referring to there? It involves an archi-archi and animals two by two, if you remember the song. It's Noah and the flood, isn't it? And Peter's point, though, is verse seven.

[7 : 59] It's by that same word that the present heavens are reserved for fire being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly.

In other words, if God's word has already created and judged the world in the past, we can be certain God's word will judge the world and recreate it or renew it in the future.

It's going to happen. But these scoffers deliberately forget this part of God's word, you see. And isn't that what people do today? I mean, I've even heard some Christians deny parts of God's word so that they can follow their own evil desires.

They say things like, oh, that part of the New Testament can't possibly apply to us today simply because they want to live the world's way. Or they deliberately forget parts of God's word that says we're to be forbearing and forgiving of one another because they simply want to hold a grudge and not speak to the other.

Of course, when it comes to this second advent, admittedly, it does seem like it's taking a long time. When the scoffers say everything just goes on as it has since the beginning of creation, we can kind of sympathize a little bit with that, can't we?

[9 : 15] It does seem like that. And so Peter moves now from saying don't forget God's word to don't forget God's timing. Point two, verse eight. He says, 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. Peter says like, not equals to. Okay, so Peter is not saying that one day in God's time equals a thousand years in human time.

I kind of like one human year equals how many dog years? Is it seven dog years? Something like that. Yeah. Rather, it's a metaphor to say that God views time differently to the way we view time. It's kind of like that joke where you have to kind of think about this one where a man says to God, how long is a billion years? And God says, well, to me, it's like a minute.

And then the man says, okay, then how much is a billion dollars? And the man says, well, God says, well, to me, it's like just a dollar. And so the man goes, oh, God, can I have a dollar?

[10 : 23] And then God says, sure, wait one minute. Or more familiar, it's like with kids. You know, you're driving on a holiday with young kids and you've been on the road for a whole 10 minutes.

And what question do they ask? Because they view time differently to the way we do, don't we? In fact, God is actually outside of time.

He sees all of eternity all at once. Whereas we just see life in terms of one lifespan kind of thing.

And the point is, when it comes to God's timing, we view it differently.

It may feel like a long time to us, but it's not to God. And what's more, God's timing is not about slowness. It's about patience. So verse 9, Peter goes on to say, We often think we're the only ones having to wait for Christ's return and to put this world right.

But actually, God is waiting patiently too. In fact, God is even more patient than we are. Because the sin and suffering he sees in our world actually upsets God more than it upsets us.

[11 : 54] And so it requires God to be even more patient than us. But he's patient, as the verse says, so that people have more time to repent, to be saved, to have eternal life.

It's kind of like verse 15. If you just skip across to verse 15 for a moment in your Bibles. I can't remember if I put it on the screen. Yep. He says, Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means what?

Salvation. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote about. See, God is patiently giving people more time to be saved. Because he prefers people to be saved than judged.

He said that in the Old Testament, in Ezekiel 33, in the middle paragraph there. He says, God says, I take no pleasure. I take no pleasure in the death of a sinner.

But he rather that they turn or repent from their ways and live. Are saved. That's what God prefers. I know a guy who I knew back in Wollongong.

[13 : 02] And every year on New Year's Eve, so tonight, he would take a moment out of the celebrations to go for a walk and to just pray. And every New Year's Eve, he would thank God for another year of God's patience.

Because it meant more chances for his non-Christian family and friends to be saved. God's patience means salvation.

But God won't wait forever. He has set a time for Christ's return. And so it will happen. Verse 10.

Notice the repetition of the word will.

Jesus will happen. Not might. Will. It's a certainty. And in the process of the earth being melted and so on, in the process, people will be judged.

At the end of verse 10, everything done on the earth will be laid bare. All people's deeds exposed. Everyone's actions held accountable.

[14 : 20] Which is a bit of a scary thought, isn't it? Unless we know Jesus. But Peter's point is that Christ's return is certain. It will happen.

We just don't know when. In fact, Peter alludes to that in verse 10 at the start when he says he will come like a thief. Which is really quoting what Jesus himself said.

And you don't know when a thief comes to your place, do you? I mean, it kind of defeats the purpose if they tell you. Or so too we don't know when Jesus will return. People keep thinking they know.

In fact, there's a book released earlier this year that this year, 2023, is the year that Christ Jesus will return, says this author. How many hours are left for him to be right?

No one knows, do they? But when it comes to the second advent, Peter says, don't forget God's word. Don't forget God's timing. And point three, don't forget our response.

