

SO NOW WHAT? 2 Peter 3:14-18

INTRODUCTION

This passage flowed out of what we have looked at recently in the STBC's "What We Teach" document which ended with teaching on the last things - the end times. We learned that a study of the last things didn't mean just looking at Revelation but at many Scriptures in both the OT and the NT. Today we are going to look at one of those other passages.

READ: 2 Peter 3: 14-18

Outline:

- A. One Reality**
 - B. Four Commands**
 - C. One Goal**

So that: We can understand that flowing out of the study of the end times, the coming day of the Lord, we can answer the question "Now what?"

A. One Reality

Christians are to be looking forward to the return of Christ.

Three times in this passage, Peter references looking ahead to the end

- v. **12, 13 & 14** - three times we see Christians looking forward to this reality

Not a command, but the original Greek language shows an indication of the reality of being a Christian

- I could not find a command to look forward to Christ's coming

Illustration: I coach football. During tryouts, I can run a drill to teach players how to be a wide receiver. However, as the ball is thrown, some of those players will get hit on the head with the ball instead of making the reception. Why? Because they are not looking for the ball. They are not anticipating, looking for something. They are not receivers - they don't long for that ball. They are just doing what I tell them to do. In the same way, Christians know to look for Christ's return. We have something sure and definite, are you looking for it? Is your reality that you are looking forward to the coming of your Savior?

Other Scriptures:

Philippians 3:20

Luke 7:18-23 - "Are You the Expected One...?"

- John the Baptist knowing that Jesus is the One
 - he is in prison
 - Jesus is getting opposition from the religious leaders of the time

- John the Baptist sent two disciples to ask Jesus... "Are You the Expected One"?

- John was looking forward - there was a longing

Note the answer Jesus gave: **v. 22** - He points them back to God's Word

- we must always go back to the Scriptures

B. Four Commands

There are four imperatives in the original Greek language.

1) Live right

2) Think right

3) Guard yourself

4) Grow in Christ

Keeping with the football analogy - the first two are on the offense, (they are going forward, what should we be doing based on our knowledge of Scripture), the last two on the defense. (see later)

OFFENSE:

1) Live Right - v. 14

Be diligent. Indicating our lives, our actions, our conduct. BE diligent to BE found by Jesus. There something observable....how you are, how you act. Observable by Jesus Himself - not a representative or someone distant. Found by Him, your Lord and Savior, face to face. He sees you. Many churches talk about your conduct - to make it observable to those around you. Man made religion - to make sure your conduct is good to make sure others find it. There is some wisdom there, at some level, but it can be manipulated by those you are trying to impress. This is not man-made religion - this is a relationship with your personal Savior.

The level of effort is great. Be diligent. Work hard. Not talking about perfection but as one wrote in his commentary - he called it "zealous persistence".

Zealous persistence in:

- your spiritual life
 - your level of obedience
 - your fight against sin
 - how you relate to people

Two observable characteristics:

a. "**peace**" - doesn't mean you aren't going to have battles

- not ignoring reality but having confidence in rightly dealing with reality
- peace of having a relationship with Christ
- He has forgiven you
- you have no worries of your actions because you are in right relationship with Him - you want to serve Him and when you don't, you are dependent on Him in

repentance and faith

- **Daniel 3:16-18** - Daniel's friends had a peace about them - because they trusted God in the face of death
- **Esther 4: 16** - "...and if I perish, I perish." - she was going to do the right thing and obey - she had a peace about her- she was in right relationship with God

What about your situation...with your spouse, your children, your parents, your work? Is there a level of peace in your life in those areas because you are demonstrating that dependence on God and you have peace with God and you can have peace right now - it is an observable characteristic in your life.

b. "**spotless and blameless**"

- without sin - not possible without Christ's righteousness
 - you can't be blameless and spotless without your relationship with Christ
 - deal with our sin through repentance

The two are intertwined. We are sinners and will continue to be until heaven. We must deal with our sin through repentance and find the peace.

So when we say live right, I am not giving you a list of commands, I am telling you to be diligent in your relationship with Christ and live in light of that relationship.

2) **Think Right - v. 15**

Regard. Think; consider; contemplate; engage your mind in the reality of what you see in scripture to understand what God wants of you.

