

How Then Shall We Live?
Week 11: How are you at waiting?

If you are visiting and missed this series and you would like to be able to answer that question, "How then shall we live?" Based upon God's word instead of what our culture is saying, then I suggest you go to our website where all of the sermons can be watched and even read.

Let's begin at verse one. **Follow along in your journals.** If you don't have one and you'd like one for further study and even following this series online, then we would like to give you one.

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." 2 Peter 3:1-4

What is he reminding them of? He is reminding them of the **two themes** that have run throughout this letter. These are also the two things that the **false teachers** or, as they are called in this chapter, "**scoffers**" have been promoting as truth and leading the weak astray. These scoffers scoff about two things; Jesus' **return and judgment** and **holy living.**

The original teaching that is the gospel that brought them to faith in Jesus and into his church as **settled in the bottom of the glass, like pulp** in orange juice. Peter wants to **stir this up again so that it is filling their hearts and minds, not make space for something else** to be poured in on top.

Believing that Jesus will return and there will be a judgment day is vital to who they are and how they are to live in that contentious culture. Living lives that **reflect** that they have been with and belong to Jesus is also vital, particularly if they are **to be an example and influence in their pagan culture.**

In the first expansion of the Jesus way in the book of Acts, Paul writes these words to people coming to Christ. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:29-30 NIV

He also writes to his apprentice Timothy. Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in **the last times** some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. 1 Timothy 4:1 NLT

Remember that phrase “in these last times.” We will return to what that means later.

They think they can claim Jesus and, at the same time, deny that living in a way that is not aligned with how Jesus lived and deny that Jesus will return and judge people’s behavior and hearts. They are wrong.

Let’s pick back up at verse 5, where Peter gives his defense for believing in Jesus’ second coming. ⁵ For they deliberately overlook (deliberately forget) 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**. But do not overlook (or “Let me remind you) 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 bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 2 Peter 3:8-10

They deliberately ignore or forget the truth that God has entered into this world in the past to intervene, and he will do it again when Jesus comes for the final judgment.

He wants to remind the readers about these facts that the false teachers ignore, **but also that you cannot put God on a human timetable.**

Let's continue reading where we left off with verse 11. We've heard about the first thing to be reminded of that the false teachers have left out.

Now for the second. 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.** 2 Peter 3:11-13

"Since these things are to be dissolved..." the assumption is that you will live lives of holiness and godliness, waiting, but looking forward to that day.

Bible scholar, Douglass Moo, gives a great explanation of why Jesus' coming must be connected to why we are to live in a way that honors God and reflects Jesus. **The Parousia (2nd coming/Judgment Day) brings both destruction and renewal. Christians should live holy and godly lives, then, not only because this world is not going to last but also because a new world is going to take its place. They should pursue righteousness, both to distance themselves from this decaying and doomed world and to prepare for the next..."** NIV Application Commentary Douglas J. Moo

This is the opposite of **"Eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow we die."**

These false teachers are denying the destruction of this world and the new heaven and earth, for those who have put their trust in Jesus, the motivation for living godly lives.

But what about those **two words we saw** used for living that pleases God. We are to be holy and godly. **Sounds like an impossible task only for the truly pious but, not so fast.**

What does Peter really mean by holy and godly? Lets' define "holy" and "godly".

Holy = set apart...We are to reflect that part of God's character, that he is set apart. We are to be set apart as useful to him.

This was hugely important for Peter in his first letter, so much that he led with it in chapter 1. ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15-16

Godly means we should reflect what we see in Jesus.

Neither of these descriptions of how we are to live includes a human nature transplant. It's transformation over time. They are not intended to be knucklehead proof. We will mess up, sin, fall short, and disappoint. We just keep focusing on Jesus and his example and our effort.

Here's the promise for those who put their trust in Christ. ³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." Revelations 21:3-4

So we are to wait for his return when these verses become reality and, because he is returning, we are to live holy and godly lives.

Let's pick back up at verse 14. 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. 2 Peter 3:14-18

So what are we to do with all of this? This comes back to that word **waiting**. We are waiting for something that is promised, but hasn't happened yet. How do we live believing that Jesus will return, even though he hasn't yet? **Productive waiting, not speculating...**

Speculate = to form a theory or conjecture about a subject without firm evidence.

You don't speculate in business sense, unless you have the money to lose.

Remember that phrase "last days?" Doesn't that mean the last days before Jesus comes, there is a judgment and the old is burned up and a new one is created? How could that have been then and Jesus hasn't come back yet. The last days, where what these people taught began with Pentecost.

Did you hear that? The last days began at Pentecost when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to live in those who trust him. It began with the beginning of the church. And it doesn't end until Jesus returns.

Therefore, it was and still is "the last days." So when someone pulls something out of the headlines and then quotes some image from Ezekiel or Revelations and says, "See we are in the last days, things are going to hell in a handbasket and Jesus is return soon," you need to understand that they are missing something in their speculation. I already knew it was the last days and it didn't have anything to do with Russia, COVID or who is sitting in the oval office.

Then they start looking for the mysterious Antichrist. ¹⁸ Dear children, **the last hour is here**. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. 1 John 2:18 Remember, what are the last days? And notice that there are multiple Antichrist(s) because they are against Christ. Get it?

Here's a list of those people who folks have speculated would be the Antichrist and in their very speculative theory of end times will take over the new world order and torment the earth for 1000 years or something like it. Notice first of all that there will be many Antichrists.

