

2 Peter 3:14-18

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[0 : 00] What happens if you know that a tsunami is coming?! A tsunami warning has been issued and everyone knows that it's imminent.

! How do people act? Imagine you've seen on the news that morning that your region is likely to be flooded within the next 24 hours. What are you going to do?

Well nobody carries on the same as yesterday, do you think? You don't get in the car and go to work as normal, come home afterwards and put your feet up. No, you take action.

You pack your things, you get in the car and you get out of there. Because you know, what you know about the future changes how you act now.

The way we act in the present depends on our view of the future. And that holds true in big things and small things, doesn't it? If you know you've got an exam coming up, then you study.

[1 : 01] Or you should do. If you know you're going on holiday, then you pack, you take what you're going to need with you. You even plan for far off in the future. We put money in our pension pot for retirement.

We live in light of the future. Nobody on the planet lives with no regard for what's going to happen tomorrow. Well in this letter, Peter has been talking about a huge future event.

A cataclysmic event, way bigger than a tsunami. This is worldwide, full scale, all out event of monumental proportions. It's literally the biggest event ever.

There's nothing that trumps it. Peter calls it the day of the Lord. The day when the Lord Jesus comes to earth to judge and to rule forever.

And it's, you cannot possibly ignore it. It will change everything. And if it's true, our whole life now has to change.

[2 : 04] We all live in light of the future and this future changes everything. And so Peter asks this big question. Verse 11. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be?

That's the big question. The day of the Lord is coming. So how should we live now in light of that future? So let's dig in. Our first heading is, live in light of the coming judgment.

Live in light of the coming judgment. We saw this morning that judgment is coming. Verse 10. The day of the Lord will come like a thief. And then the heavens will pass away with a roar.

And the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved. And the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. This is not metaphorical. The heavens, the sky, the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, the stars will be set on fire and dissolved.

Cosmic upheaval. And Isaiah described it like this. All the hosts of heaven shall rot away. And the skies roll up like a scroll.

[3 : 16] All their hosts shall fall as leaves fall from the vine. Like leaves falling from the fig tree. God will crunch up the skies and the stars like you crunch a piece of tinfoil.

And underneath, what will be exposed? The earth. Heaven's dissolved. Earth exposed. It says in verse 10, the earth and the works done on it will be exposed.

And as we saw this morning, the earth will not be destroyed when the fire comes. It will be exposed. That means the works that are done in the world will be revealed for all to see.

And it will be purged of all evil. Judgment day is coming. And all the way through this series, Peter has been shown that it's certain that judgment day is coming.

We've seen that it's certain because the Transfiguration proves it. It's certain because the prophets foretold it. It's certain because of God's previous judgment on angels, on Sodom and Gomorrah, in the flood.

[4 : 22] We've seen that the only reason it hasn't happened already is because God delays so that we will repent. The day of the Lord is certain.

But Peter's question is what difference does that make to us now? This awesome future event has to affect us today. Verse 11, since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be?

Who should you be in light of the coming judgment? Well, here's his answer. Live holy and godly lives.

Peter says, you need to live a holy life. Have a look again at verse 11. What sort of people ought you to be in light of holiness and godliness?

If there's a coming judgment on the ungodly, then live godly lives, says Peter. And that's what holiness means. Holiness means a godlike life.

[5 : 30] God says, be holy as I am, be like me. And godliness, we've seen earlier in this series that godliness is to have God's moral excellence, his righteous character.

We're to be morally good, like God. Be holy and godly. So we're seeing that we live in light of the future. If you know the tsunami is coming, you prepare.

And if you know the fire of God's judgment is coming, you live accordingly. Now this is not saying that we need to reach a certain level of holiness. And if we reach that level, then God will say, okay, I'll let you off.

You won't face the fire. No one is good enough for God's perfect standard. We've all fallen short. None of us standing on our own two feet can face God's justice.

I'm guilty. You're guilty. The only way to stand in the judgment is to be in Christ, the man who is righteous, the one who met God's perfect standard for us.

[6 : 33] He took God's judgment instead of us. And that's the only way. But to be in Christ means that you have been washed from your sins. You've been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

You repented of your old way of life and you've put on the new self. His divine power has caused you to be born again to a new life of righteousness.

So we are not saved by our works. But when God saves us, he always produces godliness in us. And that's why there's this contrast in 2 Peter between the godly and the ungodly.

Since the fire is coming on the ungodly, what sort of people are we to be in lives of holiness and godliness? Live in light of the coming judgments.

Imagine two brothers. One is a member of a criminal organization involved in all kinds of nefarious activities. And the other is a detective.

[7 : 40] Now one day the detective goes into his brother's turf. He goes into extreme danger to warn his brother. You can't keep living like this. It's wrong. And the police are onto you.

They're planning to raid this place next week. You're headed for a prison cell if you don't repent. Well, his brother has a change of heart. He realises what a fool he's been.

