

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 20 December 2020
Service/s: *Across the Diocese*
Series: A Day is coming
Title: In the mean time
Passage: 2 Peter 3:11-18
Outline: **Scoffers forget
Don't YOU forget**

INTRODUCTION

- **“A Day is coming”** – that has been our Advent theme this year – and appropriately so because as I have explained, Advent is **ALL ABOUT** looking forward to that **great day** when **Jesus will come, right all wrongs, put down all evil and establish** his eternal **righteous reign**.
- Over the last three weeks we have seen from **1 Thessalonians 4 and 5** and **2 Peter 3**, that a **day is coming** – and that means that one day all those who love and trust Jesus will be **with him forever**.
- We've seen that we don't know when that day will **be** as it will come like a **thief in the night** // so we live **every day** prepared for Jesus' coming – prepared by **ensuring** that we are people who have turned from running our **own** life to putting our trust in **Jesus**. //
- And last week we saw that many **scoffers** will come and say **'well, where is this coming...** it's been 2,000 years – where is it?' and we saw Peter's reply that any **delay** only means more opportunity for people to **repent and believe** and come into **relationship** with **Jesus**.
- SO this morning we **return** to 2 Peter 3 because Peter tells us **how to live** in the **mean time...** in other words, what are the implications for life **here and now...** because of the **new life** which is to **come**?
- There are 3 simple points to make from the 2 Peter 3:11-18 this morning... namely:
 1. He **will** come back;
 2. This world **will** go; and so then –
 3. how should we live....?

1. HE WILL COME BACK

- although as we saw last week in the previous passage, there are and have been those who want to throw doubt on any notion of Jesus' literal and physical return, without a doubt, he **is** coming back.
- I want **you** be **absolutely clear** on this... **Jesus WILL return!!** //
- ... his coming will be like a thief in the night – unexpected, unpredictable, yet unmistakable...
- ...which is why we must live as if it could happen at any time... we must expect it **all** the time...
- ...for then we won't be **surprised** when he **comes...** //
- So – he **will** come **back** – I hope you're **convinced** by that – **convinced** by that – and wonderfully looking **forward** to that!!!
- and **second:**

2. THIS WORLD WILL GO

- We don't know a lot about what it will be like when Jesus returns..
- But this passage tells us that this world as we know it will be no more...

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- There is it in v10 that we saw last week... *the heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*
- And in v12 - *That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat*
- This will **all go...** //
- Some of it we won't be **sad** to see go will we?
- For **evil** itself will be **destroyed** with it...
- no more **earthquakes** killing thousands...
- no more **cancers** claiming its victims;
- no more pain of **separation** from our loved ones through death...
- no more **destruction of relationships** through **hate** and **malice**...
- no more **coronavirus** and **deaths by thousands** each **day** as we see around the world **today**... //
- But think about what else will be gone....
- Your **home and all its contents** – finished...;
- your **property**.... And everything on it...
- your **career** that you have sunk so much time and energy into – **finished**;
- those **degrees** hanging on your wall – gone; your **reputation, status** in this world... all **irrelevant**...?? //
- Nothing... friends most of what most people spend there entire **lives** working **for** or working **on** – will be **burnt up** – **irrelevant**...
- This time last **year** much of our state and was being **torn up** by **devastating fires**... and there were many pictures of those who had lost homes... – people pouring over the still smoldering ashes in the following days... searching in vain for something to keep – some **memento**, something **tangible** from their **past life**... suddenly they were seeing more **clearly** what was **important** in **life**...
- things were **different** now... saw things **differently**...
- most of them were saying... “at least we and our family are still here – still alive – that’s what is important...”
- there was a whole new understanding for them of what matters... of what is important....
- Friends... sooner or later... everything around us will be gone.. and that needs to change and impact the way we live... needs to impact us as to what we think **matters** – what is **important**...
- So our third and final point...

3. HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

- Jesus **will** return, and the **heavens and earth** will be **gone**... and Apostle **Peter** – no – the **Holy Spirit** asks us this morning the most **obvious question** of all...
- ...do you see it there in v11? *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, **what kind of people ought we to be?*** //
- For if we really believe that this life is **temporary**... that everything we have will **go**... that should **change** the way we live **shouldn't it?** That should **shape** and **mould** what we see as **important**?
- I know someone who in a sermon suggested that to help us comprehend the reality we should all go home and get some post-it-notes and go around everything we own and attach little reminders – ‘**temporary**’, ‘**for**

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the fire, 'trash', 'to be destroyed' – on the **lounge**, the **fridge**, the **car**, the **investment accounts**, so on and so on... till it starts to **sink in**...

