

For Pete's Sake
Thank God for Patience
2 Peter 3:8-18
August 27, 2017

It is hard to believe that we have come to the end of summer already! Where did the time fly. I remember as a kid that time seemed to go on forever. Summer never flew by. And once school started it felt like forever until Christmas break. Now as an adult, it feels like time flies and I can't get enough. Isn't that so interesting – while scientifically time is a consistent; earth orbiting the sun and 24 hours in a day never changing – our perception of time can be drastically different depending on where we are in our lives.

As time has flown by, so has our series on 1 & 2 Peter. We've come to the end of these two letters and Peter also knows that he is coming to the end of his life. It has been decades since Jesus departed after the resurrection. The believers across Asia Minor are struggling with persecution that is getting worse by the day. This time has caused people to doubt and struggle with believing because where is Jesus. They are starting to wonder and ask really tough questions. What about the second coming? He said he'd be back and then we would be in heaven? Why are we being persecuted and why must we struggle when we are being faithful? Those are timeless questions that depending on where we are, we ask or want to yell at God. Why must I/my family/so and so struggle when, how can God let this kind of stuff happen...why believe when nothing seems to change? What's the point of living the faith when it is hard? And that is exactly where this morning's scripture begins. READ 2 Peter 3:8-18.

He begins this final passage with the words, ***But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.*** Peter is quoting Psalm 90 here where it says that God controls time and that we are like a blade of grass that doesn't even last for an entire season. Peter's words here aren't meant to hurt us. "Hey, while you suffer remember that you are just a blade of grass." Instead, Peter wants to remind us that there is something much bigger going on that we can't see. This moment of suffering, this temporary situation is but an instant for God. And for those who believe, we are promised eternity with him and that means that this momentary suffering is to be an instant to us.

Peter wants to help us see time as God sees it. To take each moment – the suffering, the fast pace of summer, the countdown to Christmas, the pain of failing health or failing relationships and put them all in context. Peter is trying to offer us comfort and hope by saying that there is more going on than you can see or understand. When you look at all you are going through here on earth, remember that this is just an instant. If we put your life in the context – we see that there is something going on that is so much greater than the suffering we go through. We are members of the Kingdom of God for all eternity and that means we will live forever with perfect bodies in a place where there is no more crying or pain. Until then, Peter wants us to know that God's got this...that we can find *comfort* and *hope* for our lives, for our nation, for the world we live in, for our families, and for the future because God's got this.

WHEN WE CONSIDER OUR ETERNITY, TIME OFFERS US COMFORT AND HOPE.

But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. (2 Peter 3:8 NLT)

Peter goes on to tell us why we are enduring this suffering and why Jesus hasn't come yet to make it all better. ***The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.*** God truly cares about us as His creation and so He is slow on his promise, this world keeps on spinning around the sun each day because God is thinking about everyone who He wants to have come into the Kingdom.

You know how when we suffer we really think the world is revolving around us. When we hurt, we want to crawl up in a little ball, hide in our bedrooms or head to the garage to do another project and forget what's going on. God does just the opposite. He's only thinking about us. And today means another day and another chance for one more person to be saved. While you are hurting, and every appliance in your house has broken

down and your teenager is driving you crazy, and your finances are in trouble, God is seeing the person who is lost, the person who has the chance to hear the saving message of the Good News. In fact, Peter says in v. 15, **And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved.** God is patient because God cares for us and wants everyone to be saved. This knowledge won't take away your own pain, but for believers who know the power of Jesus, this is a phrase of hope. It turns our suffering into a prayer that says, if I have to go through this, I pray that someone may come to know Jesus.

TIME IS TO GIVE TIME FOR EVERYONE ... TO KNOW JESUS.

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. ... And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. (2 Peter 3:9, 15 NLT)

Look at verse 17, the NIV translates this way: ***Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned.*** Peter begins what might very well be his final two verses ever with "therefore." Therefore, since you've been warned, you must: ***grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*** Our time here on earth is for a purpose. It is to continue to grow in our ability to offer grace to each other, to understand and live into God's grace for us and to develop our knowledge of Jesus Christ. It means to fall in love more and more with Jesus like a good marriage develops and grows more and more over time. To not just know about Jesus empirically but, to embrace and grow in that love through your heart, mind, body and soul. Peter doesn't just put this in as the very last verse, throughout these final words, Peter has been instructing us and showing us the way. In verse 11 he says, ***Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live.*** This verse gives us some tangible ways to grow in our faith. To live holy and godly lives. That our actions and our thoughts and our everyday means putting our faith into practice. To follow Jesus' example and to live as he did. And in v. 14, Peter writes, ***make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.*** We are to live peaceful lives that are pure and blameless.

This is going to take some work. We can tend to live anything but peaceful, pure and blameless lives. But each day is an opportunity to...

USE YOUR TIME AND EFFORT TO GROW IN YOUR FAITH.

Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live ... make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. ... Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:11, 14, 18 NLT)

So, let's end this morning with the reason that time goes on and our role in it. We said earlier that the reason why Jesus has not returned is to that all may come to know him. That time continues because God is concerned about all his children and wants them to know about the saving power of Jesus. That when we consider this age, this time, it is a thing of beauty because it is God offering grace to everyone. And Peter is saying that we have a role and a part to play in God's salvation through Jesus in the time that we live in. We are to grow in our faith AND THEN tell others about Jesus. Peter puts it another way in v. 12, ***looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along.*** When Peter writes, hurrying it along – he means we are to hurry the Kingdom of God along when we tell others about Jesus. We are to make sure that other people know what we've learned, that Jesus loves them and wants us to spend eternity with him. We are to help people learn more about Jesus so that they can become followers.

We are to:

LIVE TO MAKE DISCIPLES.

¹² looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along.

Next week our kids will go back to school and the days will start to get chilly. Labor Day marks the time to close the pool and put away the white pants. We love summer. It's warm, you can get a tan, vacations

happen, life seems to slow down a bit, I get extra time with our kids when they're not in school. And yet Peter now wants to show us how to turn that concept of time on its head. This time is God's. It might get feel fast paced and even crazy some days but it's like a 1000 years to our Lord. Let's use this time as a call to return to what is important. Growing in our faith, Making Disciples and helping other know more about Jesus. This is why we are here. This is the purpose of our time and its why God is waiting. Is there someone you know who doesn't know Jesus, God is waiting. Is there someone you know who is far from God, God is waiting.