

Peter has been methodically building a case for spiritual growth. He began this letter by telling us that we need to add to our faith a list of virtues. (1:5-7) He reminded us that the Second Coming is not a myth. (1:16) Jesus will return as the Judge, and we will give an account. He tell us that the only way to be effective and fruitful is to grow spiritually. So if we want that account we give to be one of victory and fruitfulness for the kingdom of God, then we need to grow spiritually. (1:8) He went on to warn of false teachers that are motivated by greed and lust. They lure those who are barely escaping their former lusts back into the bondage of sin. (2:18) We need to grow so we aren't deceived.

Last week we covered the first half of this chapter in which Peter tells us not to listen to doubters who tell us nothing ever changes. They are the "steady state" teachers that want us to think there is no urgency to get serious about a disciplined life of spiritual growth. Peter answers that God is not asleep. He is patient. He does not want anyone to perish. He is waiting until the last soul is redeemed and saved from eternal judgment. (3:9)

A few weeks ago Connie's neighbor died. Last week my neighbor died. A month ago dozen people died just going to see a movie. Life is precarious. Even if Jesus return is a century away, you might stand before Him today. The time to get on with our spiritual life is today.

Peter concludes this final chapter by returning to the theme of the need to grow spiritually to prepare for the Last Days. ¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

There are numerous explanations and interpretations about the Day of the Lord. I do not believe it is the rapture of the Church. Some see it as the end of the Great Tribulation when Jesus returns upon the Mount of Olives and proceeds to Armageddon. (Zechariah 14:4) Others see it as the end of the Millennium when the final rebellion is squelched and all appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment. (Revelation 20:12) I don't think that we have to nail it down, as fascinating a subject as it is. Let's just go with what is obvious. The world as we know it will come to an end. In the previous passage Peter pointed out that God did it before with water and this time He'll do it with fire. (3:6-7)

There are a number of passages that speak of the end of the universe and the creation of new heaven and new earth. (Revelation 21:1) Peter's emphasis is on the exposure of all that was done by each person during their life. There will be a day of justice. The books will be settled and they will balance. That has been a question of a number of

Commented [notes1]: 2 Peter 1:5-7 (ESV)

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Commented [notes2]: 2 Peter 1:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Commented [notes3]: 2 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Commented [notes4]: 2 Peter 2:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.

Commented [notes5]: 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Commented [notes6]: Zechariah 14:4 (ESV)

⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

Commented [notes7]: Revelation 20:12 (ESV)

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Commented [notes8]: 2 Peter 3:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Commented [notes9]: Revelation 21:1 (ESV)

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

major religions. Whether they look to karma and reincarnation, or purgatory, or some other means, man wants there to be some kind of justice. We rarely see it in life, and we have an inner sense that there must be some kind of final justice. There will be. We will all appear before Christ to give an account of the things done in our body. (Romans 14:12)

And so Peter returns to his theme. ¹¹ *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,* Since everything will be exposed, since what so many live for will be no more, what should you be living like today? If you knew that that day was to come tomorrow, would you change the way you live today? And if so, shouldn't you begin now living in preparation for that day?

"The phrase *what sort of people* translates the unique Greek term *potapous*, which could also be rendered 'how astonishingly excellent you ought to be.'"— MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The (Philippians 3:20; 2:15; Hebrews 11:10)

Peter used two words to describe how our lives ought to be, holiness and godliness. This is an internal and external description. The internal needs to not only to have trusted in Christ but also to have our mind renewed by the Word of God. We need to discipline our heart to set its affections on things above. (Colossians 3:1) The transformed internal person results in the outwardly godly person.

