

I. Introduction

A. Waiting rooms

1. Waiting room and Dr's office
2. All kinds of waiting rooms - some really bad and others pretty nice
3. 3:11-12, "What sort of people ... waiting for and hastening the coming of the Day of God."

B. Even in waiting rooms, we develop and display who we are. Peter asks us at the end of his letter what kind of people we are while we await the coming of Jesus and the Day of the Lord. In Peter's mind and theology the Day of the Lord, consisting of both judgment and salvation, was bedrock reality.

II. While we're waiting

A. You are here (vs 11-13)

1. What I do (thoughts, words, actions) will survive and last through judgment to eternity.
2. So, what sort of person do I want to be? What sort of person is God calling me to be?
3. Demolition and restoration (v 13)

*What this tells us is that the current state of the world as we know it is on a course of deterioration and destruction materially and morally.

4. Jesus followers are the only sources of light in this darkness.
5. California National Guard Aviators

Two aircrews, a Blackhawk and a Chinook flew at night with night observation devices through high winds with burning embers, heavy smoke, and difficult terrain to rescue over 200 people completely cut off and trapped by fire with it closing in on them about a week ago. They made multiple trips to get everyone out. CalFire on the ground fighting the fire while trapped too, waved them off and warned them not to land because the conditions were too dangerous. But they landed and rescued anyway.

*That is the spiritual reality we live in every day as those who have been rescued and restored by Jesus!

B. Our responsibility: while we wait for what will undeniably happen ...

"God prepares leaders in a slow-cooker, not in a microwave oven. More important than the awaited goal is the work God does in us while we wait. Waiting deepens and matures us, levels our perspective, and broadens our understanding. Tests of time determine whether we can endure seasons of seemingly unfruitful preparations, and indicate whether we can recognize and seize the opportunities that God brings our way." -John Maxwell

1. Without spot or blemish
 - a. **Diligent** (working hard, intense desire) is my part; **Found** (discovered in a particular position) is God's part

- b. Pure, nothing to be blamed for, in pursuit of a godly life that will be perfected in the last day
- 2. At peace
 - a. Diligent is my part; Found is God's part
 - 1) God, through Christ, has made peace with us.
 - 2) We prioritize peace with others.
 - b. Harmony in our relationships, freedom from disputes, and freedom from worry

*Q: Am I one who is free from things that can be held against me and would others characterize me as "at peace?"

- c. This is how I work on me in the waiting room
- d. Unfortunately, we tend to focus on others in the waiting room and tell them how to live while blinded to ourselves.
- 3. Age of salvation (v 15)
 - a. Human history: Stone, Bronze, Iron Ages; classical age; Middle Ages; age of discovery; Renaissance; Enlightenment; Industrial Revolution; Cold War (ultimately settled in Moscow by Rocky Balboa...); Information Age... and now, the age of COVID-19

*Those are all descriptive terms that helps us understand the activity during those time periods. What they fail to do is characterize the nature of what's really going on.

- b. Human history by nature is a spiritual reality and we are in and have been in the age of salvation.
 - 1) What Jesus did on the cross ushered in an age that will last until His return, the Day of the Lord.
 - 2) While we may see various activity, good and bad, the reality of our lives is that we inhabit an unprecedented time of hopefulness because of the rescue, forgiveness, righteousness, and restoration bought by the blood of Jesus!

*This explains why God is so patient.

*We are called to count God's patience as merciful, and the pain or unpleasantness we endure is because salvation is the focus of our time, rescued and preserved in the midst of utter destruction until the last day.

- 4. Warning label: these things (holiness and patience) are hard to really wrap our heads around.
 - a. Why? Because of our nature of rebellion, self-reliance, and thinking too much of our own ideas and opinions.
 - b. There are those ...
 - 1) ... who are ignorant and unstable, preying on others.
 - 2) ... who are ignorant and unstable, being preyed on by others.

*All of whom are twisting or getting twisted (distorted; misled; deceived) spiritually, ending up in destruction.

- c. Don't be either of those. How?
 - 1) Don't get carried away (be on guard) and lose your own stability.

*What is our stability?

-Acceptance? Wealth? Happiness? Health? Freedom? Government I agree with?

-Our stability comes from surrendering and knowing and acting like Jesus.

2) Strengthen stability with growth.

a) In grace (God's goodwill, kindness, gratitude, mercy, unmerited favor)

b) In truth (what can be known from what God has revealed)

*Grace and truth must hold hands. Neither can rise above the other.

-Grace without truth deceives people. It degenerates into deceitful tolerance.

-Truth without grace is brutality. It gives information but in a way that we cannot hear it.

III. What now?

A. Where we are

1. Global pandemic, lawlessness and injustice, power hungry leaders not bringing solutions but jockeying for more power/influence, and lately the loss of property, life, and the ability to breathe deep outside.
2. And what has the church been doing? The American church has been arguing and positioning on safety, freedom, political theory, and whatever else is the flavor of the week.
3. Church, we are in the age of salvation and God is waiting patiently for us to take that seriously.
 - a. Jesus never taught to strike first, strike hard, no mercy.
 - b. Jesus taught to love God, love others, and love mercy.

