

1) Title: Patience

2) Peter Taught that waiting for the end times is meant to prepare us for a new heaven and a new earth – what we should do in the meantime is found in 1 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Others feel eternity with God is a lie and fill their lives with either whatever their desires lead them to or apathy or abject despair. Without God intervening in human history, without having a goal for history, without having a purpose for history, without having an end for history, without the righting of wrong, life takes on absolutely no meaning at all. And so, even those who do not know Christ should be grateful that He's coming back to make it right.

But beyond that, the disciple Peter is not so concerned with unbelievers as he is with Christians. He is concerned that we have a proper understanding and response to the return of Christ. And so before he can close his letter, he has a final thing to say. One writer puts it this way, "With the little remaining strength at his disposal, he grips his quill more tightly and with a firmer hand then scribes upon the parchment before him, the final words in his faithful attempt to strengthen his readers...The sands in the hourglass of time are slipping away and soon with neither voice nor pen will he be able to serve the Savior here among the sons of men. Savage men are closing in upon him and perhaps already the sentence of execution has been passed. Very soon perhaps brutal hands will drag him away to the cursed tree where he will be crucified. As he contemplates the immediate possibilities and reviews again the words he has just written, he wonders whether there may not be need for one further emphasis. He decides there is. And he pens the final words."

3) We live in an in between time - between an "Already" and a "Not Yet." We live in a time when God has already saved us through Jesus and has already sent his disciples the Holy Spirit. God has already revealed himself in the written word; in the word made flesh, and in the word written upon our hearts and minds by the Spirit. Already the good seeds have been sown and so too have the weeds. Already plans have been made for the harvest, but is it not yet time - so we must wait.

4) We wait, however, with anticipation. We wait expectantly because we know what is to come - what is not yet. We are eager for our resurrection bodies and our full inheritance - eternal life with God. We yearn for the kingdom to come, for there to be no more sickness, no more death, no more tears. We look forward to the day when we, the righteous, will shine like the sun in the kingdom of our father - knowing that we are his beloved children and all things have been given to us. But for all of this grandeur, we must to wait.

We look forward to the time when the garden of the world will be tended by the ultimate gardener. But this is not yet going to happen. Our excited, anticipatory waiting must also become endurance. We are heirs of God, the glory of Jesus Christ will shine through us. Just as Jesus suffered, we will suffer while we wait. The weeds will grow. Their thistles will prick us, their roots may choke us, and their leaves will darken our lives once in a while. No matter what the weeds do, we must cling to an enduring hope - waiting out the storms of life remembering the goal of life is not yet, but already God has given us all we need to survive and thrive!

5) This is the life Jesus teaches us about: Knowing the already has come - and waiting.

Then feeling the anticipation, the excitement about what is not yet - and waiting.

After the suffering in this life tempers us with enduring hope - we wait some more.

It gets boring and it gets tough. Like waiting for the end of a sermon sometimes. Already you think you've gotten the point and you anticipate the time for lunch which is not yet. And as the sermon goes on and on it feels like oppression leading you into an enduring hope that lunch will come - it has been promised, and it will be gloriously fulfilled.

6) But then, just when you are about to give up and fall asleep. "GOD GETS YOU!"

God gets you...God gets ahold of you. God reveals something new: While you wait and love others as yourself, You are growing. While you wait, you are maturing and producing fruit.

You started as a seed, you received the spiritual milk of faith. Then you grew up and needed the solid food of the full grace and mystery of Christ. Then, as trials and tribulations, suffering and oppression came, you were forced to grow and mature even more, sending your roots deeper to understand the implications of your faith and of the love of God for all people and the saving grace of Christ for those who call upon his name, and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in your life and in the life of the church.

You waited, you wait now, and you expect to wait some more. But it is not time to be stuck in the attitude of suffering or boredom. The day of Christ's return will come! It is time to reclaim that excitement, that anticipation, that hope in what is to come, that yearning for all God has in store for us.

7) James taught we must strengthen ourselves through suffering and enduring patience

James 5:15-20 he continues his teaching saying: ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

☞ 8) Romans 2:7 reassures us that, "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life."

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9) 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, could 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. Pray for the sick, pray for confession, seek to do good!