And he leaves that life behind him. He's rescued by his detective brother. Now he knows that the day of the raid is coming up.

That those criminals who he used to associate with will face the full force of the law. He's been rescued from that. But how will that knowledge of the day of reckoning affect how he acts now?

Is he going to go back to his old hideout and hang out with his old partners? Is he going to get involved again with their operations and their criminal activities? No, that would be insane.

[8 : 40] If he knows justice is going to fall on the lawbreakers, he's not going to go back to that life. Peter says to us, you've been rescued from the corruption that's in the world.

Now since judgement is going to fall on the ungodly, what sort of people want you to be? Holy and godly people. Live in light of the coming judgement.

Secondly, live in light of the coming renewal. Live in light of the coming renewal. The day of the Lord isn't just about destruction.

It's not just stuff burning up and the judgement of the young godly. We saw in verse 10 that God's goal is not to destroy the earth. The fire will not annihilate our world but will expose it, purge it and ultimately God will renew it.

Verse 12 says, we are waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God. In other words, we want it to come. Because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will mount as they burn.

[9 : 49] But, according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

God has promised us a renewed creation. Peter is talking about a perfect, glorious creation. It's still this earth but it's completely renewed.

It's purged from all the stain of sin, unable to be corrupted like this creation. Instead of God destroying this earth and starting again, he's going to redeem it.

Our world is beautiful and yet it's so messed up because of sinful desire. The expressive individualism of our culture says, follow your desires.

And yet our desires are corrupt. We're killing babies in the womb because of sinful desire. We're pumping kids full of drugs to try and change their biological sex.

[10 : 50] People are getting doctors to cut off body parts in order to change their God given nature because of sinful desire. There's war, there's poverty, there's violence and adversity and pain because of sinful desire.

This world is cursed because of sin. But God has promised, I will renew this earth so that it's perfect.

Can you imagine a world without sin? It's hard to imagine isn't it? We're so used to the corrupt, fallen world that we live in. But imagine a world where righteousness dwells.

We are waiting for a new creation. Radically new and yet still this same earth. It can be hard to get our heads around this idea that the earth won't be destroyed by the fire, just exposed, purged, renewed.

Well it's a bit like our resurrection bodies. The Bible says that those in Christ who die will be raised to life with new resurrection bodies when Jesus returns.

[11 : 58] And you might think, what kind of bodies are we going to have when we're raised? Will we be recognizable? Will we be the same person? The answer is yes and no.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, it's a bit like a seed. You plant a seed into the ground and it dies. But what comes from it? A tree.

The tree comes from the seed. It's not a completely new thing and yet it is radically new. Our resurrection bodies will be the same body but gloriously renewed.

And it's the same with the new creation. God's not strapping this world and starting again. It's the same earth but it will be beautifully renewed. So what is the most significant thing about the renewed creation?

What is so new about it? Peter says, verse 13, We are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. What will the new creation be like?

[13 : 01] The home of righteousness. Picture a world full of people who love to do what's right. They love to do God's will.

A place full of love and peace and joy and kindness, faithfulness, gentleness. Full of people who resemble God in moral excellence.

This is the place where righteousness dwells. You know, there's a view of heaven or the new creation where people think it's full of boring people. Strict, holier than thou kind of people who can't have any fun because they've got to obey all the rules.

That is not what righteousness looks like. Our world says be free to be who you are and you'll be happy. Happiness comes from giving in to all your desires.

And where has that led us? But in this new creation our desires will be for good, for righteousness. It's not restrictive, it's life-giving.

[14 : 04] It's freeing. We will be who we were always meant to be. There's a world of righteousness coming and it will be amazing. A beautiful world of joy and peace.

So if that's our future, how do we live in light of the coming renewal? Well look down to verse 14.

Peter says, Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spots or blemish and at peace.

In other words, live now like you belong there. Be diligent for godliness so that when Jesus comes he will find us without spots or blemish of sin.

His people, his bride will be beautiful in righteousness. You know this language of spots and blemish, it comes from the sacrificial system.

When God's people lived under the Mosaic covenant, and do you remember they were required to bring sacrifices, to bring lambs. And the lamb had to have no spots, no blemish.

[15:10] You couldn't bring a lamb with an inch of leg or a bad eye or any kind of infection. Because a perfect sacrifice was needed in order to deal with your sin.

And this practice was pointing to the ultimate lamb without blemish, the Lord Jesus. Who was completely pure, without any sin, spotless, perfect sacrifice for our sins.

But here's the thing, if we're in Christ, we're united with him by his Spirit, then that means that in our union we start to look more and more like him.

Bit by bit our spots and our blemishes are removed as we grow in righteousness and holiness.

That's why Peter can say, be diligent that Jesus will find you without blemish when he comes.

