

II Peter 3.14
17 January 2010

Beloved, we are living in the last days. And we know that from the teaching of the apostle Peter that this world will be destroyed by fire, not that it will be completely destroyed but renewed and the people of God will descend from heaven and live upon the earth. And how do we respond to this truth? Peter exhorts us that we are to live in holy conduct and godliness, and we are to keep on looking and hasting unto the coming of the Lord.

Verse 14 begins with the word, “wherefore” And in the connection to the truth and because of this truth, the apostle exhorts the church to be diligent to be found of Christ in peace. We cannot remain the same person when we are confronted by God’s truth, without being convicted by God’s Word. Peter argues from this truth and exhorts us to live a life of sanctification in preparation for the coming of Christ. The goal is that at His coming, we be found of Him in peace, spotless and blameless. God’s Word to us today is taken from verse 14, “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless”.

The theme is: **BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND OF CHRIST IN PEACE.**

First, the reason for the exhortation. Secondly, the end of the exhortation and thirdly, the manner of keeping this exhortation.

First, the reason for this exhortation. The exhortation is be diligent to be found of Christ in peace. And Peter gives the reason for the exhortation, “since or because seeing that ye look for such things”. What are such things referred to? These refer to what the apostle has said earlier in verses 10 to 13. First, it is the second coming of Christ, which he has promised. Christ will come as a thief in the night, or suddenly and when no one expects him to come. And when the Lord comes, the present heaven and earth will pass away and its works will be burnt up. And this will usher in the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness will dwell and where the church will be. And such are the things that we are looking for!

These are the things, which he has promised us and surely none of his promises shall fail. It might appear that the Lord is slack concerning the promise of His coming, but he not slack at all, v9, but he is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but all of the elect shall come to repentance. The day of the Lord shall surely come and this is what we must expect. And we also expect that this old world to pass away, not in the sense of a complete destruction so that nothing remains but its form shall pass away. And all the elements of which it is composed shall be burned up into a molten mass. The heavens lit with the stars shall be set on fire and shall be melted with fervent heat. The earth with all it contains shall be also be burned up and nothing in its present form shall abide in that day of the Lord. And all the works of men in which he so proudly boast upon and sets his heart, shall also perish. What fools they are who imagine that their houses shall stand forever.

And such are the things that we are waiting for with hearts filled with a living hope. As in the days of Noah, so shall be in the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, men were wilfully ignorant, and mocked the truth that God was

coming in judgment to destroy the world and to purge the world with the waters of the flood. And before the final destruction by fire, men will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, living in the vain hope that nothing shall change and that they can go on living in their sin and corruption without the fear of judgment. And in those days, they shall mock those godly prophets who had warned them of the coming day of the Lord. Until they shall see the sign of the Son of Man and begin to call on the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and vainly hope that they can be killed and do not have to face the great white throne of judgment. But this is not the case with God's beloved, who have found grace in the eyes of the Lord. There are 3 elements of this hope: Our eyes are filled with hope and with holy expectation. First, hope is expectation. But this hope is not a mere expectation of something that may come, like disease or death, which may or not take place. But, the Christian hope means that we look forward to things which will take place, i.e. dwelling in the new heavens and the new earth. Secondly, hope is also certainty. We know that the certainty of the coming of Christ is sure and will take place. The certainty is about dwelling with God in the new heavens and the new earth. Thirdly, hope is also longing. They were even impatient in their longing for the day of God and because of that hope, hasten the coming of God by being zealous in preaching the gospel so that the elect can be gathered and to be diligent to be found of Christ in peace, spotless and blameless. The result is that this hope purifies us. I John 3.2, 3, 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. And therefore, the hope to be like him has the power, the incentive, to purify ourselves. And we are to look to this hope presently and actively. If, we have not lived our life in view of this hope every moment everyday, then we are to confess our sins and live in this hope now. For it is God's will that we look forward to that hope all the days of our lives. And this hope will excite us and stimulate us to follow purity and it will lead us straight to Christ, whom we know to be perfect pattern of purity. And to live out this presently is for our sanctification. But, a backslider is filled with his own ways (Prov. 14.4) and does not walk according to this hope. And we are look to this hope actively, not passively, not indifferently or waiting for things to happen, but willingly and energetically living out this hope.

