

**<sup>8</sup>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.**

**<sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

**<sup>10</sup>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 in it will be laid bare.**

**<sup>11</sup>Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.**

**<sup>14</sup>So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.** (NIV 84)

Theme: The Day is Coming Soon.

1. The Lord is Patient
2. He looks at us as blameless.

How many days are there until Christmas? With all the preparations we make for that day it seems that we are constantly counting down the days until the 25<sup>th</sup> of December finally comes. Like a child riding in the back of a car on vacation, we can hardly wait for it to get here; and we keep on asking, "Is Christmas here yet?" It may seem as if we have been preparing for Christmas for awhile now, but it is only 21 days away. I'm guessing you have a lot more preparations to make before the day comes.

We can say the same thing about Christ's second coming. There are probably some preparations we want to make before he comes. We say the Day is coming soon, yet we don't know exactly when it will be. But we do know that as we wait the Lord is patient with us and that he looks at us as blameless.

This third chapter of Peter's second epistle is dedicated to the second coming of Christ. He points out that many people don't think Christ is going to come again. They claim that nothing has changed since Christ made that promise. And then it was several decades later. And here we are almost 2000 years after Christ made those promises.

Christ said he was coming again soon. If so, where is he? Peter points out, **with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.** God said he is coming soon. But he is no on our timetable. He works on his own schedule. And according to his watch he has only been gone for a few days.

So he could come at any moment. We have no clue when he is coming. But we do know that it could be any day now. It is going to come like a thief in the night. Suddenly and unexpectedly. And when he comes the whole world will be destroyed. Because sin has corrupted the earth it will be consumed by a burning fire. And a new heavens and a new earth will emerge. Believers will be saved from this destruction. But unbelievers will perish forever.

Because this day could happen at any time, it is necessary that we be prepared. In order to prepare the people for Christ's first coming, God promised to send messengers. We read about one such promise in our first lesson for this morning. And our gospel was the fulfillment of that promise. John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Christ. He was sent to lead the people to repentance, to prepare the people's hearts to hear the message of the Savior. How did John prepare the people? By baptizing and by preaching the word. By using the means of grace.

In a similar way, God's sends us people today to prepare the way for Christ. Pastors are sent by God to prepare you for Christ. Sunday School teachers teach young children about their Savior. For some of you, Lutheran Elementary teachers did the same thing. It could be a relative, a friend, or a neighbor who shared God's word with you. God has probably used many people to prepare your hearts for Christ. These people prepare us for when Christ comes again. So that we may believe in Jesus and long for his return. They also prepare us for Christ's first coming. They make us ready for Christmas.

And how do they do this? Through the means of grace. It is only through the gospel that we can be prepared for Christ's coming. They prepare us by using the Word. For it is only through the Word that we hear about Jesus. It is only through the Word that we know who he is, what he has done, and what he will do when he returns again. And those God has given to us to prepare us don't use their own words. They speak the words of God. They tell us what the Bible says. Another way we are prepared is through the sacrament of Holy Communion. Through the body and blood of Christ our sins are forgiven. We are assured of the eternal life Christ won for us through his death and resurrection on the cross.

The means of grace—the gospel in word and the two sacraments, are the only way we can be prepared for Christ's coming. And yet we fail to find time to get into his Word. We are too busy with shopping. Or party planning. It may happen that the hustle and bustle of this Christmas season gets in the way of worshiping our Savior. We have so many events to attend, that praising God often gets pushed the side. Sleep, children, fun, family, our feelings and emotions, all get in the way of our worship of Jesus. And these same things may also cause our attendance at the communion rail may be sporadic. Our misplaced priorities often cause us to be unprepared.

And for this reason, God is patient with us. And God's patience is one of the reasons why it seems as if he is taking so long to get here. **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.** Why is God taking so long? He is waiting for us to repent. He truly wants all people to believe in him. He wants the whole world to join him in heaven. So he is going to wait. He is going to wait until all people have had the opportunity to hear the gospel.

Jesus seems to be taking so long because he cares for us. He is not going to come back until the gospel has spread throughout the world. So he takes his time. He extends our time of grace—the time which we have to hear about his grace. He wants all people to hear the gospel and be brought to faith through it.

So Christ is waiting to come until the gospel is spread. But we don't want to wait forever. We want him to come as soon as possible. We

want to speed his coming. We can actually do this by making disciples of all nations. By preaching the gospel and by baptizing. Like Christ we want all people to come to the knowledge of the truth. And we do all we can to make sure everyone hears about him. In our minds, from a humanly standpoint, we also speed along Christ's coming by praying for it. It is true that the day for his return has already been set. But that doesn't stop us from praying for his return. We pray in the Lord's Prayer, **Your Kingdom come.** And at the end of Revelation, **Come, Lord Jesus.** We long for Christ to come soon. And yet, he is patiently waiting. So we use his patience, not merely to revel in the secular celebrations of the season. No, we use it to prepare our hearts and minds for Christ to come—both as a baby and as our King. And we use it to prepare others.

And as we prepare ourselves we strive to live holy lives. Peter says, **You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.** As Christians we strive to obey his word. We strive to be holy, or blameless. Later on Peter says, **make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.** Christians make every effort to obey God. They care about what God wants us to do. They will obey him whether they want to or not—whether they agree with him or not. Christians will put aside their wants and desires. They will put aside all the distractions the world has to offer in favor God's Word and Sacraments.

Of course we know that this is not possible. As Solomon points out in Ecclesiastes, **There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.** We are nothing but horrible miserable sinners. Every day we fail to live up to the level of perfection that God demands of us. We are not blameless. We are not spotless. We often don't live godly lives. Instead of preparing ourselves for Christ's coming, we prepare for Christmas parties. We often let this holiday affect our spiritual lives. And because of this we deserve God's wrath and punishment.

But we don't have to be afraid of God's wrath. God does demand that we be spotless and blameless. And there is no possible way that we could ever be like that. But it doesn't matter. Because in God's eyes we are. In God's eyes we are spotless and blameless. That is because of his Son. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life for us. He

suffered and died on the cross so he could take away our sins. And then he gave us his perfect life. So as far as God is concerned, we are spotless and blameless. We do live a godly life. For Christ's life is now our life.

Christ did this when he came down to earth the first time. And that is why we celebrate his birth. Because it wasn't just a man who was born. It was our God and Savior. We celebrate because we realize what that baby would go on to do. He would save us through his death. And we long for when he comes again. For he will come to complete his work. He already paid for our sins. He rose from the dead. So we could rise to. He will come again to take all of his believers home forever.

God has sent us his servants to teach and remind us of such things. They remind us through the word. They assure us through the Sacraments. The one who was sent to be born of Mary, became our Savior. The one John the Baptist preached about is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus would come to save his people. Christ sent messengers to prepare the people for Christ's first coming. And now he sends us his servants to prepare the way for Christ's second coming. For Christ is coming soon to take all believers to live with him in heaven forever.

And because God tells us this, we know it will come true. His promise to send a Savior came true after thousands of years. His promise to send a messenger to prepare the way for the Savior also came true. And so will all of his promises come true. Christ will come again. So we prepare ourselves, and count down the days.

21 days until Christmas. It's not here yet, but it is coming soon. It could be even less for Christ's second coming. He's not yet here, but he is coming soon. So prepare yourself by prioritizing your life. Make God and his Word first in your life. Strive to obey his word. And know that because the little baby who will come in three weeks, grew up to die and rise again, all of your sins are forgiven. Christ will return to finish his work—taking all believers home forever. Amen.