

I. Introduction

- A. The title of my talk today is:
 - 1. **Prepping for Your Finals**
- B. Today is part 13 in a series. We've been reading and thinking our way through one of the shortest books in the Bible. This little book called Second Peter.
- C. It's pretty much in your face.
- D. When I preach a section of Scripture I have a mission. My mission is to explain the content and to convey the tone of that Scripture. If I make the content and tone of Scripture clear, I have discharged my duty.
- E. Let me read you a description of Second Peter from a super solid Bible teacher from New Zealand. His name is J. Sidlow Baxter:
 - 1. "Beware," says Peter in effect, 'Your most dangerous deceivers are those who come with a tasty bait and a concealed hook!' ... Wherever there is a Divine truth which saves, there will be a Satanic counterfeit which damns: so will it be until the arch-deceiver is flung into the abyss...There is no "mincing of words" or "beating about the bush." There can be no tolerance of that which, inside the very Church itself, dishonors Christ and ruins the soul. There can be no "dainty handling" of false teachers! ...Peter sees the issue with Spirit-anointed clearness. There can be no compromise... When easy-going kindness lounges in the place of righteous indignation, and allows Christ-dishonoring false doctrine to play havoc inside the Church, kindness has ceased to be Christian, it has become disguised disloyalty, camouflaged cowardice, or a moral wasting-disease."
- F. So, if my messages sound harsh or in your face, then I've represented Peter and his Spirit inspired message well.
 - 1. If my messages are anxious warnings about the devil, it is because Peter wrote anxious warnings about the devil.
 - 2. If my messages are about churches being deceived, it's because Peter sounded the alarm about churches being deceived.
 - 3. If my messages are urgent and in your face, it's because Peter wrote an urgent, in your face book.
 - a) It's the gospel of grace, not the gospel of nice.
 - b) It's a rigorous truth, not a sentimental feeling.
- G. Welcome to Church.
- H. So, let's finish up 2 Peter today. We have two short paragraphs.

II. *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:11-13)*

- A. The future of every individual, and nation, and of the whole world, is in the hands of God.
- B. In that future, as God has planned it, there will be a new heavens and new earth in which rigorousness dwells.
- C. We talked about all of this last time. But what we didn't talk about was this little phrase:
 - 1. looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God
- D. How can we *hasten* an event on God's timetable?
 - 1. Does God actually manage his eternal clock according to what we do?
 - 2. In this case, yes he does.
- E. Peter has already told us why Christ has not yet returned (verse 9). The reason is simple. There are still people who need to be saved, who will be saved, but have not yet been saved.
 - 1. So God is patient, and he is giving them time.
- F. And when all the people who will be saved, by their own free will, have been saved, then God presses the cosmic button and triggers the last days sequence of events.
 - 1. Rapture, Tribulation, Armageddon, Millennium, Final Judgement, Eternal State.
- G. According to Peter, the sooner the household of faith fills up, the sooner the Lord will return.
- H. Maybe he's just waiting for you.
- I. Or for somebody you love.

III. *Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; (2 Peter 3:14)*

- A. When Peter says to be diligent, he is moving something way up in the list of priorities in our lives.
- B. He says to be diligent To be found by him... pay attention to that day, prepare for that say, put energy into how that day will go down for you.
 - a) **The first way to prep for judgment day is to actually care about judgment day.**
- C. When Jesus comes again, a number of things will happen. One of the things that will happen is Judgment Day. There are a couple of judgment days in the Bible.
 - 1. For people who don't have Jesus, Judgment Day will be a very rough day, because it will deliver to them the justice of God and a sentence of everlasting death. That judgment day is called the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11).
 - 2. For people who do have Jesus—and I hope and pray that's you—it will be a really good day, because not only will you enter heaven and eternal life, you will also receive heavenly rewards. This judgment day is called the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom 14:10, 2 Cor 5:10).
 - a) This judgment is not about whether or not you get into heaven. That was finalized the day you were saved (1 Cor 3:15).
 - b) This judgment is about your rewards in heaven (1 Cor 3:14).
 - c) God will evaluate you on the basis of your grace-motivated works (1 Cor 3:12,13).
 - d) The depth and power of your spiritual life on earth will determine the breadth and scope of your blessings in heaven forever (Mark 10:30, Matt 19:29).
 - e) The Prime Directive is evangelism (Dan 12:3).
 - 3. Here is Peter. Thirty three years after Jesus has died, risen again, and ascended to heaven. Thirty three years of young churches spreading the gospel of Jesus, teaching grace and truth.

4. Peter writes a letter to them. Peter writes a letter to you.
5. He says, be diligent to be found by him... on the day of Judgment, at the Judgment Seat of Christ...
6. And then the next two words...

