

Remember to Live for Jesus' Return

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[0 : 00] Thanks, Aaron and Danny and the band. Before we turn to God's word, please do have that passage open in front of you as we walk through it, but let us come to God in prayer. Let's pray together.

Our Heavenly Father, we come before you this evening and we thank you for the joy it is to be able to open your word together. And Father, we pray that you would bless the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts and would it all be pleasing to you, our rock and our Redeemer. And it's in his name that we pray. Amen. Now, one of the things that you may or may not know about me is that I have a terrible memory and it is unbelievably annoying.

So we all know that feeling, right? You remember something as you're sitting on the couch, probably on a Friday night. You're really comfy, but you've remembered and so you traipse upstairs to the room or to the office and you open the door and something magical happens in a negative sense of the word.

You completely forget what you wanted to do. You forget why you entered into the room and you stand amazed that your brain has just simply stopped working. Or you leave the house with a shopping list of one thing, a pint of milk.

[1 : 22] You walk around the shop, you get distracted by everything else on the shelves, you pick up a few bargains here or there, you remember a few things. And then you get home to realize the one thing you went for is the thing you forgot to get.

Now, I know that that isn't just me. People forget things all the time and we know it, which is why you get reminder letters from the dent or texts from dentists and doctors offices.

It's why there are tons of different apps that ping you notifications on your phone to remind you of deals or upcoming events that may interest you. And it's why we have strings on our glasses because we know if we put them down, we will never find them again.

We are a people who need to be reminded. And as we turn to 2 Peter 3 this evening, Peter gives us and his readers, original readers, a reminder.

Peter says, remember that Jesus is coming back. So live holy and godly lives. Now, why did his first readers need this reminder?

[2 : 30] Well, because there were false teachers, as we've seen through this series, who were saying, forget about Jesus. He hasn't come back. He isn't coming back. So you can live as you please. And so out of love for his fellow Christians, Peter turns his attention to the return of Jesus, which he's already touched on before in the letter.

Remember chapter 1, verses 16 to 18. Peter said that he was an eyewitness of the majesty of Jesus at the transfiguration, which points us to the future return and glory of Jesus.

And in chapter 1, verses 19 to 20, Peter told us that scripture teaches us that Jesus will return. And in chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, he told us that there are real historical stories that tell us of a time where God will judge the wicked and save the righteous.

These have all been building blocks, pointing us to this part of the letter where Peter speaks about the return of Jesus and why it is so important that we remember Jesus is coming back.

So Peter says, remember that Jesus is coming back and so live holy and godly lives. That's the main message for tonight and that's the sentence that we'll use to think about these verses.

[3 : 53] So the first thing we see is Peter's call to remember in verses 1 to 7. Remember. Peter begins his reminder in verse 1.

Read it with me. Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

Now the NIV says, Dear friends, but a better translation of that word is beloved. Like a close friend or family member, Peter calls his readers his loved ones, which reminds them of both his love for them, but also of God's love for them shown in Christ Jesus.

And this is Peter's second letter to them. We talked about that in the first sermon in this series. The first letter was either 1 Peter or a lost letter that we no longer have.

I think it's probably 1 Peter. And the good thing is that Peter doesn't leave us guessing why he has written to them. The end of verse 1. Both letters are reminders to stimulate the readers to wholesome thinking.

[5 : 04] So Peter wants his readers to think sincerely and properly about their faith and to not have any hidden motives or agendas like the false teachers did.

Now how do we do this? Well, we remember. Peter says to remember two things in verse 2. Do you see them? The words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles.

The words spoken by the holy prophets refers to the whole Old Testament which points forward to the coming of Jesus and the forgiveness and reconciliation with God that is only to be found through him.

Peter says that these words continue to testify today. serving believers as they point us to the good news of Jesus Christ. And the command given by our Lord and Saviour through the apostles is most likely a reference to the gospel.

Peter's reminding his readers of Jesus' command to repent and follow him. That same message was passed down from Jesus to the apostles and to all churches ever since through their testimony.

[6 : 25] And it spread as people became Christians. As fallible human beings we need reminders. Peter isn't telling these people anything new right now but he's saying remember what you have been taught.

Remember what Jesus said. And then in verse 3 we see why it's so important to have this reminder. Now there are degrees of importance in reminders aren't there?

For example this past month I've had two reminders. One was to sign up to the gym and the other one was to be a witness in a court case. Both reminders but with varying degrees of importance.

One is good for my health and my ever-expanding waist. but the other is important because only if I show up there will justice be served.

Both reminders with very different degrees of importance. But I still needed reminding of both things. And so Peter helps his readers see why it's so important for them to remember the truth of the gospel and to remember that Jesus is coming back.

[7 : 36] Read verse 3 with me. Above all you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come. Scoffing and following their own evil desires.

