

2 Peter 3:8-18 (Part 1: Holy Anticipation)

I am going to show a series of pictures and see if you can figure out the progression.

Each of them cost more money and takes longer to achieve.

We don't live our lives for snicker bars because we have experience with the cycle. Want, buy, eat, small sugar high, sick, recover. Repeat. You do that enough times and pretty soon you are moving on to what you think is greener pastures. But the only difference between a snickers bar and a beachfront mansion is that it takes longer to acquire and cost more. **Is there an alternative to endlessly pursuing more and more expensive things that take longer and longer to achieve? And the answer is yes.** That is what we are going to be studying today.

Last week we talked about the fact that Peter's main purpose in writing chapter 3 is to remind his readers of the certain reality of the Lord's return. There will be many who come and scoff and mock and ridicule and jeer, but their confident denial of Christ's return does nothing to change the fact that HE is coming. Let's read verses 8-18 and follow the logic of the text as he continue to remind us of the certain reality of the Lord's return.

2 Peter 3:8 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. 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.

Peter says that God does not look at time the way we do. God does not get annoyed because things take a long time. **And he is particularly in no hurry to come back because he is patiently waiting for unbelievers to come to a saving faith in Jesus.** Verse 10 warns us to not mistake the patience of God with the toothless tolerance. It is not safe to conclude that just because God is not judging

the world today that God will never judge the world. **Lions are very patient and often wait for a very long time.** But that does not make them safe. So the main point of verses 8-10 is to remind us that Christ is returning and we must be prepared.

Now there are three responses to this reality that Jesus is coming back. We looked at the first response last week. We will look at one more today and one more next week. **The first response which we looked at last week was this:**

1. If we truly believe that Jesus is coming back and if we truly believe we cannot take anything in this world with us and if we truly believe that everything in this world will be burned up then **we will not make this world our home.**

Let's think about this point again by way of review. **When you think of the world being burned up along with all our accomplishments, it tends to put a damper on consumerism.** It draws attention to our finiteness. And that is something we don't necessarily love. We resist the reality that we are finite. We resist the reality that we are dust. We resist our smallness. We try to overcome our sense of finiteness by investing in things that are larger than ourselves. **We try to overcome our sense of vaporishness by investing in things that have lasting value. Not just something that is here today and gone tomorrow.** That's why the Pharaoh's of Egypt built the Pyramids. That's why we spend time accumulating a professional reputation or equity in our homes or accumulating heavy responsibility in which many people look to us for leadership. **We want to feel more important than we are.** We want to feel significant and weighty. We want to build our own Pyramids so that we can become immortal.

But, investing your life in this world is actually really depressing when you think about it. How much money do you think you can earn in a lifetime. You take all your cars sell them, sell your house, empty your bank accounts, pay off all debt. Take your net worth after 70 years of living. What is the number?

According to the Federal banking reserve, the average net worth for Americans 65 and older in 2007 was \$232,000. That means on average you work 40-something years of your life 8 hours a day 360 days a year to acquire \$232,000 dollars. If you

want to measure that in terms of feet of a six lane freeway you can pave, that's about 40 feet. **That is not much to be proud of.**

So let's just come to grips with our finite nature, own up to our vaporishness, stare death straight in the face and let's just agree that making this world our home is kinda dumb idea and a waste of time. That is what we talked about last week.

This week we are looking at a hopeful truth. This text teaches us that there **IS** something we can pursue that has lasting value. There is much hope that this text holds out. There is much solid and lasting treasure that this text says can be ours. So even though our life is a vapor, this text encourages us to make our vaporish life count.

Let's take a look at text and see where Peter brings these out.

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. 14 **Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace....**

The second response believers should have to the return of Christ.

According to verse 11, what is the second response believers should have knowing that Jesus is returning soon?

2 Peter 3:11-12 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be....

This is a rhetorical question. And rhetorical questions are not meant to be answered out loud. But they are meant to be answered in your head. But since

we have the time, let's answer it out loud. Knowing that the universe is going to be dissolved, what sort of people should we be?

We should be longing people

We should be distracted with anticipation

We should be disinterested in sin and anything that represents enmity with Jesus

The shorthand for that is that we should be holy and godly men and women.

Our point from last week, namely, “Don't make this world our home” is a command that tells us what not to do. That should be our first response. But this second response, Live lives of holiness, is a command that tells us what we should do.

