

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: **October 12, 2014**

Sermon Title: **Finish Well**

Series Title: A Study of 2 Peter and Jude

Text: 2 Peter 3:11-18

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: October 12, 2014
 Title: Finish Well
 Text: 2 Peter 3:11-18
 Theme: **His Coming** is certain and inescapable, thus **FINISH WELL**.

Introduction:

The call to a righteous life is a consequence of only righteousness existing in the future. A time will come when God will destroy all unrighteousness.

“The story is told of a minister who visited an elderly woman in the nursing home. The young minister said, ‘At your age you should be thinking about the hereafter!’ The older woman said, ‘Oh, I do all the time. No matter where I am – in my room, down in the cafeteria, or down in the recreation room – I ask myself ‘What am I here after?’ ‘ C.S. Lewis said, ‘It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one.’ Popular author and preacher, Joseph Stowell wrote, ‘When we begin to believe the reality of the other side, we start behaving differently on this side.’”¹

“There is a story that comes out of the Alaskan Gold Rush days. It seems that there was a prospecting party that had penetrated far into the interior of the country when they came upon a miner’s cabin. Everything around was as quiet as the grave. Entering the shack, they found the skeletons of two men, and a large quantity of gold. On a rough table was a letter telling of their successful search for the precious metal. In their eagerness to get it, they did not pay attention to the early coming of winter in that northern land. Each day the gold was found in more abundance. However, one morning they awoke to find a great snowstorm upon them. For days the tempest raged cutting off all hope of escape. Their little store of food was soon exhausted, and they lay down and died amidst abounding gold! Their folly was not in finding the gold, but in neglecting to provide against the inevitable winter. We can imagine these two. Each day they minded more gold and would talk with each other about all the things they were going to do with their new found riches. All the while they were neglecting to make provision for the coming winter. In a real sense, we could say that they were immature. They lacked practicality. They either lacked discernment about the signs of the approaching winter, or they lacked the good sense to do something to prepare for it. Their immaturity lead to their deaths. There is another season approaching. There is a time coming that will be unlike anything any of us have ever experienced. It will be a time that will be far beyond anything that has ever before occurred on the earth. The Apostle Peter both warns us about this coming day and call for us to be prepared for it. In 2 Peter 3:10 Peter warns us about the coming Day of the Lord and calls us to be ready for it.”²

The believers to whom Peter writes have, in his view, two interrelated problems: there are wolves among the sheep who broadcast doubt concerning the coming of Christ and consequently live immoral lives.

Peter makes application based on the imminent return of Jesus Christ. The holy conduct and godliness reaches back to 1:3-11. When Christ comes, the heavens will melt (3:7, 12). Despite the

heaven and earth's demise, we look to a new heaven and a new earth. At such a time, evil acts and people will be absent.

Verse 14 is a warning for those allured by the lusts of the flesh. Peter's exhortation is to live in the gospel. Only those partaking of the divine nature are found in peace, without spot, and blameless (v. 14).

God is patient in His plan to destroy the heaven and the earth (v. 15). The apostle Paul wrote of these same things. In verse 16, Peter affirms the nature of Scripture. What he wrote, what Paul wrote, and what was written is Scripture.

