

Session 6: Patience, Not Wanting Any to Perish (3:9b)

Why has the Lord taken so long to get around to Christ's return?

Peter attributes it to God's patience:

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (3:9b)

Peter teaches us three (3) very important truths in this verse:

1. **God is patient with you.** "Is patient" (NIV, NRSV) and "is longsuffering" (KJV) is a Greek verb, "to bear up under provocation without complaint, be patient, forbearing." The word is formed from two words, makro, "long," and thumos, "spirit, breath." The word means literally, "having a long spirit" -- we would say having a "long fuse." Patience is a virtue. We Christians are told to have patience, to be patient (Ephesians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; James 5:7-8).

Aren't you glad that God practices patience toward you?

2. **God doesn't want anyone to perish, that is, suffer eternal destruction, death, and separation from God.**

This truth is embodied in the most commonly memorized verse in the New Testament:
"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

NOTE: When we hear about destruction and judgment, we sometimes think of God as an angry deity just waiting for the chance to swat us down like pesky flies.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Though God is just and must judge sin, he loves us and desires with all his heart that we shouldn't die in our sins.

Jonathan Edwards preached a famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God".....and many were converted. God has reason to be angry with sin.

Good news—Jesus proclaimed a new word: "Sinners in the Hands of a Loving God." The Father sent Jesus to die for sins on our behalf, the sins we have committed.

Very Important: God won't prevent us from perishing if we set our mind to it.....but His heart and mind are against it.

That's grace. That's love. That's longsuffering.

And that's why Jesus hasn't returned yet for the final judgment.

3. **God wants us all to reach repentance.**

The Greek word is metanoia, meaning "a change of mind" from meta, "change" and noeō, "perceive with the mind."

The word also contains the idea or requirement of 'remorse.'"

It means in this passage... "repentance, turning about, conversion."

A teaching called "universalism" contends that, in the end, everyone will be saved, even the devil -- that God is too merciful to allow anyone to perish.

Those who teach this forget that God's desire is for all to reach a place of repentance so that they might not perish.

Note: America has largely removed the concepts of sin and repentance from the message of Christianity, and in the process, emasculated the Gospel of its truth and power to rescue (that is, "save") men and women from sin.

What kind of person should we be? 2 Peter 3:10-16, *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”*

If this is what's going to happen to the earth and sky (v.10-11), then how should we live?

Will it change how we do things, and what we do?

Peter calls us to live in the light of eternity---doing now what we'll be doing then.

Sometimes, when discussing funerals with the bereaved, they talk about what heaven will be like. Sometimes peoples' notions can seem very unheavenly – “a place where you go fishing all the time, play golf all the time, do what we love doing the best here on earth!”

What does Peter tell us about heaven?

Heaven, the new heavens and the new earth is ‘in which righteousness dwells.’

It's a place where there is perfect righteousness, people in perfect relationship with God and each other, where there is no sin, no sorrow, and we can perfectly please the Lord.

This is what we're aiming for - taking our place in the new heavens and the new earth.

The new heavens and the new earth are permanent, they can't be taken away from you when you arrive there!

But if that is “where” we are aiming for, if this is how we will be, then how should we be living now.....what sort of people ought you to be?

Holiness and godliness is in the big picture according to Peter.

Since false teachers are a constant danger.....ignorant and unstable people are going to twist the scriptures.....Peter warns us in the final two verses....summarizing as to how to use the Scriptures as we live now in light of eternity:

2 Peter 3:3:17-18, *“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 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.”*

Don’t follow the errors of the false teachers.....the teaching will make you lose your stability, and prevent you from increasing in those qualities talked about in chapter 1.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus:

- **Through holding to his promises,**
- **Trusting His Word, and learning it so that it changes how you live and prepares you for the new heavens and the new earth.**

Praise God for a Holy God who waits patiently for His children to come home!