**Slow Toward You? Why?**

**2 Peter 3:3-14**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

When is it time to get ready? I have heard people tell me that they have plenty of time to get religious – whatever that means. They believe that they do not need to worry about faith things now, for they have too much life to live. There will be plenty of time later.

So, how old were the people that died in latest highway death in Wisconsin? I do not know, in fact, I do not know when the last one was. Were they 60? 50? 40? 30? In their 20s? Plenty of time for them yet to get ready, to be worried about their faith life, right? Not so much!

You know what, It doesn’t matter! When will be the day that the Lord calls us home? When will be the day that Jesus returns, the Last Day? Who knows!

Know this, when it happens you will not have time to prepare. There will be no second chances. You will not be able to say, “But Jesus, if I knew that I was going to die today, I’d have gotten ready.” You and I are to be ready today!

What is more, you and I are to be proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Christ so that those who do not know, might also be made ready.

But why should we be any different than the millions of people who claimed to have been believers who all lived before our time? They knew Jesus’ own words from the chapter before our Gospel lesson. Jesus proclaimed the end, and when it would happen. “*Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

*"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”* (Matt. 24:29-35)

Jesus proclaimed “this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” Well, generations have passed away – and He hasn’t returned. What about His promise? When will it happen? Harold Camping said it would happen May 21, 2011 – but that day came and went. What you probably didn’t know was that Camping apologized for his mistake, he really meant ***October*** 21, 2011. Well, as you know that day has long come… and then gone… and nothing happened.

Since then he has made other predictions about the end. Not only him, but others have made such predictions as well. There have been all sorts of predictions about the 2nd return of Christ, the Last Day, but you and I are still here – none have come true.

So, there are many who are skeptics, or as Peter calls them, scoffers. Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

Scoffers are those who ridicule and make fun of things. In our text, the particular scoffers Jesus is describing, are those who make fun of the Scriptural predictions of the Last Day. In truth, they are making fun of Jesus – they are scoffing at the truth of God’s Word – they are ridiculing the faith that you and I profess.

Let us make this a bit more personal, are there times that you and I are among the scoffers? Are there times that we doubt the truth that there is an end coming?

You and I have been waiting for it, and when things look grim in our lives, we wonder if things about the end of time are really true. Those who make predictions about a specific day are nothing more than the latest example of those who claim to be followers of Christ and who have made predictions about the end which have failed to come true.

So we wonder, “Will it happen?” Why is God waiting so long? Can’t God see the terrible mess the world is in? The end surely must happen soon? It would be good if it did, for the world is going to hell in a hand basket. Why doesn’t Jesus return and end it all?

For your sake, my friends – for my sake – and for the sake of our unbelieving neighbors, Christ has not brought the end of all things to pass.

How can I say that? I did not say it, our text says it! I am simply repeating what God Himself revealed to us, just as it is proclaimed in God’s Word. It is recorded for us, “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.”

God wants all to reach repentance, so He is waiting.

I know that some would like it if God would wipe out all evil in the world. If that were to be what God did, it would mean wiping out all sinners – ***all sinners*** – you and I are included in *all sinners*. Your neighbors and friends are a part of that group called – all sinners. Everybody on the face of God’s creation is a sinner, and all would be wiped out.

How many of your friends, neighbors, and family members would go to heaven if Christ were to return today? Let me ask it this way, so you can have a better idea. How many of your friends, neighbors, and family members trust solely in Jesus Christ for their salvation? That means, they believe they are sinners, that Christ died for them, for their forgiveness, and because of that, the have eternal life. If they do not believe all of that, God is waiting for them.

Jesus is slow because He’s waiting on you. He is waiting for you to call them to repentance and to trust solely in the forgiveness Christ purchased for their salvation. He is slow because you and I are chicken. We are afraid of proclaiming the truth because someone might take it the wrong way, or they might get mad at us, or think that we are judging them.

Our problem is that we are so busy trying to be loved by everybody – that we never truly love many. We never truly love some of those who are closest to us. We never love them, because we are more worried about their friendship with us here and now in this life, that we are willing to risk losing them for all eternity.

What am I talking about? How many of those closest to us will be eternally lost because of their unbelief? They break the 1st Table of the Law for they do not love and trust in God above all things. The use God’s name in vain on a regular basis, it flows past their lips in some subtle – and sometimes in some vile manners. They despise God’s Word and His blessed sacrament by letting other things get in the way of their joining us on Sunday mornings.

They also shred the 2nd Table of the Law – with their unwillingness to forgive, their lust after others, their covetousness, their sexual sins of lust and using pornography, and their many other sins.

Sin is a part of their lives. But they are no different than you and I are in that regard. Sin is an unfortunate integral part of our lives. But there is a difference. Unlike you and I, they do not see their need for repentance – they continue in their sins as if what they are doing is acceptable. It is in their impenitence that they will be lost eternally – damned in hell for all time – because they chose not to repent and trust in the forgiveness purchased with the suffering and death of Christ.

In the meantime, we will not point out their sins and call them to repentance because they might get upset with us, or they might un-friend us on Facebook. We say nothing, for if we did it might cause waves at the family get-together, it might unbalance our relationship with them in this life. So, we keep our mouths shut. We would rather keep them close now, but that literally may mean – to hell with them for eternity.

“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.”

Dear friends, we have been given so very much. You and I know the gift of forgiveness that is ours in Christ Jesus, that He took our sins and death into His own flesh – that He suffered separation from His Father, suffered hell, so that we might have eternal life and salvation. We know the wonderful gifts that we receive when we gather together in His house around the Word and Sacrament.

We are here today, being forgiven for our failures to speak the truth in love to our friends and loved ones. We are here being forgiven for our silence so that we might keep our own security. We are also being strengthened to be faithful witnesses.

The Lord is not slow toward you, for He desires to bring you forgiveness, salvation, and life. Consider it done to you, here in this place, today! Here is where He fulfills His promises to you, and grants to you forgiveness and His peace. In the name of Jesus. Amen.