

Advent 2
“Scoffers, Slackers and Servants of the Lord in the last days”
(2 Peter 3:8-9)
December 10, 2023
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this Second Sunday of Advent is from our epistle reading 2 Peter 3:8-9.

“8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

So far the text...

“Longsuffering toward us”. God’s enduring, eternal Word comes to us this day as it did to the Christians in Asia Minor, to whom Peter writes this second letter. Who are the “us”? They are the dearly beloved of God – the agape loved - is the precise word that Peter uses.

Yes, Peter makes clear distinctions throughout his epistle between those who have received the Word of God and serve the Lord, who has loved them with His sacrificial agape love, and those who reject the Word of God, scoff at the Word of God and follow their own desires and lusts.

Throughout his epistle, Peter present two outcomes – either eternal destruction or eternal deliverance, depending on whether you are believer of God’s Word or a scoffer of God’s Word. In chapter 2, Peter quickly gives the examples of the fallen angels, the people of Noah’s time, and the people of Sodom as an undisputed list of those who did not escape punishment in times past.

But at the same time, Peter is quick to point out that Noah with 8 of his family, and Lot were delivered from destruction. So, Peter speaks of Lot in chapter 2:

“8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority.”

Having given examples in the Old Testament of those who rejected God, Peter brings the conversation in chapter 3 into “these last days”

“3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”

As in the days of old, so it is now. Peter forewarns us of the present day scoffers who aren't prepared for Jesus' second coming because they lack faith. They walk according to their own lusts. Man's sinful history continues to repeat itself. God's beloved shouldn't be surprised and yes, the righteous, like Lot will have their souls tormented by hearing and seeing of all the lawless deeds that goes on in the world.

But, again, Peter reminds the beloved, you and I that God's always in control. His powerful Word does two things – it creates and it destroys. Listen to verses 5 to 7 of our epistle again.

“5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

God created the world through His mighty Word and it perished with a great flood. This same mighty Word of God is upholding the world until it will be finally destroyed by fire along with the perdition of all the ungodly.

So, Peter puts everything in perspective for the beloved, for you and me, servants of the Lord. For the servant of the Lord does not serve his or her own lusts and

desires but serves the One who has escaped from eternal destruction by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The servant of the Lord has been rescued from his or her own condemning sin by the waters of baptism.

In fact, Peter begins his epistle by calling himself a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ. And who wouldn't want to be a servant of the Lord? For the servant of the Lord has been served and has received the **“precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1)**

And then Peter continues to list what great things the beloved have been given.

“2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

“Given all things that pertain to life and godliness...Great and precious promises...partakers of the divine nature...and of course, the great escape of the corruption that is in this world.”

Scoffers reject all this. Servants have received it by faith. And then Peter tells us in our text to not be slackers.

“8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

We all know what a slacker is. When the boss isn't looking, the slacking worker wastes his or her time. And the work doesn't get done. Famous football players were accused of being slackers at times. A wide receiver doesn't run his route as hard as he can because the play doesn't directly involve him. He jogs around and tries to expend the least amount of energy as possible.

In a spiritual sense, Christians can fall into the same mindset. One can convince oneself that God isn't going to return in my lifetime so why put forth a good effort. Every day is the same.

But Peter reminds us, the beloved, that every day is an opportunity to serve the Lord in holiness. For the day of the Lord can come at any moment like a thief in the night.

“10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,

God's not a slacker. Jesus never slacked in fulfilling His work of saving the world. He never shirked His duty to do His Father's will and drink the cup of suffering and death to reconcile the world to Himself.

On Friday night, a Christmas parade went through the city of Mercedes under the theme of “superheroes”. Well, Immanuel's school participated with a float and it wasn't difficult to highlight the real super hero of Christmas – Jesus Christ. For He came humbly to serve us sinners and humbly suffered, giving up His cape as they threw lots for His clothes. Jesus truly died and through His death, rescued the world from its evil.

And then, an amazing thing happened three days later. Our Superhero rose from the dead victorious. He conquered all sin and promises to come again in glory to make a new heavens and new earth where only righteousness dwells! To remind people of the real reason for Christmas, a costumed Jesus waved to the people and told them merry Christmas! And what a joy to see and hear the response of many people shouting with happiness, there's Jesus! Hi Jesus! Jesus the King lives! He is with us in these last days! And thanks be to God, our float received the honor of 1st prize!

Yes, God is not a slacker. In fact, He's patiently working hard to share His life-saving Word of what Jesus did to the world. He does so through you and me, His

servants. Why? Because God doesn't want anyone to be lost. He wants all to repent and believe in Jesus. He wants all of us to grow in our faith and slowness of heart. Does not God delay so that we would grow stronger in our faith and service to him and repent of our slacking?

Of course! John the Baptist message of repentance and forgiveness through our baptisms is our daily message of life. It calls us to live godly lives in this ungodly world!

And finally, God, in His own time, for one day is like a thousand years, will make a new heavens and a new earth.

because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

Dissolved, burned, melted, purified and then made new and perfect again where only righteousness dwells! Home of the righteous. Home of the sheep, the blessed ones in Christ through faith in Him. Oh, we can't wait for this day! Come Lord Jesus!

And as we wait, keep us from slacking, through Your mighty Word that has created our faith and keep us in this faith, until Your mighty Word makes all things new again.

So Peter concludes in our epistle reading with these words to us and all Christians, God's beloved, agape loved people...

"14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;"

"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)