- Watch out for a church that does not let you engage your mind.
 - No fear for a Christian to think because God is renewing the mind
- (Romans 12:2, Psalms)**
- Here, there is one specific that says God's delay in coming is for a very particular purpose - for salvation to be accomplished. This gives us the opportunity to share the gospel. (there are evangelism ministries in our church to assist you in sharing the gospel)
 - **v. 15** connects with **v. 9** - just to be clear **v.9** does not teach universalism in any way by using the word all - the all is related to the you in the same verse. Only a subset is saved, not the whole world.

Illustration: Growing up in the south, use expressions like 'y'all' and 'all y'all' - the first meaning one or a group of one, the second meaning everyone.

The command here to think right in the context of the relationship between end times and salvation.

Now Peter expands it out in the rest of the **verse 15:**

Broader thinking: think after God's thoughts explained in the Bible.

- we need to think biblically

Isaiah 55:8 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts..."

v. 16 - Thinking biblically takes diligence and discernment when it comes to how we are learning

- diligent to study because not easy to understand - the human mind understanding God
 - Peter provides for us a contrast between what type of teachers we should be listening to and what type of teachers we shouldn't be listening too
 - discernment to learn from the right people

Interesting that Peter is referring to Paul's writing and recognizing that, because he is an apostle, it is on the level of Scripture

- Paul is dead at this time
 - Peter has read Paul's writings
 - Love even after confrontation described in Galatians
 - beautiful picture of both men working together for the proclamation of the truth

Peter describes Paul as beloved brother contrasted with false teacher

- run from the untaught and unstable and unprincipled (**v. 17**)
- when you are looking for a church and biblical teaching - are you looking for teachers who are well taught and principled
 - relating to untaught - some say that you can't teach and be trusted unless you have gone to seminary - to some extent that is true but there are many who haven't gone to seminary but who have been very well and intentionally trained

Being saved and looking forward to Christ in Heaven should make us live right and think right...but we are not in heaven yet.

v. 17 - "**..therefore, beloved..**" - connects awareness of distorting false teachers to how we should respond.

The false teachers are also on offense, so we have to play a little defense...the third and fourth imperatives in this passage.

DEFENSE:

3) Guard Yourself - "be on your guard.."

Knowing that there are false teachers out there, Peter doesn't say to go after them. There is a time and a place for that - it does have to happen at times as we see John doing in **3 John** - calling out Diotrophes. The command here to believers is to guard yourself.

- Watch yourself.
 - False teaching is permeating our televisions, our internet, our bookstores.
 - You are responsible for you.
 - Can't blame bad teachers.

This word, guard, is a military term - someone is at war with you. False teachers are being used by Satans.

Illustration: In football, the defensive backs and/or safety is lured in by distracting plays eventually allowing the opposing team to run a deep pass play. Why? Because he wasn't guarding himself. You can't stop the offense from being on offense, but you must guard against being carried away.

Steadfastness is the expected standard.

- Warning: Steadfastness in error is still error. Steadfastness is not stubbornness.
 - How do I know if I am being stubborn? Look at the next command....

4) Grow in Christ - v. 18

Illustration: Steadfastness is like that big oak tree that is there in a yard. It is steadfast, it is not going to blow over in the wind but it is still growing.

In growing, the idea is becoming mature, experience, constantly growing. It is not a one time thing but a continuous growth in the "**grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**"

- Eph 2:8-9 - idea of grace - it is a gift of salvation - that is given and never lost
 - in this verse - the idea of grace means beloved one, in favor of Christ - His continuing favor and love for you

Not the book knowledge of Jesus.

Here, used together indicates a relational aspect: seeing God in and at work in our lives.

- Kindness to us in life revealed by our knowing His presence and strength
 - Live involves suffering, but we mature/grow as we see Jesus with us
 - Like a growing marriage - your esteemed one who you know more now and who knows you more as time goes by

Review:

One Reality - Jesus is coming back and Christians need to be looking forward to Him.

Four Commands - Live right, think right, guard yourself and grow in Christ.

C. One Goal - v. 18

"To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."

Great statement of His being the One True God, equal with the Father.

These are Peter's last known written words. They reveal his focus, his goals.

Peter would not have wanted a huge church building named after him in Rome. We should share the same desire.

CONCLUSION:

Our reality of looking for Him is because we want to see God glorified.

Following commands are to bring God glory so...

- our living right is to bring Him glory
 - our thinking right is to bring Him glory
 - our guarding ourselves from error is to bring Him glory
 - our growing in relationship with Jesus is to bring Him glory

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