

Found In Peace • 2 Peter 3:14-18

INTRO • Read vs. 8-13 >> Before prayer . . .

1. We finish 2 Ptr today.
2. As we do, tie off what looked at last time, 2 wks ago in vs. 10-13.
3. Then wrap it up with some final exhortations from Pete.
4. So let's again try to condense the last 2 wks & go back to where we ended last time; w/the challenge presented by these vs
5. If you could go back to the 15/16 yr old you w/all you know now –
What would you say to yourself? >> What counsel would you urge?
6. Now: In light of what Ptr says here & what we know abt heaven
What **counsel** would the glorious, future, Jesus-seeing you **urge** the VC you of today?
7. That question & challenge propels us into v. 14

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things,

- a. The new Heavens & Earth of v. 13 . . .
- b. Bend every effort toward; make an all-out pursuit of 1 of Ptr's fave words
- c. Nowhere on Ptr's horizon was the idea the Christian life was a kick-back cruise on a luxury liner; we're born again then sail on in effortlessly into Heaven.
- d. Yes! We're saved by & stand in grace.
 - 1) But grace doesn't make us **lazy**!
 - 2) Those who **really understand** God's grace know it **empowers them** to live, grow, & serve.
- e. So Ptr says,
be diligent to be found by Him in peace, w/o spot & blameless;
8. When Jesus comes, we want Him to FIND us in peace & practical holiness.
 - a. Not worried, fighting, splattered w/the muck & mire of this fallen world.
9. Toward the end of my time in the restaurant business, I was an area supervisor.
 - a. Part of the job was to go out to the 6 units under my watch & do monthly inspections.
 - b. But no one ever knew when I'd show up; morning, afternoon, night.
 - c. Inside & out. // I often just sat in lot / dinning & watched for a while.
 - d. Then get out clipboard and start ticking off items.
 - e. It was interesting what I "FOUND" as I did the inspection.
 - 1) That's the word used here; it refers to the findings of a careful review.
 - 2) When the crew that was on shift was faithfully & diligently going about their assigned work, things were almost always pretty good.
 - 3) But when they were clowning around; neglecting what they were getting paid for, it was a mess.
10. So: What are we to be about? What did God save us for?
 - a. When Jesus comes, it's inspection time called Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - b. What's He looking for?
11. We want to be found **in peace**.
 - a. Because of the work of Christ forgiving our sins, we are now at peace **WITH** God, as Paul describes in Rom 5:1.
 - b. From that base of **new relationship** with God **as His sons & daughters**, we should **move into** the peace **OF** God as he says in Col 3:15.
12. Let me illustrate it this way. This is a rather crude illustration but it'll make the point.
 - a. We have a professional boxer here at CCO **Hugo Centeno: The Boss**.
 - b. If you were his enemy, you'd NOT be at peace **WITH** Hugo & would have good reason to be **fearful** of him; anxious – worried.
 - c. But let's say you reconcile & Hugo becomes your friend; **Besties** even!
 - 1) Now, you're at peace WITH Hugo.
 - 2) So the 2 of you go out to the **Collection** for Pizza at Settabello.
 - a) As you're walking frn the PL to the restaurant, you're confronted by a thug threatening to give you a beat down.
 - b) Are you afraid? Hardly! The Boss is standing next to you!
 - c) Your peace **WITH** Hugo has moved over into a relationship with him that's produced a peace

that copes with danger.

13. When Jesus comes, we want Him to find us IN Peace; so confident in the goodness of God that anxiety, worry, fretfulness, though they will tempt us, are quickly dealt with.

Pray

14. We also want Jesus to find us w/o spot & blameless.

- a. While it's true God see the believer as righteous in Christ, that's not what Peter refers to.
- b. This means **practical** holiness; that the life of Christ **within** us is altering us.
- c. I doubt anyone here would argue with the fact that following Jesus means repentance.
- d. It means turning away **frm** self **to** God, **frm** sin **to** righteousness.
- e. And the longer we live, the more like Jesus we ought become; because the goal of the disciple is to be Just like the rabbi.

15. That's what Ptr means. When Jesus comes He ought not find sin we're **clinging to, rationalizing, excusing, rather than** Repenting of & seeking to put away.

