

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

2 Peter 3:8-10(ESV) ⁸But 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. ⁹The 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. ¹⁰But 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.

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Amen.

I have lived almost my entire life in a **hurry**. One of my favorite relatives was on her deathbed. She told her son; I need a glass of water and **hurry**. I have driven across the United States six times and always in a **hurry**. I have worked my tail off at the farm trying to beat the rain and always in a **hurry**. I tend to walk fast because I am always in a **hurry**. Often times when I am with my wife I am already in the building and she is still getting out of the car because she is never in a **hurry**. I don't know why she can't speed up because I am in a **hurry**. One of the reasons I am choosing to sit while preaching is I am more relaxed and not in a **hurry**. If you think my sermons are too long I will just speak faster in order to take up less time. Having said that, it is not too smart to try to hurry a sermon. So please listen fast.

God does everything according to His perfect timetable. He created all that there is in six time periods and rested on the 7th. He could have hurried the entire process up and done it in a split second because God is all powerful. God was most patient with Adam and Eve. Our perfect Father, namely God the Father, created Adam and Eve and they rebelled against God. God could have consumed their very lives but displayed grace and patience and provided clothing for them. An animal had to be sacrificed to get the animal skins for Adam and Eve to wear. That first sacrifice points to the final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that saves us for all eternity.

Today, God is exercising tremendous grace and patience. Do you know that every time we sin, we deserve to die. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Every time we sin, we deserve to be buried or cremated but God is exercising his holy patience. God does not want any to perish but all to be saved.

God sees all that is happening in our nation today and I believe it grieves God. The Holy Spirit is being ignored. God is being mocked as people live their lives with no thought of God at all. Church attendance is on the steepest decline ever in our country and it cannot be blamed on the virus. Forty percent of regular church goers have had no contact with their church whatsoever since early March.

Why does God just not hurry up and put an end to all of this? God is giving us all time to repent and get right with God. If the Lord Jesus were to come today so many would be lost forever because there is no such thing as a second chance to come to Christ once this life is over. There are people to be brought in the Kingdom first and then the end will come. **Matthew 24:14(NLT)** “¹⁴And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.” God wants more people to be reached for Christ so that there will be less perishing than if he came today.

But when he does come look at what will happen. **Habakkuk 2:14(ESV)** “¹⁴For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” God’s glory will be everywhere, and we will finally breathe as easily as we have ever breathed with our brand-new glorified bodies that will live forever and ever. God even shares His glory with us. That my friends is what your soul and my soul longs for. God and all His goodness wins. God’s reign will know no end and the Bible says we will reign with him. Part of us yearns for that to happen now but God is not in any hurry. One day God’s patience will wear thin, but that time has not come yet. God’s patience has its limits.

God lives above time. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." God is not bound by time. There are experiences in our own lives that give us a sense of eternity where time does not exist. For whatever reason you do not see one of your closest friends or relatives for over 30 years and then when you meet up again, it seems like no time has gone by at all. You pick up where you left off. Christian friendships are eternal and according to God's point of view no time has gone by for God lives above time. God never thinks, "I only have five minutes to fix this." God is not bound by time as we are. Sometimes you can enjoy an orchestra or a movie and when you leave you feel as if no time has gone by. These experiences give us a hint of eternity for no time has gone by in the realm of the spirit. Sometimes my sermons feel like they last an eternity when only 30 minutes have gone by. That's because we are so time oriented, bound by time. It is possible the sermon might have been too long, maybe. I have no comment about that.

God is not slow in fulfilling His promises and neither is God in a hurry. It means for us living today that God is developing within us better hearing, better eyesight, and it is called patient endurance. For 45 years my devotional time alone with God has been a disciplined part of my life. Now I crave that time alone with God in His Holy Word. Friends, our ears need to hear exactly what God is saying. If all we do is listen to what this world is saying, we will sink fast. What I mean by this world I mean the way of thinking that is in rebellion against God and has no thought of God at all. Listening to that which opposes God drains us of our internal resources. When we are being lied to, we feel it. God's Word is absolute truth. Our ears are crying out for what God has to say and it is time for us to listen.

This week I listened to the time when the Apostle Paul was stoned and left for dead. The believers gathered around him and Paul stood up and walked on his own strength. The very next day Paul and Barnabas continued their ministry. I quote, **Acts 14:22(NLT)** ²². ...they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that

we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.” None of us have been stoned and left for dead. When I heard this section of Scripture, I was so convicted of my own self-pity and feeling sorry for myself. I have nothing to complain about at all. O Lord may all of us continue to strengthen one another in the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that our brothers and sisters in Christ are suffering hardships, some of which we do not know about. God’s Word is right there to get us over ourselves, to pick us up, and put us to use for God’s sake. God keep our ears open to Your Word of Truth.

Friends, to look at this world and see all the darkness is self-defeating. We need better eyesight. In the book of Revelation, we see Jesus high and lifted up reigning over the entire universe. To have better eyesight is to have an eternal perspective seeing Jesus as the Almighty ruler. Jesus is not some little baby in a manger pooping his diapers. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords who one day everyone will bow down to. Your view of God must be larger than this world. One reason we struggle is our view of God is too puny; we need better eyesight. Quick looking at all the darkness and see Jesus who is the light of the world.

Practically this is called having patient endurance. Patient endurance knows that nothing in this world occurs that God does not see or know about. Patient endurance knows God is moving history toward God’s end. Patient endurance knows that God is still in control and God’s will cannot be thwarted. Patient endurance means we accept the fact that God knows what He is doing when we do not understand. Patient endurance means remaining faithful to God no matter what because we have the ability to hear what God is saying and see God at work. Oh, how we need ears to hear and eyes to see. It is called living by faith in our unseen God instead of only seeing the darkness of this world and sinking to new lows. God’s light is greater than the darkness and God’s truth overcomes the lies of this world. God is working out everything in your life for your good and for the greater glory of God. Amen and Amen.