

2Peter 12-01-06a

This is Friday the 6th of January 2012. We continue our study in the book of 2nd Peter chapter 3 resuming at verse 10. We'll take a moment as we begin to dedicate our time to the Lord to give each of us a chance to ensure that God the Holy Spirit can do his work both on my end and on yours and that our time spent in God's Word will be profitable for us individually and as a group.

Shall we pray? Father we thank you for the many blessings and provisions that you have bestowed on us in recent days for safety, for the fellowship and prosperity that we have enjoyed through the holiday seasons. We thank you most of all for the blessing of Jesus for his coming to this earth and fulfilling your plan and purpose in making this life which we enjoy possible and granting to us a great hope of not only blessing and opportunity in this life but in the ages to come. We thank you for this passage of scripture which is before us this evening from Peter's second letter.

We ask your blessing on us as we study together. May each one of us find in it pertinent truth that is meaningful, that is applicable, that is life-changing, that changes the way we think, that affects our goals and our values and our priorities, the way we plan the use of our time and our assets so that we will be ready for the second coming of the Lord Jesus whenever that may be. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Second Peter chapter 3. Since it's been a little while we'll start at the beginning. Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder.

Reminder is a good thing. Review, recapitulation, rehearsal, revisiting, going back over the things that we know, the things that we have heard in the past is a good thing. Not to excess, not to where it becomes tedious or ineffectual or meaningless.

There is a meaningless repetition that the Bible argues against. Remember Jesus talking about the prayers of the Pharisees, that their repetitions are not helpful. But there is review, there is reminder that is essential.

None of us can keep all of the pertinent information in our minds having only heard it once. If you are, you are some sort of savant and are probably in a special program. Most of us, we learn a thing, we hear a thing and it's meaningful and then it tends to fade.

It goes into the background. This is the normal function of the human mind. In the same way that your computer does not keep every single piece of data and every line of program code in its operational memory, it shuffles some of it off to disk.

It puts it in a cache. It puts it away and uses other stuff and hopefully at some later time it can go back to storage and pull the needed information back up. Our minds are the same way.

They're efficient. They use what is pertinent at the moment and we have longer-term storage. But there are times when we need these things refreshed.

This is why, by way of application, meditation is so important. We will not have enough of the Word of God available to our thought processes and to the Holy Spirit to speak to us with, if all we do is go to Bible class once or twice a week. It is not enough.

We need our pure minds stirred up by way of reminder. This is why daily devotions, daily time set aside for meditation and prayer is not optional. It is critical.

It is essential. Now, what if you're a college student and you've got a heavy 17-hour load or maybe it's only 15 hours but they're really intense hours. You are not off the hook.

Well, what if I've got a really busy job? You are not off the hook. Well, what if I'm in an intense period of my spiritual life, my personal life, my relational life? I'm infatuated. I'm spending all my time thinking about talking to and dreaming of this other person.

You're not off the hook. What is more important? This is where Peter is going in our passage tonight. What is more important? These things are going to disappear with the material universe.

Nobody is going to have their college degree hanging on the wall in their heavenly mansion. Nobody. I don't care if it's from Dallas Theological Seminary.

I don't care if it's from the US Naval Academy. I don't care if it's from UTA or A&M or any other school. UTD.

Did I leave anybody out? Criswell College. What is it? Rogers State University. Is that what they're calling it now? Name your college.

Your degree will not be hanging on the wall in the eternal future. It won't. You won't have it.

You won't have the letters after your name. Nobody's going to say, Oh, where did you go to school? It doesn't matter. It's gone.

The things that count are the things that we are encouraged by the Word of God to think about on a daily basis. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud. My son, you can say it with me, my son, if thou receive my words and hide my commandments with thee so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and liftest up thy heart to understanding.

Right there. That's enough. Incline your ear.

Lift up your heart. Lift up your voice. Cry out.

Seek it as silver. Search for it as for hid treasure. That's the treasure.

