

2 Peter 3:8-10 Our Great God 8/13/17

But do not overlook 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. (Pastor prays)

Old sins die hard. They strangely rear their heads long after you hoped they were dead. They are coddled and tolerated and tamed and then relabeled in the form of Christian conservatism.

We've seen it in the last couple of days in Old Dominion, Virginia; we've felt it here in the streets of our own Queen City. Racism, white supremacy, is the lasting brand of a fallen humanity and the aftertaste of chewed-on hatred. It should make every born again Christian nauseated with a real loathing for sin and a real longing for the coming King, King Jesus, a king who will grant a new Heaven and a new earth and will cast out the racists into eternal darkness.

The Day of the Lord. This is providential because here we are in 2 Peter talking about the great day of the Lord. Peter is neck-deep in explaining why King Jesus has not yet returned, but as Peter writes, he assures us: don't be fooled by the chaos we live in. Christ will return, and when He does, in the words of verse 10, the works that are done on earth, and the people that do them, will have nowhere to hide, no one to cling to and no hope to calm their hearts.

Verse 10 is a clarifying, haunting verse: The day of the Lord (this is a quote from Jesus). The day of the Lord will come like a thief, unexpected, and will bring unmitigated horror for those who are not in Christ. And Peter is stretching the very limit of verbal communication to tell believers not to worry, don't give up hope. Your father in Heaven hears your prayers and knows your needs and, in due time, will heal your wounds.

This passage, like all passages in the Bible, is here not to tell us about ourselves. The bible is not a love letter to *people*; it's a biography of *God*. This letter is here to tell us about our Great God who can be known only in Jesus Christ. So here is what I hope you will see today...

God is Great and You are Not

God is Not Like Us Although We Imagine Him to Be

Voltaire was not right about much, but he was dead-on when he said, "God made man in his own image and, ever since then, man has been trying to return the favor," meaning, we want to fashion a God who is like us, not worship the God the Bible describes. We want a God with our taste and morals and idiosyncrasies, A God who will approve of our way of life and understand our deficiencies while condemning the wrong of others.

Peter, in the text, could've picked 1,000 things, but for the sake of silencing the critics in verse 4, Peter says in verse 8: *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. Peter is doing a couple of things here and it would be good for us to look at this verse for a little bit.

He's paraphrasing Psalm 90:4 "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night." What seems like a long time to us is not long to Him. The lives of human beings are short and frail but God does not weaken or fail with the passage of time. Peter is asserting God's sovereignty over time.

Now, I think, there are several things you can do with this but, strictly speaking, Peter shows us two sides of one coin to remind us that God is not like us although we imagine that He is. In regard to the time in verse 8, Peter tells us God is different in two ways: in perspective and intensity.

Let's break the phrase down and deal with perspective first. Let's read verse 8. *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. Notice the last phrase: a thousand years is as one day. What a glorious and comforting thought that the God of the Bible can see what we

can't imagine. He can see the end from the beginning. Peter is using that art of simile to make a point that 1,000 years is the blink of an eye.

Not only that, He sees what is going to happen in the future. He is already in the future setting that stage for what He sees is going to happen so that it will indeed happen. This is an important thing for growing Christians to grasp because it is so easy for us to get caught up in our own little world and only see things from our perspective and not envision our lives from God's perspective. This verse is important to use as a flashlight shining on Romans 8:28, *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* This is not about you. This is about your brief life being a part of His perfect plan.

It's a beautiful picture of this truth as found in a mosaic. We did one at Camp Paradise a few weeks ago. In the afternoon, I would walk around to the land recreation area or to the water recreation area and, one day, I walked over to where they were doing crafts. I'm not much on doing crafts but it was air-conditioned in there so I went to check it out. Sharon Locklear was leading it and asked me to participate in a craft. Well, that doesn't appeal to me. But she gave me a little yellow piece of paper and asked me to "write something that is real meaningful to you about Christ." So, I wrote down "imputed righteousness" because I'm thankful God doesn't look at me through my own filthy rags of righteousness but He looks at me through the righteousness of Christ.

Well, she did that with hundreds of other people. Students and leaders all had different color paper. All color of paper, all color of people. She took all of these little pieces of paper with what all these people thought about Jesus and put them together in a beautiful mosaic of an anchor. If I get up close to it, I can probably find my little piece of paper. But it's not until I back away to the point where I can't see my little perspective that I see the beauty of this anchor that symbolizes what Christ has done for me.

If all you do is get up close enough to your life that all you see is how everything affects *you*, then you miss the beautiful mosaic and perfect plan of our good God.

God – He can see our perspective. We are called to trust His perspective. Perspective.

There's another way verse 8 says God is different. Let's read it. We don't think about this very much but it's worth thinking about. Read the first phrase of verse 8 again. *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years.*

We talked about God's perspective; now let's look at His intensity. Intensity. A day is like 1,000 years. Our God is not like us, living life in sound bites. Our God looks at our lives thoroughly, deeply and completely...And not just our lives, but the lives of every individual who has ever lived.

We are a society of 144 characters. A society of pictures and emoji's. There's even an emoji Bible. That, in my opinion, should be shredded and ground to a fine powder and blown into a hurricane. Our God sees things in one day that we wouldn't see if we stared at it for 1,000 years. This is just a reminder that our God doesn't miss anything. Nothing escapes His gaze. He is not like us though we imagine Him to be.

God is Patient with His People

Aren't you thankful for the patience of our God? He is so much more patient than we could ever deserve. Verse 9 gives one reason and one reason only for the delay in the return of Christ. Notice what Peter says in verse 9. *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.*

This speaks to the character of God, the love of God and the mercy of God. It's the same thing Paul said in Romans 2:4, *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?* The reason you don't immediately die when you sin is not that the sovereign God is not angry with sin. He clearly hates it and will judge it with infinite punishment if you are not in Christ.

The only reason you woke up again this morning is that the patience and kindness of God has provided a clear opportunity for you to experience His grace. God is slow to

anger but He will not delay forever. And the reason the world continues to function, at least in part, is that the full number of people have not yet been saved. This means at least two things. For believers it means you and I must give verbal testimony about Jesus Christ. We must tell people who are without Christ the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For unbelievers as Paul says in 2 Corinthians, now is the time of God's favor. Today is the day for salvation. Or in Hebrews, today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. Part of what I am doing this morning is calling you to repent and believe before it is everlastingly too late.

(Pastor shares the Gospel and prays)