

2 Peter 3:8-15a

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him.

Sermon

Advent is a time of waiting, but as we wait, we prepare.

- We prepare for Christmas by planning menus and putting ornaments on trees.
- We light candles and read the scriptures and we pray for God's peace.



And the frustrating thing about all this is that there is no perfect preparation. We simply can't be prepared for any circumstance or odd reality that comes our way. If any year is proof of that - This Is It.

- There will be something that does not go according to plan.
 - We will forget some crucial part of that traditional recipe.
- Our cell-phone battery will die right as we are trying to figure out how connect to that Zoom call with the family.
 - We won't get to the post office in time to ship our presents across the country
 - The cat will knock over the tree
 - Whatever it is, our preparations will always be imperfect because there just simply isn't enough time between now and Christmas to make it all perfect.

And this time of preparation can certainly be anxiety-inducing can't it? We spend so much of it worrying about everything that can go wrong. We convince ourselves that all is lost. And we feel ashamed for not being more prepared.

- In a lot of ways, our Christmas preparations are set up perfectly to lead us away from peace, rather than guiding us toward it.

And you think that it might be easier for us Christians, but I'm not so sure that's true. Because we are called, not just to prepare for the holidays, but to spend our lives in preparation for the Kingdom of God that is coming into the world when Christ comes again. We are called, not to stand idly by, but to get to work in building that Kingdom up, through acts of generosity and kindness. We are called to invite others to join us in our preparations by sharing good news and words of hope. We are called to defend that Kingdom from selfishness and slander. We are called to give the world a glimpse of what that new world will truly be, through the way that we live our lives.

- And I thought I was nervous about whether the turkey would be dry.
- They say that this is supposed to be a time of Peace, but preparing for the Kingdom of God sounds awfully overwhelming to me! There will never be enough time to do all that!

And then, Thanks be to God, the scriptures interrupt our anxiety.

- They say that "With the Lord, one day is like a thousand years. And a thousand years are like one day."
- They tell us to reconsider our worries. To turn off the countdown to Christmas and to reset our watches to God's time. Because, with the Lord there is always time enough. For God is patient and forgiving. Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God is understanding and ready to give us all a second chance.
 - And this is where I find Peace in this season. In the Good News that God doesn't want anyone to be unprepared, but will give us the time we need to make our preparations and get ready for the Kingdom that Christ is bringing into the world.
 - I find Peace in the knowledge that there is time for all of our audacious plans, for all the bold hopes that God has given us. We can swing for the fences in our ministry as a church - striving to live out the fullness of the dreams that God has given us, rather than just settling for the cheap and easy version. For we can trust that even if we fail, there will be time to get back up and try again.

So let us strive to live in the peace that comes with faith. Trusting in God's patience and preparing together for all that God will do through us, during this Christmas season and beyond, until the very coming of the Kingdom of God. For the patience of our Lord is our salvation.

Amen.

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