

# God's Good Delay



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**2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:1–9**

I don't know about you, but the last two weeks I've got a recurring question and that is, "Hey pastor, do you see what's going in the Middle East? Does this mean the end is near?" You may have had that same question. The reason people are probably asking you that question is because when we look at our Bibles, there is an end. Jesus returns and there is a judgment. So we know the end is coming, and there are different views on when and how that will happen. So I want to give you the four typical views of the end times, and it'll make sense when we go into our text because Peter is talking about the return of Christ. Most Christians will hold one of these four views.

The first one is all **Amillennialism**, which by the way, is the view I hold. There's no literal open, visible, hundred year reign of Christ on the earth, so we're not waiting for the millennium to happen. It seems that the New Testament writers agree that we're in the last days right now. Acts 2 says Jesus is on the throne right now ruling over the world through His people, the church. So we're not waiting for that, we are in the last days right now. When Christ returns, it's game over. And He's not predictable—it's like a thief in the night, Peter will tell us, so you're not going to wait and get

charts out; you're going to be ready because Christ is coming back. That's one view.

Second would be **Postmillennialism**. This is that the world is going to get exceedingly better. There's going to be a golden age of Christianity where the whole world is basically won to Christ and then Christ will return. It seems like that's probably not going to happen if you just look at the news, but maybe this is your view and that's perfectly fine.

Third is **Historic Premillennialism**. This view is Christ will return physically and visibly to usher in the millennial reign. There will be a thousand years where Christ is going to come, He's going to set on his throne in Israel for a thousand years, and then that's going to usher in the new Kingdom.

Fourth is **Dispensationalism**. This is another view of Premillennialism, which says the millennium reign of Christ will begin after His return at the end of a distinct seven year period known as the tribulation. So depending on how you see it, Christ is going to come a secret second time and He's going to take out the church, leave Israel, and there's going to be seven years tribulation, and He is going to come either before, midway, or after. And there are different views in this one view, but He's going to deal with the church and Israel distinctively differently. So, this view really sees the church and Israel as distinct, where it seems to be, in my view, in Ephesians chapter 2, the church and Israel are now those who believe in Christ—the church is the new Israel...that Israelites who are believers in Christ are part of the church. But for you, this might be still the view that you hold, so if that is the case, then things like the last two weeks get you wondering, is this it? Is this the tribulation? Are things about to happen? Is the rapture coming? So you get the question a lot is the end near when things in the news surrounding Israel.

So, I just want to answer the question, is the end near in light of what's happening in Israel? I want to say this—yes, the end is near. And when you look at the news, you can be certain the end is near. But I'll also say that three weeks ago the end was near. And two years ago, the end was near. And 500 years ago, the end was near. 2000 years ago when Peter

wrote this letter, the end was near. That is the crux of the New Testament—that Christ is going to come back, we are in the last days, the end is near, therefore be ready. Christ can come back at any moment so be ready.

So, when we look at these four views, you probably hold one of them, or maybe you don't know any of those. It's okay. We can disagree and debate these different views; that is perfectly fine. As Christians, you can say, "Well, I don't believe that view; I believe this view." That's fine. We can argue, we can talk, and we can debate. No problem. We can debate these things and still be Christians together. These four things aren't things we divide on. We can argue about when and how Jesus is coming back, but the one thing we can't argue about as Christians is that He *is* coming back. That's the one dividing point. If you actually don't think Christ is going to return, well then we're going to divide. We're going to say we're not Christians together; we can't have Christian fellowship. But if you say you're an amillennialist, great, if you're a postmillennialist, great. Whatever you want to believe in, you have to get this right, this is the major—Jesus is coming back and there will be judgment. That's what we all need to agree on as believers.

As we dive into 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter chapter 3, Peter's going to have an obvious question: If Christ coming back, where is He? It seems like it's been a bit. And Peter is writing just a few years after Christ ascended into Heaven, and the mockers are already saying...*Hey, where's your Jesus? He said He was coming back and He's not here. It seems like He's delaying. Did He get lost?* That was just a few years; we're dealing with 2000 years. So we have that same question posed to us...*Hey, where is that Jesus guy? He hasn't come back yet. Do you think He might've forgotten about you, or left you, or maybe He's not coming back?* So what we're going to see this morning is God's good delay—that it's actually good that God has delayed. The big idea that I hope you take home is God is not slow; God is good. The reason Jesus hasn't come back yet is not because God's not good, it's not because He's slow, it's because He's good. He is patient. He doesn't want anyone to perish. God wants all to repent and believe in His Son Jesus. So let's look at how Peter says this. We're going to read verses 1 through 10.

