

A Growing Consummation

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in 2 Peter 3. 2 Peter 3, and we're going to look at verses 1 to 10, but if we just read again from verse 8.

2 Peter 3, and we'll read again at verse 8. Where Peter writes, 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.

The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

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.

Last week, we saw the long-awaited and much-debated restart of the football season in the English Premiership. But, you know, what marked the restart of the football season wasn't just the fact that the matches had to be played behind closed doors, and in the silence of a stadium, an empty stadium.

[1 : 25] But there was also the sight of, you'll probably have seen it on the news, the sight of players and match officials bowing their knee for 10 seconds at the start of each game.

And they bowed their knee in order to show their support and solidarity for the Black Lives Matter movement, and they did what many have referred to as taking the knee.

They took the knee before the game started. And, you know, the influence that football has is such that when the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, when he was asked if he would take the knee, like many of the football players, Dominic Raab said that he would only take the knee for two people, the Queen and his wife.

Of course, the Foreign Secretary, he received a lot of criticism for his comments, especially because football players and politicians and police officers and protesters, they have all continued to take the knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

But, you know, seeing all these pictures of players, politicians, protesters and police officers, seeing them all take the knee, you know, it reminded me of what Peter is saying here, of what will happen at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 48] Because as our Bible assures and affirms to us, it says that we will all take the knee. We will all take the knee. Because whoever we are, whether we're a player, a politician, a police officer, a protester, whether we're the Prime Minister, a prince or a pauper, whoever we are, the Bible says to us, we will all take the knee.

Because at the name of Jesus, we're told that every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and in hell. And every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

My friend, whoever we are, we will all take the knee. That's why the Gospel urges us as a church and as a community and even as a country, that's why the Gospel urges us to be ready by repentance.

The Gospel urges us to be ready by repentance. Because as Jesus said, be ready, for at an hour when you think not, the Son of Man will come.

And this is what Peter draws our attention to in the last chapter of his last letter. Peter, in these verses, verses 1 to 10, Peter issues three things. He issues a careful reminder, a considered reservation, and a call to repentance.

[4 : 18] Peter issues us three things. A careful reminder, a considered reservation, and a call to repentance. So we look first of all that Peter issues a careful reminder.

A careful reminder. And we see that in verses 1 to 3. Peter writes, This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

And so as Peter begins the last chapter of his last letter, he issues another careful reminder to the church. Because Peter, he gave a careful reminder to the church back in chapter 1.

You'll remember that he urged the church to have a growing concern. Because Peter himself, he had a growing concern that every Christian would be a growing Christian. And as we saw there in chapter 1, Peter gave a careful reminder to the church that every Christian must be a Christian with quantity and a Christian with quality.

Peter gave a careful reminder to the church that every Christian must make every effort to supplement their faith by seeking and striving to possess and practice all these Christian qualities in their life.

[5 : 53] So in chapter 1, Peter gave a careful reminder to the church. And he said to the church, As long as I am in this body, I will stir you up by way of a reminder.

And Peter issued a careful reminder because he knew that he wouldn't be able to be with them much longer. He said, And I know that I'm putting off my body. The putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

And so Peter issued a careful reminder in chapter 1 because Peter had a growing concern that every Christian would be a growing Christian. But now here in chapter 3, Peter again issues a careful reminder.

But this time it's because he has a growing concern about a growing corruption in the church. And we touched on this last week when we considered chapter 2.

And we saw there in chapter 2 the contamination, condemnation and conclusion of corrupt clergy. Because as Peter said, he said the corrupt clergy, they are enemies of the cross and their end is destruction.

[7 : 05] And they're ultimately leading people to hell with them. But as Peter says in chapter 3, just because the problem had been exposed in chapter 2, that didn't mean the problem has been eradicated.

Which is why here in chapter 3, in the last chapter of his last letter, Peter again issues a careful reminder that he had a growing concern about a growing corruption in the church.

And you know, you can see from Peter's language that he has a real concern and care and compassion for the church of Jesus Christ. Because he repeatedly regards them as the beloved.

He calls them the beloved. He says in verse 1, this is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder.

Peter calls the church the beloved. In fact, that's how Peter described the church in his first letter. He called them the beloved. And that's how Peter described the church back in chapter 1, where he gave them that initial reminder.