Live a life that is set apart for God. In light of the eternal, live a godly life. **Is your perspective on the future long term enough that you are giving yourself to the truly important.**

Now what this is essentially teaching us is that this truth of the coming of Jesus with reward and judgment can serve us as a tool for overcoming sin and temptation and living a life of generosity and selflessness and humility. **In other words, meditating on the return of Jesus can help you become more like Jesus.**

So for today we are going to consider a few different situations in which contemplating Christ's return will enable you to live a godly life.

1. Contemplate Jesus' Return in Situations of Voluntary Suffering

In life there is this principle of voluntary suffering. **And when we say voluntary suffering we are not talking about putting your hand in a vise and seeing how much you can handle.** We are talking about the idea that if you want something that has lasting joy you have to invest some time and energy and give up some personal pleasures in order to achieve that. **For example, some of the greatest joys in the world for me personally come from my family.** But that being said, everyone knows that marriage and parenting is not a coast down the beech. Marriage and parenting require lots of work. Changing diapers and dealing with

sibling bickering, teenage attitudes and dealing with unmet expectations within a marriage are not easy little tasks. They require a TON of work.

But its not JUST work. If you invest in those things, or as we are stating here, if you choose to voluntarily suffer, then you can experience some wonderful joys. **There is hardly a thing in the world that melts my heart more than to feel the chubby little arms of my youngest son wrap around my neck and feel him giggle.** I love that. There is hardly a thing in the world more precious to me than coming home to a wonderful dinner and a smiling wife with her cute little apron on and to be greeted with a special kiss and hug and some kind words.

Now take that concept of voluntary suffering and translate it across to your walk with Christ and storing up treasures in heaven. Randy Alcorn in his book the treasure principle talks about the concept of storing up treasure in heaven and phrases it this way: we can't take it with us but we can send it on ahead.

Now what that means it that you can't have both. You can't choose to spend your money on a new sofa AND give to God's church. You can't choose to spend your time working on your favorite hobby, doing some are project, improving your house AND spend your time serving down at the Boise Rescue Mission. It's a binary decision. You **have to make a choice. You can't be in two places at once.** And since this is the unfortunate limitation of all carbon based creatures, sacrifice or voluntary suffering is going to be necessary if we are to lay up treasure in heaven.

What is going to cause us to suffer? **What is going to cause us to choose something a little less comfortable.** What is going to cause us to keep the worn couch or the hutch that doesnt quite match in favor of investing in God's kingdom. **What is going to cause us to put our projects on the shelf in favor of getting involved in ministry?** What is going to cause us to voluntarily choose discomfort? Answer: the return of Christ!

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

You know what this passage is saying: Jesus is worth it.

If there is discomfort for a season, it is worth it. Momentary and light affliction produces an ETERNAL weight of glory.

Now in my mind there are two little foxes that get into the vineyard and begin spoiling the grapes so to speak. There are little voices in my head that prevent me from actually choosing voluntary suffering.

The first little voice whispers something like this, "Listen, heaven is going to be amazing no matter what. The thief on the cross is not going to be wallowing in regret. He will be happy. So I can invest here on earth and still be happy, right?"

We won't feel that way in heaven. Nobody in heaven says, "I am so glad I spent all that time watching TV and buying those new rims for my truck. That was a great investment." Nobody says that.

The second little voice whispers something like this, "Listen, you don't want to motivate yourself by reward. That is such a fleshly, self-serving reason for sacrificing for Jesus. Don't go there. You need to only serve Jesus because your heart is in the right place and so don't give yourself to Jesus unless it is done for the right motive. Don't give yourself just because of reward. Make sure you have the right heart first"

Now this one is a much more sneaky. There are elements of truth to it. We don't want to serve Jesus just to get blessing and benefit from him and see him as a cosmic gumball machine. Put in our quarter of service and watch the gumball of reward come rolling down. **But, there is a way to serve Jesus out of love and anticipation of reward.** Consider the following text:

Hebrews 11:24-26 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Moses was in an extremely difficult situation. He had to make a decision between living in Beverley Hills in a 10million dollar mansion with attendents, servants and Porches, AND INSTEAD OF THAT, live in a trailerpark in Elko, NV. Why would you choose Elko? **What motivated him to choose suffering over comfort was the reward.** When you give to a ministry or give to this church or give a gift to someone in Jesus' name, it is right to realize that that very gift will not go unnoticed. You are investing in your eternal account. **And just to be ultra clear, what is the greatest reward we could ever receive? The greatest treasure on earth, clearly is Jesus. And specifically, capacity to know Christ.** I think you can make a pretty good case that the rewards we will receive in heaven have everything to do with capacity to know Jesus.

