**What Sort Of People**

**Ought You To Be?**

**2 Peter 3:3-14**

**2nd Last Sunday**

**11.14.2021**

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

What sort of people ought you to be? You know that you do not earn heaven by your deeds! You know that your sins are all forgiven in the blood of Christ shed to purchase forgiveness. You know you cannot be perfect.

So, what sort of people out you to be?

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.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 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! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

The day of the Lord is coming! It might be tonight! It might be in five weeks! Five years! Fifty years! Five hundred years! Five thousand years! Or, it might just happen in your sleep. What do you want to be found doing when Christ comes for you? And since we do not know when that will be, it might be – NOW.

So, what sort of people ought you to be?

At every single moment of your life, what sort of people ought you to be?

You are to be, according to our text, living lives of holiness and godliness – waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God. You are to be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Dear friends in Christ, while you may be forgiven all your sins, while you do not get into heaven by your works, and while you are still a poor, miserable, sinner – you are to be holy, godly, without spot or blemish, and at peace. That is what sort of people you ought to be!

You are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect. You are to be in the world but not of the world. That is what sort of people you ought to be.

What does that look like in our lives? You know the commandments. They are not optional! In fact, when we are all raised from the dead on the Last Day and enjoying eternity with God in His heaven, the commandments will still be in force. Of course, in our perfected state, we will simply keep them – it will happen in us automatically.

If all people kept the commandments, what would life be like in this world? It would be incredible! If we all thought of God and our neighbors before we thought of ourselves, there would be no selfishness and immeasurable kindness to one another.

What sort of people ought you to be? We would be Christ-like. TO be Christ-like is to fulfill God’s will. It means we would live in accordance with God’s commandments. How ought we to live?

We would fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

We would use God’s name in a good, right, and salutary manner, calling upon His name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

We would hold preaching and the Word of Christ sacred and gladly hear and learn it. We would desire to be in the house of the Lord, and be absorbed in the study of His Word.

We would honor our parents and all other authorities. We would serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

We would help and support our neighbor in every physical need.

We would lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, husbands and wives love and honor each other.

We would help our neighbor improve and protect his possessions and income.

We would always speak well of our neighbor, explaining everything in the kindest way, and building up their reputation.

We would help and be of service to our neighbor in keeping his house, guarding his wife and employees by encouraging them to be faithful and do their duty.

If we did as we ought, we would feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome all strangers, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned.

In short, know that God promises grace and every blessing to all who keep His commandments, we should love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

That is what sort of people we ought to be!

No, you may not hate or detest preaching and the Word of God, but is it your joy to begin each morning in God’s Word and prayer? Is hearing the Word and eating of Christ’s Eucharist the foundation upon which your every single week revolves? Are you glad when they say, “Let us go into the house of the Lord,” for you know that is where God’s gifts of Word and Meal feed and nourish you to be in the world but not of the world?

When was the last time you really sacrificed your desires, your wishes, and maybe some of your time, talents, and treasures to the building up of God’s kingdom? How often do you put the needs of your neighbor before your desires, using what the Lord has given you to help your neighbor rather solely to keep your flesh happy?

And I could go on and on with this list of ours sins. Simply put, we are sinful through and through.

What sort of people ought you to be? Speaking only for myself, I ought to be a much different sort than I am – a much sinless sort than I am. As I consider my relationships with others according to the commandments, I am a failure. When I consider my willingness to fear, love, and trust in God above ALL things, I am a failure.

If Christ were to return, at most times, I would not be found by Him diligently doing as I ought. My sins are as scarlet! I do not have blemishes, for I am a walking scab, a pariah, a stinking leper. How can I, before God, be found at peace?

With man this is impossible! But with God, all things are possible.

God does not wish any to perish, but that all should reach repentance. His Holy Spirit has called you and gathered you together. He has brought you to repentance – to know your sins and desiring the Good News of Christ which brings forgiveness of sins.

This is why I get sad when people think that Christianity is about being morally better. Or, when people think Christians are those who think they are morally better than others. People have told me, “Pastor, I do not need church. I am as good as any Christian in your church. If you only knew what kind of hypocrites come to your church…, but I won’t rat them out to you.” I like to conspiratorially wink at them and say, “We should sit down and compare lists one day. I am sure I have some on my list that are not on yours.”

“Really?” they will ask.

“Really,” I will say, “There is not a one on our congregational list that is not a sinner.”

They then look at me in surprise.

“Just like their pastor. You should us. I think you’d fit right in.”

It is amazing how many people think that to be a real Christian means that you do not sin!

Dearly beloved of God, the church is not a place to show off how perfect and sinless you are. The church is a hospital for those suffering from sin-sickness. Here is where you receive the medicine of immortality. This is a bathhouse to be cleansed of sin. Those who are not sinners do not need what is offered in Christ’s church – they do not need forgiveness, eternal life, or salvation.

So, what sort of people ought you to be? Dear friends, God wants that all should reach repentance. He wants all to believe that they are sinners and that for such, He gave His own Son to die. Repentance trusts not in self but knows of the great need for what Christ has purchased with His precious blood and innocent suffering and death – forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

The repentant trust that Christ has cleansed them with His blood so that not a spot or blemish of sinfulness remains. Only repentant sinners are at peace, because they rest in Christ the Word of peace which passes all understanding, Repentant sinners are at peace for they eat and drink of Christ, knowing that they can depart in peace for His body and blood has strengthened them in body and soul to life everlasting.

So, what sort of people ought you to be? You ought to be people waiting for Christ.

You are in Christ! In Christ you are without spot or blemish. In Christ you are at peace, a peace beyond all understanding. In Christ, and only in Christ, you are the sort of people you ought to be – holy, godly, without spot or blemish, and at peace. You are as you ought to be, for Christ has made you holy by cleansing you of all sin and giving you peace.

Dearly beloved of God, Christ Jesus lives in you richly. It is He who will do in you as you ought. Live in Him – in peace. In the name of Jesus. Amen.