- Hitler
- Pope John Paul 2
- Henry Kissinger
- Anwar Sadat
- Napoleon
- JFK
- Bill Gates
- Ronald Reagan
- Barack Obama

All of the speculation came to nothing. They were wrong every time, but people keep doing it. It follows this type of logic.

If you believe in this type of dispensational end time's theory, I'm not here to yell at you about being wrong. I'm just saying **speculating isn't going to help us make disciples or make the kingdom present for others.** And it **doesn't help us wait productively.**

Every time in the history of our country that people were really scared, they started speculating about this being the end times. They did it during the **cold war,** they did it during the **Cuban missile crisis,** they did it during the **dark days of WW2,** during the build up to **Y2K,** they did it when the **United Nations was established,** and each time they were wrong. **People sold a lot of books and made a lot of movies creating a lot of money for these "so called" prophets.**

Here's the thing about speculation. It makes you **feel special and smarter** than all those really smart people.

Speculating almost always leads to pride and more fear!

Speculation wastes energy needed for growing in knowledge, because we are looking for a **different knowledge.**

Simply put, we cannot wait on what God is doing and when he will return to put things right if we speculate. We will lose resolve. That's why obediently making disciples goes out the window when we needlessly speculate on why Jesus might come back during this season in life. We play defense, not offense. We hunker down and spin tall tales about how Jesus is coming back this year, because this, this, and this, is happening in the world and, when you take a couple of verses out of context in Ezekiel and Revelations, it all fits so perfectly.

Jesus said that he didn't even know when he was coming back.

Stop wasting our time trying to crack the code. There is no code. Just get ready by being obedient.

I didn't put this scripture in the outline or powerpoint, but this should clear a few things up about how we are to wait. ⁶ So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"⁷ He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."⁹ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰ As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Jesus is saying. "Stop asking me when the kingdom will come and stop staring up in the sky. Go, get out of here. I've just given you your marching orders. Is anything unclear? I'm done here. Go, wait for the Holy Spirit. Believe me you have no idea what's coming your way."

Look back at verses 11-13. What word did you see repeated several times? Yes, it was, "wait."

“Waiting is not the same as inactivity. Waiting is a commitment to continue in obedience until God speaks.” P. Shirer

So what does this productive waiting really look like? What is Peter focusing on throughout this whole letter? “Productive waiting not speculating...is growing in knowledge of God...” Peter is challenging people to grow in their knowledge of God. That means experiencing him and learning about his character and ways from the Bible. It’s head and heart when we speak of growing in knowledge of God. This is never to be confused with agreeing with some facts about God. Even the demons in hell know that these things are true about God, but they don’t really know him. To truly know him, is to love him and to love him and want to please him. That’s head and heart.

This happens when we open up, or create space for the transformational power of the Holy Spirit to work. If I am experiencing God’s presence, knowledge of God, and reading his Word about who he is and his character, then the Holy Spirit will have space.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-8 That’s productive waiting!

Peter is here to stir us up and remind us, so how about this as a timely reminder. ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 2 Peter 1:3-4

To wait and not be passive, means this...“Productive waiting not speculating”... But in order to wait for Jesus’ return in a productive way, “is growing in knowledge of God” ...which leads to stability...In other words

what growing in our knowledge of God creates is stability. Now what does Peter mean by stability in **verse 17** when he says, **"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."**

This means not easily fooled, not easily distracted.

Another way to describe stable, is **rock solid**. Not easily shaken, discouraged, or anxious. Anxiety is like vibration. Everyone is really anxious in our world right now. **What they don't need from us is more shaking. The world needs someone who isn't freaking out.** They need to grab hold of us and find stability. People who know this, **"I am one in whom Christ dwells and I live in his unshakable kingdom."** **Let's say that together.**

Let's add the final phrase onto Peter's challenge to us. Productive waiting, not speculating...is growing in knowledge of God... which leads to stability and being found ready!

Look at verse 14 again. ¹⁴ **Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.** This is a **reference about** people bringing offerings into the temple in ancient days as a **sacrifice to pay the penalty for their sins.** You couldn't bring in some old dying animal or one that is damaged or diseased. This had to be without spot or blemish.

Have you ever come home after leaving your kids alone in the house for a while and it's a disaster? How did you find them? You found them lacking responsibility and respect for their parents. **But what about when you came home and found that the dishes were in the dishwasher, their toys were put away, no homework scattered over the dinner table, the TV is off, not playing for anyone, and the side door is not open, letting heat out and cold in, and dog is not long since gone but resting in the kennels.**

Jesus returns and finds his people ready, because they have been doing what he told them to do. Because this is true... ²⁷ **And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, Hebrews 9:27**

Have you noticed today or throughout this series that there is something out of line in your life to what God is saying to you through Peter?

Aligning my life

We started this last Sunday and I hope you have been testing God on this. We call this the 21 day change. It's 14 days now, but why change the name.

Join the 21-day challenge Here's what this means. **It's a way to wait productively to grow in knowledge, to create stability in an unstable world and ultimately be found ready.**

- 1. 15 minutes in the Bible a day.**
- 2. Pray this way.**
 - Praise: God I love you because you are...**
 - Confess: I confess to you my sins of commission and omission.**
 - Listen: "Speak Jesus; I'm listening."**

If you want some help where to read those 15 minutes per day? Read the end of Matthew, Mark, or Luke which describe Jesus' last weeks before his resurrection.

Have the worship team come forward. Take a posture that helps you pray this way. I'm going to lead us through these three prayers to begin our build up to baptism and Resurrection Sunday. As our prayer time ends, the band can begin to play.