Anticipation of future reward can even be the motivation for good service to your boss on Monday.

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

So we are to contemplate Christ's return in voluntary suffering.

2. Contemplate Jesus' Return in Situations of Success

Life is not always difficult. **There are often times when we have great success.** We might be succesful at our business or job. Successful at sports. **Successful at marriage or parenting. Successful in playing a certain instrument.** And contemplating Christ's return can enable us to give God glory and live holy lives in these situations.

Consider the parable of the talents. **The parable of the talents is a story intended**

to teach us about the expectations God has for us when it comes to using our resources for his kingdom. In the parable, the talents represent resources God has given the three men. The talents could represent money, talent, skill, intuition, positions of influence, cars, boats, land, equity, abilities, etc. And God wills that some people are 20 watt light bulbs while other people are 250 watt light bulbs. Some people are given more. In the parable we find 3 men. The first guy has 5 talents, the second guy has 2 and the last guy 1. And I guarantee if you saw this 5 talent guy in real life you'd be jealous. He is successful. He's good looking, got lots of money, lots of friends and influence, he's good at every single thing he tries. He even won last years watermellon seed spitting contest. Here was a man who had a lot of resources. Now the context of this parable is couched in a long string of parables that all speak of JESUS' RETURN.

Matthew 25:13-30 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. 14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent [advance slide] went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

....

In the world's eyes the dude with 5 talents would be considered very successful. He had a lot of resources. And the question is, what is he going to do with that money and that position of influence and that skill that God has given him. Here's the key: Is he going to see himself as a steward who is investing those resources for the master's sake? Is he awaiting his master's return, in his success?

How many of you see yourselves as stewards of the business you have or the

family you have or the money you have. Truly stewards. **We all say that we are stewards of the resources God has given us, but do we have a mental image of that fact.** **When you pick up your phone, do you think, this is Jesus' phone and I am using it for his purposes and his kingdom.** When you look at the balance in your accounts (positive or negative) are you thinking, this is Jesus' money that he has given me to take care of. Was that Jesus' money that you used to buy the clothes you are wearing?

As Americans who are really into investing we miss the point of this so quickly. Think about the man who received 5 talents. **What kind of investing earned him the investor of the year plaque etched with the words, "Well done good and faithful servant."**

Let's start by saying what it is NOT:

- The kind of investing God is looking for is MOST CERTAINLY NOT doubling your money in the stock market. Doubling your money in the stock market is actually the opposite. It's burying your money in a hole in the ground because you have not taken the master's wealth and invested it in his kingdom. You've spent it in your kingdom.
- If you have been given a musical skill or an artistic skill or a craft skill the kind of investing God is looking for is NOT developing and polishing your skills in the solitude of your home for your pleasure and enjoyment. That's digging a hole with your backhoe.

The kind of investing God is looking for is taking those things and SPENDING them for the purpose of the gospel. When we spend money our fingers let go of it. That is what God wants us to do with his resources. **This might be something as simple as loving someone by buying them what they need or serving a refugee family with your skills and gifts.** That means reaching out to unbelievers with the resources God has given you. That means using your business to reach people for Christ or fund missions efforts. **You see Christ is coming back and if you want him to say well done, you have to invest the resources he has given you for HIS kingdom.** He is coming BACK.

3. Contemplate Jesus' Return in Situations of Trial

When we invest in God's kingdom, we become fools in the eyes of the world. The world does not treat fools very kindly. And so when your efforts to honor Christ with your resources are met with the ridicule and scoffing of the world, the return of Christ can be a great comfort.

Luke 6:22-23 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

I am so glad Jesus wrote this and not some pastor. Because if a pastor wrote this I would say to him, that kind of language is not very helpful. **You are not being very sympathetic to a person who is experience a very hard situation.** **Is that really what you want to say to a wife whose husband is being tied to a stake to be martyred?** Leap for joy? Could you have toned down that language a bit to make it more realistic and helpful to people who are suffering? Nobody feels like leaping for joy in the midst of persecution. Jesus says, "you should." **Not to minimize the pain of suffering but to draw attention to the immensity of the reward.**

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

In the middle of a hard to understand section of Revelation, there is the beautiful verse and promise to believers. Perhaps your life is not marked by persecution, but just general suffering. **Family issues, health issues, financial issues, marital issues, whatever the form of suffering.** But that suffering is deep and constant and tiring. Here is a verse to comfort your soul.