We're probably not going to preach all the way through 10, but we're going to get as far as we can.

## Scripture

***"This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that 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." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 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. 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. 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."***

We're going to deal with five lies that these scoffers say about the return of Christ, and it's all around their thought that He's not really coming back, just do whatever you want. So lie number one is Jesus isn't coming back. They're saying I don't know what happened, you got misinformed, you misread the prophecies, but He's actually not coming back. Look back down with me in verse 1, "This is now the second letter that I'm writing to you, beloved." Peter's writing a second letter, that's probably why it's called 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. He wrote the first letter, we probably believe that was 1<sup>st</sup> Peter,

and now he's writing them a second letter and he calls them "beloved." So he loves these people; he would have a relationship with these people. These are probably people that he's seen come to Christ, baptized, walking with the Lord, going on mission, living out the gospel. They are his beloved congregation that he's giving this letter to.

Here's what Peter says to them, and this is the purpose of both of his letters because he says this in both of them, "I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder." So in both letters he's reminding these people with a sincere mind, they have a faith in the Lord Jesus. He's stirring them up so that they would remember what they know. We've talked about this; you don't always need to know more. You need to remember what you know because you often forget the gospel. We forget the goodness of God. So he's trying to stir us up to remember, and that's what the letter is doing to us this morning. It's stirring up to remember.

Notice in verses 2–4, here's what we should remember, "...that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the command of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing following their own symbol desires. They will say, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'" Peter says here's what scoffers are going to say—the Lord's not coming back, so I want to remind you, I want to stir you up to remember that the Lord is coming back. He uses, as Kent Hughes says, this threefold cord to remind them. And here's the reminder—you have the prophets, those will be from Old Testament scriptures who are prophesying, there is going to be a return of the Messiah, and there's going to be a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Kingdom. You have that information from the prophets that the Messiah is going to deal with your sin, but the Messiah is King and He's going to have a new heaven and a new earth that you are going to dwell in, so you have those prophecies. But then he says, also you have the commands of the Lord and Savior. So you have the commands of Jesus, like Jesus, when He was with them on earth, would say things like I'm going away, but I'm going to prepare a place for you and then I'm coming back and I'm taking you with me; I'm going to prepare a place where we're going to be together forever. So the Lord Jesus, when He left, says I'm

coming back. So the King told us that He's going to come back, He's going to bring His Kingdom on this earth.

Peter also says we should remember "the commands of Jesus through the apostles." So what does this mean? Now we're dealing with the preached Word of God. The apostles take the Bible, they take the things Jesus said, and they preach them to the congregation to remind them that Christ is coming back. So you have the Old Testament, you have Jesus, and you have preaching that's all stirring you up to remember Christ is coming back, therefore you should live in light of that. So Peter's trying to stir them up to these different things.

Next Peter talks about the scoffers, they're going to say there is no coming. Think about just the book of Acts, the story of the first church. At the very beginning of Acts, Luke writes about Jesus who spent 40 days before His ascension teaching about the Kingdom of God and this idea that He's the King, the Kingdom has come and it is coming. Then in verse 9 of chapter 1, Jesus ascends to Heaven and all the disciples, they're just looking up at Him like, whoa, that's cool! And these angels come beside them and they said hey, stop gawking into the heavens. That guy who just ascended, He's coming back, and He's coming back for you...get to work, basically is what the angels say. Then at the very end of the book (Acts 28) the very last thing said about Paul is for two years, he's in Rome, and do you know what he's teaching about? The Kingdom of God...that our King left but He's coming back, and He's going to set up His Kingdom in a new earth and a new Heaven, where we will reign with God forever. It's this idea of remembering this, not just part of the gospel; we're remembering the whole gospel.

