

# Waiting on the Lord

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[ 0 : 00 ] Humbly before you today, recognizing our need for your spirit to work through me as I speak, but also your spirit to work in each of us as we help us to be attentive to what we are about to hear and help us to respond, trusting you that you will do what you will do in our lives and for your glory. I'm with you. It's a good time to get it out. We're going to be in 1 Samuel this morning.

And I'm going to be reading 1 Samuel. I apologize for that this evening. I'm jumping ahead. We're in 2 Peter this morning, and I'll be reading the chapter 3. So 2 Peter chapter 3 verses 13 through to 18. And it's kind of a bit of a pocket rocket. It's three chapters long. It'll take you about 10 minutes to read. So if you've got time to read through the whole chapter yourself, I'm not going to cover it all this morning. But what I am going to do is I'm going to look at the last 15 to 18, which really kind of sums up the whole letter that's written. Chapter 3 verses 13 to 18.

And I'll be reading from the English Standard Version. But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without peace, and count the patience of our Lord a salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you on him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters, in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own other scriptures. You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to him be the glory, both now and now. Amen.

We spend a lot of time waiting for the kettle to boil. We wait in traffic, particularly if there's a traffic jam. We wait for the kettle at times, at least in our house it does anyway. We wait for technical support on the phone, which can really, in 20 minutes, half an hour, we wait, if there's any pregnant women here today, but we wait for a baby. Spend a lot of our days waiting for things.

And some of us are better at waiting than others. I'm going to set a timer when I set the kettle to brew for a cup of tea. I'll set the timer for three minutes, and I'll go away and do some good at waiting. In these six verses that I've read for us, Peter wants to teach us for the return of Christ.

[ 2 : 53 ] He wants to teach us how to wait well for the return of Christ. But according to Jesus' promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which we are waiting. So in this passage, Peter gives us three postures, three postures that we need for new heavens and the new earth, which will be inaugurated when Christ returns. For holy as we wait, we're to be holy as we wait.

We need to be preparing ourselves for Christ. Verse 14 with me. It says, therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be by him without spot or blemish and at peace.

As we wait for heavens and the new earth, Peter says we need to be diligent so that when he does come, we'll be ready. We get ready for Christ's return. Peter says we need to be found by him without spot.

Imagine a t-shirt that you get a dollop of tomato ketchup on, or an out-of-place blob of ink on it. Or maybe you can recall your younger days, maybe there's some younger people here today, days when you look in the mirror and you see a spot on the end of your nose.

We call them for imperfections because they stop something from being as they should be. To be without spot or to be without blemish is to be pure.

[ 4 : 28 ] Peter calls us to be holy as we wait for Jesus' coming. But how can we be without spot or without blemish?

You can wash a t-shirt, can't you? On the end of your nose. But removing a blob of ink and recreating a beautiful picture, the Bible teaches us that God made us like this.

God painted his creation. And out of all God's artwork, humans are God's masterpiece. He made us without dollop or spot or blob.

He made us holy. But the first humans sinned. And in doing so, they... And we've all followed in their footsteps.

We've all become spotted. We've all become blemish. And we drip another dollop of paint onto God's masterpiece. When we take an eye, we see that the blemishes, we see the blemishes.

[ 5 : 33 ] But what do we do with the blemishes? We try to cover them up. We try to redo the painting. But like toddlers trying to...

We can't do it, can we? We try to scrub away our sin. The marks. We know that we're not holy. We can't hide it from God. He sees beneath. He sees underneath. He sees every spot and blemish more clearly than we see that spot on the...

And because he is holy, he can't be with what is... He can't be in the presence of what is stained. Of what is blemished.

Of what is spotted. We can't enjoy friendship with him in that state. We won't be able to enjoy his new heavens and his new... Because we won't be allowed in.

[ 6 : 37 ] We won't be allowed in. We will be allowed in with Jesus. Because without Jesus, heaven is empty. He came to die for our sins.

And he came to recreate us to likeness. He came to get us into heaven. But the invitation that we've received... To enter heaven, we must be holy.

Jesus not only took the punishment for us... In his holiness. In his spotless robes. And then he sent the holiness ready for heaven...

By making us holy. The people probably know it. Just as I am without one plea. That hymn reminds us...

And that's true. We do come to Jesus as we are. But we mustn't miss... With coming to Jesus and remaining as we are.

[ 7 : 41 ] We come to Jesus and to heaven as we are. Coming to Jesus is less about getting a... And more about being enrolled...

Into the prep school that gets us ready for heaven. Salvation. We get excited when we talk about redemption and forgiveness.

And it's good to get excited about those things. And we should be excited about those things. We don't often get quite as excited about the being holy as we wait part, do we?

