**God Ain’t No Slacker**

2 Peter 3:1 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, **2**that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, **3**knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. **4**They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” **5**For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, **6**and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. **7**But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. **8**But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9**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. **10**But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodieswill be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Once again Peter reminds us that reminders are his goal. Peter reminds his readers that they have everything they need to live the Christian life, the Word of God is authoritative and powerful, and they must be on guard against false teaching. Now he reminds them of what the prophets and apostles have predicted: the soon coming of Christ. Peter once again affirms through this statement that the words of the Prophets (the Old Testament) and the apostles (the New Testament) are both authoritative. And both authoritative voices have predicted often the return of the Savior one day to the earth.

Most every believer since the beginning of the Church has believed Jesus would return in their lifetime. Jesus told them to live their lives in preparation for His soon coming. Little did these early Christians realize that Jesus would not return in their lifetime. But that does not denigrate the fact that Jesus intended for them to live as though He would. Because living as if He would spurred believers to holiness and without holiness no one shall see the Lord. Holiness to God through faith in Christ was Christ’s message and the notion that He would return soon only reinforced that message.

But while some people live in readiness and preparation for Christ’s soon return, there are others who live the exact opposite. Rather than eagerly awaiting and preparing for His return, they laugh at the idea as if it’s some silly farce meant to scare us. And sure, it does scare some people, but it scares those not living in holiness. It only scares those who know they aren’t in right relationship to God. Maybe that’s what these scoffers are: people who are afraid of the truth so they try to crowd it out of their minds treat it lightly as they know their sin will keep them from being whisked away in the rapture.

But Peter states clearly that scoffers scoff because they do not believe. They follow the passions of their flesh in lust. Sin, lust, self-indulgence, ungodly passion—they all lead to a spiritual blindness. Spiritual blindness creates the best skeptics. Think of doubting Thomas. He was the world’s first real skeptic of the resurrection and it was because of his spiritual blindness. Jesus had made it clear that He would rise from the dead, and yet because of Thomas’ lack of understanding he did not believe when he was told it happened. I’m not saying Thomas was spiritually blind because of some sin, but I am saying that he was spiritually blind and those that are big sinners—carousing in their ungodliness with no care in the world—are spiritually blind because of that sin.

Sin hinders belief! I’m a firm believer this is why John the Baptist had to come before Jesus. John came to prepare the way for Jesus. How did he do that? By calling the people to repentance before Jesus came. Because God needed the people to repent of their sins so their eyes could be opened to the power of Jesus. John’s job was to get that hindering, blinding sin out of the lives of as many people as possible so those people would accept Jesus as Savior. And you know that’s what happened right? Those that repented and followed John’s teaching eventually followed Jesus and those who did not—the Pharisees and Sadducees—were the ones calling for the death of Jesus.

But these scoffers Peter speaks of act as though terrible things will never come upon the world. They pretend that no terrible world-breaking event has ever come upon the earth, so why would it now? Peter says they intentionally overlook certain truths. It’s like those people that read where Jesus says “Thou shalt not judge”, but they intentionally leave out all other parts. Or the people who only speak on the love of God but never bring up His judgement and wrath which is also clearly laid out in Scripture as much as God’s love is. Sinners and scoffers have a habit of intentionally overlooking things and in this case Peter says they overlook the terrible world-ending threat of the global flood in Genesis 6.

Peter says the earth was created out of water and this same water was used to destroy it. The whole world was deluged in water. The idea of a catastrophe such as this on a global scale is not unheard of. But scoffers don’t want to believe these things did and can happen. And God does make clear throughout Scripture that He will come and destroy the world again one day. But God already promised that He would never flood the earth again, so instead the end of the earth is going to end by fire.

Peter makes it clear that the best option is to disregard what the scoffers say. He wants the believers to know that just because Jesus hasn’t returned yet even though they thought “soon” meant their lifetime, that He is not slacking. Jesus will still return “soon”; He just works on a different timetable than us. Peter even says the reason “soon” hasn’t been just yet is because God wants as many as possible to come to repentance and turn towards Him. This aligns with Jesus’ message in Matthew 24 that the gospel will reach all nations before the end of the world comes. This is why we evangelize—because Jesus told us to and because we want to see His soon return. We do the work of Christ until all know! Not all may know Jesus as personal Lord and Savior but our hope is that all will know how to receive salvation and enter into relationship with God. Not everyone may know God but our goal is that everyone will know how to

2 Peter 3:11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, **12**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! **13**But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. **14** Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. **15**And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, **16**as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. **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. **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.

Sometimes us believers have to think and pray about what the life application of a Bible passage is. There is no such need to ponder it here. Peter tells us straightforward what this has to do with our lives. Verse 14 sums it up at best as possible. Because we are waiting for Jesus’ return and the end of the world as we know it we must faithfully, sincerely, fiercely pursue a life of holiness. Jesus is coming back for a holy, spotless Church without blemish! Without what? Without SIN!

Ephesians 5:27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (ESV)

Suppose you men enter the church house on your wedding day. If your wife had fallen in mud in her wedding dress and dirtied it all up and all but embarrassed herself would you want her to walk up the aisle dirty, blemished, embarrassed and ashamed to be there in such a state? No! You would find something clean to wear for her. If you say you wouldn’t mind a bit if she was dirty, well, ask her! Women, if you had been the woman that fell in the mud or bloodied your face on your wedding day, would you have wanted to walk down the aisle unclean, dirty and wounded on what was the best day of your life? We are the bride and He is the groom! Jesus is coming for us and we must be ready.

This is the call of this whole letter. Peter knows he won’t get the chance to experience the great rapture of the saints, but he believes his fellow believers might. And he wants them to remember all these things: the blessings of God to live a holy life, the Word of God to live a holy life and the heretics and false teachers that will seek to suppress the need for holiness. Peter is now ready to move on to the next life, confident his hearers know now that holiness is the answer and God has made it possible to live in holiness—secure and ready for the future coming. You can live in holiness—and you should!

Can we do this today? Can we pray for the holiness of the Church? Can we pray for holiness in our personal lives? Can we pray for holiness in the lives of other believers and salvation for those who don’t know Jesus? Can we pray that they will be ready?