

June 9, 2019

Strangers in this World

"To God's elect, strangers in the world..."

I Peter 1:1

"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. 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."

"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."

"Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...so then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him."

II Peter 3:8-18

Jesus is returning. As sure as the sun rose this morning and will set this evening; Jesus is returning. When God decides the time is right Jesus will come and when he does everything that we think of as so very important, so very precious, so very permanent will be destroyed.

It is so very easy to get caught up in acquiring and keeping the things of this world. We work to make money so that we can buy a new car or a new TV or a new house. Once we own that car or TV or house we have to take care of them and even though we might try hard to be good stewards of the things we have, in the end they fall apart and so we work even more to acquire some more things even though we know that what is so important to us today, will be trash tomorrow.

Our bodies suffer much the same fate don't they? We try to eat right, we try to exercise, we count calories, we count steps, and in the end our bodies still age: still fail us. All of creation is like our bodies. No matter what happens, sooner or later, it will all be destroyed. Everything will perish except for one thing. Our souls are designed to be eternal and even as creation burns and is destroyed, our souls will survive to face God.

The Apostle Paul told the believers in Rome that on that day, ***"...each one of us will give an account to God."*** (Romans 14:12) Every one of us will stand before God and give an account to him for how we have lived, and what was important to us and what was not. Even if we are washed in the blood of Jesus and bathed in God's grace, there will still be a time for each of us, forgiven as we are, to own what we have done or not done with the lives that our Creator has given us.

Understanding that end of all things is a certainty, even if it is long delayed, Peter asks, ***"...what kind of people ought you to be?"*** He answers his own question, ***"You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming."*** As we live day by day in the certainty that eventually our lives will end, that ultimately the whole of creation will be destroyed, our focus needs to be on the eternal.

There are things that will survive the end and there are things that will not. When our time comes, what will we be trying to hold on to, and what will no longer matter? So, walking as disciples coming to understand what is important and what is not is about seeing everything from the right perspective.



"Lay not up for yourselves treasures
upon earth, where moth & rust doth corrupt,
& where thieves break through & steal,
but lay up for yourselves
treasures in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,
& where thieves do not break through
nor steal:
For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.
Matthew 6: 19-21

Every thing, every possession, every relationship, every accomplishment needs to be measured from a single perspective: Will it survive the fire? Those things that will not survive the fire, really have little value. Those things that will survive the fire, are the things that will matter the most. What matters to you? What matters to me? What doesn't? In the end, are we struggling to hold on to the right things; to the eternal things?