

—2 Peter 3:8-14

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 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. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

For six summers during my last years of high school and throughout my college years, I worked building farm silos. For the last two summers I was foreman of the crew. We built silos as high as 60 feet. Even to this day I can tell you how to build the type of silo we built. But not many farmers today build silos. In fact, many farm silos stand empty as monuments to the past. You got to keep up with the times. Sometimes our children and grandchildren feel the same way about us especially when we cannot figure out a computer problem or some cell phone technology and our latest is one of our TV remotes which sometimes is so frustrating that I would like to drop it from a silo. "Dad, Grandpa, you got to keep up with the times."

Believe it or not, that is what the Apostle Peter is telling us this morning. "Keep up with the times, dear friends, keep up with the times!" What in the world is he talking about? Peter is speaking about the second coming of the Lord. About now you might be thinking, "Well, didn't we hear these for the past few weeks wonderful sermons about the Lord's Second Coming? Are you pastors having some kind of contest? Aren't you communicating with one another? Or maybe you pastors have been recently given some inside information about the Lord's Second Coming such as that He is coming before Christmas of this year!" No we do not have any inside information. All we know is what the Bible says. It happens that our sermon texts this year emphasize the Lord's Second Coming.

"Keeping up with the times" can be summed up with three Rs. The first is that you **recognize** the times. Yes, almost 2000 years have gone by since Jesus announced he would be coming again – that will be Judgment Day, the end of the world, the Last Day. Peter starts off this section with this reminder, "**But do not forget this one thing, dear friends.**" Maybe you tend to forget things such as where you put your keys or your glasses or where you set your coffee cup. Maybe you have forgotten the name of some person. These things can be embarrassing and frustrating. But please do not forget something important about the Lord's Second Coming. **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.** Keeping up with the times means that you realize that our calendar is much different from the calendar of the Lord who is the Creator of time. Maybe in our prayers we ask the Lord to provide something RIGHT NOW but the Lord says LATER. Maybe the Lord tells us to do something RIGHT NOW such as Stop that sinful habit and we respond, Lord, not now but later.

After God had made the first announcement in the Garden of Eden that His Son would come to be our Savior, 4000 years of time went by before that first Christmas when Jesus was born. But after God announced a flood was coming to cover the world, only 120 years of time went by before the flood came. When God promised Abraham that his descendents would someday occupy the Promised Land, 500 years of time went by before Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land. But only a few days went by from the time God announced the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to when the fire and brimstone poured out of the skies upon those cities.

How much time left before Christ returns, we do not know. God does not want us to know exactly. But that day will come, it will surely come. In fact, the Lord says it will come like a thief in the night – **suddenly, unexpectedly.** About 20 years ago I had a 1991 Buick Le Sabre which I parked in the driveway. On a Thursday morning about 5:30 as I was going to teach the Thursday morning Bible Class that meets at Denny's Restaurant, I walked outside to my driveway with my Bible and Bible Class handouts in my hand along with the Buick Keys. But surprise, surprise! The Buick was not there. A thief in the night had stolen it. That is how the Lord will return, suddenly, unexpectedly. He could be coming yet this day.

But what's the Lord waiting for? I'm happy that the Lord has delayed His return for had the Lord come back 500 years ago, we would not have been born and we would never experience the joys of heaven. Here is an answer why the Lord is delaying. **He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** He is holding off for awhile for He wants everyone to repent and be saved. He takes no delight in seeing someone perish and end up in hell. Isn't this passage a wonderful Gospel passage showing the Lord's love? At the same time it is a serious law passage for God is calling upon people to repent. Keeping up with the times means **repenting** of your sins. This is the Second R.

Calling upon people to repent is an accusation. It is saying that you are guilty of sin and therefore need to repent. A broad definition of repentance contains the 4 R's.

1. **Recognition of sin** – For example, many men and women in our society are living together without being married. And a great many of them do not think it is wrong and sinful. What people need to know that it is not what we humans may or may not say what a sin is but what God in his timeless Word says is a sin. Let's keep up with the times. God has rules. The summary of them is not called the Ten Suggestions but the Ten Commandments. **We too** need to recognize our own sins. Let's look at but one thing – patience. We are told that the Lord is patient with you. I like the word the King James Translation uses for patience as it translates this section. "The Lord is longsuffering with you." Are you patient and longsuffering with others? Or do you tend to be snippy, snarly, snooty, and snappy toward others? Maybe you don't show these things but are these things inside of you – and maybe even stored by you in your inner file cabinet or hard drive along with hard feelings toward others? Let's recognize too all those sinful thoughts and attitudes such as greed, lust, self-pity, and yes, even worry and anxiety.
2. **Remorse over sin.** The kind of remorse we are talking about is not feeling sorry only because you got caught. The young boy caught shoplifting was really sorry but mostly because he got caught, the police were coming, and on top of it all he would have to deal with his parents. The person who had ruined his life with drugs was very sorry but not truly repentant before the Lord. Godly remorse is realizing you have offended God. You wish you had not sinned. You look for God's mercy. And then it goes on to the next step.
3. **Remission of sins.** It is trusting in Jesus for the remission of sins. It is not like Judas who had remorse but did not turn to Jesus for forgiveness. We hear and believe those words of John the Baptist as He pointed to Jesus, **Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.** It is following those words of Jesus Himself, **Repent and believe the good news.** It is rejoicing in those words, **Come now, let us reason together says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be as red as crimson, they shall be as wool.**
4. **Renewal of life.** Remission of sins is not a license permitting us to sin all the more. Rather it is an incentive to fight against sin and live a renewed life. If you say that you are really repentant of sin but then deliberately continue in that sin and do not fight against it, would we not question the sincerity of your repentance? Peter has a probing question for each of us. Having announced that the Lord is coming back and that this world we live in will be laid bare, he asks, **"What kind of people ought you to be?"** How would you answer that question? Peter who asked the question also gives the answer. **"You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming."** He also continues, **"make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him."**

In a very real sense keeping up with the times means having the right attitude – the right attitude toward our sins, the attitude of love and respect for the Lord who forgives our sins – and one more thing – **Really Looking Forward.** Maybe some of you are looking forward to special events in your life. But especially look forward to the time when the Lord shall return. In fact, three times in these verses we are told to look forward to the day of the Lord.

However, it might seem to be a terrifying day because we are told the end of the world will be sudden, violent, and with great destructive heat. But remember when all this happens, we will be in the safe arms of our God. After this universe is dismantled, it will be rebuilt, transformed, and renewed. It will be the home of righteousness. That means no more sin, evil, cruelty, lies, crime, and jails. It will be a perfect environment. We ourselves will be perfect and could not be any happier. We will be different. No longer that sinful nature to contend with! And best of all, we will be with the Lord.

Keeping up with the times means the following for us.

- A. **Recognizing the times**
- B. **Repenting of sin**
- C. **Really Looking Forward to the day**