Look how that ends, verse 14. At peace. We want to be found at peace with God. On the day of the Lord, we will all be Jesus' friends, not his enemies.

[16:13] Live in light of the coming renewal. Have you ever seen a bride getting ready for her wedding? It takes a lot longer than getting ready for any other day.

She gets a hairdresser to do her hair properly. Someone to do her makeup. It takes hours. More attention is paid to her makeup than ever before. Now I know nothing about wedding makeup, so I had to Google it.

And here's what I found out. Bridal makeup should be timeless. Choose a look that accentuates all that makes you beautiful. You need something that complements your dress.

Before you put on the makeup, you're supposed to do cryotherapy, face gym, light therapy and other facials. I'm not making this stuff up. Drink plenty of water, eat anti-inflammatory foods, eye masks, lip exfoliation, and this is all before you've even put on the makeup.

The point is, on your wedding day, you make sure there's no spot or blemish. Because you want to look perfect for your bridegroom.

[17:21] We are Christ's bride. His church. He is joining himself to us. He will bring us to the home of righteousness.

And we want to be without blemish for him when he comes. Live in light of the coming renewal. So to recap, Peter calls us to live in light of the coming judgement and the coming renewal.

Live lives of holiness and godliness. Diligent to be spotless and at peace with God. But the thing is, while we are in this waiting phase, while the day of the Lord has not yet come, we're not in easy conditions.

We're not in peacetime. We're at war. And Peter's been saying throughout this letter there will be false teachers among us. And many will be led astray by them and end up facing the judgement too.

And there are people in the church who will entice us by sin. And if we're not careful, we'll fall. So Peter ends by giving us instructions on how to live in light of the future while we wait in these dangerous conditions.

[18:30] So that's our final heading. Waiting in dangerous conditions. Three things we need to do. Count God's patience as salvation.

Guard against error. And grow in grace and knowledge. Have a look at verse 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. We saw this morning that the dangerous scoffing of the false teachers who were saying, Where is the promise of his coming?

If Jesus is really coming back, why is it taking so long? And Peter said in verse 9, The reason is, God is being patient with you. He wants to give us time to repent.

Particularly those in the church who are being enticed to sin by these false teachers. We should count God's patience as salvation. He wants us to be saved.

[19:30] So while we wait in these dangerous conditions, we should view the waiting time not as God forsaking us, but as God's grace. A time for all God's people to be brought to repentance.

You know, for many of us, if the judgment day had come 15 years ago, or 30 years ago, we wouldn't have been saved. But because God is patient, he delays the judgment day so that we will repent.

So that we turn from our old sinful life and trust in the Lord Jesus. Count his patience as salvation. Secondly, guard against error.

In verse 15, Peter says that Paul also wrote to you about these things in his letters. But verse 16, 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.

There are some bits of the Bible that are hard to understand. Some of Paul's writings have deep truths in them that take time to work through.

[20 : 38] And Peter has been warning us throughout. There are those who are unstable who will twist the Bible to say something else. And we have to take action when this happens. Look at verse 17.

You therefore, beloved, know this beforehand. Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. We have to guard against error.

We have been seeing this over and over again. There will be people in the church who say with their lives and with their words that godliness really doesn't matter. But this error of lawless people must be guarded in this so that we don't get dragged into it and lose our stability.

Finally, grow in grace and knowledge. Verse 18 says, But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. There are two parts to keeping our stability as Christians.

We must die against error. But that's not the only thing. We also need to grow. Peter emphasised this in chapter 1 when he said we are to make every effort to grow in godliness.

[21 : 47] But here he picks out just two areas of growth. Grace and knowledge of Jesus. Peter is saying our experience and understanding of the grace of Jesus should deepen and increase.

Our knowledge of the person of Christ should expand until his arrival brings the full revelation. This is how we will remain stable in our faith in a dangerous waiting place.

Count his patience as salvation. Guard against error. Grow in grace and knowledge. We are waiting in dangerous conditions. And so we must take care that we don't lose our stability.

Now we have been asking this question, since the day of the Lord is coming, how shall we live?

How shall we live? How shall we live in light of that certain future? Peter says, if we know the fire is coming on the ungodly, let's live broadly like this.

If we know he's renewing a righteous earth, let's be diligent to be found spotless. If we know this is a dangerous waiting time, let's take care not to lose our stability.

[22 : 56] Brothers and sisters, Jesus is coming back to renew a home of righteousness. Let's live now like we belong there.

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you for your words through your Apostle Peter.

Thank you for speaking to us by your Spirit as we've listened together over these past weeks.

Thank you for reminding us that the day of the Lord is coming. And that Godliness matters.

Father, we pray that your Spirit will apply these things to our hearts. So that you beautify your church. Presenting us without spot or blemish by your divine power and work in us.

Protect us from being carried away by the error of lawless people. And instead cause us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For his glory we pray.

[24 : 05] Amen. Amen.