- How much **time and energy**, how much of our **money** and **resources**... how much **anxiety and argument** – goes in to that which **will be burnt up**? //
- ...and we have to remind ourselves **constantly** of this... and **recheck** our **values**... review what we consider is **important**.
- What sort of people ought we to be? (v11) *You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...*
- and how on earth might we speed on Jesus' coming?
- If one of the reasons for the delay is to allow more and more people to repent – then we will speed its coming as we tell people about the marvellous amnesty – the **forgiveness on offer**....
- ...we speed it as we pray earnestly – 'your kingdom come', and 'come Lord Jesus'!
- **How** then ought we to **live**?
- You ought to love **holy** and **godly** lives
- Holy = **separate** – for God's unique purposes.... There ought to be a comfortable distance between ourselves and some of the values, the lifestyles, the language, the jokes, the innuendo of the unbelievers around us... - holy – separate from - different from those around us who are without God and without hope in the world...
- Lets be blunt - often times we're so desperate to show how 'normal' we are... how 'in touch' we are, that in the end we compromise ourselves as we crave the acceptance of the world... but friends – we have a Saviour Jesus – he went to the cross so we could be free from sin...
- ...and although we have to be **in** the world we are not to be **of** the world... Like Israel of old we are to be God's distinctive people.
- There **ought** to be something that stands out about us – light in a world of darkness... hope in hopelessness, truth in relativism, joy in the midst of despair, godliness in a world of godlessness....
- ... we should be living every moment so that we are not embarrassed if Jesus were to turn up and see what we were doing! – **every moment** to please him – **every moment** worthy of the calling we have received...
- godly - means – **godlike in character** – the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, patience, kindness, self-control.... Being **other person centred** in a world of **selfishness**... so **very** different from the world around us – so **very different** ///
- again we are challenged in v14 *so then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him...*
- and that is **exactly** how we would want to be found when he returns isn't it? //
- does that describe **you** this morning?
- You may be busy working your way back through the week and evaluating how you have done... you may be thinking about your behaviour at home before you put on this video.... But...
- of course being spotless and blameless is **impossible** on our own weak efforts - but through the **cross** where our sin is taken... where our **spots** and blemishes were laid on the Lord Jesus... where **peace** was made between us and God because his perfect sacrifice once for all for sin...
- **there** we find all we need to be **spotless, blameless and at peace**....
- spotless, blameless and at peace with him? – if you are **HIS** this morning – this is **exactly** what you are because of the **cross** of **Jesus**..

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- no you may not **feel** it.... In fact far from it – but this is now how the Lord himself **sees you**.... ///
- Two further exhortations on how we ought to be living because Jesus could come back at any moment and everything here will be going....
- We have to be on our guard... v17 - *be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall away from your secure position...*
- To watch out that we don't get distracted by those who do not know and love the Lord...
- Already the world has undue influence on us doesn't it – and we get caught up so easily in its way of thinking....
- Here is a sober warning that if we let that go on unchecked.... Then we may end up dragged **away** from the Lord all **together**....
- Those non-Christian friends you have – those non Christian business partners – by all means – keep up the relationship – all the time praying that you will influence **them** for the **Lord**.... But make sure that their influence on **you** is not **greater**... that they don't drag you **down** and **out**....
- And the way to make sure that **doesn't** happen?
- There it is in v18 – *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!*
- Grow in the grace of Jesus, grow in the knowledge of Jesus
- Grow in the confidence of... in the security of... in the certainty of... in the joy of the riches of his grace....
- Allow that grace to penetrate and permeate to your heart so that you too become a person of grace
- And grow in the knowledge of Jesus? - knowledge of Jesus himself... **relationship, intimacy**... that comes from the study of His **word**.... /////
- So friends as this challenging year winds up, as Advent itself comes to an end and Christmas approaches... as we face another new year – what sort of people ought we to be?
- People who are looking forward to the Day of Jesus' return and are speeding that on - people who know that much of what the people around us are living for - are **consumed** by – will be worth **nothing** in eternity!... people who will not be found **embarrassed** or **surprised** should Jesus dramatically return next **Friday afternoon!**
- And **therefore** – people who are living **holy and godly lives... spotless, blameless and at peace with God**....
- ...On our **guard** against being dragged away and **growing** in the **grace** and **knowledge** of our **Lord** and Saviour **Jesus Christ**
- To **him** be the glory both **now** and **forever!**