

Advent: Patience, Perish, Passing Advent: People, Promise, Peace

Michael J. Nielsen / General

Patience; People of God; Promises; Peace / 2 Peter 3:8–15

Rejoice in the certain promises of God!

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Coming Advent King. Amen.

towards the back of your bulletin I have given you an outline of the sermon

There's always a debate that happens once Thanksgiving is over. What season are we in? Many people claim that we are in the Christmas Season. As the Church we know we are not. We know we are in the season of Advent. Doesn't it seem as we wait through the days of Advent the world is already acting as it is already Christmas. Oftentimes though we grow impatient with the Advent Season. We get tired of waiting around - so what do we do...we bring Christmas into Advent. We want it here now. We want it like the rest of the world. We live in a fast-paced, frantic culture...we like to keep moving. Perhaps that's why we've had such a problem with this time of slow down. We have a problem with patience...actually we have a problem with impatience.

So today, we are going to go on a journey, a journey from patience to peace. Our calling to be the Advent People of God begins with patience and it ends with peace.

God is **patient**. He is patient with you, He is patient with others. He is patient with the world. And when he is patient, we grow impatient.

Hear again what Peter writes:

English Standard Version Chapter 3

8 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. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,

Some in Peter's day were becoming impatient with God's patience. This happened in particular as they faced persecutors and scoffers. It seemed to them that Christ was never coming back. After all he promised that they would be back soon. Just years or even decades later, he hasn't returned. The question that they were struggling with: "Had they been wrong in their believing?" "Have we been wrong in believing that He is coming back?"

Are we some of those accusing God of slowness? Do we accuse God of being slow when we face pain and sadness and rejection? God, why are you allowing the Pandemic and the consequences go on this long? God, we thought this was only going to be a month or two and then we can gather again like we want? When will this initial grief be over? When will I feel better God? Don't you call yourself a gracious and loving God? Why can't I find a job - we apply, but no call back, we apply but we are told we aren't qualified or even overqualified? What about the slowness that we perceive of God: When will he help me out financially? This Covid thing has really caused me to struggle. My kids and I, we've been home together without many places to go, we aren't getting along...how long is this going to go on? Many of our questions begin with when God? or even sometimes we cry out like the Psalmist has, "How Long, O Lord?"

Now as Christians even though we pray for His Kingdom to come, but we too may wonder where he is—if not actually to come and bring this world that we know of to an end, and if not that, at least to end our own problems. So we ask, just like the readers of Peter's epistle: "What is taking you so long God?"

You know the fact that God seems slow to you is really not the fact. The fact is God is not slow, but wishes that no one would **perish**. Hear again these words from Peter.

English Standard Version Chapter 3

9 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.

God's patience is for a gracious and glorious purpose. It's for your eternal well-being. It's for the eternal well-being of many.

If Christ returned at our own convenience, when we want him too—really the first time we wanted him to bail us out, think about the souls who would be lost. Perhaps even the souls of individuals that you are oh so close too. God loves them too. God died for them. He doesn't want to see them perish.

This was the very reason that John the Baptist came...the reason we hear a portion of his story today in our Gospel reading. He came to preach the message of repentance. "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is near!" This is a message we need to hear even today. Repent of your selfishness, repent of your greed. Repent of the times that think only of yourselves. Because yes the day is coming.

The day of the Lord will still come, and creation as we know it will **pass away**.

English Standard Version Chapter 3

10 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 don't know when the Lord is coming back, but we do know that it is coming and he will come like a thief. On that great day things will look very different. All the material goods that we find value in and cling to will be—and must be!—destroyed! The earth and the works done on it will pass away. On that last day...just think for a moment about the wonders of the world that will be no more...The Great Pyramids, the Taj Mahal, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Eiffel Tower...oh and the things that Americans hold so dear...the Statue of Liberty, the Lincoln and Washington Monuments, the White House, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis. What about closer to home...Lambeau Field or even closer the Turkey Plant or even closer the very building we are in this morning or that you came from...your own house. These things will not last forever. Your earthly possessions will not last forever. The event that is coming, the great day of the Lord will be stunning and spectacular.

What will we see? Only the Lord knows. We do know that all of creation will pass away, but the Word of God will not pass away. The Word of God will never pass away. The Word of God will remain forever!

Knowing what we know now, what sort of **people** we to be? Peter asks us this question:

English Standard Version Chapter 3

11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

Should we be people who scoff or doubt? Absolutely not! We ought to be people who live in holiness and godliness. We ought to be a people who live according to the will and Word of God. We ought to be people who live as disciples, who put others ahead of self and serve God by serving others. We ought to be a people who serve our community. Service definitely looks different today, but it can still be done. We ought to be a people who share the Word of God with others. This is what we ought to be, but often not what we are.

Yet for our sakes, the Son of God left the splendor of his paradise to live in this unholy and ungodly world. For you and me, the Son humbled himself as a Servant. For you and me, the Son went to the cross and the grave. For you and me, the Son will return in glory and gather His Church. That's a **promise!**

English Standard Version Chapter 3

13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Unlike our creations—temporal, artificial, egotistical (those things that we build)—his promise is for something far greater: “new heavens and a new earth).

It’s not just going to be same ole, same ole; God is doing a whole new thing. This is the place “in which righteousness dwells.”—where all is holy and godly, where we suffer no more sadness or scoffing or pain, even from our own sin. Our grief will become no more. We will be with Christ and those we love who died in the faith. Our sickness and disease will be gone. In the new heavens and earth...Covid and Cancer will be gone. There will be no need to physically separated. Whatever rejection we face won’t be there. The financial situation that we find ourselves in, whether it’s due to Covid cuts or something other predicament won’t matter. We will have far more riches than the earth can give way. This is big. God knows this!

Get this, God knows where you are at - more specifically, Christ knows it! He gets it. He’s been in pain before, his pain was greater than you will ever bear. He knows your grief. He cried at the death of Lazarus. He had no place to lay his head. He gets your troubles. He was rejected by men. He’s been physically and socially distanced from those he loves even his own Father. Every trouble that you have, He gets it, He’s experienced and you won’t have to deal with it anymore. It’ll be all gone.

During Advent, dear Saints, we look back to remember how God surely keeps his **promises**. We look back at His Old Testament promises and see them fulfilled in the manger of Bethlehem.

During Advent, dear Saint, we look forward to this promise yet to be kept, knowing that we have a faithful God.

Bo Giertz once said: “What unbelievers call the end of the world means, in fact, that we—finally!—will receive ‘new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells’, that creation—finally!—will be good again and the world a paradise, as it was meant from the beginning. Of, if we were only there!”

English Standard Version Chapter 3

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

This such good news for us. We will be found in him. Being in him makes us spotless and blemish-free. Being found in him makes us to be at **peace**. For you are reconciled with God by Jesus’ atoning death! That is, we have **peace** from Christ and through Christ and in Christ. This Advent Season, you have peace. You are an Advent People of Peace.

Therefore we are messengers, we are heralds of peace, as God is patient, desiring repentance, so Advent, awaiting Christ's return is time to prepare others.

Patience, God's Patience—that no one may **Perish**. Though this old creation will soon **Pass Away**, we will be a **People** waiting in holiness and godliness, because we have a **Promise: Peace** in Christ. Even in our impatience with all the things going wrong in this world, there's nothing there that is a **Problem**.

In the name of Jesus, our Advent King. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, our Coming Patient Advent King of Promise and Peace. Amen.