

Are we there yet? That question bothers just about every parent probably because kids ask it every three minutes. My sister and I knew not to even ask the question. Asking yielded responses along the lines of a flat out 'no' to a breakdown of the long hours left to travel. Neither made us feel better about the time left to spend in the car before we got to whatever exciting place we were going.

These days I hear not "Are we there yet?" but rather something like "Is it here yet?". That might refer to a birthday coming up soon. It might refer to an upcoming trip. Or of course it might refer to the number of days left in school or work till Christmas Break. What I don't hear, "Is it time to repent of my sin yet?" "Is it time for me to be in Bible study more frequently?" "Is it time for me to take life seriously and live the way God wants?" "Is the Last Day here yet?" Those questions we usually ignore completely or we say we'll do tomorrow.

What does God want? Does he want the annoying asking of a five year old to the parents, are we there yet? Or is God happy with the silence? Peter addresses what God wants as he writes the letter for the second lesson.

**Is it here yet?  
More time to repent  
More time to live righteous lives**

Ten days till your birthday. That statement means something to an adult. A short week and a half is nothing. The same ten days for someone turning three or four is like a lifetime. They can barely count to ten much less understand how short a time ten days is. So they agonizingly wait for each day to pass. A three year olds time frame is not the same as an adult. Just like God's time frame is not our time frame. **"With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."** That sounds like a huge difference to us, but to God it isn't anything at all. When you're waiting for something exciting, like say Christ's return in glory, each day passes agonizingly slow, like God is delaying. But in God's time frame it's like no time has gone by at all.

When we think about God's timetable what is most on our minds may not even be Christ's return. We might want to know more about why God allows dreadful things to happen while the world keeps on going. Why if God is so powerful doesn't he stop time when a father is about to hurt his child? Why if God wants what's good does he allow our car to need repairs which cost a lot and will keep our car in the shop for a day or two? Our response might be God must not be able to act quickly enough. Perhaps God has time management issues too. So when we do think about Christ returning it seems almost laughable. God hasn't done anything with that in so long the entire world has stopped watching. The world doesn't need the wakeup call as much as it seems God does.

The truth is Christ could come tomorrow. Tomorrow for us is Monday. For God tomorrow might mean another thousand years. It might mean only two hundred years. It might mean tomorrow. We don't know because it's God's timetable. **"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness."** Whether it's two thousand, two hundred, or tomorrow the Lord hasn't forgotten like some might believe. God isn't slow, apathetic, or powerless. The delay is interpreted as slowness; that the end of the world is a long way off yet, maybe not coming at all. No need to get serious about spiritual things. Maybe it's even us who thinks life is long. We want to experience all of its pleasure. Wanting long life isn't sinful. But wanting God to delay the end or not bring it at all until we've had the experience of the pleasure might be sinful.

Flip your thoughts about slowness. What if instead of slowness and delay being a bad thing they were good. Opening Christmas presents on Christmas makes them that much more enjoyable. A terminal illness that goes on for a couple of months gives time to say goodbyes. A long time till Judgment Day gives us more time to repent, and more time for others to repent too. **"He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."** God isn't working off your timetable. "Ready for Judgment Day today Lord because I've got a test or big presentation. I'm not ready tomorrow when I've got a swim meet or soccer game." God's timetable thinks about all people. Delay means more have time to hear God's Word and repent. Delay means longer for people to hear about Jesus and believe. Delay means more focus on Christ and his return. Delay is God's grace in action for you.

God's grace is our mission and God's grace in delay gives us time to be about the mission. Now is the time, later will be too late. Now is the time to speak to that loved one about Jesus. Now is the time to offer the invite to someone for Christmas services. Now is the time to participate in the outreach mailing or come to the Advent by Candlelight or invite someone to the Children's Christmas program. God is delaying for you to be about his good news work of spreading Jesus.

Friends of mine from Alabama recently posted about a favorite restaurant in Huntsville that was closing. They had just gone the final time. They savored each bite. Knowing that the restaurant was closing made it vital that they go one more time. If you knew someplace was closing that you enjoyed wouldn't you want to go and savor each trip, each bite, each moment? God tells us over and over that the world is ending. **"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief."** We don't know when but we know it will. That means we must change our behavior. Use the extra time to live the lives God wants.

John the Baptist came to prepare a world that didn't remember the promise of a Savior for a Savior. It was shocking but needed to be broadcast. The message about the Last Day might be one people don't remember. It might be shocking. We might even live right now with a paralyzing fear over Judgment Day. The more we prepare maybe the more unprepared we feel. God is seen only as angry judge. Particular sins that we're committing make us feel uneasy about going before God. Maybe a sin we haven't really admitted, a sin we know is wrong, a sin we want to hide? Or we could be using church as a hideout. We come to church to avoid dealing with ungodly people. "Let them come to us if they want something" we say. "They should all know that they're going to hell for their sins" we say with a note of boasting.

Christ Jesus wants none of those things for us. **"In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness."** Christ is the fulfillment of the promise God made. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the one who had come to take away the sins of all the world. Christ promises that those who believe in him have eternal life. Christ promises that those who believe in him will be in that new heavens and new earth. For believers the Last Day, the day Christ returns is a day to look forward to. Even one we wish would come quicker. It's the day our Savior returns for us and keeps his promise.

So we still wait but all this is more time for us to live the lives God wants us to live. **"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."** The Holy Spirit changes our life, our attitudes, and priorities. He brings them in line with our faith, which grows as we soak ourselves in God's grace. We do the things God wants us to do according to our roles. Christ's coming doesn't allow us to get out of being a student and doing homework. "I didn't do my homework because I thought Christ would come back." No employee can say, "I didn't come in yesterday because I was convinced Christ was returning." Live your lives. Wait confidently for Christ's return. The Holy Spirit will keep you strong till the end so you will be found blameless and holy when Christ does return.

Is it here yet? No it's not. And according to God's timetable it might not be here for years or it might come today. We don't know and we won't know. But that's no matter. All the time God gives us is time of grace. It's time for us to repent of the sins we do commit and turn to Christ for forgiveness. It's time for us to live the lives God wants us to live. We grow in faith, we make decisions based on biblical principles, and we invest ourselves in studying and sharing God's Word. Christ isn't here yet so make the most of the time you have left under his grace.