

A CALL TO END TIME LIVING

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For the past three weeks we have been looking at 2 Peter and have covered three challenges. In this last week, we want to look at the motivation behind those challenges. As a reminder Peter was writing to churches that were in what is now Turkey. In his first letter to these churches, he was concerned about living Godly blameless lives whilst under persecution.

In his second letter he seems less concerned with persecution from the outside and more concerned about heresy taking hold in the church. Both of these have the potential to destroy the churches effectiveness as Christ's witness in their communities.

Persecution can bring believers to unity and a focus on God, which in turn brings glory to God, (The focus of 1 Peter).

When life settles down (maybe the persecution has gone!) then there is the potential for distractions and division in the church.

Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive.
(Matthew 12:25-26, NLT)

But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.
(2 Corinthians 11:3, NLT)

In 2 Peter, the church is being warned about heresy taking root and teaching how it can be dealt with.

Recap of the last three sessions

The call to grow in faith – maturity (Chapter 1)

- His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.

- Make every effort - faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection and love.
- Prevents uselessness and fruitlessness.
- Make every effort to confirm your calling and election – you will never stumble.

The call to know the truth – morality (Chapter 2)

- There will be false teachers among you.
- Bring in destructive heresies.
- They will exploit the people for their own gain.
- The desires of the flesh will pollute people.
- They will promise freedom but will corrupt bringing enslavement to sin.

The call to Godly patience – morale (Chapter 3)

- Remember that God is working through history.
- God's timing is perfect.
- We need to be patient whilst God is working through His plan.

The call to end time living - motivation

But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.
(2 Peter 3:10-13, NLT)

- What is meant by the day of the Lord?
- Why was Peter reminding the readers of this letter about it?
- How do we prepare ourselves for the day of the Lord?

The Day of the Lord - "This expression, often in the context of future events, refers to the time when God will intervene decisively for judgment and/or salvation. Various formulated as the "day of the Lord" the "day of our Lord Jesus Christ" the "day of God" or "the last day(s)," the expression highlights the unmistakable appearance of God. God will make visible his rule of righteousness by calling for an accounting by the nations as well as individuals, dispensing punishment for some and ushering in salvation for others." Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology.

Will come like a thief in the night:

Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected. (Matthew 24:43-44, NLT)

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The time will be unexpected, without warning, so believers should be alert and ready at any time

Judgement:

But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (NLT)

Warning of Coming Judgment. What sorrow awaits you who say, "If only the day of the Lord were here!" You have no idea what you are wishing for. That day will bring darkness, not light. (Amos 5:18, NLT)

New heavens and earth:

Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! (Isaiah 65:17-18, NLT)

Jesus replied, "I assure you that when the world is made new and the Son of Man sits upon his glorious throne, you who have been my followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28, NLT)

Peter wrote this to motivate believers to:

- Avoid corruption and pollution and so be useful and fruitful.
- Look forward to and make it to the finish line, winning the eternal prize.

Believers do this by:

- Growing in maturity.
- Keeping to the truth.
- Living patiently understanding that God has His plan and is in control.

This takes effort!

Conclusion

We live in a world that has little or no sense of an eternal destiny. Peter is reminding people that the Lord will be returning sometime in the future. We should live with our eyes on this future return and not just our present circumstances.

Peter's Final Words:

You already know these things, dear friends. So be on guard; then you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:17-18, NLT)

All glory to Him, both now and forever! Amen.