

Sunday August 24, 2025
@ FGBC
2 Peter Series
2 Peter 3
30 minutes

Anticipating the Future

- Anticipation is always fun isn't it?
 - o Anticipating the start of a new job, a trip, or simply a good meal always brings about the anxious joy...that feeling in your stomach that is good and exciting, yet a little bit nerve-racking...those butterflies in your stomach type of feelings.
 - o One of my favourite things to anticipate is tied to good experiences.
 - I love finding and giving a good gift and the anticipation in the wait-up to giving that gift at a birthday or holiday is something I have always enjoyed.
 - Or going on a family adventure and anticipating what the kids are going to think of the experience...I enjoy the answer to the question, "What did you think? Did you have a good time?"
- Today's text addresses the anticipation of the Day of the Lord that is coming
 - o 2 Peter 3 gets us back on track from the slight digression that was 2 Peter 2
 - In part 1 of the letter, the focus is on the fact that we are saved by God's grace...part 3 continues on that theme as we live in anticipation of what is to come.
 - The middle, if you were here last Sunday, is all about false teachers.
 - o Today we get to jump into some good news that is hopefully a little bit more encouraging.

READ 2 Peter 3

- There are three aspects of this chapter that we are going to look at today.
 - o There are some words of encouragement, there is the promise that Jesus will return, and then there is a challenge to each of us in how we live our lives from here on out.
- 1) Peter encourages the church.
- Peter writes to his beloved, his dear friends...the body of Christ.
 - o Remember, Peter is not writing to anyone in particular...this isn't like Paul's letter to the church in Galatia or Philippi or Thessalonica...this is simply a general letter to the capital C church.

- The way Peter says, “beloved/dear friends” communicates how he feels about the church.
 - Peter loves the body of Christ...he cares immensely about this rag-tag group of people, even though there is a good chance he has never met them before.
 - Even in this introduction, we catch a challenge to each of us as well...do you love the church the way Peter does?
 - Do you have a passion for those who pursue Jesus with heart, soul, mind, and strength?
 - Do you desire to pursue the mission which God calls the church to live out together with other people?
- And as he shares his love and care for the church, Peter gives one final reminder to avoid false teachers, those who scoff at and mock the truth, following their own wants and desires.
 - False teachers seems to be a really big deal to Peter because, as we looked at last week, false teachers can so easily seduce anyone with their truths paired with subtle lies.
 - As a final shot at the false teachers, Peter addresses the importance of a word...the importance of knowing the Word that comes from God.
 - Heavens and earth were created by the spoken word of God.
 - “Then God said, ‘Let there be...’”
 - As followers of Jesus, we must remember the Word of God.
 - The spoken Word of God is not just something that happened at the creation of the world and then ceased to be, but is an ongoing act of a loving God who is completely engaged with the lives of His children.
 - The Word of God continues to be alive and active in our lives and our world today.
 - The Word of the Lord saves and the Word of the Lord brings judgment to a disobedient and sinful world.
 - We can try to control the world by ourselves and our actions and our developed institutions and organizational frameworks, but in reality, it is God who is in control...not me, not you, not your boss, not Walmart or McDonalds.
- 2) Peter addresses the assurance that the Day of the Lord will come, but there is no certainty of when that date will be.
 - The return of Christ, which is paired with judgment of humanity.
 - We read about this throughout scripture
 - “The Son of Man comes in his glory...and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.” (Matthew 25:31-33, NLT)