D. **In peace...**

E. Peter is talking about our prep-work for Final Judgment.

1. And he says what the main thing you should focus on is... peace?
2. To me, that's totally unexpected.
 - a) Why not be diligent to be found in him full of holiness but why peace? After all, Peter does mention being without spot and blameless, which is a giant pointer to holiness... so why does he say in peace?
 - b) Why not evangelism?
 - c) Why not the fruit of the Spirit?
 - d) Why not obedience to God?
 - e) Why not love for God, and love for your neighbor, and love for the world for whom Christ died?
3. Why peace?
4. Like I said, this is really unexpected. But the more I studied it, the more it makes sense to me.
5. What is peace?
 - a) Peace is the absence of strife.
 - b) It's the presence of harmony.
 - c) It's the space in your life to inhale and exhale with nobody and nothing pulling at you in a thousand directions.
6. Peace. The Jews called it *shalom*. The Greeks called it *eirene* (eye-RAIN-nay, the name Irene comes from this).
7. Our lives are made of lots of parts.
 - a) **Dating or Marriage. Family. Money. Work. Church. Relationships. Sexuality. School. Friendships. Taking care of your house or apartment. Food. Exercise. Mental health. Spirituality. We have all of these parts inside of us.**
8. Sometimes these parts clash with each other.
 - a) *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?* (James 4:1)
9. It's like an out of tune orchestra.
10. You can be really healthy financially, and really sick in your marriage. There's a clash in your life. You can have a lot of strength in your work or school, but be immoral and messed up in your sexuality. There's another clash in your life. You can be morally strong, but parentally weak.
 - a) All these clashes introduce fractures into your life that your soul can't bear.
11. Why?
12. They have no peace. Their spokes are broken
13. When Peter encourages you to prep for Judgment Day, he says you should be eager to be found by God with peace... meaning that all the parts of you are singing the same tune. And that tune comes from Jesus Christ himself living in you and through you.
 - a) **The second way to prep for Judgment Day is to submit every part of your life to Jesus and his transforming presence.**
14. That is the only way to quiet the inner dissonance of your life. That is the holy way to get all the parts of your life singing the same tune, the life-giving, purpose-driven, god-honoring tune of the life of Christ at the core.
15. Peace therefore includes everything else.
 - a) It includes holiness.
 - b) It includes evangelism.
 - c) Peace includes a life of obedience.
 - d) It includes love.
16. The more I think about it, the more I realize how deep and brilliant Peter was when he exhorted us to be diligent to be found by God, on judgment day, possessing the one quality that includes all the other qualities of a well-lived Christian life.
 - a) Do you want this peace in your life?
 - b) I do.

F. But how? How do we grow this peace? How do we come to a place where all the sectors of our lives are resonating with the harmonic frequency of the Lord Jesus Christ?

IV. *and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. (2 Peter 3:15, 16)*

- A. A few verses back Peter said that there were mockers who denied the second coming of Christ. These mockers claimed that the long delay in Christ return represented slowness on God's part. But Peter says no it isn't slowness, it's salvation.
1. More people get to be saved. Every day that Jesus waits allows more people to come to Christ. I love this because it shows the heart of God wanting everybody to meet Jesus as their Savior. God is the greatest evangelist in the universe.
 2. And you are invited to dedicate your life to this cause.
 - a) **The third way to prep for judgment day is to invest emotionally and practically in the salvation of lost people.**
 - (1) People need the Lord.
 - (2) People need to be saved.
 - (3) God loves lost people and wants them saved.