[15:16] And the first response we're to have, well, is to repent and trust in Jesus. After all, that's why God is patiently waiting, isn't he? And so have you done that?

Whether you're in the room or online, have you turned to Christ and put your trust in him and his blood shed for you at the cross? It's only his blood that can pay for our sins.

His blood is like our bomb shelter on the day of judgment that protects us and saves us. So have you turned to Christ? And for us who have, then there's three other responses where to have.

And we see them in verses 11 to 14. Peter says, since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? Or 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 heavens or skies and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

[16:26] So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Now, the three responses are kind of mixed up in these verses.

But the first is where to look forward to that day. Three times, Peter says, where to look forward to it. Look forward to Christ's return and our true home in all its glory.

And so do we? Do we look forward to it? Or are we so preoccupied with this life, both the good things and the struggles, that we forget all about it?

My daughter is able to go for her peas in just 24 days. Not that she's counting. And she's definitely looking forward to this, so much so that it drives her, pardon the pun, drives her thoughts and actions and conversations.

For a long time, all she talked about was getting her own car. And she'd search carsales.com and so on. And after a loan from the bank of mum and dad, she now has her own car.

[17:33] And now she's looking for a second hand. And now all she's doing is looking for some driving instructors that she can book to give her some last minute pointers to pass.

And looking forward to it also helps her to persevere in the present. Every time she's frustrated about having to catch the bus or wait for mum and dad to pick her up, she remembers.

She's 24 days out from getting her peas if she passes. But the point is, if we look forward to Christ's return like that, then it will drive us too, won't it?

It will help us persevere in the present. Every time we are frustrated in life with suffering or sin. Knowing that one day it will all end.

And our eternal glory will more than make up for it. Or it will shape our words and actions too. And how we live our lives.

[18:31] Which brings us to the second response. We are to live holy and godly lives in light of it. In verse 11, we are to live holy and godly lives because all ungodliness and all unholiness is going to be destroyed.

It's going to be wiped out. So don't live that way. It's not going to last. In verse 14, we are to live spotless and blameless lives that are at peace with Christ.

You see, if Christ is returning, then it is worth storing treasure in heaven rather than on earth, isn't it? And it is worth living godly lives rather than worldly lives, isn't it?

In fact, we ought to live godly and holy lives now because we will then. If you look at verse 13, it says we ought to look forward to new heavens and earth where the righteousness dwells.

So then, verse 14, live righteous lives now, spotless, blameless, peace with Christ. Peter's saying we're to start living now as we'll live later.

[19:43] It's kind of like what astronauts do, you know, where they prepare for living in outer space. They start living in anti-gravity chambers now to get used to, you know, moving around without gravity. They start living now as they'll live later.

Or some friends of ours who were missionaries and went to Indonesia a few years ago. They're back now. But before they left, they started eating Indonesian food and started learning the Indonesian language.

They started living here now in Australia as they would live later in Indonesia. As we look forward to Christ's return, we're to start living now as we'll live later in our home of righteousness.

And thirdly, we're to speed the coming of that day, verse 12. Whether that's by praying, come Lord Jesus, or by proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

In fact, Jesus himself said in Matthew's gospel that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come.

[20 : 48] You see, once the gospel is preached and all those God has chosen have been saved, not just from this generation, but from whatever subsequent generations God deems, the end will come.

Christ will return. I remember listening to a guy called John Chapman, who said that Christ's return motivated him in evangelism.

He said sharing the gospel is not often easy. And so apart from having compassion for people, which also motivated him, he'd also imagine that this person might be the last one God has chosen to be saved.

And so he'd say, come on, John, Christ might return after this person has repented. And so off he goes and shares the gospel with him. Who knows?

He might have been right. And so there's a sense in which we can speed Christ's return by seeing the gospel proclaimed and people saved. Whether that's by praying for people or proclaiming the gospel or supporting others to do so.

[21 : 52] That the end might then come. That's how we can speed. It's coming. Well, we can forget all sorts of things in life, can't we? From names to events and sometimes even our kids.

But Peter says, don't forget Christ's certain second advent, but rather look forward to it. Live godly lives in light of it and hasten the day of it.

Let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father, we do thank you for the first advent of Christ that we celebrated last Monday. And we thank you that he came into our world to grow up and die for us and by his blood pay for our sins that we might be saved.

But Father, we thank you also for his certain second advent to come. And so Father, we pray that you'll help us to look forward to it, to live godly lives in light of it and to speed the coming of it.

We ask it in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[23 : 03] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.