How differently we would live if we were truly ¹² *waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!*

I just bought a new car. I really like it. But if Jesus returns tomorrow I won't miss it one bit! My affections are not set on that car. I'm not waiting for the next new car. I'm waiting for Jesus to return. We live in this world but we are not of this world. (John 17:14-18) The pilgrims who came to establish this nation were called pilgrims because of a passage in 1st Peter. ¹¹ *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;* 1 Peter 2:11 (KJV)

The things we so strongly desire in this life, things that will one day burn, can wage a war against our soul. Our soul includes our desires. The passing physical things vie for first place in our hearts, but as we grow in Christ, our desires increasingly become heavenly ones. The realization of the transitory nature of the things of this world turns our hearts to heaven and its eternal King. (2Corinthians 4:18)

Commented [notes10]: Romans 14:12 (ESV)

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Commented [notes11]: Philippians 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Commented [notes12]: Philippians 2:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Commented [notes13]: Hebrews 11:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Commented [notes14]: Colossians 3:1 (ESV)

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Commented [notes15]: John 17:14-18 (ESV)

¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Commented [notes16]: 2 Corinthians 4:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. This world is so infected with sin. I think we are seeing the words of Jesus come to pass when He said that the Last Days will be as the days of Noah. (Matthew 24:37) God's word tells us that in those days the thoughts of man's heart were only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5) I look to the third world with some hope, as the church is growing so rapidly there, but a closer look reveals much of it is a mixed gospel with local superstition or a false gospel of prosperity that points their eyes to the things of this world. What we need is a return to the discipleship that Jesus practiced and taught.

The elders are reading a book by Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. Ron shared some of it with you in a Call to Worship. It is the same message as this letter of 2nd Peter. We can't ask, "What would Jesus do?" and then suddenly act like Jesus unless we've been following Jesus' example of how to live. The disciples learned to pray, and fast, and have times alone with Jesus before they were ready to go out and have the life of Christ work through them. We, too, need to learn to follow Jesus in our daily life so that when those times of ministry present themselves, we will be in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 6:25) You can't live out of touch with Jesus in your home and work and then suddenly expect to act like Jesus and get in step with the Spirit because a situation arises.

We learn to keep in step with the Spirit and commune with Christ in our daily life, and out of that flows the natural opportunities to share the life of Christ. All my life I have heard the question, "What is wrong with the church?" It's the recognition that we should be more than we are. The obvious answer is, "we are what is wrong"! We are not yet perfected.

But that may be too easy an answer. Jesus expected us to become new creations in Him. (2Corinthians 5:17) Yes, there will always be the tares among us (Matthew 13:30), but is this all that we should expect from the church. Are we the salt of the earth? (Matthew 5:13) One person commented on 25% of Americans that claim to be born again followers of Jesus. "If a chunk of meat was composed of 25% salt, would it be just like any other chunk of meat?" Has the church set its sights so low, that what we have now is all we expect?

I think the reason we get excited about the latest program is that we think that might fix it. We would love a quick fix, to suddenly be like Jesus in our thoughts in actions after a weekend seminar. But that isn't Jesus' way. His way was to demonstrate to his disciples over a three year period how to live throughout every day and situation.

Commented [notes17]: Matthew 24:37 (ESV)

³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Commented [notes18]: Genesis 6:5 (ESV)

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Commented [notes19]: Galatians 5:25 (NIV)

²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Commented [notes20]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Commented [notes21]: Matthew 13:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Commented [notes22]: Matthew 5:13 (ESV)

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

It is also a matter of church leaders doing what the Apostle Paul told them to do, equip the saints for the work of the ministry. (Ephesians 4:12) That is why we will be intentionally focusing on discipleship. We will be looking at the life of Jesus and seeing how we can live with the disciplines He practiced daily. We'll be building new small groups that focus on putting into practice throughout our work day and leisure time the things that will help us mature into genuine disciples of Jesus. We hope that you will pray about being in one of those discipleship groups or at least finding a mentor to challenge your spiritual growth.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. How could we be looking forward to the destruction of this world? That could only be the case when we can see the curse of sin and how it has brought death to every physical thing. If our hearts and minds are set on things above, then we look for the new heavens and new earth, the home of righteousness. So "make every effort" to be spotless, blameless, and at peace with God. Spotless speaks about the character of a person. Blameless is in regards to our reputation. In other words to be living in Jesus all day, every day! (Philippians 4:6-7; John 16:33; Romans 15:13)

¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, Apparently the Apostle Paul also explained that the Lord's delay in coming was a sign of God's patience so that more could be saved. The prophet Ezekiel wrote that God takes no delight in the death of the wicked. (Ezekiel 33:11) He wants all to repent, though all will not do so. If there is one more that will come to Christ and know Him as Savior and Lord, God patiently waits. Our world is getting quite hard, but it sounds as if it will get harder yet. (Luke 18:8)