- “Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.” (John 5:29, NLT)
- The coming of the Day of the Lord is compared to a thief...its coming is unexpected.
 - Imagine you get your copy of the Citizen this week (for the three of you that still read a hard copy of the newspaper), and as you are reading through the classifieds, you come across an interesting ad.
 - Monday August 25, 2025. 3:00 am. 1259 20th Ave.
 - Tuesday August 26, 2025. 2:30 am. 732 Foot St.
 - Wednesday August 27, 2025. 12:35 am. 3393 Williams Cres.
 - And on and on.
 - You don’t really think anything of it, other than the fact that is a really odd ad.
 - Then you start hearing reports of robberies around town...matching the dates and locations of those listed in that newspaper ad.
 - The next week, you pay a little closer attention...I mean, you don’t want your house to show up on that list right?
 - The Day of the Lord is coming unexpectedly and won’t show up listed in a newspaper.
- This Day of the Lord is not simply a nice serene return where the Messiah checks in...there is some destruction that is tied to it.
 - Not destruction for destructions sake, but destruction because now, after years, and decades, and maybe even millenia, the time has come.
 - God is not stepping into the role of Michael Bay who simply wants to see excessive explosions.
 - For centuries people have thought that this “Day of the Lord” was coming soon.
 - Acts 1 – Jesus ascends to heaven, and the disciples are sitting there waiting for Jesus to return as they figure that return is going to happen pretty quickly...no more than a couple days.
 - As the disciples are standing there doing the sun-stare, two white-robed men, presumably angels, come and say, “Get lost...Jesus gave you a mission, so go live it out.”
 - In the 1800s a pastor by the name of William Miller determined that Jesus was going to return around 1844...a few dates came and went and then a few of his

followers came up with specific dates, which all came and went...surprise, surprise.

- Some of Miller's followers were so convinced...they wanted something to hold onto...that they got rid of all their stuff because Jesus was coming soon.
 - Others didn't plant crops that year because they figured what were they going to need wheat for when they were in paradise with the King...imagine being a farmer without a farm.
- It is still true today that Jesus is coming soon.
 - For humans, soon is relative to our lifetime.
 - If I tell Karissa we are going to go out for supper soon, and more than 2 days passed without going out for supper, Karissa is likely going to be frustrated, slightly confused, and maybe unsure if she can trust me.
 - If I tell Sophie and Parker that we are going to the playground soon, and anymore than 5 minutes has passed and we are not at a playground, I am going to have 2 very disappointed kids.
 - If I am getting ready for my retirement soon, I know that it is still going to be quite a few years from now, but it is going to be in my lifetime, God willing.
 - God is not bound by my understand of time.
 - Human standards of calculation are insufficient when it comes to measuring God's standards.
 - "God works *in* time, He is not limited *by* time." (Wiersbe, *Be Alert*, 83)
- One day the Day of the Lord will come after hundreds of thousands of years of God's patience in allowing the Church to do what God has called the Church to do... "Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands that have been given." (Matthew 28:19-20, paraphrase)

- The apparent tardiness of Jesus return is for the good of humanity so that the Church can live out the Great Commission.
 - At the end of the day, God desires that all people know of the hope found in Christ.
 - Hope in Christ is not just for the select few who happened to get in on the message at the ground floor.
 - It is hope for everyone...think about the word “everyone”...that is a lot of people.
 - The other day at bedtime Sophie said she couldn’t sleep, so I told her to lay still and count as high as she could.
 - She got to 100 before she popped out of bed and said, “I did it. I counted as high as I could.”
 - She was completely unaware of the fact that numbers go beyond 100.
 - Sometimes I treat life the same way...I know my people...the people that I interact with regularly...there’s a lot of them...at least 100.
 - I can’t be the proclaimer of Jesus to all of those people.
 - And then if I think of the fact that there are 8+ billion people in the world, I realize that the body of Christ has been assigned a monumental task...each of us gets to be a part of it.
 - And it’s no wonder that Jesus hasn’t returned yet.
 - And the world population isn’t getting any smaller.
- The goal of this text is not to help us develop a theology of the end times.
 - There are many thoughts about what exactly the end times will look like.

