

## 2 Peter 3:14-18 From Hope Springs Holiness

Because of your hope of Christ's coming, you can grow in gospel-holiness.

- “Because of your hope of Christ's coming”—3:14 “Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these . . .”—“Therefore” and “since” point to the ground or basis of the following instruction; “waiting for these” refers to the promise of “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (3:13) which will be fulfilled at the coming (parousia) of Christ (1:16; 3:4, 10)
  - “you can grow in gospel-holiness”—3:14 “be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace”—“and at peace” describes the sphere of our existence while we wait; this peace is the abundance of life that is enjoyed in communion with God; think reconciliation, restored relation; thus, not just holiness, but *gospel*-holiness; “be found” is judicial language; Christ is a judge who will examine everyone on that day; “without spot or blemish” refers both to purity of doctrine and godly living, contrasting with the false teachers who are “spots and blemishes” (2:13), and urging Christ-likeness as He was “a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19); “be diligent” is an imperative; so, you *must* do this; the following verses explain how you *can*
1. God gives you time to better prepare for Christ's coming (3:15a).
    - a. “Count the patience of our Lord as salvation” (cf. 3:9)
    - b. Consider each day as a gift to better prepare for Christ.
    - c. Luke 21:34-36 “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
    - d. Matthew 25:1-46 – Parable of the Ten Virgins; Parable of the Talents; Final Judgment
    - e. How will you “redeem the time”? (Ephesians 5:15-16)
  2. God gives you Scripture to guard thoughts closely (15b-17).
    - a. “Just as our beloved brother Paul also *wrote* to you according to *the wisdom given him*”—Paul's writings are not merely his personal reflections on the Christian life, but are “wisdom given him”; cf. Matthew 16:17 “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”
    - b. “as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters”—Peter considers the whole collection of Paul's letters as wisdom from God
    - c. “There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures”—Peter considers Paul's letters to be Scripture
      - i. Peter's estimation of Paul's letters is not based on Paul's impressive resume (although he did have one). His appraisal of Paul's writings is based on his apostleship. Peter is also an

- apostle (1:1). Obviously, he expects this letter to be received with the same authority as Paul's.
- ii. Though Scripture is God's perfect communication, our sinful corruption makes some parts of Scripture "difficult to understand." Calvin counsels that this is not to discourage our reading of Scripture, but to warn us to "bring a calm and teachable mind." He continues, "Those vices ought to be corrected which prevent improvement, and not only so, but render deadly to us what God has appointed for our salvation." (Calvin, 2 Peter, *ad loc.*)
  - iii. Vices: ignorance = willful ignorance of God's Word; instability = inconsistency in faith and practice
  - iv. "twist" = torturing someone on the rack; those who have doctrinal and moral corruptions torture and twist the Scriptures to conform them to their desires
  - v. This Scripture twisting is "to their own destruction"; "destruction" = final or eschatological destruction (cf. 2:3, 9, 17; 3:7)
- d. "Knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability."
    - i. Do you recognize the danger of Scripture twisting? You can take the good medicine of God's Word and so abuse it that it poisons your soul.
    - ii. The lawless are those who cast off all restraint. "I want to run life my own way," has been at the heart of mankind's sin from the beginning.
    - iii. "Take care" may also be translated "guard closely" or "keep vigilant guard"; guard against ignorance of God's Word; guard against inconsistencies between faith and practice.
    - iv. "not carried away . . . and lose your own stability"—see 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 1 John 2:19
  - e. How well do you know your hope in Christ? What is your inheritance? What are you looking forward to?
3. God gives you growth in grace and in knowledge of Christ (18a).
    - a. "Grow" is an imperative. We are commanded to grow. But as grace is a gift from the beginning, so the increase of grace is also from God.
    - b. God's grace is sufficient for "life and godliness" (1:3).
    - c. Grace is the fertilizer on the garden of virtues (1:5-8)
    - d. "Knowledge of Christ"—knowing Christ is the definition of the Christian life (cf. John 17:3)
    - e. Are you growing in the knowledge of Christ? What is the evidence?
    - f. Holiness that is grounded in the gospel is the evidence of grace and knowledge.
    - g. How are you preparing to meet your King?

All for the glory of Christ! The glory belongs to Christ because it is His work from beginning to end.