Peter already spoke of Lot's situation; his soul was vexed every day by what he saw and heard. (2:8) I can certainly relate. America may be in one of those cycles of depravity before judgment followed by revival, or we may be in the midst of the final cycle in which the Lord returns and rescues His own. Whatever the case, we should be preparing for the day. (1Corinthians 9:24)

Peter goes on to tell of the inspiration of Paul's letters. *¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.* Paul had written about the return of Christ and the coming judgment, and Peter says that some twist what Paul is saying, just like they do the other Scriptures. In saying the "other Scriptures", the one that Jesus ordained to feed the sheep, Peter, has declared Paul's letters to be Scripture.

Commented [notes23]: Ephesians 4:12 (ESV)

¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Commented [notes24]: Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Commented [notes25]: John 16:33 (ESV)

³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Commented [notes26]: Romans 15:13 (ESV)

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Commented [notes27]: Ezekiel 33:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Commented [notes28]: Luke 18:8 (ESV)

⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Commented [notes29]: 2 Peter 2:8 (ESV)

⁸ (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

Commented [notes30]: 1 Corinthians 9:24 (ESV)

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

Eschatology (end time events) *is* hard to understand. There are so many different interpretations. Don't let anyone interpret them in a way that pulls you from the fundamentals that are in Christ. The church has always lived expecting the Lord's return. The church of the first century expected it. If they were supposed to live differently, like selling their homes and waiting on a rooftop, the Apostles would have told them to do so. Instead they told them to be salt and light in their communities (Matthew 5:13-16), to do all that they did for the glory of God (1Corinthians 10:31), and to love one another. (1John 3:11) That is how you prepare for the end. Grow in Christ likeness. Be disciplined and be disciplined. Then go and disciple others. (2Timothy 2:2) Learn how to live in this world while not being of it as we follow Jesus' example.

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. Peter is closing with his main theme. Grow firmly in your faith. Temptations will come. False teachers will abound. Grow to maturity so we aren't led astray.

Peter's closing words are summation of the whole letter. *¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* Grow brothers and sisters. To grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is not just to have an intellectual understanding of who He is and what He taught. That is certainly part of it. It is to observe all that He demonstrated and taught and to put into practice in our life each day. That gives Him glory!

I am continually amazed at how faithful the Lord is to this little church. I pray and ask the Lord what to portion of Scripture to preach next and God's answer is just what we need. I never understand at first, but as we go through it, it all comes together and the God incidences begin to pile up.

One of the folks from California that went to Israel with us sent me a book on what their church had gone through. It was amazingly similar to what your elders were seeing. **We don't need Christian consumerism; we need Jesus!** We aren't competing with any other church or organization. We don't need another felt need met or another program to get you excited. We don't need to follow any other church's pattern for success. We need to listen to Jesus. We need to be disciplined and disciple others. We need to get very real about deepening our spiritual life. (Ephesians 4:15)

This letter of 2nd Peter could not have been timelier. I can't tell you why I skipped 1st Peter. All I know is this is where the Lord led us and it fits perfectly with where we are being led. It's time for Wayside Bible Chapel to get serious about seeing Christ formed in us. (Galatians 4:19) It is a lifelong process. It is challenging. It won't attract big

Commented [notes31]: Matthew 5:13-16 (ESV)

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Commented [notes32]: 1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Commented [notes33]: 1 John 3:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Commented [notes34]: 2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Commented [notes35]: Ephesians 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Commented [notes36]: Galatians 4:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

crowds. But it is what Jesus did and what He commanded us to do. In the long run, He promises that it will bear much fruit. ⁵ *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides* (remain, continue, dwell, tarry, endure) *in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing.* John 15:5 (ESV) Next week we will begin Jude.

Questions

- 1 Go over the major themes of the letter to this point.
- 2 What did Peter teach about the things of this physical world?
- 3 How should that affect us?
- 4 Why wait for and hasten judgment day?
- 5 How do we do what Jesus did?
- 6 Why should we focus on discipleship?
- 7 How should we be found?
- 8 What did Peter say of Paul's letters?
- 9 How do we avoid false doctrine?
- 10 How do we live verse 18?
- 11 How do we bring God glory?