[8 : 14] He called them the beloved. But now here in the last chapter of his last letter, Peter calls the church, he calls them the beloved, not once, not twice, but five times.

Five times Peter calls the church the beloved. Which only emphasizes to us that Peter was certainly aware that these words that he's writing here, they were going to be the last words that he would write to the church of Jesus Christ before he would be martyred for his faith.

And what Peter wanted more than anything else was to give a careful reminder to the beloved that Jesus is coming again. Peter wanted to give a careful reminder to the beloved that Jesus is coming again.

And as we said before, that's what 2 Peter is all about. Peter is urging the church, he's urging these suffering and scattered saints, he's urging the beloved, and he's urging them to keep praying, and to keep persevering, and to keep proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's what Peter is saying in these opening verses. He says, This is now the second letter I'm writing to you, beloved. In both of them, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles.

[9 : 45] Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, Where is the promise of his coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. My friend, Peter had such a concern, such a care, such a compassion for the church of Jesus Christ that he gave to them and to us this careful reminder that what has been prophesied about the second coming of Jesus Christ will come through.

It will come through. And what Peter's saying to us is, Remember what the prophets said. Remember what the apostles said. Remember what Jesus said.

Remember what they said about the second coming and the day of the Lord. Because there will be many corrupt clergy who will contaminate the church with false teaching and they will question you, just like Peter says there.

They will question you by saying, Where is the promise of his coming? Where is Jesus? It's been years since his resurrection and ascension. It's been years since Jesus has gone to the right hand of the Father and he hasn't come back yet.

[11 : 05] If he promised to come back, then where is he? Where is the promise of his coming? And Peter says, The corrupt clergy will try to cunningly and convincingly claim that there's not going to be a second coming.

There's not going to be a day of the Lord. There's not going to be a day of judgment. There's not going to be a day of wrath. And they'll say to you that Jesus, he's not this exalted king.

He's not coming back to judge the world. Therefore, you can love God and live as you please. But remember, says Peter. Remember, says Peter.

Remember that I gave you this careful reminder that what has been prophesied by the prophets and the apostles and by Jesus, what has been prophesied about the second coming will come true.

And you know, my friend, it's good for us to receive a careful reminder about the second coming of Christ. It's good for us to be reminded that what has been prophesied by the prophets and the apostles and by Jesus about the day of the Lord will come true.

[12 : 18] Because you know, far too often, far too often, we live life as if Jesus is not coming back. Far too often, we get distracted and caught up in the ways of the world.

Far too often, we forget that the day of the Lord is near and fast approaching. Far too often, you know, it's not false teachers that are corrupting our mind and leading us astray.

But it's just our own sinful hearts and our selfish desires. Far too often, we forget that Jesus is coming back. And that's why Peter is issuing to us a careful reminder that we live our lives in light of the second coming.

We're to live our lives in light of the second coming. And you know, when I was first converted, that was the advice an older Christian gave to me.

That I should seek and strive to live out my life as a Christian as if Jesus could come at any moment. And I was told, live your life in light of the second coming.

[13 : 31] Live your life in light of the second coming. Live out your life as a Christian in such a way that if Jesus were to return suddenly, he wouldn't find you slacking or sleeping or in a situation or doing something, that he would ask you, what are you doing?

Live, my friend, were to live out our Christian life in such a way that if Jesus were to return suddenly, that he wouldn't find us slacking or sleeping or in a situation or doing something, where he would ask us, what are you doing?

My friend, sometimes, you know, we need a careful reminder so that we seek and strive to ensure that our Christian character, conduct, and conversation is being lived out in light of the second coming.

We need to live our lives in light of the second coming. And so, in the last chapter of his last letter, Peter issues a careful reminder.

A careful reminder. But then, secondly, he issues a considered reservation. A considered reservation. We'll look at verse 4.

[14 : 48] Peter says, they will say, where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water, and through water by the word of God.

And that by means of these, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

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.

The late professor John L. Mackay, who was the professor of Old Testament and Hebrew in the Free Church College for many years, he stated that the day of the Lord is the time at which the Lord will decisively intervene in the affairs of this world in order to achieve his purposes and vindicate his name.

[16 : 04] But first of all, before Peter comes to the day of the Lord, he says that there have been three occasions in the history of this world in which the Lord has already intervened in the affairs of this world.