The end of this exhortation is to be found of Christ in peace. This is the positive way of stating what is negatively expressly in "without spot and blameless". To be found in peace means that you are so discovered by the Lord when He comes again as being in perfect harmony with Him and His will. All the natural enmity, the rebellion and hatred of your old nature is removed. You will be found of him all the love of our heart going out to him, as being righteous as he is righteous, and holy as he is holy. It means that you will be living and walking as his covenant friend in the world, and expecting the judgment of his favour and declaring, "come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom which I have prepared for you." And to be found without spot and blameless. When the Jews offered a lamb unto God, a unblemished lamb, if it had the smallest speck of disease, the least wound would not be allowed for the Passover. The priest would not have allowed it to be slaughtered nor would God have accepted the sacrifice. It must be a lamb without blemish, and was not Jesus even such from his birth? Unblemished, born of the pure virgin Mary, begotten of the Holy Ghost, without a taint of sin, his soul was pure and spotless as the snow, white, clear and perfect. And in him was no sin. He took our sins and bore our sorrows on the cross.

He was in all points tempted as we are, but yet without sin. He is the Lamb without blemish. And through the spotless and blameless lamb of God, Christ will find us uncorrupted or unspoilt from the world, free from all vice, wholly unblemished, pure in his sight. When we confess our sins with grief in our hearts that we have offended God and turn unto God for the forgiveness of our sins and he will cleanse us from our sins. And we continue to submit ourselves to the work of God's grace in sanctifying us. That we mortify the old man of sin in our members: lust, idolatry and greed but putting on the new man of doing what pleases God and being consecrated to Him and through this obtain the smile of God. And through this life-long process of sanctification or conversion, God delivers us from being under the dominion of sin and at the same time renews us to be conformed unto the image of Christ. And enables you to walk faithfully in all good works through thinking, willing and desiring to do the will of God.

And it is clear that we cannot bring about this relationship of peace. You must remember that sanctification is entirely God's work of grace in us. This work is preceded by another work of grace in us whereby he begotten us again. We have been regenerated unto a living hope. According to God's abundant mercy, He has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Once were we were uncircumcised and without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus we were brought near by the blood of Christ. That is, by his death on the cross, he has broken down the wall of partition between us, abolished the enmity, even the law of the commandments to make in himself of one new man, and reconciling us unto God by the cross. And the result is that we have this living hope and that hope is the coming of Christ. Regeneration is the first principle, the beginning of the life of the new creation which we expect him to bring out of the old which shall pass away. It is this grace that it cannot perish, while all else, your old nature passes away. And it is this grace of regeneration that is the ground of sanctification within us. He dwells in our hearts, motivates us to live for Christ. Out of the regenerated heart, from which proceeds all your thinking, willing and desiring comes the holy expectation and longing for the new heavens and the new earth.

And finally, how do we keep this exhortation? We do it in diligence. Literally, diligence means to be hardworking and to spare no efforts in obtaining the goal. This means that we are to be earnestly desiring it, and with all our hearts following after him so that we may be found of him in peace, spotless and blameless. This implies that there is no place for laziness, indifference or carelessness in our living because this concerns being ready for the most important thing in our lives. The coming of Christ is the telos or end or the climax of all things. This is what God has promised to us in our salvation will be given unto us in full and in all perfection, right now it is a token. This is the salvation of the whole creation through God gathering all things in Christ: things in heaven, things on earth and things under the sea. And the history of man will come to an end and the course of the whole history of this world is for the glory of Christ and the gathering of His church.

But how does this truth transforms or make a difference our lives?

A man has bought a brand new house and he will not be so foolish as to spend his time and money in fixing up the old in which he currently lives in. So, in the spiritual

sense, one who is truly expecting the renewal of all things, will not continue to seek after to furnish the old. He will be living always in the desire to be found by the Lord in his coming. He will be like the wise virgins in the parable, he will be watching and be sober, with oil in the lamp and see to it that it keeps burning. Or like students preparing for the O and A level exams. No student would be so foolish as to study aimlessly without purpose for he knows the consequence if he day dreams in class and will not study. He will surely fail in his exams. A wise student will be soon preparing for the exam and you cannot prepare too early for the exams. And when the Lord comes, would you want him to find you idle in his kingdom, not living in obedience to God's Word and neglecting your family? Surely, you would want to be diligent in his kingdom, living a life of godliness and found faithful in raising your children in the fear of God. And you would want to settle any offences with your brethren today, and not leave it till tomorrow. And right now, if you are not found of him in peace, you must come to the fountain of the blood of Christ for cleansing of your sins and seeking God's forgiveness. Then, we are ready for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of glory. Amen.