Verse 17 is a warning to those who made a profession but are enticed to leave Christ. Instead of turning back, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"Peter wants to remind (1:12) those believers who 'have obtained a faith of equal standing' (1:1) of what they have been given by belief. The focus and core of their belief is the righteousness of God and Christ. Conviction about God's righteousness grants everything that is needed for believers to share in God's righteousness. In fact, believers can expect to 'become partakers of the divine nature' (1:4). They can expect to become like God and have life and godliness (1:3). Conviction about God's and Christ's righteousness is not simply a collection of ideas about the character of God and Christ. Faith in God's and Christ's righteousness includes the belief that because God and Christ are righteous, all that is not righteous will be destroyed. The righteousness of God and Christ means that what is evil will not last. It cannot last. The righteousness of God and Christ means that all that opposes the pure goodness of God and Christ has a limited shelf life. The premise upon which this letter is based is the righteousness of God and Christ is stronger than sin and wickedness. Further, sin and wickedness, unlike God and Christ, will come to an end. Despite the letter's chilling references to the punishments in store for the wicked (e.g., 2:4-6)--inspiration no doubt for Dante's *Inferno*--Peter's focus is not on the negative but on the positive. The good news is the righteousness of God and Christ will one day be all there is. One day there will be no evil. One day there will only be the divine nature. The divine nature has many aspects to it, but all of these are aspects of love (1:4-7). One day there will only be love. In order for the righteousness of God and Christ to be all in all, what is now must come to an end. Peter is certain that the present heavens and the earth must be destroyed in order for the purity of the divine nature to fill creation. Peter is convinced that there will be a new creation--'new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.' (1:13). The author recognizes that this idea is preposterous to some. He defends his views with the argument that God has done this before: the first creation was destroyed by water (3:5-6). His main point is that God will not let evil go on forever. There will be an end. Life during the time of waiting for the end is to be lived in light of the good future. Since what is coming is a creation cleansed of sin--'new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwell' (3:13)--now is a time for believers to live what will be. Earlier in the letter, Peter gives a prescription for how to live for the future: 'make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with sisterly and brotherly kindness, and such

kindness with love.' (1:5-7). **Peter sees an inextricable connection between expectation of the advent of Christ and purity of life.**"³

THE BIG PICTURE:

- 1:1-11 Partaking of God's nature. God's righteous seed produces righteous fruit.
- 1:12-15 Keep remembering and do not forget the *Story*.
- 1:16-21 Jesus fulfills ancient promises given by the Holy Spirit.
- 2:1ff There Are false prophets who deny Jesus and make merchandise of the local Church. Their nature is revealed in their works.
- 2:4-10 God's word is sure. The unbeliever will perish and the believing will be rescued.
- 3:1-10 God stays final judgment for the sinner to repent.
- 3:11-18 In light of the future judgment, finish well.

The imperatives in this text speak of our sanctification as a result of our justification resulting in our glorification. They are inevitable and inseparable.

How the New Testament defines finishing well is often very different from how others might define it.



- I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; (2 Tim. 4:7)
- ³⁵ . . . and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated ³⁸ (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. (Heb. 11:35-38)
- ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? --I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, ²⁶ dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? ³⁰ If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, ³³ and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands. (2 Cor. 11:22-33)

Let us consider how Peter instructs us at the end of his short letter.

Outline:

I. His coming encourages hope-filled waiting/anticipation (vv. 11-13).

- ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. (2 Pet. 3:11-13)

“The participle is present, and implies the certainty of the event foretold, and, perhaps, also that the germs of that coming dissolution are already in being, that the forces which are ultimately to bring about the final catastrophe are even now at work.”⁴

“The Greek participle is in the present tense, and is probably used to convey the thought that even now the fabric of the earth is on its way to the final dissolution.”⁵

A “must” [ought] in the gospel. The must is looking and hastening [present active **participles**] (v. 13). The “look” in verse 14 is a present active indicative.

The contrast is between the false teachers found in chapter 2 and the people of God in chapter 3.

The “look” [prosdokao] means, “To anticipate (in thought, hope or fear); by implication, to await:--(be in) expect(-ation), look (for), when looked, tarry, wait for.” Peter uses it in verse 12, 13, and 14.

“Or possibly, “let us wait for.” The form in Greek (προσδοκῶμεν, prosdokwmen) could be either indicative or subjunctive. The present participle in v. 14, however, is best taken causally (“since you are waiting for”), suggesting that the indicative is to be read here.”⁶

It is of interest to see how Peter picks up the idea of “looking” found in the New Testament.

Looking for . . .

3:13 A new heaven and a new earth

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. (Rev. 21:1)

⁹ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ **for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God . . .** ¹³ All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. ¹⁵ And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. (Heb. 11:9-11, 13-16)

¹³ So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. ¹⁴ **For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.** (Heb. 13:13, 14)

“The Greek word for ‘what manner of persons’ means literally, ‘of what country;’ it seems to point to the great truth that God's people are fellow-citizens of the saints, that the commonwealth of which they are citizens is in heaven. The word for ‘to be’ is the emphatic *υπαρχειν*, which denotes original, essential, continuous being.”⁷

Of the thirteen times the word “conduct” occurs in the New Testament, eight are found in 1 and 2 Peter.