That's when you understand the fear of the Lord. That's when you find the knowledge of God. We know these things, right? I'm preaching to the choir.

But this is what Peter is talking about. Look at verse 1. I write to you this second time. Already wrote to you once.

I'm writing to you again. And what am I saying? Same thing I said the first time. What did I say the first time? I'm stirring up the purity in your mind.

I'm stirring up your integrity. Stirring up your Christian character. Stirring up your like-mindedness with Christ by way of reminder.

Why? Verse 2. So that you may be mindful. Have a full mind. Mindful of what? The words that were spoken in the Old Testament and in the New.

First spoken in the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets. This is going to be our study for the year 2012 is going to be the Old Testament prophets.

We have already done Ezekiel and we will soon have completed Isaiah. Not many people can say that. I went through Isaiah verse by verse.

I think we should print t-shirts. I did Isaiah verse by verse. All 66 chapters.

Something to that effect. But we will soon finish Isaiah and we are going to look at every prophet. What does Peter say here? This is one of the inspirations for our new studies.

You need to be mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets. That's all of them. That's Amos, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Joel.

All of them. We've covered a few. We've done Daniel and the major prophets.

Well, we're going to do the minor prophets. Every single one of them. We're going to do them in their historical context.

We're going to look at the reason that God gave that prophetic content, that message to that prophet in that kingdom at that time. What's it for? In fact, we're going to be looking at one of them tonight if I get with it. Holy prophets and the commands of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.

Be mindful. So, let's give ourselves a little personal silent pop quiz. Yesterday was Thursday, right? Yesterday was Thursday.

So, did we, did I, ask yourself this question, did I yesterday, at any point in the day, spend any time meditating on anything that the prophets or the apostles have recorded, humanly speaking, by way of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God? Did I meditate, did I think about, did I

process, did I chew on any part of the Word of God, anything from the prophets or the apostles yesterday? Did I do it in the morning? Did I do it sometime in the middle of the day? Did I do it in the evening? Did I spend any part of my 12 to 14 to 16 to 18 hours of waking time, any part of it? And even if we did, how much time was it? Who are we? Who are we? Are we just citizens? Are we just looking for entertainment? What are we doing? Why are we here? Why do we not care more about our actual identity as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? People who are going to leave every particle, every molecule of this transient earthly life behind and will move into the spiritual realm of God the Father forevermore. One would think that it would be like a trip anticipated where you start packing. You say, hmm, got a little trip coming up here.

A lot of people travel during the holidays. What am I going to take? Well, I might need a jacket. I better pack a jacket.

I might need my running shoes. I might need changes of various kinds of clothing. I should probably take some toiletry articles.

I should take my toothbrush. If I've got pills or vitamins or something, I should probably pack some. We think ahead, don't we? We think this is what I'm going to need for this journey.

This is a one-way journey to the eternal future with God. What are we packing? Because this is packing time. We're not going to take any Christmas presents.

We're not going to take any birthday presents. We're not going to take any material possessions. We're not going to take any earthly accomplishments except what we grasp and store away in our souls from the holy prophets and apostles.

That's the only thing we can take. So how much did we pack yesterday? How much did we pack today? How much will we pack tomorrow and every day that remains to us in this life? Peter says, remember the occasion, why he's writing? He says, I am about to check out. This is the last time you're going to hear from me.

This is my parting shot. And I thought I would stir up your pure minds by way of reminder. This is what you need to invest your life in.

My life is over. My life is finished. As Paul says, I've run the race.

I've finished the course. Can we get to that point and say, I know that there is laid up for me a crown. I know that I have run in such a way as to achieve the prize.

Well, it's done day by day, isn't it? It's not done in a big sprint at the finish. Oh, I'm on my deathbed. Maybe I'll have somebody read some verses to me.

I'll do some praying. It's now that we're packing for the eternal future. It's now that we are running that race.

You can't dawdle and then see the finish line ahead and suddenly run a great sprint and do well. The whole race has to be run well. So that's what he is putting us in mind of.