Again and again calls... God calls his people to be holy. In the New Testament. A verse from Leviticus.

I'll just turn there just now. But Leviticus 20, 26 says... You shall be holy to me. For I, the Lord, am holy from the peoples. You should be mine. God calls us to live a holy life.

[ 8 : 45 ] As for his return, we must continually watch how we're living. Asking ourselves... My head. Holy. Are the words that come out of my mouth?

Holy. On television. Or scrolling on the internet. Holy. Is the way I'm treating others... Am I living a holy life now...

As I wait for Christ? Or am I just living like... How we wait for Christ really matters. Because by living right, preparing us for heaven.

Where everything is righteous. Where everything is holy and blemish. Where everything is holy. For his coming, fear is diminished.

And replaced with a sense of readiness... For his return to take us into holiness. So dwell for the new heavens and the new earth.

[ 9 : 51 ] Firstly, he says we're to be holy as we wait. We're to be careful as we wait. We're to be careful as we wait. We need to be careful...

This information about the Bible. Including the return of Christ. Look at the second half of verse 16. It says there are some things in them.

He's talking here about Paul's letters. He says there are... And... Which the ignorant and stable twist to their own destruction. As they do the others. As early as 35 years after Jesus has gone up to heaven.

People are questioning why... Shall he return? In verse 15. Peter's saying that Paul had been teaching the same...

He says Paul can be quite difficult to understand at times. And some of the false teachers had been taking advantage of this. By twisting Paul's words for their own gain.

[10:51] Paul leading the people away from the truth of God's word. So then he says... You therefore beloved. Knowing this beforehand. Take care.

Take with the error of lawless people. And lose your own stability. To wait well. Who we allow to influence us.

People have forever been twisting the words of God. Or something wrong. It began with Satan. Who twisted God's word. In Revelation Satan is described as the deceiver of the whole world. In John's gospel in chapter 8. And the father... And the father of lies. So when people being like God. They're being like Satan.

The father of lies. But this to lie. Or this section of the passage is not telling us not to lie. If it's not to be deceived by lies. We've seen lie too, haven't we? We've all had people try to deceive us.

[11:56] Whether it be an email scallus. The best thing since sliced bread. Or perhaps it's a guilty child. Pleading their innocence, sister. But here Peter is warning us of a far greater...

Disciplining the wrong child. Or being duped by a scanner. Here Peter is warning us by lies that are told about God's very word.

Verse 16 makes it... Twisting the Bible leads to destruction. Because it destabilizes the true teaching and the assurance of it. Now bikes usually have two wheels, don't they?

Often parents will stick another couple of wheels on the side to stabilize the bike. So the child destabilizes, don't we? And just like stabilizers on a child's bike, God's word gives us to do life. We will encounter rocky paths. We will encounter stability as we travel through life. As we wait...

[13:06] Sorry, as we... Easy for us to understand, is it? There are bits that we find particularly hard to get our heads around. But this doesn't mean that we should just believe anything that anybody says about it.

Be careful. God gave us the Bible, his word, so that we would know him. So when people twist its meaning, when they say things that are untrue about it, they're causing us to believe falsehood. This is why James, in chapter 3, says, Not many of you should become teachers. Each will be judged with greater strictness. So when you're listening to a sermon, even this sermon or online, listen carefully.

Listen with your minds engaged. Reflecting on what the preacher is really saying and own opinion. But he's telling you what the Bible actually says.

Most teachers, perhaps tele-evangelists who are out to get rich, don't let them lead you to question what Scripture plainly teaches.

[14:21] Bumble on what the Bible clearly teaches. When you're reading a Christian carefully, particularly those offering new perspectives on the Bible or a real understanding, always think about, is this book giving me a true biblical picture of God?

It tells me that they have a fresh take on what the Bible says about homosexuality. But Jesus, just because it's packaged as Christian, doesn't mean it's not for us.

We can be easily lured in. We need to be careful. Christian videos. So many Christian books that are out there. And when there are some speakers who want to edit out Bible truth, particularly in which common judgment, there are authors and speakers who avoid writing and talking about our sin and try and bypass the need for repentance.

We, as God, and careful as we wait, we need to be careful that we don't allow ignorant, false teaching Christ and destabilize our faith.

Peter's teaching us ways to wait for the new heavens and the new earth. Firstly, we're to be holy as we wait, careful as we wait.

[15:53] And thirdly, we're to mature as we wait. We're in Christ. Look at how verse 18 begins. It's grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We mature in our faith in Christ. I can clearly remember the day when our youngest daughter, our youngest daughter, Rebecca, who was sat next to her, is eight, coming on nine.

And I clearly remember the day. It was a bit of a shock to us because she was born two months early. And she came into the world at just three pounds, which, for those of you that used to measure things in bags of sugar, which is two bags of sugar in all terms.