- But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye **holy in all manner of conversation**; (1 Pet. 1:15)
- Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your **vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers**; (1 Pet. 1:18)
- **Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles**: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Pet. 2:12)
- ¹Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, **they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives**; ²While they behold your **chaste conversation** coupled with fear. (1 Pet. 3:1, 2)
- Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your **good conversation in Christ**. (1 Pet. 3:16)
- And delivered just Lot, vexed with the **filthy conversation of the wicked**: (2 Pet. 2:7)
- Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all **holy conversation and godliness**, (2 Pet. 3:11)

Clearly, Peter believes those who partake of the divine nature, look and live like Jesus.

The word “godliness” [Eusebeia] occurs four times in Peter.

- According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and **godliness**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (2 Pet. 1:3)
- And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience **godliness**; (2 Pet. 1:6)
- And to **godliness** brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. (2 Pet. 1:7)
- Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and **godliness**, (2 Pet. 3:11)

Peter is not referring to something foreign, but something known.

Peter’s promoting comes from the horrific day of judgment awaiting the world.

“v8-9. The early church expected the return of Christ within the lifetime of the apostles. cf. Jn.21:22-23. As the apostles began to die off, some believers started to take the view that a cataclysmic last-days judgment of the world was more myth than reality. The delay in Christ's return seemed to support this idea. Peter makes two points: First, to talk about a delay in the day of judgment is to speak in human terms. God is not bound by created time; he is outside time. Second, to speak of delay, as though God is indifferent, is to fail to see the great benefit of such a delay. God's kindly patience gives additional opportunities for the salvation of the lost.”⁸

Peter elsewhere describes the coming or *parousia* as the coming of *Christ* (cf. 2 Pet 1:16; 3:4). The almost casual exchange between “God” and “Christ” in this little book, and elsewhere in the New Testament, argues strongly for the deity of Christ (see esp. 1:1).⁹

“v10. With regard the final great day of God's coming in judgment, Peter makes two points: First, the coming day is unexpected. All such comings are unexpected, including the final coming of the Lord. It will come like a thief in the night - a picture used by Jesus, cf. Matt.24:43, Lk.12:39, and Paul, 1Thes.5:2. Some manuscripts actually make it ‘during the night’, but this is probably not original. The point is simple enough, the day will come upon us unexpectedly, so be alert. Second, this day will be a day of cosmic dissolution: i] the ‘heavens’, the sky, the space about the earth, the cosmos, will disappear with the whizzing sound of a storm; ii] the ‘elements’, the heavenly bodies, will be burned up and melt in the heat; iii] and the earth will be laid bare, probably with the sense burned up, destroyed. Nothing evil in that day will remain hidden. The point is that this last day will be a day of cosmic battle which will end in a mighty victory over evil.”¹⁰

“v11-13. Since this great day of judgment is coming, what should we be like in our holy living and in our piety? That is, what should be the direction of our Christian lives, in our active lives (holy living) and in our reflective lives (godly fear)? Our reflective lives, says Peter in verse 12, should exhibit pious expectation; a constant looking forward to the one who comes. Our active lives should exhibit holy living, a constant striving toward the coming day. Given that the coming day is a day of judgment, a day when we don't want to be caught napping, a day of wonder and power, a day we don't want to miss out on, our conduct should be one that conforms to God's holiness, a life devoted to God.”¹¹

The end is certain. We are to live with anticipation of future joy (cf. 1 Peter 1:13). That which awaits the unbelieving is marked by horror, but the same judgment birthing their condemnation brings our joy.

II. His coming encourages attentiveness/diligence (vv. 14-16).

Be diligent is an aorist active **imperative** (v. 14). “The Greek verb used in the phrase *strive to be found* is the same as is found in v. 10, translated ‘laid bare.’ In typical Petrine fashion, a conceptual link is made by the same linkage of terms. The point of these two verses thus becomes clear: When the heavens disappear and the earth and its inhabitants are stripped bare before the throne of God, they should strive to make sure that their lives are pure and that they have nothing to hide.”¹²

- ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent** to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:14-16)

“The language here is cryptic. It probably means ‘regard the patience of our Lord as an opportunity for salvation.’ In the least, Peter is urging his audience to take a different view of the delay of the *parousia* than that of the false teachers.”¹³

God waits for His people to repent. It is only in salvation He finds us in peace, spotless, and blameless. This is Paul’s message and the message of the rest of the Scriptures.

