

## **Remembering and Living in Light of Our Lord's Return**

### **1. Introduction**

There are some future things in life that we wait for that dramatically shapes the way we live at the present.

Your upcoming wedding. The impending birth of your child. These future events shape present living. Well, they should!

An engaged couple will be busy planning for the wedding. And not just the wedding, but preparing for the marriage itself. They'll be nurturing their relationship, figuring out what life will look like together. They'll attend premarital counselling, maybe do some house-hunting, setting up home. And they'll be faithful and exclusive.

They're going to get married and that's going to affect the way they live now. If it doesn't, there's something seriously wrong.

Imagine if they continued living as if they were single. Don't put any time planning for the wedding day or the marriage to come. Imagine if they kept going on dates with other people.

The same is true of a couple waiting for the birth of their child. Having a baby soon! It'll be on your mind every single day, if not every single moment. You'll be excited... and anxious. And you'll be busy. Researching all the baby products, pregnancy signs and symptoms, pain relief options, attending pre-natal classes, playing music to the foetus, prepping the nursery, praising God for the gift and praying for health, wisdom, strength and everything else we need as we wait for this baby to be born.

Some things in the future are so big and important and life-defining, that they must shape life now in the present.

As important as your upcoming wedding day is or the birth of your child - and boy, don't they shape our present lives as we wait for these! – these events are nowhere near as important, life-changing and life-defining as the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Jesus is coming back”: something we all know in theory... but...

Why does it seem that Jesus' future coming makes so little difference to our present living?

Do we really believe it's going to happen?

What difference does it make?

What difference should it make?

Peter wants to remind us again and again that Jesus is definitely returning. God has given his great and very precious promise and it will happen. Some will teach and live as if this isn't true. But for us, we are not to think like them or be like them. We are to live in light of Jesus' certain return.

### **2. A(nother) Call to Remember**

#### **a. Reminders and more reminders to remember**

(PPT) I want to remind you about the sermon from 2 weeks ago about the importance of being reminded (1:12-15)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore I intend always to **remind** you of these qualities,  
though you know them  
and are established in the truth that you have.

<sup>13</sup> I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of **reminder**,  
<sup>14</sup> since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon,  
as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

<sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to **recall** these things.

And here Peter is at it again.

<sup>1</sup> 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**,

<sup>2</sup> that you should **remember** the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

Peter's all about the reminders. His first letter was a reminder letter. His second letter is also.

Here's a perfect reason for me to re-preach old sermons over and over again!

b. Remember that the Lord is returning

For Peter, the big truth he wants us to remember is the Lord's return. And with the Lord's return comes the day of judgement.

It is the clear teaching of the Old Testament Prophets, the clear teaching of Jesus himself and the clear teaching of Jesus' apostles.

Heard one from the readings before in Malachi. You'll hear it in Matthew 25 on the lips of Jesus himself.

Peter himself testifies to Jesus' second coming back in chapter 1, having gotten a sneak peak of the glorified, second coming Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration.

And here Peter is at it again:

"Remember that Jesus is coming back.

If you don't remember, let me remind you again.

I want you to have a strong belief and sincere conviction about this."

We need to be reminded because we forget. And we need to be reminded because this belief and conviction can be shaken.

**3. Threats to Remembering**

There will be false teachers and scoffers who will deny Jesus' return.

They will deny for these reasons:

a. The moral threat: Wanting to follow their own desires

For moral reasons, they will deny Jesus' return. We see this in verse 3.

Scoffers will scoff at the idea of Jesus' return because they follow their own sinful desires.

"I don't want to believe it... because I want to live as I please. I want to do my own thing. I don't believe in the second coming of Jesus and the day of judgement because it'll cramp my lifestyle."

Many of us, sadly, have friends that once went to church. Who once called themselves Christians. Who were perhaps even pretty faithful and godly. But who have left the faith.

For some it is because of truth issues. They no longer believe in the historicity of the Bible or the facts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

But for many others, it's more the desire to live their own way.

A close friend of mine that I grew up with. Went to church since young. Went to Sunday School and YF. Made conscious efforts to read the word and live out the faith. He then went to the army. Got into the chionging/clubbing scene. Mixed with people who just wanted to enjoy life, be carefree and self-determining.

A few years back I asked my friend whether he was still a Christian. And he said to me: "I don't know... I mean I believe Jesus is God's Son and the Saviour who died and all that. But I don't want Jesus to be my Lord. I prefer just to live life however I want."

That's the sad story of my friend.

That's the sad story of many who call themselves Christian.