- There are groups that hold to different views of the timing at the end...when will Jesus return and what will happen to the Church when Jesus returns? Will there be a period of tribulation? What will happen to Satan at this time?
 - Good questions, but not the focus of this passage...Peter wants the Church to know that Jesus will come unexpectedly, so be prepared.
- 3) In the close of this letter, Peter addresses the response of the Church...how do followers of Jesus live in response to the fact that Jesus is returning one day soon?
 - 1) Anticipate Jesus return
 - Remember...look forward to the day of the Lord.
 - This can be hard, right...Yes I want Jesus to return, but at the same time, I want to experience the fullness of life here on this earth before Jesus returns...I have some selfish motivations.
 - I want to watch my kids grow up.
 - I want to be able to share experiences with other people.
 - I want to watch the Maple Leafs win the Stanley Cup.
 - Yet it is a call for a follower of Jesus to look forward to Jesus' return with anticipation.
 - 2) Hurry along Jesus return.
 - This is an odd statement in 2 Peter 3:12 isn't it?
 - How do we make Jesus return faster?
 - On one hand, we can't.
 - Jesus is going to return, and nothing that we do or say is going to change the date that that occurs.
 - On the other hand, there are a couple things that we can do to hurry along the return of Jesus.
 - Pray
 - Pray that God's will be done.
 - Pray for those around us...our friends, neighbors, enemies.
 - Pray for those living in the midst of war and persecution and social hardship.
 - Proclaim
 - Share the hope of Jesus with those around you.
 - When you have a chance to live out your faith, do it.
 - When you have a chance to share the reason for the hope that you have, do it.

- These actions don't change the timeline, but they are our active participation in what God has called us to instead of sitting back watching things unfold.
 - All too often it is easiest to participate in God's kingdom passively, not actively.
 - Whatever belief we hold to about the end times should impact how we live our lives in pursuit of Christ and in faithfulness to Jesus.
- 3) Grow
 - Peter's instructions are to "Be on guard."
 - Don't get swept away by every new teaching or fad.
 - Know what you believe...remember, as Peter says...and stand firm in that.
 - Be aware of those false teachers that can try to pressure you and sway you to follow teaching that is not the truth.
 - Then Peter instructs the Church to "be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in God's sight...to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
 - "The best precaution against being infected by the false teacher and carried away by them is to be making spiritual progress." (New Bible Commentary, 1258)
 - Are you growing in maturity as a follower of Jesus?
 - Or have you stagnated?
 - Or have you been declining, moving further and further from Jesus?
 - If you compare your walk with Jesus to a week ago...a year ago...6 years ago, are you seeing progress?
 - If you watch the stock market, you will notice that most of the time stocks trend up over time.
 - There are dips and downturns.
 - If you buy a stock today there is a chance that it drops tomorrow, and that can be scary.
 - More often than not though, over time, the stock will take a turn back up.
 - The same should be true of our lives.
 - If you were to graph out your life along with spiritual maturity, there are going to be periods in your life where everything seems to be crumbling.
 - You are doubting God.

- You are filled with hate, anger, discord, impatience, bitterness, frustration, unfaithfulness, harshness, and excessive self-indulgence.
 - You want to run from the truth that you know.
 - Maybe that is you today...
 - If you find yourself in a spiritual rut, chasm, valley...you are not alone...it is part of life for each of us.
 - Surround yourself with people who can walk with you through that valley.
 - If your life is on a spiritual downswing, one of the best things that can be done is to follow Peter's direction...pray and proclaim.
 - Allow God to use those acts of service to form and shape your faith.
 - Hopefully there are plenty of moments of rejoicing and heading up from those valleys too.
 - And hopefully, you see that through the years your trajectory of faith is that it is growing in maturity.
- So together, as the Church which has the privilege of reading this letter from Peter, we aim to pursue Christ as individuals, yet as members of the body of Christ together.
- So as followers of Jesus we must be different, but not odd.
 - Different from the world in that we attract, not odd so that we repel.
 - In our pursuit of Christ we must remember why we are pursuing Christ...there are a number of answers to that, but according to this letter, it is because Jesus will return soon.
 - That should be our primary motivation.