16. That's what we ought to be diligent about as we consider Jesus' return.

¹⁵and consider

- a. Carefully ponder . . .

that the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation

17. In the earlier vs of ch3, Ptr dealt w/the issue of the **delay** in Christ's coming.

- a. That delay wasn't due to God's inability to keep His promise or reluctance to judge evil.
- b. It was due to His mercy! The delay gave time for sinners to repent.
- c. He repeats that here.
- d. Many of us read the news & plead for Jesus to come!
 - 1) Boko Haram in Nigeria
 - 2) Mike & Carol form ZOE last week.
- e. Know this: God's wrath is hot & ready to fall.
- f. But there are some folk yet to be saved; maybe your spouse, child, parent, friend, enemy.
- g. 1 day, somewhere—the last soul will be saved & judgment will fall.
- h. Until that day, our task is to be about our Father's business and that is mercy & grace; not judgment.

18. Then Ptr says something interesting . . .

—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also NOTE THIS = the rest of the Scriptures.

19. There's a lot to unpack here

^{1st}) Ptr calls Paul a beloved brother.

- a. In Gal. 2 we discover Paul got all up in Ptr's grill when Ptr played the hypocrite.
- b. So, judging by the way a lot of Christians react, we might expect Ptr to carry a grudge & have written Paul off.
- c. He didn't; because Paul was right. Ptr **had** acted like a hypocrite & rebuke was exactly what he needed.
- d. Every 1 of us in this room are going to have moments when we mess up.
 - 1) Sometimes that mess-up is a wild, strange, out of left field error we won't repeat.
 - 2) But other times that mess-up **reveals something deep inside** us that needs to change.
 - 3) Paul saw a dangerous character flaw in Ptr that needed to be called out.
 - 4) Ptr was better for it; God did a work in him that was prompted by Paul's tough love.
 - 5) And Ptr got past the hurt to his pride to realize what a treasure Paul was to the Body of Christ in general & himself in particular.
- e. Are you humble enough to receive correction?
- f. Or do you send the message; "Rebuke me & I'll hold it against you forever?"

^{2nd}) When Ptr wrote this, there was **already** a body of Paul's ltrs circulating the churches regarded as Scripture.

- a. We don't know which of Paul's ltrs Ptr meant – but this makes it clear they were already being used in the mid-1st C as authoritative.

b. This is a crucial insight in affirming our confidence in the NT.

1) Skeptics & critics claim the books of the NT weren't recognized as Scripture until the 4th C.

2) That's **absurd** to anyone who bothers to look at the history.

3) The language & grammar here make it clear Ptr considered at least SOME of Paul's ltrs as Scripture on par with the Law & Prophets of the OT.

3rd) Ptr was an Apostle of Jesus. He understood clearly the message Jesus announced.

a. If anyone understood **the Gospel**, it was Ptr.

b. And HE affirmed Paul's msg as 1 & the same as that Gospel.

c. This is important because there are critics & cults today who say Paul & Jesus had different msgs. They drive a huge theological wedge btwn the 2.

d. What Ptr says here nukes that idea.

& Finally 4th) Ptr saw a repeated theme in Paul's ltrs.

a. Paul wrote often of the return of Christ & how that reality ought keep us ever alert,

b. Walking in the Spirit, yielded to God, dependent on Him.

20. I don't know about you but I find Ptr's comment about the difficulty in understanding some of what Paul wrote, **comforting**!

a. If the great Apostle struggled w/some of what he read in Paul, I don't feel so bad.

21. The problem is, as Pete notes here, some **twist** difficult psgs into an excuse for sin.

22. There **are** portions of the Bible that present a challenge to interpretation.

a. Scholars debate what the authors meant.

b. And these scholars are men & women who are intimate with the original languages of Greek & Hebrew.

c. They know the historical background of the text.

d. And they're well-versed in the theology & doctrine of the rest of Scripture.

e. And **for the most part**, because they understand the rules for interpreting the Bible, they agree to disagree in their conclusions.

23. But there are others who don't know Greek or Hebrew; they barely know English.

a. They don't have a grasp of Biblical doctrine.

b. And they **don't even know** there **ARE** rules called **hermeneutics** for interpreting the Bible.

c. There's something they WANT to be true; something they **want to believe** because it gives them an **excuse to do what they want to do**.

d. So they cherry pick psgs that give them a pass. "I've got a verse!"