Now scoffers get a kick out of mocking people or ideas and the dangerous thing that these particular scoffers were doing is that they are toying with and mocking ideas and promises that Jesus Christ gave.

And by doing so they are showing their arrogance and contempt for the truth. Peter says, remember these people will come in verse 3 in the last days.

Now the last days is a term that the Bible uses to describe the time between Jesus' birth or the New Testament uses to describe the time between Jesus' birth and his second coming.

Which is a future date when Jesus will come and will judge the wicked and save those who believe in him as verse 13 tells us. But following their evil desires as the end of verse 3 says, what will these scoffers say?

[8 : 47] In verse 4 they will say, where is this coming he promised. Ever since our ancestors died everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.

Do you see how flippantly these scoffers were responding to promises that Jesus said? They're basically calling Jesus a liar. Saying, well, if he said he would come where is he?

Also saying that from the beginning of time things have just happened. God has had no hand in anything. He hasn't intervened at all in creation. And so Peter sets them right in verses 5 to 7 because these scoffers are deliberately forgetting.

They are deliberately intentionally ignoring the truth that verse 5 God created the world by his word in Genesis 1 and 2. And they continue to ignore the truth that verse 6 God also judged the world by water in the flood in Genesis 6 to 8.

See, these scoffers are mocking these truths and deliberately ignoring the warnings that the Bible gives. Both in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus that judgment will fall on all those who reject him.

[10:12] That's why Peter says in verse 7 by the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Do not be ignorant of this fact that scoffers will come. Do not be ignorant that people will mock the truth and stand up and say that judgment doesn't exist.

And people will say that a loving God wouldn't judge people that hell is just a creation of the church. All of these things are lies that act like a comfort blanket to people whilst they walk on their path to hell and judgment.

Deliberately forgetting truths that the Bible makes abundantly clear. Friends, if you're flirting with these ideas, if you're flirting with preachers and people who promote these ideas in any form whether that's sermons, books, blog posts, whatever, be careful.

And remember the truth of Scripture. Remember the gospel of Jesus Christ and run a mile from all teaching that would seek to distract you from Him. As Christians we need to be able to discern the truth.

[11:29] We need to know the Bible because doing that we will remember what we need to. We need to get into our Bibles to know God's Word well and that way we can discern what is true and what is false.

So Peter says remember. And the second thing we see Peter saying is that Jesus is coming back in verses 8 to 10. Jesus is coming back.

See one of the things that these false teachers were using as their so-called evidence for Jesus not coming back is that it hadn't happened yet. But Peter was a witness of Jesus' promises.

Peter saw the amazing miracles that Jesus did. He was a witness of all Jesus said and did through his time. and Peter saw some of the things Jesus said come true in his life.

So Peter says in verse 8 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. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness.

[12:42] Instead he is patient with you. Not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance. Peter says don't be like the false teachers and the scoffers who deliberately forget in verse 5 but instead remember that God's timing is not our own.

Timing has been a distraction for people for thousands of years. In every generation there is normally at least one person somewhere on the planet who says that they have a specific date that they know Jesus will come back on.

The day comes the day goes and nothing happens. That doesn't mean we aren't waiting eagerly for that day. See realistically I think many of us would like Jesus to return now wouldn't we?

We turn on our news and we see news we see reports of war in Ukraine not to mention the ongoing wars in Syria Yemen Mozambique war crimes hatred murder bombing school shootings we see all of these events and we think Jesus why have you not come back yet?

And because of our natural good God-given desire for justice we want to see Jesus come as judge and because people are eager for Jesus' return when we read verses like verse 8 that with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day the temptation is to read that like a mathematical formula and to pin down a day when we think Jesus will return but that's not what Peter's saying remember he was there physically with Jesus in act 1 where Jesus said about his second coming it is not for you to know the times or dates that the father has set by his own authority Peter is saying that God's relationship with time goes beyond what our finite minds can imagine because God has always existed as Psalm 90 verse 4 tells us which Peter's alluding to here see the reason

[15:03] Jesus hasn't returned yet is not because he's slow or reluctant it's not because he isn't planning on coming through on his promises but Jesus hasn't returned yet because God is merciful God's patience is evident in verse 9 God is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance God's patience is a common theme throughout the Bible but God isn't just God isn't being patient because he doesn't want to come and judge God's patience is intended to lead people to repentance as Romans chapter 2 verse 4 says because whilst God is merciful and wants people to be saved he is just and his sovereign he is sovereign over creation and judgment is coming verse 10 but the day of the Lord will come like a thief the heavens will

disappear with the roar the elements will be destroyed by fire and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare the day of the Lord is a term used in the