We may or may not actively deny Jesus' second coming in our theology, but in practice we do. Because we want to live by our own desires, we live life, make plans, do things as if Jesus isn't our Lord, isn't coming back.

b. The intellectual threat: Nothing's happened yet and nothings ever going to happen

For rational reasons, people will deny the return of Jesus.

"Where is the promise of his coming? – Because I don't see it, because I haven't experienced it yet, I won't trust in the promise. I don't believe because my reasoning tells me it's not going to happen."

It's an amazingly modern argument for rejecting the return of Jesus.

The laws of nature are constant and unchanging. Sun goes up and comes down. Seasons follow seasons, year after year... for thousands of years this has been the case.

Even if these people believe in God, they believe in a God who doesn't meddle with earthly affairs. God is the set-and-forget God.

There are actually people like that in the church today teaching that there won't be a physical return of Jesus and a day of judgement. These are supposed to be teachers of God's word. And yet they are so ignorant.

For the false teachers and scoffers of Peter's time... They have deliberately forgotten what God has done. But they are so wrong and ignorant. That's what Peter says in verse 5-7.

God has intervened in history. God did something massive once.

We're actually living in Creation version 2.0. Something happened to Creation 1.0 – the flood happened.

In Creation 1.0, God separated the waters from above and waters from below to create the sky and sea, and from the sea water was separated off to bring out dry land.

People lived in Creation 1.0, but they fell. Rebelled against God. Sin became so ridiculously bad that God brought judgement. The flood came. And the separated waters were joined back together. The waters from above came back down and the waters from below rose up.

Creation 1.0 was deluged with water and perished.

This is the precedent. Judgement came by water once. And judgement will come again, not by water, but by fire.

That's all there in the Bible. That's been passed down from generations and generations.

But the false teachers deliberately suppress this knowledge.

And maybe some of us here are suppressing this knowledge also.

Life does just carry on as normal, doesn't it?

In our experience of life, Jesus hasn't returned.

We know from the history books for the past 2000 years that Jesus hasn't returned.

We live day by day assuming it will always be like this. Life just carries on. So we'll just do our own thing. Nothing's happened yet and nothing ever will.

Is that you this morning?

#### **4. Why are we waiting?**

Every time we hear about Jesus' return, we may ask why it still hasn't happened yet. It seems like a long time – almost 2000 years since Jesus left this earth with the promise of His return.

We all know what kids are like in the car. (PPT)

“Are we there yet? Are we there yet?”

“Why are we waiting? Why are we waiting?”

Super SUPER annoying!

And as parents we try and calm ourselves down and explain why there's a delay. “it's a long way to the beach”, “the light is red and we have to wait do others can pass through the junction”

It helps for us to know why Jesus hasn't come yet. It's important for us to understand what's going on.

So what's the reason why Jesus hasn't returned?

##### **a. Perspective of Time**

Firstly: there's a perspective issue: God and His perspective on time is totally different from us. God is eternal, we are finite. God is the sea, we are a drop of water – and that's being kind to us.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

Our Lord Jesus' coming might seem slow to us. 2000 years is a long time... to us! But to our Lord, it's just a couple of days.

Illustration: as a 1 year old, a 30 min car ride seems like forever, but as 30 year old adult with a bigger experience and perspective of time, well, 30 min is such a short amount of time. A 2 year old waiting for next birthday – that's a whole 50% of life to wait... for a 70 year old waiting for next birthday – that's like next week.

Our Lord isn't slow. It seems long to us, but to Him it's been but moments.

We need to realise that. Get some perspective. And stay convinced about our Lord Jesus' coming

b. Merciful Patience

There's another, and I think even more important reason, for this apparent delay.

When I'm slow to keep my promise, I've either forgotten or have been lazy.

The Lord isn't being slow to keep His promise. He is being **PATIENT**. Mercifully patient.

Our Lord doesn't want people to perish. He is giving more time for people to repent.

He wants to give the sinful and the lost more time to hear the gospel: the good news that Jesus came to die for sinners. To hear the gospel and believe. Repenting of how they have treated God. Coming back to God. Receiving God's promises and blessings.

That's why our Lord hasn't returned yet. That's why judgement day is being held back.

Later on in v15, Peter says: "count the patience of our Lord as salvation"

This delay is our chance, our last chance, our only chance, to bring salvation to others.

Why are we waiting? Look around at the lost in your family, among your friends, to strangers near and far away. We are waiting to give them a chance.

c. Suddenly, without warning

Jesus' return is being held back, but it won't be held back forever! It will come and it will come suddenly, without any warning.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

Like a thief coming, there won't be a warning of when it'll happen.