1) Gen 1:30 = "God's given us every green herb. Here's some herb."

2) 1 Cor. 6 & 10 / 4x's = "All things are lawful for me, because by grace, we're not under the law – so we can't really sin anymore. Everything's acceptable!"

3) 1 Cor. 9:22 = "I become all things to all people. So I'm going clubbing w/my homies."

4) Luke 12:19 = "Take your ease; Eat, drink, & be merry. It's all the abundant life Jesus came to give me."

24. Listen: Scripture-twisting isn't new. There were people in Ptr & Paul's day who did it.

a. People who **want** to sin KNOW it's wrong because their conscience **pings** them abt it.

b. Instead of being honest & admitting its wrong, they **rationalize** so their conscience won't bother them. They want to enjoy their sin but conscience won't let them.

c. So they run to the Book of books because the fact is, no matter how loudly they may say they don't believe the Bible, they still claim cover for themselves **in it**.

25. As your pastor, called to protect you, I urge you to be careful abt who you listen to when it comes to shaping your worldview & theology.

a. Not every voice on the radio & TV speaks truth.

b. Not every best-selling book or hit movie is right-on.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand,

1. That judgment is coming. That the long delay of judgment so sinners can repent & be saved will 1 day end beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

2. There isn't a person here who CAN'T, **in themselves**, go off into error & make shipwreck of the faith.

3. That's why we must **ABIDE IN CHRIST!** **HE** is our security. **He** is our strong refuge.
4. So, how do we make sure we're abiding in Him?
- 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.
5. Literally **Keep growing** in grace. Go deeper in your experience of Jesus **AS Savior & Lord**.
6. Oh! So much here but we're running out of time so will be more summary.
7. We aren't just **saved** by grace, **then** ushered into a **life of works** to **KEEP** our salvation.
 - a. It's grace frn start to finish.
 - b. Jesus is the **Alpha & Omega**, the **Author & Finisher** of our Faith.
 - c. We **enter** by grace, **stand** in grace, & will be **completed** by grace.
8. But here's the thing; here's what some of those unstable posers Ptr mentioned in v. 16 do . . .
 - a. They turn the truth abt grace into an excuse for being lazy.
 - b. This despite everything the NT tells us abt those who've **REALLY** been gripped by grace.
 - c. Real grace **transform sinners into saints**.
 - d. It saves us **FROM** sin, not **TOO** it.
 - e. When the REAL grace of God gets ahold of us, it makes us **want** holiness.
 - f. It produces a **hatred of sin**. We **ache** over our moral & spiritual failure.
9. Christian: **Keep growing in grace**.
 - a. Make it your aim to always be **amazed** at the goodness & love of God **FOR YOU!**
 - b. **That** & a deep awe of God is the **well frn which** all true worship flows.
 - c. Someone once said when we get to heaven, the biggest surprise won't be the people we find there we assumed wouldn't be. The biggest surprise will be that **we're** there!
10. And **keeping growing in the knowledge** of Christ.
 - a. No theologian who's ever lived has exhausted what there is to know abt Jesus.
 - b. At best, they've but scratched the surface.
 - c. Augustine, Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Barth, Van Til, Pinnock –
 - d. Each of these brilliant thinkers **forgot** more than most of us will ever even **learn**.
 - e. But not a one of them ever arrived at the place where they said, "Yep! That about does it. I've learned all there is to know about Jesus."
 - f. On the contrary, most of them said the more they learned, the more they **realized** how ignorant they were.
11. But it isn't just a head knowledge Ptr calls for here.
 - a. The word speaks of **experiential knowledge**.
 - b. If you know Jesus this way it means you're **familiar with Him** as a person, not just with facts abt Him.
 - c. Specifically, Ptr says we ought to grow in our familiarity with Jesus as our Lord & Savior.
 - 1) As Master & Redeemer.

CONCLUSION

1. So as we end today & 2 Ptr, let me pose this question:
Are "Lord & Savior" just titles for Jesus, or do they describe your **relationship** w/Him?

Is Jesus your Lord?

Does he call the shots for you?

Do you obey Him?

Is Jesus your Savior?

It's great He saved you from the ***penalty of sin***.

The question is: Is He saving you from the ***power of sin***.

To Him *be* the glory both now & forever. Amen.