I was in my office counseling with two boys that had come to Christ, and this usually happens if somebody comes to Christ, they have to meet with one of the pastors to talk through their salvation before we go to baptism. It's a dad and two boys and we're talking about their salvation. I start out with, "Okay, tell me your testimony," so they both did. After their testimony, I ask what I always ask, "Okay, now tell me what is the gospel?" Both of the boys in one way or another said, "Jesus died for my sins." And I'm like, "Absolutely, that is the gospel. Christ died for your

sins." The dad kind of perked up, he's in ministry too, and he said, "And...?" And the boys looked up at him and said, "...and He rose from the dead!" And the dad says, "Yes, don't leave Jesus in the grave. It's not just He died for your sins, it's He also rose from the dead. Don't leave Jesus in the grave." And then I said, "And...?" And all three of them just kind of looked at me like, *and what?* I said, "Well, if you're not going to leave Jesus in the grave, also don't leave Him in Heaven because the gospel is not just Christ died and rose again; the gospel is, and He's in Heaven and He's coming back." He's coming back to bring His Kingdom. The gospel is not just God saved you so now you can live a saved life. The gospel is God saved you to be in His Kingdom, and the Kingdom of righteousness is going to dwell, and you're going to live with Him forevermore. See, that's the whole gospel and that's what Peter wants to remind these Christians of, don't forget that Christ is coming back. Because the scoffers are going to say (lie number one) that Jesus is not coming back so just enjoy life. Whatever makes you happy, whatever your flesh wants, determine your own life, make your own decisions, don't worry about Jesus, He's actually not coming back. But we've got to be a people who remember the whole gospel. Christ promises He's coming back and He will come back.

Lie number two is right now is forever. That's lie number two. Look with me in verse 4. It says, "For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." So that's the second argument the scoffers make. You can just see every day's kind of the same...the sun comes up, the sun sets. Just look at your calendar, if you flip through your Google calendar, you can go see years in the future. They're all there because today is forever, and there's always going to be a tomorrow, now is forever. There's not this 'last days,' there's not this transition where this world's going to end and there will be a new reality with God. The world has been existing ever since the fathers fell asleep and it's going to exist when we fall asleep and our grandkids fall asleep. It's just going to keep going. Right now is forever, so just live for now. The whole point that we've been trying to make, preaching through 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, is to tell you right now is not forever...right now *counts* forever. That we're actually in those last days, the New Testament would say, and the last days as we're living in them, count forever. And there's going to be

judgment. Right now, what we do with our lives and in our bodies, and what we do with the gospel, it counts forever. So the world's not going to eternally last forever, though you think it is. We've planned vacation into the future, we've already planned out our week, we just know it's going to happen; it's just routine. That's not a bad thing but we have to remember that might not be the case. The end might be today. I think as a kid, the first time I really thought about it was the movie Independence Day. Aliens came and took over, and it's like whoa, there might be aliens that come. Then Armageddon was the other movie with asteroids. Like what? I thought I was safe. I thought everything was good! Even as a culture, we don't believe the world is going to be forever—global warming, something is going to happen, we're going to get extinct, the world's going to blow up. We have all of these apocalyptic movies because we in a sense know there's an end and it's coming and we're not really sure what's going to happen in the end. Well, we as Christians actually know what's going to happen in the end. Christ is coming back and there's going to be judgment. So we of all people should be ready and living not just for today but living in light of eternity. See, the truth is right now is not forever, but right now counts for forever.

Lie number three is God doesn't intervene. God doesn't intervene with His creation. He made it, but He's like the watchmaker—He set it in motion, and now He's just hanging out somewhere else, not paying attention to what's going on the planet. And He's definitely not meddling with what's going on the planet. Verses 5–6 say, “For they deliberately overlooked this fact...” So they're lying, they're twisting this fact “that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the Word of God, and that by means of these, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.” The argument is God, it's just forever, God doesn't intervene, and everything's going to keep on going. Peter says that's not true. God is the creator who made the world and He's also the God who intervenes and judges the world.

Then, we get this picture of water and the word. Peter's bringing us back to the fact that God is the Creator and that God fashioned both the heavens and the earth, and he pulls this idea of water and the word from



the Genesis account. If you want to go to Genesis chapter 1, we will look at where Peter gets this idea of water and the word. Genesis 1:1–2 says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” So first of all, what Peter's not saying is, God created the world out of water. Like God was like minding His own business and He is like... *Oh, there's water, what can I do with water? Maybe I could create a world in heavens out of water.* That's not what God did. What we see is in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. We see that God is the Creator and everything else is creation. So God created everything out of nothing. He spoke into existence all that we see. He didn't use materials like we do. If we build stuff, we need like lumber and nails and concrete. We need materials to build with; God created His own materials. But then, what we're going to see is God decided to create it in a way where He chose to first create a formless void and then to fashion it in a particular way in order to form things, and fill things, so that it would build up to this sixth day where He creates us in His image. Now, I'm not going to preach on this, I just want to show what God did in using this material that He created, primarily waters. Verses 6–8 of Genesis says this (this is the heavens) “And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.” So God created this formless void and there's water in His creation, and now He's taking the water and He's separating these waters to create the heaven. So he is using the word and he's using water to create the heavens. But not only is He creating the heavens with water and the word, but now He's going to create the earth with water and the word. Verses 9–10 say, “And God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together, He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.” So here, we find God now creating the earth and He first creates it chaos, void. And then, taking His

tapestry that He created and He's weaving it into a beautiful masterpiece. He's a sculptor who is making this beautiful sculpture, and He's the Creator making creation.