Revelation 14:12-13 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now

on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

4. Contemplate Jesus' Return in Situations of Temptation

All temptation can be distilled to this: Satan and your flesh are attempting to make you believe a lie. And all sin can be distilled to this: You lost and believed the lie.

How can Jesus' return help you to resist temptation and instead pursue godliness and holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Focusing on the return of Christ exposes the one falsehood upon which all Satan's lies are built. Satan wants you to believe that God is not real. That is why when we sin, God seems a million miles away. Because we believed the lie.

But focusing on the return of Christ can have a very powerful, lie-canceling effect on us. If we really know the father and if we really focus on the actual reality that one day very soon we will get to see our savior, the two things will happen.

#1 We will NOT want to disappoint our Father.

#2 We will want to please our Father.

The more you care and get to know the father, the more he means to you and the more powerful this becomes. You can sense this Spirit in Paul as he speaks to the Corinthians about how he looks forward to the return of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.... It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to

light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

There is great motivation to become like Jesus thinking that you will see him someday soon.

What will your life be like in 15 years? What will your life be like in 2025?

Think about it, if you are in high school now you will be about 30 years old then.

- Will you be married?
- Married to someone who loves the Lord?
- Will you be active in a church where not only you, but maybe also your children are learning about Christ?
- Will you be using your money, your abilities and your energy to expand the kingdom of the Lord Jesus?
- Will you then care about such things?

If you are 35 today, just think; you'll be 50 then.

- Your children will probably be out of high school or nearly so.
- You'll probably be settled into your occupation or career.
- Will you still be married to the same person?
- Will your commitment to the work of the church be as great?
- Will you personally be walking with the Lord?

What about you who are around 55? You'll be about 70 then.

- Will people know you as a godly man or woman?
- Will you be an example others will look to and say, "That's what I want to be like when I'm that age?"
- Will there be about you a gentleness and wisdom of character that comes from having spent years with the Lord?

Living in light of the Lord's return will change you into the image of his Son. Caring to please the Lord and prepare yourself as a bride would prepare herself, without spot or wrinkle will change you into the image of your son. We have one very short life to live. And then we see Jesus. And that is what we all look forward to! Only one life will soon be past, only what is done for Christ will last.

Some might say, "Listen all this talk about living for heaven is a bad case of having your head in the clouds. We live in the here and now. This talk of other worldliness is only escapism from the real world."

"Other worldliness is only escapism if there is no other world. But if there is another world than worldliness is escapism."

Baptism:

I want to transition and talk about baptism because tonight at the family picnic we are going to be baptizing three individuals, namely, Tim McCauluf, Jared Smith and Carolyn Williams.

Baptism is an outward declaration of something that has happened internally. Baptism is like a big sign that points to the work of Jesus on the cross.

And the work of Jesus on the cross can be summarized this way. Because of my sin, I cannot enter heaven and be with Jesus. My sin, the actual sinful things I have done and the actual sinful thoughts and motives that have characterized and still do characterize my life have created a permanent, impenetrable barrier between me and God. And so the just punishment for those sins is death and eternal separation from God in hell. But God made a way by sending Jesus to absorb that punishment in my place. My sins were given to Jesus. Jesus' righteousness was given to me in the most dramatic exchange in the universe.

And so in a very real sense when Christ goes to the cross and the nails go through his hands and feet and when he dies, we go with him. And then when on the third day, he raises, we raise with him. Because he is in our place. That should have been us. And so baptism is a way of identifying with that act and the exchange that took place.

When we go down into the water that represents the death that Christ died. We die with him. And when you who are being baptised go under water, think about that. This is representing the death of Jesus for me. And then when we come up

out of the water it represents the victory of Jesus over death and the life we receive because of it.

And that symbolism is expressed in Romans 6:3-5.

Romans 6:3-5 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

So just like when we are placed into an airplane the things that happen to the airplane also happen to us. The airplane taxis, takes off, flies in the air, and so do we! So Christ died, was buried and was raised again. And all those things happen to us as well.

Baptism is a symbol of faith. It is an expression with the whole body of the heart's acceptance of Jesus as Lord. And it is that very special symbol of dying with Christ on the cross, being buried in the tomb with Christ, and being resurrected with Christ. So the things that happened to Christ also happen to us. When we are baptized we are saying three things:

1. Lord I will follow you for the rest of my life. You are my Lord.
2. Lord I trust in you and in you alone for my salvation
3. Lord I acknowledge that sin no longer has power over me.

That is what baptism is. And so I encourage all of you to come out tonight and rejoice as these 3 people make a public proclamation of what Christ has done internally in their soul/spirit/heart.