And Peter says the first time the Lord intervened in this world was at the creation. That's when the Lord spoke into the darkness of this world. And by the word of his power, the Lord brought forth form out of the formlessness and he brought fullness into the emptiness of this world.

Because the Lord said, let there be light and there was light. And the Lord said, let there be land and hills and mountains and rivers and seas and oceans. And the Lord said, let them be filled with trees and plants and animals and mammals and birds and insects.

And we're told that the Lord saw that it was all very good. Peter says that the first time the Lord intervened in the history of this world was at the creation. Then the second time that the Lord intervened was at the flood.

And it's interesting that Peter repeatedly mentions Noah and the flood in his letters. He mentions Noah and the flood in both letters. Peter mentioned Noah and the flood in his first letter.

[17 : 41] And Peter mentioned Noah and the flood back in chapter 2. We saw that last week where Peter highlighted that Noah was a preacher of righteousness who faithfully and fervently preached about sin, righteousness and the judgment to come.

And he preached about it for 120 years. And now here in the last chapter of his last letter Peter once again draws attention to Noah and the flood.

And he says that through the flood the Lord intervened in the affairs of this world in order to achieve his purposes and vindicate his name.

The Lord revealed his wrath and brought justice and judgment against the sin of mankind through the devastating destruction of the flood. And so the first time the Lord intervened in the history of this world was at the creation.

The second time was at the flood. And the third time was the incarnation. Because it was at the incarnation that the Lord humbled himself and he took to himself our nature where he became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

[18 : 54] And he did so in order to live the life we should have lived. And to die the death we deserved to die. And you know is that not the glory of the gospel? That through the incarnation the Lord intervened in the history of this world.

Through the incarnation the Lord was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Through the incarnation the Lord intervened in order to act as the sacrificial saviour and substitute for our sin.

The Lord intervened through the incarnation. And so what Peter's saying to the church what Peter's saying to us is that if the Lord has already intervened at different points throughout the history of this world if the Lord has already intervened at the creation and then at the flood and then again at the incarnation then he says the day of the Lord is the time at which the Lord will decisively intervene in the affairs of this world in order to achieve his purposes and vindicate his name.

And as Peter said the prophets and apostles they have all spoken about this day the day of the Lord. The day on which the Lord will definitively and decisively intervene in the affairs of this world.

The day on which the Lord will reveal his wrath and bring justice and judgment against sin. It's the day of the Lord. And you know the prophet Isaiah he prophesied that the Lord has appointed this day.

[20 : 34] This day on which the arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men will be humbled. Isaiah said wail wail for the day of the Lord is near the destruction from the Almighty will come.

The prophet Ezekiel said the day is near the day of the Lord is near it will be a day of clouds a time of doom for the nations. The prophet Joel he said the day of the Lord is near and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

Blow a trumpet sound an alarm on my holy mountain let all the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord is coming it is near for the day of the Lord is great and very awesome and who can endure it?

Joel says the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. Multitudes he says multitudes are in the valley of decision for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The prophet Abadiah another prophet he said the day of the Lord is near upon the nations as you have done it shall be done to you your deeds shall return on your own head judgment is coming he's saying the prophet Zephaniah another prophet he said be silent before the Lord God for the day of the Lord is near the prophet Amos he also said woe to you who desire the day of the Lord why would you have the day of the Lord it is darkness and not light but you know it's not only the prophets who spoke about the day of the Lord Peter reminds us that the apostles have also spoke about the day of the Lord Peter himself he stood up on the day of Pentecost and he quoted from the prophet Joel and he said that the sun shall be turned to darkness the moon shall be turned to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes when Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica they were a church that wondered if the day of the Lord would ever come but Paul affirmed the teaching of Jesus that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night and that's just what Peter says in verse 10 the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night but more than that the New Testament in different places the New Testament describes the day of the Lord as a day of wrath a day of visitation it's been described as the great day of God Almighty my friend the day of the Lord is the day of judgment the day on which everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account it's a day on which everyone will take the knee before Jesus Christ it's a day on which every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord it's a day on which everyone will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of their life in this world to King Jesus my friend the day of the Lord is the day on which you will be asked what did you do with Jesus the day of the Lord is the day on which you will be asked what did you do with Jesus and you know my friend