Peter is trying to bring that imagery to say, are you're telling me God doesn't intervene with His creation? God intimately created the world. He is the Creator who made all things and He used his word and water to form and separate and make the heavens and the earth. So Peter's using that imagery of water and the word in creation because he's now going to say God also used those same two things to judge the earth. Look again in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, verse 6. It says, "...and that by means of these, what does that water in the word the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished." So what's he talking about there? He is talking about the Noah story. Remember the Noah story, Genesis 6, where everything is just corrupt. Everyone is corrupt, everyone's doing what they want, their sinful desires are rampant, and the world has literally gone away from God. God decides to judge, to cleanse the world. So He has Noah build a boat because He's going to both judge the world and save the world at the same time. He judges the world and He saves eight persons. Peter is saying remember that these people are saying God doesn't intervene, God leaves you alone, God lets you do whatever you want. No, God created the world intimately and God also intervened and judged the world when sin was so rampant, He will also do it again. So he's trying to remind them and we need to remember that God intervenes and God does judge.

I mean, we need such a reminder that we, in Kentucky, actually built the boat, right? We needed to remember this, we let's actually build Noah's Ark and let's have people come! Crider got to go last week to Noah's Ark and I haven't been there yet, so I said, "Take pictures!" You can go and see it and eat popcorn and be like, oh yeah, that's the boat, cool, and here's the petting zoo. That's how much we need to remember...we're so forgetful that we actually have to build the boat to remind us there's judgment coming. But also like in the Noah's Ark story, we remember it but often remember it kind of odd and wrong because a lot of us will make our nurseries into Noah's Ark. You have a little boat and a little animal spinning, like really? So you want your kid to go to bed looking at a boat

and remembering that all around them are floating dead bodies? If your nursery is Noah's Ark, there's a reason your kid's not sleeping. They have nightmares, right? There's bodies floating...it is not a good picture; it is judgment! God judged the world. We have to remember that. God created the world but He also judged the world. He intervenes in the world, and guess what? He's going to intervene again. He is intervening again; that's why we prayed at the beginning of service. We can't do anything but God can do something. God is the God who intervenes. We cry out to Him to move and to act. The truth is God acts in creation. God intervenes, God acts, and He will do it again.

Lie number four is God won't judge the world. Yeah, He intervenes, He did that in Noah's day, we've seen it, but He really won't do it again because we've now seen God is all love, no wrath, no justice. He's just going to let everybody do what they want. But that's not true. Here's what we see in verse 7, "But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." So God says He once destroyed the world by His word and by water. He's promised not to do it again; we have rainbows in the sky that shows He's not going to flood the world again. But now, He is going to judge the world again and it's going to be by His word and by fire. The world as is right now, in all of its fallenness and sinfulness, will face judgment just like Noah's day faced judgment.

Now, we're going to see in the next weeks that this judgment by fire is not an annihilation of the earth and then God makes a new one—because in the Noah account, it says the earth perished. Well, it didn't perish in that it wasn't annihilated; instead, it was cleansed. The sinful marks were removed and now there was a new beginning—that's how God is going to fashion the new heavens and the new earth. It's not new in a sense of nothing we've ever seen; it is this earth, refashioned, cleansed, remade through fire to become what it was supposed to be in the beginning. The garden we once lived in is the garden city we will live in, in the future, and we're going to see that play out. But for now, we have to believe this reality that God actually does judge the world. He is going to judge, and He's going to judge the ungodly.