*If my safety or my freedom is more important than unity within the church or the self-sacrificial rescue of the lost, then I am guilty of dismissing the power that God has given His Church.

B. So what now?

1. Jesus is coming.
 - a. Are you without spot or blemish? Are you at peace?
 - b. Are you processing events and people through a lens of salvation?
 - c. Have you lost your stability?
 - d. Are you growing in grace and truth equally?
2. It's time to look inward and let the Holy Spirit convict and correct whatever is off inside of me and you with whatever method He deems fit.

*It's time for us to be like those national guardsmen, ignoring the arguments and agendas and going all in to save those who have false hope or no hope.

*We are living in the age of salvation. This is our time. The people of God who have been rescued, forgiven, made righteous, and restored. WE are the church, the Body of Christ, and the gates of Hell cannot stand against us if we are actually behaving like Jesus. We, of all people, should be hopeful and ready.



WHILE WE ARE WAITING

2 PETER 3:11-18

SEPTEMBER 20, 2020 | PASTOR MATT WHITEFORD



GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1 What are some things that take a long time to realize or wait for, but that are worth the wait when you finally receive the “fruit” or benefit?**
- 2 What are some consequences of not allowing things to grow to maturity?**

The apostle Peter closed his second New Testament epistle to believers explaining what true spiritual growth looks like. He also explained the reasons why such growth is important. Spiritual growth is a long process, not an instantaneous change. Nevertheless, we should remain diligent to grow in Christ, guarding our conduct and glorifying God as the Holy Spirit conforms us into His image and likeness.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1 Someone read 2 Peter 3:11-13.**

The New Testament Scriptures, including Peter's epistles, confirm that God is not bound by time, and that Christ will return according to God's timetable, not ours. In the meantime, we know that God is patient because He wants more people to come to Christ. What may seem like abandonment to the world, skeptics, and scoffers is actually God's kindness as more lost people hear the Gospel and are saved.

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.

How can Peter's description of the cataclysmic events related to Christ's return encourage believers to live rightly?

How would we answer those who might say these words are too frightening to encourage anyone to strive toward godliness?

- 2 Someone read 2 Peter 3:14-18.**

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. ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸But 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.

Peter used a couple of terms associated with animals offered as sacrifices at the Temple. The law God gave to Israel through Moses (Exodus, Leviticus) explained that when the people and the priests brought animals to be offered, they were only to bring those that had no flaw - no spot or blemish. Bringing an imperfect sacrifice to God was an offense to Him. He demanded the best His people had to offer.

According to v. 14, how can we be found “blameless” when Christians continue to sin?

Note that Paul stated in both 1 Corinthians 8 and Colossians 1:22 that it is the work of Christ in us to “keep us” blameless until He returns. This is part of the good work that He began in us, that He will be faithful to complete (Phil. 1). We guard our conduct because we’re looking forward to Christ coming and our going to our eternal home, not because we strive to earn it.

What does it mean to “keep the peace” in our church? How can we, individually and together, promote and strive toward unity in our body?

How can growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus steer us clear of errors in biblical thinking? How can it strengthen us against doubts that Jesus will return to claim His church?

Grace and knowledge are two essential aspects of spiritual growth: grace, flowing out of a believer’s life, is a fruit of spiritual growth. Knowledge, going into a believer’s life, is the root of spiritual growth. Matt shared on Sunday that grace and truth must hold hands. Neither can rise above the other. Grace without truth deceives people. It degenerates into deceitful tolerance. Truth without grace is brutality. It gives information, but in a way that we cannot hear it.

Why do you think Paul prayed at the end of his book that God would receive glory both now and forever (v. 18)? In what ways does the spiritual growth of His children glorify God?

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

- 1** How can you look to the people in your group to help you in your spiritual growth? If you are using this study for personal use, what is preventing you from connecting in a home group?
- 2** In what ways could you be a mentor and discipler toward a less mature believer, to help him or her achieve goals toward spiritual maturity?
- 3** How can you continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus? What would likely be the outcome if we just grew in grace, but not knowledge? What would it look like if we just grew and focused on knowledge and not grace?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time in prayer with your group.

NEXT WEEK: NEW SERIES!

We are starting a new series called "JESUS" and we will be going through Mark chapters 1-8 from now until Christmas. Read **MARK 1:1-13** before Sunday and your home group. Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

COMMENTARY

2 PETER 3:11-18

3:11-14. Peter insisted that the anticipation of the Lord's return and its accompanying events of judgment should rouse Christians to holy living. Evil will be completely destroyed when Christ returns, and righteousness will permanently dwell in the new heavens and a new Earth (Isaiah 32:16).

3:15-16. Peter notes that the teaching in Paul's letters said that the Lord's patience provided opportunities for salvation (Romans 2:4). Peter grouped Paul's letters together with the rest of the Scriptures. This reference does not necessarily mean that Paul's letters were already circulating as a complete collection. Peter may simply have been referring to the Pauline letters that were widely known and accepted as Scripture at the time he wrote 2 Peter. In any event, Peter clearly affirms the God-given authority of Paul's writings.

3:17-18. Since Peter's readers had now been warned about the false teachers in their midst, he instructed them to be on their guard and not be led astray. He also encouraged them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. He closed with a doxology in which he ascribed glory to Christ both now and forever.