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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
December 6, 2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 40:1-11, Mark 1:1-8

Hymns: 68; 605; 64:1, 3, 5; 50:2, 3

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: 2 Peter 3:8-14

“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. <sup>11</sup>Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

<sup>13</sup>Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Coming Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: The world goes on, and on and on, or will it?

There have always been “nay sayers.” The unbelieving world is not looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In their minds Jesus was a good man that lived and died a long time ago. Its nice that people still talk about Him, but His coming again in glory is considered nothing more than a myth. Many people think that the idea of the Lord coming in glory and ending this world as we know it is balderdash.

You all know the expression, “There is nothing new under the sun.” Already in the days of the apostles early Christians were being mocked and criticized for believing there was going to be a day of the Lord when Jesus would come again, and everything as we know it would come to an end. This opposition confused many Christians. It got to the point that they weren’t sure what to believe! So the Spirit of God led Peter to write the words of our text to set the record straight. The divinely inspired record gives assurance and good counsel that we might have hope. It really is about hope. It’s about our hope of salvation, our hope of heaven, our hope in Jesus who promised that He would come again in glory to receive us to Himself. With all the challenges of life in this world, with sickness and suffering and death, Jesus’ return in glory gives us something wonderful to look forward to. Ultimately our faith leads us to a --

**THEME: Looking forward to the Day of the Lord.**

We need to start with --

**I. Understanding the Timing.**

Listen to what our text says:

**2 Peter 3:8-10** “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up

There are three distinct points made here concerning timing. The first is that we have a very different perspective about the passing of time than God does. Our entire lifetime is but a few decades. God has been around literally for eternity! What seems like a very long time from our lifetime perspective is the blink of an eye for God. So the unbelievers challenge of “when’s all this going to happen? Look how much time has passed and the world is still turning.” is baseless. They would like to equate the Christian with Chicken Little crying “The sky is falling!”

God knows when the end will happen. He has the timing all worked out. The day of the Lord will come. It will come when God says it’s time, and not a moment sooner. It doesn’t matter what the unbelieving world says, the Day of the Lord will come.

Well, point two is that God has His reasons for waiting. Those reasons are good and gracious. It is not that God has lost track of time, or that God wasn’t serious about Christ’s return and what that will mean for the world. Every day that this world continues God intends as a day of grace. Every day this world continues the gospel is being proclaimed, and not just here or there, hit or miss. It is being declared around the globe. Many who have not heard the gospel are hearing of Jesus as their Redeemer. God wants more and more of those whom He has known from eternity as His children and as heirs of eternal life to hear the gospel and believe and be saved. The other side of that coin is still pure grace, “*the Lord ... is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance!*” (v. 9) You see how that speaks to timing. God isn’t forgetting. And it isn’t about stalling, it **is** about saving souls, souls purchased with the precious blood of His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

The third point about timing is that the Day of the Lord will come, but it will come sneaky. The timing will not be when the world is expecting a dramatic appearance by the Lord. It will be when the world is preoccupied with its own thing; when the world is spiritually sound asleep. We, on the other hand understand the Day of the Lord will come. We shouldn’t be caught spiritually asleep, but rather spiritually attentive. We should be watching for what we know will be an overwhelming and powerfully glorious event.

When the Day of the Lord comes it will be transformative. Well that is putting it mildly. “The heavens will pass away with a **great noise**, and the elements **will melt** with **fervent** heat; both **the earth and the works** that are in it will be **burned up.**” (v.10) When we talk about this the world’s response, along with many religious people is to suggest that’s all hyperbole. They may even use the word fairytale and get us back to that Chicken Little analogy. The Day of Lord will come, and that is what that means.

So you understand we should really be --

## **II. Shaping Our Lives for that Glorious Reality.**

Peter wrote by inspiration:

**2 Peter 3:11-14** “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? <sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

Understanding that all of mankind’s greatest monuments to the power and wonder of man, bridges, skyscrapers, space stations, the stock market. All will be gone. If that is all going to disappear how important should all that stuff be to you? I’m not saying that we shouldn’t make things and work hard, and strive to do our best, using the gifts God gave us, but that we do while still maintaining our priorities. Things that aren’t going to last aren’t as important as things that are eternal.

A few years ago while vacationing in Virginia Beach on the Atlantic ocean we saw the entries into a sand sculpture competition. The contestants were serious. They were professionals from around the world. (Yes, there are actually professional sand sculptors) They put a great deal of effort into their sculptures, but even as they shaped their sand sculptures, (and I saw some pretty awesome ones,) everybody knew they were sand sculptures and eventually the tide would take them away. It didn’t

mean that didn't do their best. But they knew what they were building was temporary.

So we build businesses and homes and factories and highways, and make a good effort to do our best, but as children of God we know the day of the Lord will come, and these things will disappear, So what is important? What do we need to make our highest priority? Our text emphasizes the importance of our spiritual lives. What kind of people are we going to be? Spiritually minded people who strive against sin, strive to live holy lives to the glory of God. We are going to do what we can to bring the Day of the Lord sooner, to hasten its coming.

We just sang, "The world is very evil." Although God in times past has sent judgment upon evil nations and even sent the flood in the time of Noah, the presence of evil isn't what speeds up the Lord's coming. It is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. God has us on the earth to share the good news of salvation in Jesus' death and resurrection. We tell other people of God's love and forgiveness, and share with them the hope we hold in our hearts of everlasting life. The Spirit works faith in that heart calling a sinner to repentance. That is hastening the coming of the Day of the Lord.

Stuff is just stuff. Yeah, we need to have clothing and shoes and food and shelter. In our day we need cars and cell phones. But all that stuff is all going to disappear. It won't matter. We have something so much better coming our way, so much better that we are looking forward to, and it is all coming on the Day of the Lord. There will be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. No more sin. No more of the curse of sin. That means no more sickness or pain, or petty meanness between people. No more sadness or death. The former things will have passed away. We are looking forward to something grand, as well as something that's forever, really forever!

God has already given it to us. We have the down payment of eternal life with the Spirit's indwelling in our hearts. We have the gift of faith. By grace through faith we live sanctified lives in which we shun sin. Put off the old man with its evil desires! Don't entertain sin in your lives. Don't entertain even the thought of sin! Put on the new man that seeks to glorify Jesus in all our words and

actions. We will be diligent in shaping our lives, striving for that which lasts, looking forward to that glorious home Jesus secured for us. We live in this faith, and look for Jesus' coming. The Day is coming and it is our goal to be found by Him living in the peace of faith.

Remember this Day of the Lord, the day of Jesus' reappearing is what **we are looking forward to** just as much as the believers of old were looking forward to Jesus' birth.

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)