Jesus Himself talked about this in Matthew, particularly, chapter 25. There are these ten virgins with their lamps, and some of them are ready, some of them are not. What does Jesus say? He's going to come like a thief. You're not going to know, you're not going to know the day, you're not going to know the hour. So what do you do? You get ready. You stay ready because He's coming at a moment that you don't know so be ready. Then He talks about these people who had various talents, and some of them used them, some of them didn't. The ones who didn't were so afraid that they might misuse them they hid them. The reality is they didn't really believe the master was actually going to come back and call them to account, so they got cast out. So it's like, do we really live in light of His return? And then, Jesus talks about that final judgment. In that final judgment, He talks about this separation between sheep and goats, and that people are going to come to Him. There's going to be those who believed in Him, those who their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life because they've confessed Christ. They've identified with Him as their Savior and Lord, and they are going to be sheep that go to His right hand and get to go into the Kingdom forevermore. But there are those who haven't repented and believed...they're not sheep they're goats. They will go to the left and they will be cast into outer darkness. They're going to be away from God forever! Why would Jesus tell a story like that? Why would He tell us there's going to be goats that go left? Because He doesn't want you to perish, He wants you to be a sheep that goes right. He wants you to be a person who's in the Kingdom because you've repented and believed in the gospel. See, the lie is God won't judge—He's all love, all grace, all compassion—do whatever you want; it's all going to work out in the end. That's not true. God is a good God, He's a just God, and He must act rightly, which means He must punish sin. So either you're going to have your sins punished forever in Hell, away from God, or you're going to have your sins punished on the cross of Christ, a onetime event that leads you into the presence of God forever. There's judgment coming.

The fifth lie is God forgot us. Scoffers want you to believe God forgot us. Somehow, He got lost. Like, when He put in on his MapQuest, it said "Can't find current location." He didn't have service...I mean Heaven's a long way away. He just can't get to us, somehow He's distracted, He's sleep, He's

somewhere else, but He's actually not coming back for you. God is slow, God is delayed, but I want you to remember is God is not slow; God is good. And the reason He is delayed is because He wants you to repent. Notice what Peter writes in verses 8–10, "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. 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. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief..."

So first of all, don't overlook this fact that God doesn't work on your timetable. We have really clear time...we look at our watch, our calendar app; we are on days and hours. We know how to track days and hours but Peter says some of you think God's slow, but God doesn't work on your timetable. As Bro. Ricky likes to say, "God is outside of time and inside time at the same time." God knows the beginning from the end, that's why He can write Revelation, because He knows how the end is going to be. He has it from the beginning. He's looking out on all of time at the same time. That makes Him eternal. He's not bound to time. So He is not following your calendar.

So to Peter's people, they're thinking it's been twenty years and Jesus still hasn't come back. And Peter's saying listen, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day; God's not working on your timetable. Now for us, it's been 2000 years, so how much more do we have scoffers saying...*Hey, I think God forgot about you. I think He got lost. I don't think He's coming back. I think you can just do whatever you want now. I think you can be safe and realize that gospel thing wasn't true. It says He's coming back but He hasn't come.* Well, in one sense, it's been 2000 years; that's a long time. Do you how long that is to God? Two days! Two days, that's it. That's not much time. So we can't count God slow because He doesn't operate like us. He's creator, not creation. Not only is He not working on our time, but we can't count Him slow to fulfill His promises, as some count slowness. Why? Because He's intentionally being patient towards you. He's not slow; He's good.

Why is Jesus delaying? Why has Christ not come back? That's the question Peter's dealing with and he answers it—the reason Christ hasn't come back is because He wants you to repent. I mean just look at the goodness of God, “That is patience towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” I mean that's what the Word of God says to us—He is patient towards us because He doesn't want you to perish’ He wants you to repent. Christ loves you. He is patient with you. He is long suffering with you. He is putting up with you, and you know you're a lot to put up with. Why? Because He wants you to repent and come in the Kingdom. He doesn't want you to perish, He doesn't take pleasure in people perishing, He wants all to come to saving knowledge of Him, so He's patient, He's long suffering, He wants you to repent.

So, my question to you is have you repented? Have you repented and believed in the gospel? What does that even mean? What does it mean to repent? Well first of all, it's you realizing that you are sinful and you are lost, and what that means is you could be a very good sinner or a very bad sinner. Being a sinner can go either way. A very good sinner is you're very religious, you try really hard, you have a really good family, you work really hard, you're doing everything right but it's for self-righteousness. It's for your own ticket into Heaven. That's the fig leaves you're putting on and covering up to make yourself look good, but you're still the god of your own life and you have your own righteousness to show before God—that righteousness is like filthy rags. So, some of us have to repent of our goodness, because our goodness is no good before God. We need the goodness of Christ, perfect goodness.