She entered the world smaller than one of her big sister's little dolls. She was that small. Remain, three pounds, seven ounces. She grew.

She matured. Health. And Peter's telling us here that we're not to stay as we are while we wait for Christ. Our faith as we wait is to be a maturing faith.

[ 17 : 06 ] Daughter needed milk to grow. We, too, need spiritual. We need to be continually nurturing our faith with the spiritual food that God provides us.

We have God's Word, the Bible, to help us grow in our knowledge of Him, grow in our relationship with Him. We have baptism and communion to remind us of our bond with Him.

We have God's people, the church, to encourage and spur us on in our faith. And we need to be testing to teach us to grow more and more dependent on Him.

Pages with me in your Bibles to chapter 1, verse 3 of 2 Peter. Maybe it's one page or two. There. His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Everything we need for godly living. Because Jesus' divine power has given us.

[ 18 : 13 ] You and I have got everything we need to mature in our faith. But this doesn't mean to let go and let God. We're to make good use of the tools which He's given us to mature.

So, if you want to follow along with me, Peter says, For this very reason, make every with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection.

We're to cultivate our faith. We're to grow our faith by maturity, through knowledge of God, through self-control, through steadfastness, through godliness, through brotherly affection.

This is what we are to commit our lives to growing and maturing in. We're to exercise these things. Now, some of you may have membership to a gym here. I did have membership to a gym, but I didn't go very often. Hence, I didn't get super fit. We have a gym, but to really properly get fit, we need to use the gym, don't we?

[ 19 : 26 ] We need to go and exercise. It might be we need to exercise ourselves in order to grow physically, but we also need to exercise ourselves well. We must take seriously maturing in godliness.

Perhaps you're here today, and you started off as a Christian with great excitement, with great enthusiasm. You've perhaps plateaued, and things don't seem quite as exciting for you.

Living the crowd's exciting for you today, and you're just perhaps going through the motions of the gifts that we've been given to help us grow.

You do not have to stay at that place. You can grow into you, and I encourage all of us, including myself, to make use of the gifts that God has given you to grow in the God and Savior, Jesus Christ. So, read your Bible, not just because you read your Bible on a Monday morning or Tuesday morning or evenings, whenever you read your Bible. Don't just do it because you really want to know God better, and you want to grow in response to that.

[ 20 : 39 ] Things that you want to ask God for, but because you want him to show. Don't just see coming to church as a place where you go.

See it as a group of people that you can grow together with. Remember, God also uses suffering to mature you, to help you grow. Peter closes the letter with these really significant words.

He says, To him now and to this, to the day of eternity. Amen. This isn't just a bolt-on on the edge saying, Yours sincerely, Peter.

This is the goal of life. Because maturing in faith is not so much about us getting bigger. It's getting bigger in our minds and in our hearts.

I want to close with an illustration. I think it will help us to get this idea. Turn to Narnia. One of the main characters, Lucy, encounters Aslan.

[ 21 : 52 ] And Aslan, the Lion King, is the hero and the champion. And Lucy says, Aslan, Aslan, dear Aslan.

Sob Lucy. At last. So that Lucy fell. Half sitting and half lying between his front paws. He best touched her nose with his tongue.

His warm breath came all around her. Large, wise face. Welcome, child, he said. Bigger.

This is because you're older, little one, answered he. Not because you're older. I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.

Christ does not grow more beautiful as we wait for his return. But as we mature as more beautiful, we see him as more glorious.

[ 22 : 53 ] The question is not, when will Jesus come? But how will Jesus find us? Will you be ready?

If he were to come right now, before this service finishes, are you waiting well? Are you being holy? Are you being holy?

Are you being careful as you wait? Are you maturing as you wait? Father, we thank you and praise you for who you are.

We thank you that you are a God who has not left us in our sins, but a God for sins through your son, Jesus. We thank you for what he accomplished for us on the cross.

We thank you that we can know you because of that. We thank you that you are transforming us. Father, help us to take seriously our holiness.

[ 23 : 56 ] Help us to change, to be more like your son, Jesus, as we prepare for heaven. Help us as we open your Bible, as we speak to you in prayer, as we meet with one another.

The thing in you is to see you as more beautiful, as more excellent, as more perfect. Spirit in these things. Forgive our sins of heart and continue to transfer our good and your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. We're going to invite the musicians to come up and the singers to come up again. We're going to sing How Great Thou Art.

There should be a slide coming up. I thought we could say this together. Just before I forget, I really noticed on the... If you've not noticed it before, have a look at what it says because it really connects with what we've been talking about this morning.

We wait. So let us say the words of this benediction together as we close our time together. I wait for the Lord, and in his word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning.

[ 25 : 13 ] Thank you.