

2 Peter 3:8-15 (NIV)

- 8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.
- 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
- 10 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 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.

Title Slide

Have you ever peeked at your gifts in the closet or under the bed before – or even after they were wrapped?... How do you act “When you already know what you’re getting.”...one thing we know is coming is Christ.

2nd Slide

We do not preach only the first coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom.

In general, whatever relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects.

There was a birth from a virgin at the fullness of time – foretold and announced.

There is a second coming, still in the future. Which we await and watch for.

At the first coming he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At his second coming he will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming he endured the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming he will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels.

We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The Savior will not come to be judged again, but to judge. At his own judgment he was silent; then he will address those who committed the outrages against him when they crucified him and will remind them: You did these things, and I was silent.

His first coming was to fulfill his plan of love, to teach men by gentle persuasion. This time, whether men like it or not, they will be subjects of his kingdom by necessity.

The prophet Malachi speaks of the two comings. And the Lord whom you seek will come suddenly to his temple: that is one coming.

Again he says of another coming: Look, the Lord almighty will come, and who will endure the day of his entry, or who will stand in his sight? Because he comes like a refiner's fire, and he will sit refining and cleansing.

These two comings are also referred to by Paul in writing to Titus: The grace of God the Savior has appeared to all, instructing us to put aside impiety and worldly desires and live temperately, uprightly, and religiously in this present age, waiting for the joyful hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Notice how he speaks of a first coming for which he gives thanks, and a second, the one we still await.

That is why the faith we profess has been handed on to you in these words: He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. Our Lord Jesus Christ will therefore come from heaven. He will come at the end of the world, in glory, at the last. For there will be an end to this world, and the created world will be made new.

Slide 3

We know this is coming in under our tree. Maybe not this year, maybe not next year, but it has been revealed – the wrapping peeled back.

When Jesus returns he will be carrying the key of David as revealed in Revelation 3:7. He is the fulfillment of God's covenant with the House of David. Christ will be the ruler of the New Jerusalem, and the Lord of the kingdom of heaven. Key of David is a term also found in Isaiah. Having the Key of David gives the Christ authority and control of David's domain: Jerusalem, the City of David, and the kingdom of Israel. One from David's royal line will sit on the throne with Power, he will rule with a mighty arm – both with reward and wrath.

How do you act “When you already know what you're getting.”...?

Slide 4

Let me tell you with a poem: **A Night Before Christ**

Tw'as many centuries after Christmas when all thru the house not one
Christian was praying; not even the spouse.
The Bibles, all dusty, lay on the shelves without care,
without any thought of Jesus coming there.
The children climbed staircases and crawled into their beds,
not once ever kneeling or bowing their heads.
Mother, in her rocker, with the baby in her lap
and dad on the couch just taking a nap.
When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
dad bolted to his feet to respond to the matter.
Away to the window - his fears were belayed.
Apart went the curtains and up went the shade.
When what to his wondering eyes should appear -
but some heralding angels announcing, 'Jesus draws near!'
There shone a great light, brighter than the sun's shining rays.
He knew in a moment this must be the 'day.'
The radiance of Christ's face almost blinded his eyes.
It was Jesus all right! What a traumatic surprise!
His usual confidence about his spiritual health,
gave way to a great fear when he saw Christ in spite of himself.
In the book of life that he held in his hand
was written the name of every saved woman and man.
Dad spoke not a word as Christ searched for his name.
The longer it took the more his head fell in shame
Christ said, 'You're not listed - at least not yet.'
My, how his heart stopped beating. What did he mean, 'not yet?'
Christ sensed his question and replied,
'You've got the head knowledge of what you should do;
but you must live it, prove that my words are true!'
He promised Christ faithfully as he rose out of sight,
'I'll be ready next time - I'll live my life aright!'
In the words of this poem - the message is clear.
The coming of Christ for you might be very near.
You've only one chance and when comes your last call
You'll find out that the Bible was right after all.

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Church isn't just supposed to be a place where you hear what you ought not to be doing, but a place where you also hear what you can be doing to live out your faith; a place where everyone is keeping watch for the Lord and living in expectation, anticipation, eagerness for Jesus to return.

So let me give you one more encouragement on how to prepare: I know it's a little thing and I know it's expected from pastors, but this week, let's encourage each other by saying, "Hey, you never know, Jesus might return first!" That little phrase helped us put things in perspective...If Jesus were coming back tomorrow, what would really matter? It's not an excuse not to do things well or to skip do-ing things altogether, but it helps us make sure we're doing our baking, our shopping, our working, our singing, and our debating with a more perfect attitude. It helps us focus on what God wants instead of what we want – it helps us put other people before our pride. It helps us see that it isn't about our TVs, cell phones or gifts under the tree, but about our souls rejoicing together celebrating the gift of God...

Every time we read a Christmas story or watch a Christmas movie, or sing a Christmas song know that we not only pointing to a coming baby Jesus but we proclaim Christ who has already come and prepare for a Christ that will return. Prepare - Keep alert, be awake, and watch for the signs of the time –the signs as in the Coming Christ at Christmas.

The Advent of Jesus Christ has begun again. We know what that gift is. Let's Prepare.