“That Paul had written to these people indicates that they are most likely Gentiles. Further, that Peter is now writing to them suggests that Paul had already died, for Peter was the apostle to the circumcised. Peter apparently decided to write his two letters to Paul’s churches shortly after Paul’s death, both to connect with them personally and theologically (Paul’s gospel is Peter’s gospel) and to warn them of the wolves in sheep’s clothing that would come in to destroy the flock. Thus, part of Peter’s purpose seems to be to anchor his readership on the written documents of the Christian community (both the Old Testament and Paul’s letters) as a safeguard against heretics.”¹⁴

You have one of two options. Either you believe in Jesus and are found by Him at His coming resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, OR you do not believe in Jesus and are a part of those who follow the way of Balaam and are damned.

III. His coming encourages watchfulness (v. 17).

- You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **be on your guard** so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, (2 Pet. 3:17)

“On guard” and “grow” are present active imperatives.

- “Stay awake” contrast with vv. 5, 8 “escape your notice”
- “carried away” and “fall” / used of a ship’s destruction on rocks, Acts 27:17, 26, 29, 32.
- “unprincipled men” cf. 2:3 “exploit”, 14 “enticing” and 3:16 “distort”

“False teachers distort the meaning of Holy Scripture; they wander far from the truth; they are self-willed, lawless, and disobedient to the Law of God written in the heart, revealed in his Word. Therefore Christians must be on their guard; they must ‘not believe every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’”¹⁵

The threat throughout Peter is real. We cannot afford to rest on our elected laurels. God calls us to keep looking and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. He alone is our sole means of standing before the Father in peace, spotless, and blameless.

Hope-filled waiting, attentive to the *Story* produces growth.

IV. His coming encourages growth (v. 18).

- **but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Pet. 3:18)

Peter uses the same word for growth in 1 Peter 2:2.

- ¹ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (1 Pet. 2:1-3)

Those who do not fall away grow. Friends, if perseverance is a consequence of His preservation, then growth is the inevitable consequence of new birth. The harder you try to grow, the less growth will happen. Why? Because you are focusing on what you are doing and not on what He has done. If you rest in His finished work, you will grow.

“Remembering, revisiting, and rediscovering the reality of our justification every day *is* the hard work we’re called to do if we’re going to grow.”¹⁶

“Recognize that the church is the outpost of sanctification. We all need the local church. It is where we find all the resources we need to love God in a sin-stricken world—exhortation, encouragement, rebuke, opportunities for service, enjoyment, edification, and so much more. Sanctification is the dynamic manifestation of the gospel in our lives.”¹⁷

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. “The fashion of this world passes away.” What country shall we belong to?—this dying world, or the eternal city?
2. The great day is at hand; we must look forward to it. We must prepare the way of the Lord; we must pray, “Thy kingdom come.”
3. In the new earth, righteousness dwells. Let us pursue righteousness; let us be diligent, “that we may be found in peace, blameless in his sight.”
4. Let us study the Scriptures in faith and prayer that we may grow in grace.

¹ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/how-then-shall-we-live-david-owens-sermon-on-discipleship-156120.asp>

² https://gracebibleny.org/motivation_for_maturity_2_peter_3_10_18

³ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=181 this is an excellent short article.

⁴ <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tpc/view.cgi?bk=2pe&ch=3>

⁵ Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges on 2 Peter 3:11.

⁶ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+3:7>

⁷ *The Pulpit Commentaries* on 2 Peter 3:11.

⁸ <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/advent2be.html>

⁹ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+3:8>

¹⁰ <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/advent2be.html>

¹¹ <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/advent2be.html>

¹² <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+3:11>

¹³ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+3:11>

¹⁴ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/2+Peter+3:11>

¹⁵ <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tpc/view.cgi?bk=2pe&ch=3>

¹⁶ <http://www.pastortullian.com/2011/06/08/work-hard-but-in-which-direction/?comments#comments> This entire article is excellent.

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VknHuoVRrA&index=5&list=RD9RX2V7278Mo>