That's what this chapter is for. And it's particularly important in the section we get to tonight in Ten and Following. I'm putting you in mind of what the prophets have said.

Well, what have the prophets said? Well, skip ahead to our passage for tonight. Don't forget, starting in verse eight, this one thing. Here's the premise.

Here is the theme. Here's the backbone of what he's going to talk about. This is not the only thing, but don't forget this one thing, this foundational thing.

This primary thing would be a better translation. If it was me, if I was doing this, and believe me, there are things. The more I work in the New King James, the more I quibble with some of their choices in terms of capitalization and punctuation, but that's another subject.

Beloved, do not forget this primary thing, this primary thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. Why would he say this? Well, because there is an indictment, there is a charge, there is a criticism that is leveled against the God in whom we believe. It has been a charge since even before the time of Christ.

The Lord is not slack concerning promise, concerning the forward movement of his plan, as some count delay, or slackness. We looked at this last time, and there is a principle here that I did not cover last time that I want to mention before we move into our passage for tonight. Why is the Lord delaying the rapture and the tribulation at the second advent in the millennial kingdom? These prophetic events that we know are coming, they are part of God's program and plan for human history, but they are not happening.

Why is there this delay? Critics say your God is not really there. You are waiting in vain. If he is a God, he is the God of deism.

He is vague. He is uninvolved. He is elsewhere.

He wound it up and then walked off and let it tick away on its own like a clock. This is the God of the deists. This is the God of those who think, well, yeah, okay, if you want some vague nebulous first cause that lit the fuse on the big bang, but since then it has all been happening on its own.

It is like writing a program, starting the program, and then just letting the program run. The programmer has gone off to eat a sandwich. There is this criticism that God is not involved.

What is the actual reason? Why is it that there is this period of delay? Why is it that Jesus has not come back yet? Peter says it is God's long-suffering. It is God's forbearance. God isn't willing that any should perish, but that all should come to change of mind.

He is maximizing the opportunity. He wants as many people as possible to hear the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and to respond to it. This is the point I want to offer to you in this regard.

How often are the good and righteous motives of God and purposes of God impugned? In the same way, Jesus said, the servant is not greater than his master. If they have hated me, they will hate you. How many times do you do a thing out of valid reasons, out of loving reasons, out of scriptural reasons, out of the fruit of the Spirit that is being produced in your heart, and it is misconstrued? It is impugned.

Your motives are misconstrued. Oh, you are not doing that because you are unselfish. You are doing that because you are actually very selfish.

People judge you by what they would do in your place, and they are rascals, and so they impute rascally motives to you, when in fact your thinking is completely beyond their comprehension. These people, the thinking of God, the purposes of God are beyond their comprehension, so they assign what they can comprehend, which is mean, low, mundane motives. Well, God is not acting because God is willing to do it.

God is weak. God is not acting because God is not even there. This is proof that your beliefs are mythological instead of factual.

Just be aware that when they do it to God, they will do it to us. You remember the Latin term for an argument against the man? Ad hominem? The ad hominem fallacy? I can't refute your actual argument, so I'm going to say, well, your grandma wears army boots, or something to that effect. I say grandma because the new army boots are actually pretty nice.

The old army boots, not so much. But there will be some criticism, some low misconstruing of your actions, weaving them together and making it look like you have done wrong, speaking of your good as evil, and we call this ad hominem. Well, I got to thinking, this is really an ad hominem argument against God, except you can't say against the man when you're talking about God, so this is an ad diem argument.

D-E-U-M. Seriously, this is a Latin term, ad diem, against God. And it is impugning God's character, it is impugning the whole concept, the character, the purposes, the motives, the abilities, the, you know, read the famous Dawkins quote again if you want something that is ad diem.

So, be aware that in the case where we feel wronged because our good is spoken of as evil, we're maligned and wrongly judged and ill thought of, and we were actually doing something that partakes of spiritual life and is going to be misunderstood. You look at the Pharisees and others looking at Jesus, and here is Jesus healing the blind, healing the lame, healing the deaf, bringing the dead back to life, and the Pharisees, all they can see is violating the Sabbath. Disciples are reaping grain in the fields and he's breaking the rules, and missing it, completely missing it.

