



2 Peter

Steady on Course

Staying Spiritually Awake

2 Peter 3:1-9

Message #6 of 7 – S701

Sermon given on August 21, 2016



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Staying Spiritually Awake

2 Peter 3:1-9

Opening Comments

- Turn to **2 Peter 3**
- Today, we continue our series through the second letter from Peter – **Steady on Course**
- When we studied 1 Peter, we referred to the Christian life as a journey
- In that series we saw that the journey sometimes includes difficult times – times when life gets hard, painful, times of suffering
- In 2 Peter – we saw in the last chapter that the journey sometimes includes false teachers – those who are trying to get us to deviate from the path that leads to the best possible life in Christ
- Today, Peter is going to talk to us about watching out for the background noise of scoffers
- Listening to the scoffers can cause us to become spiritually lethargic or drowsy
- Spiritual drowsiness may make it hard to hear God warning us of danger, or hearing when He is trying to direct us toward the best possible life
- The Lord would desire for each of us that we be spiritually awake
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **2 Peter 3:1-9**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Staying Spiritually Awake**
- Chapter two was a denunciation of false teachers
- Used strong, confrontational language
- Peter turns his attention to the people he is writing to and his language changes
- **2 Peter 3:1**
- Peter says this is his second letter to them

- Most believe that is referring to what we call 1 Peter, though it could refer to another letter
- ‘Beloved’ – Peter has a pastor’s heart for these people
- Peter says here in our text that because of his love for them he wants to ‘stir up’ their minds = stimulate
- Then tells them what they need to be reminded about
- **2 Peter 3:2**
- Peter is saying something very interesting here
- Be mindful of the holy prophets = what we refer to as the Old Testament
- And then includes the teachings Apostles of Jesus Christ, including himself
- Peter knew that his message was not his own
- He was an eyewitness of the teaching of Jesus Christ and he had been anointed by the Holy Spirit to continue Christ’s work in the world
- If this letter were addressed to us, it would say something like, be mindful of the words of the Old and New Testament
- To be mindful = attentive or careful – read your Bible, and be careful to do what it says
- He then explains why
- **2 Peter 3:3-4**
- This world is filled with scoffers
- A scoffer is someone who takes lightly something that should be taken seriously
- In context they are scoffing at the Second Coming of Christ to judge the world for its sin and to set up His kingdom
- But scoffers are not that limited – they scoff at God’s judgment – hell – the Bible – God’s view on marriage and sexuality – and on and on
- Peter quotes the scoffers – Jesus hasn’t come back yet
- In fact, everything is exactly the same way it has always been
- And since things are as they have always been, they will always be the same
- Peter says they are forgetting something
- **2 Peter 3:5**

- The scoffers would have us believe that the universe has existed for billions of years – some – always existed - eternal
- The Bible teaches that less than 7,000 years ago God created everything that is out of nothing
- Things haven't always been the same
- There was a time when nothing existed, God spoke, and everything changed
- And that wasn't the only time things changed
- **2 Peter 3:6**
- Not only did God create the universe, He is watching over it
- In Genesis 6, God was checking this world out and was disgusted by what He saw **Genesis 6:5**

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

- God decided He was going to have to reboot the system
- Asked the only righteous man on the planet to build a big boat
- It took Noah 120 years to build the ark – and all the while people scoffed – it had never flooded before – hadn't even rained
- And then it did - God did it once – He can do it again – in fact He has said that He will do it again
- **2 Peter 3:7**
- After the flood God promised never to flood the whole earth again
- Next time, God is going to judge the world with fire **2 Thessalonians 1:6-8**

It is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- And Revelation 21 speaks of a new heaven and a new earth – the old has passed away
- What Peter is saying is, don't listen to the scoffers
- If you do, they will lull you into a spiritual sleep that will keep you from the best possible life
- Scoffers today say – it's been 2,000 years and still no Jesus