So have you repented? It's to repent from yourself, your life. I've either done really good or really bad, but it's been all me all the time. I've been the lord of my life, and what I need to do is I need to turn from me and turn to the Lord Jesus. I want His righteousness rather than my own. I want Him to forgive my rebellion rather than staying in it. I want Him to be Lord and King of my life rather than me. That's what repentance looks like—it's turning from you and turning to Jesus because you believe who Jesus says He is; He is God who became a man. He lived the life you couldn't, He died the death you deserve, and on a cross, God made this beautiful

exchange—your sin for His righteousness—and the exchange happens when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. When you believe, you say yes I believe Christ died for my sins, He was buried, but three days later He rose again for my justification and He's in Heaven and He's coming back to be my King and bring me into His Kingdom forevermore. I'm saying yes to that. I want that more than I want this world. I want that more than I want me, so I'm repenting, I'm turning, and I'm trusting in Christ. When that happens, you will be born again into the Kingdom of God and you will have hope and reconciliation back with God. The reason why Christ has not come back is because He wants you to repent. He doesn't want you to perish. He wants you to have everlasting life with Him. So my question is have you repented?

Some of you are saying, "Yes I have. I remember the day, I remember it well, and now I'm walking with Jesus and life's been better." If you have repented, then here's a second question. Do you know someone who needs to repent? Do you know a family member, a friend, someone that you work with, someone that you rub shoulders with, a stranger that you meet? Do you know someone who hasn't repented and believed in the Lord? Why has Christ not come back? Because He wants that person to repent and come into the knowledge of Jesus and have salvation. What's keeping that person? Well first, they need to hear the gospel. They need to hear what Christ did for them on the cross, and who better to tell them than you? You obviously know them, you're around them, you have favor with them, you're in a circle with them, why not you be the one that tells them the best news in the world that could change their life forever? See, Christ isn't slow in coming back, He's good, and He's waiting for you to repent or for the people you know to repent. They need to hear the gospel from you that you might be someone who carries the message of Jesus to them. Yes, it might be messy—it's hard, it's awkward—it always is, but you know, it's never as awkward as I think it's going to be. When I share with somebody, I always think it's going to be just the most awkward train wreck in the world. They're going to hate me, they're going to spit at me, they're going to punch me, they're going to cast me out, and it's never gone that way. I mean, we haven't always agreed, but it's semi-friendly. You're probably not going to get punched in the face when you share the

gospel with someone you love. We always imagine like the worst case scenario, but what if you just leaned in and prayed this week for an opportunity to share with someone you know who needs to repent and believe in Christ? What if you started there? Just pray, "God, just give me an opportunity. Break my heart for this person. Give me an opportunity to share." I'm just going to pray that every day this week and see what happens. If you pray that every week, you know it's probably going to happen. You're going to find some opportunity where that person's going to be in your path and you're going to have a moment to actually share the gospel with him. Christ hasn't come back because He wants sinners to repent.

So either you're a sinner needs to repent or you know sinners that need to repent. What does this mean for us as the church? We do like those people in Acts who are gawking up at heaven wondering about charts and times and when's He coming. Instead of trying to figure out when Christ is coming back, remember what the text says, "...the day of the Lord will come like a thief." Do you know what that means? Peter's saying you're not going to know when it's going to happen. Do you know what thieves don't do? They don't call or text you to let you know they are coming. Have you ever noticed that? They don't call you and says...*Hey, guess what? I'm going to be your house about 10 o'clock. I have a red vehicle. I'm just going to share my Life360 with you so you can track my car and know about when I'm going to pull in. I'm just going to rob everything you have.* Is that what thieves do? No, thieves don't warn you; thieves just come. It's the element of surprise that a thief is counting on. When Jesus comes in judgment at His second return, He is coming *like* a thief. In other words, you can't prepare for it. You're charts don't equip you for it. He is going to come and you're not going to be able to predict it. It's going to happen, and when it happens, it's too late—it's the end, it's over.

So what does that mean? Today is the day of salvation, right now. Does all this stuff happening in the Middle East mean the end is near? Yes, it does mean it's near. 500 years ago, it was near. In Peter's day, it was near. It's always been near. Christ is coming like a thief and when He comes back, it's game over. So don't wait; prepare right now. Repent and believe in the



gospel and plead with your friends, plead with your family to repent and believe in the gospel because we are not promised tomorrow. Jesus might come back today and it's judgment and eternity. Are you prepared, are your friends prepared for the return of Christ? The scoffers say there's no return and there's no judgment; the Bible says there's a return and there is judgment. So be ready and get ready, and make sure those you love and know are getting ready and are ready.