Well, if they've done it to him, if they do it to God, they will certainly do it to us, and we should relax. We should calm down and recognize when we deal with one another that we should stop and think, is there another reason? Could there be, instead of my knee-jerk human reaction, well, this person is raining on my parade, maybe we should give them a little credit. Maybe we should hope that there is a more spiritual reason for what they're doing.

Maybe we should look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others. There is always the instinct to criticize. There is always the instinct to impugn the motives.

It is the fallen human nature to do so. We are supposed to be able to rise above that. How do we do it? It's not in us, but God gives us that power, God gives us that ability, and where does it come from? It's the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

This is why, and I'm back to my initial exhortation or encouragement, this is why daily meditation, daily prayer, daily rehearsal and review, bringing our pure minds to remembrance is so important, because that gives us perspective. That reminds us of who we are, why we're here as believers, we're all in this together, and so on. So Peter is, in a way, arguing not only for individuals, but also for the Church as a group.

You are going to hear these arguments against God. Your God is lazy, your God is slack concerning His promise, and Peter says, you know the truth. God's reasons and purposes are merciful, not sinful.

He is strong, not weak. How much strength do you think it takes for God to suspend His judgment and suspend His righteous indignation and His wrath against the world, waiting to be merciful, putting on hold His natural, divine recoiling at sin and evil, and His divine desire to eradicate it, to deliver His children from it, and release His angels from the presence of it, and His people from the presence of it, but He is delaying. Why? Because mercy, right now, still delays judgment.

And then you have people cracking whys about God, and making little of His mercy. And God still is patient enough to put up with that, just as Jesus did during His trial. So that's what you have there in verse 8 and 9, which brings us to 10.

The day of the Lord will come, and when it comes, it is going to end all of this. It will come as a thief in the night. You remember the thief passages that are found in various places in the Bible, just in the New Testament.

You have Jesus speaking in Matthew 24.43. Now, what do you think of when I say Matthew 24? You should think, second coming. Matthew 24 is the tribulation and the second coming of Christ. Matthew 24 is the description of the end of the age of Israel.

And what does Jesus say? Know this, 24.43, if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. What

house is being spoken of here? This is the God of this world. This is Satan working through the Antichrist and the beast and the false prophet.

This is the 70th week of Daniel. This is those days which are programmed out, seven years, two sets of three and a half, the 3,260 days and all of that. But it also says the days will be shortened.

Shortened by how much? Well, God's not saying, because the master of that house is the God of this world. The principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age are controlling that whole phase. And God's not telling.

It's one of the reasons, one of several reasons, why the rapture is not specified in Scripture. If you know when the rapture is, you can narrow down when the second coming is. And Jesus says, no man knows the day or the hour, not even the Son of Man.

Nobody's got a high enough clearance for this information. There is no security background check you can do to get qualified for this information. Not Harold Camping, not Hal Lindsey, not Billy Graham, nobody.

Nobody gets this information. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself does not know the day or the hour. Only God the Father.

And this speaks, by the way, to segregation of omniscience. It is possible to be omnipotent and yet restrict the use of a thing. You can be a strong man and yet not use your strength.

You can have the ability to know all things and yet not know them, because you choose not to. God's essence, God's powers are not like the Midas touch. You know, Midas had this incredible thing where he could touch something and it turned to gold, but he couldn't control it.

Everything he touched, his bed, his food, his hat, he would touch it and it would turn to gold and it became a curse. Well, God is not cursed by His divine omnipowers, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence. God can choose when and where to use His power, because He's God.

So the Lord Jesus Christ probably could walk into the Father's office and open up the file drawer, so to speak, and pull out the folder and look at it, but He does not. God the Father said, I'll let you know. Don't ask, don't look, and the Lord Jesus, even though He has the power of omniscience, chooses not to know what the Father has told Him not to know.

