

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

2 PET 3:8-14
DEC 7, 2014

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² 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! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

When I was a kid, if I was procrastinating, slow to do something,
my mother would sometimes exclaim,

“What are you waiting for, Christmas?”

We are not at time of year when I could answer, “Yes.”

but we are also waiting for much more.

Many are getting ready for Christmas already at Halloween.

They are slackers compared to us.

What we are getting ready for

we don't even know when it will be.

Advent is time of church year when Bible readings

help us get ready not just to celebrate Jesus' birth -

we might be able to do that in less than 4 weeks -

but also to get ready for his coming again in glory.

Jesus first coming & coming again necessarily go together

like two covers of a book, like a box and a lid.

His first coming was necessary to prepare for second.

Second coming is necessary to deliver all the gifts

purchased by the first.

In text, Peter reminds us why we are waiting so long

and what we do meanwhile so that time flies.

WE WAIT FOR GOD TO RENEW ALL CREATION
GOD WAITS FOR REPENTANT PERSONAL RENEWAL
WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR GOD TO RENEW US FOREVER

WE WAIT FOR GOD TO RENEW ALL CREATION

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This season is not just about all the stuff that is overflowing
in the stores and in our homes
but, in fact, about the end of all this stuff.
Because history is not just a holiday road trip that never ends
so answer to question, "Are we there yet?" is always no.
On our own we would be lost, going around in circles,
going past same familiar kinds of events over and over.
But instead there are intersections where God intervenes,
like Noah's flood that Peter mentions earlier,
but especially Jesus coming into history.
and God will intervene in history again, bring it to end,
bring time to end to bring us to God who is outside time.
Many look forward to Christmas as a time to get new things.
Every there is latest new thing everyone just has to have,
compared to which what we had before is boring.
We might wonder how long technology
can keep improving at this pace.
But one result of getting so excited about such things
that don't last is that everything is ultimately boring.
But all the new things everyone in world will get this year
is just tip of iceberg compared to what is in store.
God will not just bring something new to earth
but will bring all heaven and earth to renewal.
Some new things require not just assembly but disassembly,
taking a system apart to install the new & reassemble.
The system of this world has been broken, ruined by sin.
It is so corrupted to its very core
that God needs to take it apart down to atomic elements.
Every part of its works will be exposed as it is dissolved.
Because the new thing God is giving us is righteousness.
But, as you will find whenever you try to do what is right,
this is not a world in which righteousness lasts very long.
It is attacked like a foreign virus in a body.

This toxic environment which must be totally changed
in order to be a place where righteousness dwells.
But, now, who can live in that kind of environment?
It would be toxic to sinners like us, so,

GOD WAITS FOR REPENTANT PERSONAL RENEWAL

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ 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... ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

More and more, people are doing their shopping on line
there are advantages to this but also disadvantages
for people who like instant gratification.

You have to wait patiently for things to be delivered.

Peter tells us to be patient because God's new life for us
is on the way but really God is the one being patient.

If you have gone to a photographer for family picture lately
you know it is not just a snap.

Photographer is waiting for moment when everyone
has a decent look on their face.

The bigger the family, the longer it might take.

God wants the whole world to be in his family.

but if God took picture of us right now, how many would be
looking around at meaningless distractions,
scratching head in confusion about God's truth,
yawning with total disinterest in God or others,
scowling or sticking out tongue at someone else,

God is being patient, waiting for us to repent,
because he doesn't want to leave any of us out of his picture
and because, until we repent and turn to him,
we are the ones insisting that we be cropped out of it.

Back to the picture of us waiting for things to be delivered,

It is good for us that we have this time
because what is holding up the delivery of God's
peace, joy, love, holiness, that he is giving us,
is all the old junk sitting around in our life
that we can't bring ourselves to part with:
pride, selfishness, lust, bitterness.

Like the appliance delivery truck, God who has new life for us
is ready to haul the old away for free.

Our old way of life is not worth anything as a trade-in.

It is no use to try to clean it up in order to bargain better.

The reason for us to repent & let go of our failed goodness

is not so that God will then give us something new

but because God is already giving us new holiness

and so we have no use for our old ways any more.

So now,

WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR GOD TO RENEW US FOREVER

⁽¹⁰⁾ the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

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people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for
and hastening the coming of the day of God,

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to
be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Right now, some children are trying hard to behave
with the thought someone is watching them
to see if they deserve any presents.

There is, in fact, someone watching us always: God.

But he is not watching to see what we deserve.

He can see in an instant that we deserve nothing.

He is watching and observing our tattered, ragged way of life
to see what we need, which is everything.

Peter says, in the end, works done on earth will be exposed.

When our works, which God already sees, are exposed,

we will see what we have done for self is wasted effort.

and only value in them is the benefit to others.

But the works that will really stand out

are the works Jesus has done on this earth.

He who is holy God is the one who has lived the life
of holiness and godliness.

Peter writes in 1st letter he is lamb without blemish or defect
who has been sacrificed for us.

It is his precious blood that has redeemed us
from a worthless way of life.

If we are to be found without spot or blemish,

it is because we are found by the Good Shepherd
who laid down his life for the sheep.

If we are to live a righteous life, we have to wait for it
to be given to us by God.

When we are found to be in Christ, we are at peace,
even when the whole world falls to pieces around us.

So we eagerly hasten God's coming, by calling out in prayer,
hurry up and come to us.

And he does. We don't have to wait for him to come
in his word, promising us forgiveness every day.

& in Holy Communion, using elements he holds together
to feed us Jesus his own body & blood
to strengthen us for holy living.

The Holy Spirit comes to turn us to repentance
to lead us to faith and to guide us in righteous living,

And God himself preserves our spiritual lives
so we are ready at any moment for his coming again
which we wait for more eagerly than for Christmas.

WE WAIT FOR GOD TO RENEW ALL CREATION

to melt down all the stuff of this whole creation
and reform it into the perfect home for righteousness.

GOD WAITS FOR REPENTANT PERSONAL RENEWAL

he wants everyone to be in the picture of his family,
smiling & holding the new righteousness he has given us.

WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR GOD TO RENEW US FOREVER

by what he himself is doing in our lives already now
through what Jesus has already done for us
to make ready our eternal home and make us ready for it.