



How Then Shall We Live?
Exhortations from 2 Peter 3
May 26, 2019

TEXT: 2 PETER 3

Happy Memorial Day!

The day not only reminds me to pause and thank our LORD for those who courageously gave their lives for our Nation's freedoms, but also to consider the great spiritual battle in which every Christian is a part (Eph 6:10-13).

I was reflecting this week on some things we were saying almost a decade ago:

- That gay marriage was a possibility if something doesn't change (SC ruling in June 2015).
- That biblical manhood and womanhood were being systematically undermined, even in the church.
- That 2000-3000 babies are killed each day (still the same, est. \$63 million since 1973).
- That one day we could see unsustainable amounts of debt as a nation.
- That wickedness and perversion was being normalized, legalized, and monetized.
- That our children were being systematically indoctrinated into an ungodly, unbiblical worldview, and as a result we were losing them in record numbers to the world.

Then, like today, there was a battle going on over authority—in particular, the authority of God's Word. Peter's answer to that was precise (2 Peter 1:16-21)!

Peter was concerned about the false ideas and false teachers that had infiltrated the church. 2 Peter 2 is nothing short of a polemic (or a strong rebuttal and condemnation) against false teachers (2 Peter 1:1-3).

Adding intensity to Peter's letter and against the backdrop of the ongoing spiritual battle was the apostolic expectation of an imminent eschatological event. In verses 10-12, Peter uses apocalyptic language to encourage and exhort the saints. He wasn't alone:

- John said, *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."* Revelation 1:3 (KJV)
- He also said, *"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."* 1 John 2:18 (KJV)
- James said, *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."* James 5:7-8 (KJV)
- Paul said, *"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."* Philippians 4:4-5 (KJV)

- Peter said in 1 Peter, *"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."* 1 Peter 4:7 (KJV)

Much can be said about this from an end times perspective, but suffice it to say, they urged the church to live a certain way...with zeal, passion, and intentionality!

With all this in Peter's mind, (and his impending martyrdom) he, via the Holy Spirit, pens the following, extremely relevant, exhortations to a church culture in crisis. In Verse 11, he intimates a question:

"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness," 2 Peter 3:11 (ESV)

In other words, what do we do in the midst of the battle, with all the chaos around us?

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

1. Like you are **loved** by God! (V1).
2. With a "stirred up," mindfulness of the **truth** of the Bible. (V1-2)
3. With the blessed assurance that persecutions are nothing new and are to be **expected**. (V3)
4. With a humble confidence in His Coming, refusing to **listen** to scoffers! (V4-7)
5. With **urgency**, not taking the LORD's mercy and patience for granted! (V8-9, 15)
6. With a **personal awareness** that a fearful Day of Judgment is coming! (V10)
7. In **holiness** of life and godliness! (v11)
8. With eyes and hearts looking forward to the Day of God (new heaven and earth)! (v12)
9. With diligent effort to live in **peace** and purity. (v13)
10. According to the Apostolic **Pattern** (V14-15)
11. On guard and with care that we are not led away by error. (v16)
12. With a **desire** to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ. (v17)

TO SUM UP:

1. Live expectantly, with the joy of heaven in view.
2. Live christianly, with Christ always in focus.
3. Live peacefully, despite the expected persecutions.
4. Live holy, trembling at His Word.
5. Live biblically, applying His Word in every area and fighting the good fight!

A Petrine benediction seems appropriate...

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 5:6-11 (KJV)

...and Amen!