- (4) People need to hear the gospel of grace, the message of the shed blood of the Savior, and an invitation to only believe and be saved.
3. Peter is telling you that the reason Jesus hasn't come back yet shouldn't cause doubt, it should cause passion for lost people.
4. I also love how Peter points to Paul. Both of them are leaders in the early church, called Apostles. Both of them had a passion for Christ and our love for God. And both of them had an incredible fire for truth and theology and doctrine.
 - a) Here Peter points to Paul and specifically to some of the parts of the Bible that he has written. He acknowledges that some of these writings can be hard to understand. Paul's writings are tightly reasoned arguments for grace and truth.
5. That's why it is so important to study.
6. Because if you don't do that you end up doing with Peter warns against here, which is to twist the Scriptures. Unless we are tightly anchored to the word of God, we will be blown away.
7. Please don't miss the fact that in this verse Peter points to the writings of Paul and says that they are Scriptures.
 - a) Did you catch that?
 - b) Peter is putting the apostolic writings on the same level as the Old Testament Scriptures. In other words the whole Bible is the authoritative, inspired, inerrant, and perfect Word of God.
- B. The main theme of Peter's whole book has been to warn against false teachers. And so I stand here today and remind you and everybody hearing my voice that it is the Bible alone that is the source of our truth.
 1. The Bible protects us from false teachers.
 2. It is the Bible, not dreams and visions, not experiences, not historical trends, not traditions, not cultural values, not emotions, not preferences, not current opinion, not media, not celebrities, not government, not educators, not opinion polls, not the majority, not popularity, not even pastors and preachers, it is the Bible that is our source for truth.
 3. And the day we forget this is the day we open our hearts and minds to the destructive errors of false teachers. God help us.
 - a) **The fourth way to prep for judgment day is to return again and again to the written Word of God.**
 4. Let's not forget what Peter is talking about here. He is talking about being found ready for reward at Judgment Day.
 5. And now he is saying that the only way *that* can happen is if we are continually feeding our soul and our spirit with the life giving truths of the word of God.
 - a) The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to zap away all the things that destroy your peace.
 - (1) And whether the part of the Bible you're reading is written by Peter or by Paul or by David or by Luke or by Isaiah or by Moses, it makes no difference.
 - (2) All of Scripture is the one and only inspired message of the Holy Spirit of God, straight from the heart and mind of our Savior Jesus Christ.
 - b) *'Behold, I will bring them health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth.'* (Jeremiah 33:6)
 6. This is my prayer for you.
 7. This is truth is such an important part of our ministry of pathway Church and Peter underlines that in his final paragraph.
- V. *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.* (2 Peter 3:17, 18)
 - A. We have a warning. And we have an encouragement.
 - B. Both of them sum up everything Peter has been trying to say to you for all 13 of these sermons. It's everything I've been trying to say to you as well.
 - C. The warning is that word *beware*. You need to keep your guard up. And the encouragement is that word *grow*.
 - D. If there is anything that I could say to you as a child of God right now it is to keep your guard up and keep growing. We live in perilous times.
 - E. The devil is working overtime. His lies are flying fast and furious.
 - F. A storm is coming.
 - a) This is not the time to take your faith lightly.
 - b) This is not the time to be spiritual on Sundays and carnal every other day.
 - c) This is not the time to take lightly your relationship with God.
 - d) This is not the time to neglect God, the Bible, prayer, church, your heart.
 2. That's the warning, and the answer is to grow. To pack on spiritual muscle. To be strong against the dysfunctional currents of today.
 - a) **The fifth way to prep for Judgment Day is to fortify your heart by growing mature and strong in the Lord.**
 3. Don't stay a baby. Don't stay in spiritual kindergarten. Push away from the kiddie table, and join the feast of grace and truth with all the spiritual adults of the ages.
- VI. Conclusion
 - A. I've had a kind of slap me upside the head realization in the last couple of weeks.
 - B. For the last hundred years in America, there's been a really important battle for the Bible.
 - C. For almost all of that time, the battle has been over whether or not the Bible contains errors. This is the battle for inerrancy.
 1. Our church believes in inerrancy with all our hearts.
 2. This is definitional for being a Bible-believing Christian.
 - a) So there's been a battle over that, and all these papers and conferences and all that defending inerrancy.
 - D. But in the last five years, I think the battlefield has shifted.
 1. Inerrancy is still a battle.

2. But now the battle is moved a level back.
3. The battle today — pardon the big word — but the battle today is over the question, **Where do we find our truth? (Epistemology)**
4. Because there are plenty of churches and pastors that sign on to biblical inerrancy, and then set the Bible on the side and look everywhere else but the Bible to find their truth.
 - a) Emotions. Feelings. Impressions. Popular Psychology. Motivational speeches.
 - b) There's very little verse by verse Bible teaching. Theology gets laughed at. Biblical morality is getting eroded every single day.
 - c) Instead we have cheap epistemology — inferior truth sources that Jesus said is shifting sand, and any life built on them will collapse.
 - (1) Experiences and emotions and wonders and signs and dreams and visions and everywhere but the Bible.
- E. The greatest danger in the world today is the theological drift in the Church today.
- F. Let's plant our anchor in the Word of God, the theology of grace, the message of salvation, and the apostolic preaching of the cross.
 1. We don't need another revelation.
 2. We don't need new ideas.
 3. We don't need novel interpretations.
 4. We don't need signs.
 5. We don't need wonders.
 - a) We just need the Bible in all its richness and depth.
 - b) When the Bible isn't front and central, the church is in trouble.
- G. See this Bible?
 1. It's once for all.
 2. It doesn't change.
 3. You can't add to it.
 4. You can't take from it.
 - a) The devil hates it.
 - b) The demons fear it.
 - c) The world doubts it.
 - d) But God's people crave it.
 5. You can't improve on it.
 - a) And you shouldn't try.
 6. The Word of God is settled.
 7. It is permanent.
 8. It is the book of God, the book of grace, the book of salvation, and of our Savior Jesus Christ.
- H. The false teachers don't have a chance when the people of God are equipped with the Word of God.
- I. Filled with Christ, and armed with Scripture, we are invincible, AND we are prepared for our finals and the eternal glory that awaits, and we give all the glory and praise to God.