- It's all a myth or as Richard Dawkins says in his book it is a shared God delusion
- But is has been 2,000 years – what is He waiting for? Is He late? Is He delayed? What is the hold-up?
- Before Peter answers that, he reminds us of the nature of God
- **2 Peter 3:8**
- Scoffers try to understand and define God using human terms
- Human life on this earth is a finite thing - <120 years
- God is not finite – He is eternal = no beginning and no end
- Human life is not actually finite – we are immortal
- We have a beginning – at the moment of conception an immortal soul is created by God
- And that soul will live forever – either in heaven with God or in Hell separated from Him forever
- Some people try to turn what Peter says here into a mathematical formula – 1,000 human years = 1 God day
- That is not what he is saying – God doesn't relate to time like we do
- As humans, we are slaves of time, it holds us, restricts us, confines us
- Not so with God, He exists outside of time, but chooses to operate within our concept of time
- Waiting a day or waiting two thousand years is exactly the same to God
- Here is something of an illustration – A book is created by putting words on pages and then binding those pages into a single unit
- Imagine this book is the history of the world from its creation to its end
- We are somewhere near the end of the book of history
- The scoffers are asking, 'Where is His coming?' – when is Jesus coming back to Judge the earth
- I can tell you when, it is at the end of the book
- We have to go page by page through the book of the history of the world – God doesn't – He is already at the end – and He is here today
- This is what we need to understand, we are not waiting for Jesus to come back

- Jesus is waiting for us to get to the page of the history of the world which tells of His Coming – that page has already been written – Jesus said **Matthew 24:36**

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

- The natural question is, why so many pages of history
- Peter explains that in the next verse
- **2 Peter 3:9**
- God is not slack or slow or in keeping His promise of judging this world
- God is showing His mercy – the longer He waits, the more people who will repent and be saved
- I was saved in March of 1997 – what would have happened to me if Jesus had come back on Christmas Day 1996? I would have spent an eternity in Hell
- That was not God’s desire for me nor anyone else **Ezekiel 18:23**
Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord God, “and not that he should turn from his ways and live?
- Rhetorical question, of course God isn’t pleased when a sinner dies apart from Him
- He wants them to turn to Him and repent, and so He extends mercy to them
- This who reject God’s mercy will get what they wanted in this life – that God would leave them alone – in eternal separation from God
- But because He showed me mercy and delayed Christ’s Coming I will spend all eternity with Him in heaven along with everyone else who has been saved since then
- God is putting up with all the wickedness, evil, and sin in this world in the hopes of more coming to repentance and salvation
- But the last page of the book has been written – there is a moment in time in the future when God’s patience with the wickedness of this world runs out
- And right before that moment comes, Jesus will come back and get all of us who are looking forward to His coming
- Right now, God is delaying judgment, mercifully giving people time to repent

- For us as believers, we need to remember that God told us that there would be scoffers
- The fact that they are all around is further proof that the Bible is true and can be trusted
- Commit yourself to knowing His Word better, so that you know Him better, so that you know Jesus better, and so that you know the Holy Spirit better
- That will help you not to be distracted by the scoffers
- You will be able to stay steady on course toward the best possible life
- So where are you today? Have you repented of your sin? Or are you still rejecting God's mercy? God has been putting up with your sin, but He won't do it forever! The time to repent is now. The path you are on leads to desolation and eternal separation from God.
- Or maybe you have repented of your sins, and accepted Jesus as your Savior, but there are still sins that you won't turn away from. You can't cling to your sins and live the best possible life – repent today
- And all of need to ask ourselves – Do I know God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's Word the way I should?
- All of us could do better – that's not what I'm talking about
- Do you feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit that you have been neglecting God and His Word?
- Commit today to give yourself to God, and ask Him to help you draw nearer to Him
- Or maybe you are a scoffer here today – We're glad you are here – you may not believe these things, but you need to hear something
- God loves you, even if you don't believe in Him, even if you scoff at the things we believe – still He loves you
- Loves you so much that He sent His only Son to die for your sins
- So that He could show you mercy, and allow you to scoff at Him and His Word and His church
- He wants you to be warned though, you can't do that forever
- Calling you to repent before it is too late
- Amen–**Pray**