God won't be patient forever. One day He will return. And when He does, this creation is done for. PASS AWAY WITH A ROAR. BURNED UP AND DISSOLVED.

(PPT) The false teachers were lovers of the world – sex, greed, money. Peter tells them: The world you love is going to burn.

He tells us the same thing:

My beloved gadgets, my phone, my camera, my chin up and dips bar. Up in flames, gone.

Steve's beautiful new study. Up in flames, gone.

Your new car, kitted out and 'zenged'. Up in flames, gone.

Your corner office overlooking the river. Your career achievements. Up in flames, gone.

Your toys, your clothes, your shoes, your books, your craft, your pets, your plants, your projects and prized possessions. Up in flames, gone.

But the fire that burns isn't primarily to destroy, but to REVEAL.

The fire that burns isn't primarily to destroy, but to REVEAL.

To show up the things that really matter to God.

All the works and deeds done on this earth will be exposed for all to see. All the works and deeds done by you and me will be exposed for all to see. For God to see. And judge.

It's a sobering reality.

In us is a Personal Video Recorder with a massive hard drive. Recording every single thing we think, say and do. And on the day that Jesus returns, he will do a playback of our entire life. And he will make a judgement on our life.

That's the reality ahead of us. That's what Peter wants us to remember.

Should that make a difference in our lives? What do you think? It's a no-brainer.

## **5. Living in Light of Our Lord's Return**

### **a. Living holy and godly lives**

The only thing that will stand the test of these fires are lives and deeds of holiness and godliness.

Before I expand on this point, let me make something very clear.

Peter is speaking to Christians. Those who have already been saved by grace. Having been saved by grace, Christians called to live for God.

If you are not yet a Christian. The challenge for you this morning isn't to try to live this way as the first thing. The challenge for you is to come to be saved by God's grace. It is to come to believe that Jesus is your king and saviour. You need to be saved by Jesus first before you can live for God in holiness and godliness.

We are so glad that you are here and we would be so pleased to explain more of this further to you.

But for those of us who are Christians, verse 11 is something we must take seriously.

**2 Peter 3:11** <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness

The implication of verse 11 is this: the only things that are going to survive the fires of judgment on this earth are the *expressions of holiness and godliness*.

This is the negative drive.

If all things will be burned up in the flames of God's judgement except holiness and godliness, then devote yourself to holiness and godliness.

But there's a positive drive also.

<sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

The New Creation which we are going to live in is the place where righteousness dwells. It is a world marked by righteous, wholesome, holy, God-honouring, just, loving, peaceful living.

If that is the world we are going to be living in, should we not start living that life now?

The best life now isn't prosperity and possessions and earthly pleasures.

The best life now is the one without spot or blemish, at peace with God and with each other.

"Is your heaven a holy place?" You would not enjoy heaven if you do not enjoy holiness. You would not be happy there if you do not enjoy holiness here.

It's time for us to take being holy seriously. In all the different aspects of our lives.

Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas. The question he posed from the tagline on the cover was, "What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?"

The same question could be posed for all other aspects of our lives. Our singleness, our motherhood, our studies, our work, our play and our possessions. God designed all of life to make us holy.

Holy and godly living is what will last through the purging fires of judgement.

Holy and godly living now prepares us for life in the New Creation.

b. Taking every care and put in every effort

So...

Let's take every care. Don't let false teachers, empty promises of this world and the lies of the evil one and our own desires lead you astray.

Be wise and discerning. Become wise and discerning. Be watchful and sober.

Let's also be diligent. Put in every effort to fight against sin and fight for holiness. To be diligent to live out our calling. To ensure that we are without spot or blemish.

Living the Christian life requires hard work. Are you willing and ready to give it everything?

c. Growing in grace and knowledge

Our every effort isn't where I want to end this sermon series, because that's not how Peter begins and ends his letter.

2 Peter begins and ends:

**2 Peter 1:2-3** <sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. <sup>3</sup> His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,

**2 Peter 3:18** <sup>18</sup> 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.

All of this can only happen by God's grace

We need to keep drawing from God's grace... found in knowing Jesus Christ.

God's gracious gift: as we know Jesus more: we are grounded in the truth and will never fall away; we understand what it means to be godly and can pursue it; we are engaged by the Spirit to empower us to live for Jesus coming.

**6. Conclusion**

There are some future things in life that should and must impact our present living.

The return of Jesus ranks as the greatest and most important of them all. Let this certain and glorious future impact all that you are and all that you do right now.

Pursue holiness and godliness as your highest objective. Wait eagerly and patiently for the Lord. Count God's patience as salvation. And guard yourselves in every possible way from being swayed from this belief and conviction.

Let's pray.