So He said, the Son of Man doesn't even know, which I think makes God greater than people who are attempting to make Him great by magnifying His assets beyond all functionality or believability, His attributes. The day of the Lord will come as a thief, unexpectedly, at a time that is not anticipated. Thieving would disappear as a business if people knew when the thief was coming and sat there with a shotgun or called the cops or were prepared.

The reason thieving works is you come out the next morning and your stereo is gone. You come

back from a vacation and your house is empty. Or you come back from a vacation and there are squatters living in your house.

I've done some reports on that recently. That's just becoming an epidemic. People moving in and filing an \$18 piece of paper and saying, this house is now mine, and thinking they're going to get away with it.

Seriously, Fort Worth, it's happened half a dozen times over there. A lady had a contract, went for a month to work back east, came back home, squatters had moved into her house and filed paperwork to own her house. They have had dumpsters set out in front and have dumped the contents of the house out into the dumpster and taken over the house themselves, especially empty houses, foreclosed houses or houses that are currently not occupied but they're owned by somebody.

People just move in and then dare somebody to kick them out. That's another story. If you knew the thief was coming, you wouldn't let your stuff be taken.

If Satan could anticipate the timing of God's plan for the return of the Lord Jesus at the rapture and the second coming, he's a pretty smart angel. He would take steps. He's not going to be ready.

He's going to launch this thing and think that he's got it going. Just when he thinks it's all going great guns, the timing is going to fool him. He knows the timing is going to fool him because he's read the word of God and he's heard this principle.

What it reminds me of is open field tackling. There's a good runner that's got the ball and there's only one guy between him and the goal line. Some of this took place over the holidays, so forgive the football analogy.

I've seen it. But a good runner, the tackler knows that the runner is going to try to fake him out. He knows this.

He knows the guy is going to try to get around him and score a touchdown. So he's going to try to tackle him. But if the runner is good enough, he will fake the guy out and cause him to miss the tackle.

Well, Satan is standing there as the tackler and he wants to tackle the rapture and the second coming of the Lord Jesus. He knows that the runner is going to try to fake him out. But even with that knowledge, he still is not going to tackle him.

The Lord Jesus is too good. God the Father's plan is too perfect. And Satan, with all of his power and all of his arrogance and all of his self-assurance and all of his confidence, thinks he's going to stop it and he's not.

Didn't stop it the first time, isn't going to stop it the second time. He's going to meet with an equal level of success the second time in trying to crush the Lord Jesus. He's going to get his own head crushed by the heel.

But coming as a thief. Now, there is an application for this because the day of the Lord is a day of judgment. That's what it is.

When you see the phrase day of the Lord, it always speaks judgment. There are different judgments, there are different times, there are different aspects. Some of these judgments are a thousand years apart.

But the day of the Lord, that phrase always speaks of judgment. The judgment of God comes as a thief, comes when you do not expect. Pop quiz doesn't even begin to cover it.

Surprise examination doesn't begin to cover it. The only way you can be ready for something whose timing is unknown is to always be ready. Always prepared.

Always faithful. Semper Fidelis. So that whenever it comes, you're ready.

That's the only way to be prepared because you can't anticipate and cram the night before. You can't anticipate and sprint to the finish. We never know when our last heartbeat will take place.

We never know when our last breath will be drawn. And for us, that is the return of the Lord Jesus. The day of the Lord, the judgment, which for us is the judgment seat of Christ, the Bema.

For others, it is going to be the great white throne. For some who will be in the tribulation, it is the time of the beast and the antichrist and the false prophet, the battle of Armageddon, the inception of the Millennial Kingdom. Whatever that applicable day of the Lord is, the only way to be ready for it is to always be ready for it.

There is no other way. It comes as a thief. There's no advance warning.

So, Peter is going to draw a conclusion from this. Since you know that your time of judgment, your time to stand before the Lord for evaluation will come at an unknown moment, how should you live your life? That's where he's going, and that's where we'll pick up when we return from our break.