Bible to describe that final day of judgment that final day when all of humanity will stand before God and be judged and that day will come like a thief meaning that it will be sudden but it won't be a secret it cannot be missed and it cannot be avoided you don't get a save the date card through the post and you leave it sitting on the sides do you thinking or questioning whether the day is going to actually happen if you do that you'll probably miss a party or a wedding or some kind of special event no if you're told that something's coming up you prepare for it don't you you make sure you're free you look forward to you plan around it well whilst we do not know the date we can be certain that a day is coming where this world will be transformed and everything in it will be laid bare verse 10 that means that all of humanity will stand before

God and give an account of their actions in this life and how they responded to Jesus so this is your save the date card that day is coming are you ready for it the false teachers weren't they mocked God they distorted the truth they lived as they pleased deliberately ignoring the truth that Jesus was coming back friends please please do not be like them do not go through the motions but remember that Jesus is coming back and let that truth challenge your heart and how you respond to Jesus but also make it challenge your heart as you look out to a world that is dying without the saving knowledge of Jesus do you love this world as God does are you actively sharing the gospel or are we simply playing lip service to a belief system without actually caring about people's eternal state before

God Jesus is coming back the day of the Lord the day of judgment is coming what are we doing about it and that's what Peter touches on in the last section of our passage tonight he says remember that Jesus is coming back and so live godly lives in verses 11 to 13 live holy and godly lives Peter is saying to these Christians in light of the knowledge that one day Jesus will judge the world that all the actions of people will be laid bare then we are to live holy lives so the reality of the day of the Lord demands us to live a certain way not because a moral life makes us right with God but because our salvation through Jesus and his death and resurrection should result in us wanting to live the way God created us to live and so Peter's summary is live holy and godly lives we see the same Peter making the same call in 1

Peter 1 verses 15 to 16 that Christians should live holy lives why because Christians are called to be holy because God is holy 1 Peter 1 15 to 16 because God has made us into a holy priesthood 1 Peter 2 verse 5 and a holy nation 1 Peter 2 verse 9 therefore the life of every Christian the life of every church should be different set apart for God following his will following his word following his plans living this kind of life is necessary for every Christian but it is also the fruit of looking forward to the day of the Lord with eager anticipation so it is looking forward to the day of the Lord is waiting but it isn't passive now we're all used to waiting for things but it doesn't mean that we like it but we know what it means to wait maybe you're like me and you get impatient you're standing at the bus stop you've got the app open with the live updates on when the bus will arrive constantly checking the app refreshing constantly looking around the corner waiting this happened to Sabina and I this week we were standing waiting for the bus that just decided it wasn't going to show up but we kept looking waiting doing a little bit of complaining too but apart from that we could do nothing else all we could do was stand there we were passive in our waiting but Peter says that doesn't work with the

[21 : 15] Christian life but it's a whole life orientation Christians should be living for the day of the Lord when judgment will fall as verse 12 reminds us but also the day as verse 13 says that in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells see the day of the Lord isn't only about judgment but it is the day where salvation is complete the day where all Christians will be in the new heavens and the new earth the place where righteousness dwells that righteousness refers to those who have been made righteous who are right with God through Jesus but the new creation will be a place of righteousness the place that righteousness dwells because ultimately God is there and he is the very definition of righteousness so what would it look like for us to live holy and godly lives as we eagerly look forward to the second coming of Jesus well it means living a life of holiness that the

Bible calls us to it means standing out for Jesus it means relying on him as we live in a broken world in our broken bodies it means living a God orientated life living for his glory it means taking our faith seriously investing time to know the truth it means having our whole life shaped by our new identity

in Jesus it means gathering with your brothers and sisters in Christ encouraging them building one another up in the faith worshipping God as a local church and it means taking the good news of Jesus to a world because a day is coming where the opportunity to repent and believe will no longer be there so Peter says to his readers and to us this evening remember that Jesus is coming back so live holy and godly lives we're a people who constantly need reminding of things that's why we have shopping lists doctors and dentists appointment reminder text to-do lists and so on but the most important thing that we can and should remember in this life is that as Christians we are not our own we live for God and we should be constantly reminding one another of the truth that Jesus is coming back and discipling one another living the Christian life together in eager anticipation of the day when we will meet Jesus face to face brothers and sisters remember that Jesus is coming back and live holy and godly lives let us pray together heavenly father we come before you and we ask for forgiveness for the times where we coast through the Christian life where we don't think about the second coming of Jesus and we go about our day to day as if it will never happen but by your spirit I pray that you would give us the strength and the ability to fix our eyes on Jesus to eagerly await the day when he will come and would that day change the way we live would it give us a burden for those around us to come to know Jesus Christ as their own Lord and Savior would it give us a burden for our own lives that we would live in a way that glorifies him and father we pray for that day and we look forward to the day where there will be no more tears no more pain no more suffering and no more death and that you will dwell with your people that glorious day when we will meet you face to face help us to eagerly expect that day in Jesus name we pray amen