[24 : 06] Peter had such a concern care and compassion for the church that he says to us that the day of the Lord is a considered reservation the day of the Lord is a considered reservation meaning that the day of the Lord is an appointed time it's an appointed time which we will keep it's an appointed time which we will not miss it's an appointed time that we will not be late for we might be late for other things but we will not be late for this appointed time because it's an appointed time that God the Father has set it's an appointed time at which the Lord will decisively and definitively intervene in the affairs of this world it's an appointed time in which the Lord will reveal his wrath and bring justice and judgment against sin and as the prophets and the apostles repeatedly reaffirmed the day of the Lord is near the day of the Lord is near but you know as the corrupt clergy claimed and as many other sins have claimed they've all said that the prophets and the apostles they've been saying that the day of the Lord is near they've been saying it for centuries they've said that the day of the Lord is near for hundreds of years in fact they would say that the prophets said that the day of the Lord is near 3,000 years ago the apostles said that the day of the Lord is near 2,000 years ago and so the corrupt clergy these false teachers they would say how can the day of the Lord possibly be near when nothing has happened for thousands of years how is the day of the Lord near and you know Peter he responds to any claim which seeks to unsteady or undermine the teaching that the day of the Lord is near and he responds by saying in mercy remember remember this one fact 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 and what

Peter's saying is that it doesn't matter if it's been 1,000 2,000 or 3,000 or even maybe it might be 4,000 years since the prophets and apostles proclaimed the day of the Lord is near Peter says the Lord isn't governed by time he's not working according to our schedule he's not working according to our calendar he's not fitting in with our appointments no he has a considered reservation he has an appointed time at which he will decisively and definitively intervene in the affairs of this world and bring it all to an end and when that will be no one knows no one knows as Jesus said no one knows the day nor the hour not even the angels of heaven nor the sun but the father only no one knows the day nor the hour but our responsibility is not to work out when he's coming our responsibility my friend is to make sure that we're ready when he comes our responsibility is not to work out when he's coming our responsibility is to make sure that we're ready when he comes that's why

Peter issues finally a call to repentance a call to repentance because you know in the last this the last chapter of his last letter Peter draws attention to three things he gives to us a careful reminder a considered reservation and a call to repentance a call to repentance he says in verse nine 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 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 in it will be exposed God willing and if the Lord doesn't come before then we will consider more of the consummation and the conclusion of the world next

Lord's Day as we come to the end of this letter but in these verses in verses nine and ten Peter addresses those who are in the church he addresses those who attend church those who know about church those who are regular in church but are not yet committed to Jesus Christ Peter addresses you my unconverted friend Peter addresses you and he issues you here in some of his last words he issues you a call to repentance the last thing Peter wants to issue to you is a call to repentance and Peter he pleads with you his dying words are that he's pleading with you to turn away from your sin and turn to the Saviour Jesus Christ and you know Peter's urgency and reasoning for you to seek the Lord tonight is because the Lord will fulfil his promise that's what

[30 : 00] Peter is saying Peter is saying it may be 2000 years since the Christ ascended to heaven and it may seem that the Lord is slow when it comes to his second coming but you know my unconverted friend the reason for this the reason the Lord seems to be slow is because the Lord is being patient with you the Lord is being patient and the Lord doesn't want you to perish in your sin because the Lord wants you to come to repentance he's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance do you know my unconverted friend the Lord is being patient with you tonight he has been patient with you for many years and you know that to be true but the Lord has been patient with you up until now and he's patient with you tonight because he wants you to turn from your sin and turn to the saviour but the thing is and this is what

Peter is getting at Peter is saying the Lord may be long suffering the Lord may be patient the Lord may be long suffering but he's not all suffering the Lord may be long suffering but he's not all suffering because you know my unconverted friend the day of the Lord will come and it will come whether you are ready or not and it will come like a thief in the night and it will come at an hour you do not expect and that's why Peter is saying to us tonight be ready be watching be waiting make sure you are in Christ but you know how am I to be ready you might be asking that how am I to be ready tonight how am I to make sure that I'm ready and watching and waiting my friend repent and believe in the gospel turn from your sin and turn to Jesus

Christ in repentance turn seeking the Lord with all your heart asking him to save you and forgive you and cleanse you and wash you and make you his repent and believe in the gospel because you can only be made ready through repentance you can only be made ready through repentance and the thing is we need to be ready we need to be ready because as we said earlier whoever we are we will all take the knee you look at those football players and those politicians and police officers and protesters all taking the knee my friend we will all take the knee before King Jesus Jesus it doesn't matter who we are whether prince or pauper we will all take the knee because the day of the Lord will be a day of wrath a day of visitation a day of judgment where every knee will bow and every tongue will confess my friend we will all take the knee before King

Jesus at the judgment seat of Christ and given account we will all take the knee where we will all bow every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and in hell and every tongue will confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father my friend whoever we are we will all take the knee that's why the gospel urges us as a church and as a community and as a country the gospel urges us to be ready to be ready through repentance by turning from our sin and turning to the Saviour we need to be ready because as Jesus said be ready be ready for at an hour when you think not the Son of Man will come be ready my friend be ready you know there's an old hymn that I heard years ago which emphasizes this call to repentance and with this

I'll close because it's a hymn which retells the story of a conversation between a minister and an elderly woman who is on her deathbed and she's dying without Christ it's a very it's a very solemn hymn and I'll just read you the lyrics it was in a country cottage and the sun was sinking low as I stood beside the pillow of one who soon must go and as the sun beams lingered around the dying bed she turned her eyes upon me and this is what she said he's coming soon to call me he's coming by and by but oh I am not ready his coming draweth nigh then I spoke to her of Jesus and of his power to save and as I said there was still mercy although she neared the grave but she did not seem to hear me for her thoughts were all astray and as I strained to listen

[35 : 21] I could only hear her say he is coming soon to call me he is coming by and by but oh I am not ready for his coming draweth nigh there she told me all her story how in strength and health I knew she had lived for pleasure only and her words were words of truth but now beside the river in fear of doubt she stood too weak to trust in Jesus and once again she said he is coming soon to call me he's coming by and by but oh I am not ready his coming draweth nigh just a day a day or two she lingered and then the summons came her spirit fled and parted never to return again but you know then there's the closing verse of the hymn and it's addressed to you my unconverted friend it's addressed to you as the hymn writer pleads he says

O sinner heed the warning and seek the narrow way eternity is coming and you must pass that way he's coming soon to call you he's coming by and by can you say today you're ready for his coming draweth nigh can you say today you're ready for his coming draweth nigh and that's a question I want to leave you with this evening my unconverted friend can you say today you're ready for his coming draweth nigh well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for the warnings of scripture where scripture warns us so solemnly that King Jesus will come and he will come in the glory of his father with his holy angels he will come in all power and all splendor and all authority that has been given to him in heaven and on earth and he will call all to stand before the judgment seat and give an account and Lord we pray that we would be ready for that day that we would be ready for the day if he comes if he comes even tonight that we might be ready for the day when he calls us out of the scene of time into eternity or we do not know at what day or hour our Lord will come but Lord help us to be ready because Lord as the hymn was reminding us there that his coming draweth nigh all can we say today we're ready for his coming draweth nigh

Lord bless us we pray bless thy truth to us we ask and help us to seek thee while thou art to be found and call upon thee while thou art near all do us good then we pray take away our iniquity lead us into this week that whatever is before us help us to know Lord the word one who goes before us behind us and beside us keeping us on the way ever looking to Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith cleanse us and we ask for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake Amen Well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 95 Psalm 95 in the Scottish Psalter and we're singing from the beginning down to the verse marked 5 and Psalm 95 it's a psalm which invites us to come we're to come before the Lord with singing and praising the Lord but we're also to come on our knees we're to come and take the knee before King Jesus and acknowledge that he is

Lord and that's what we all need to do we all need to come and take the knee before the Lord Psalm 95 begins O come let us sing to the Lord come let us everyone a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation and then down to verse 6 O come and let us worship him let us bow down with all and on our knees before the Lord our maker let us fall O come O come let us sing to the Lord come let us every one a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation let us be born his presence come with great and thankful voice let us sing sound to live with grace and make a joyful noise for God a great

God and great King above all God He is dead on the earth are in His hand the strength of His His His To Him the nations He be loved He He le

[42 : 08] Come and let us worship Him, let us allow me to.

And on our knees before the Lord, our maker let us fall.