

## East Cooper Baptist Church

May 29, 2016

### How Should We Live? (In Light of the Reality of the Coming Judgment and the New Heavens and the New Earth) 2 Peter 3:11-13

*<sup>11</sup> Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup> 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! <sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

False teachers had beleaguered the early church with a message of “live only for today” (which involved sensuality). Their refrain was:

1. Where is God in the unfolding reality of history?
2. There is no judgment (because of the absence of God).

And Peter responds by saying do not forget this one thing: God is above time, he is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but a day of judgment is coming.

The early church had the tendency to “overlook” this one truth because of the combination of the confusing and heretical teaching of the false teachers plus an unfriendly culture plus the demands of everyday life.

\* In this section, Peter asks: What type of people should we be in light of the coming new heavens and new earth?

**Answer:** We should live with holiness and godliness as we live in obedience (i.e. hastening the day of the Lord).

“We must be holy, because our present comfort depends much upon it. We cannot be too often reminded of this. We are sadly apt to forget that there is a close connection between sin and sorrow, holiness and happiness, sanctification and consolation. God has so wisely ordered it, that our well-being and our well-doing are linked together. He has mercifully provided that even in this world it shall be man’s interest to be holy. Our justification is not by works – our calling and election are not according to our works – but it is vain for anyone to suppose that he will have a lively sense of his justification, or an assurance of his calling, so long as he neglects good works, or does not strive to live a holy life.”

J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, p. 43

#### What motivates this type of living?

1. The understanding that God’s honoring/worship/glorification and my happiness are inexorably linked.

“<sup>3</sup> His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,<sup>4</sup> by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. <sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be

richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 1:3-4, 11

2. We are not paralyzed with fear (1:4) but live with expectation. (1:11)
3. “The new heavens and the new earth” (v. 13) involve an eager expectation (vv. 12-14) or “standing on tiptoe”.
4. We live with a sense of weighty and glorious responsibility. Our obedience and commitment to kingdom living can hasten the coming of the day of God and we will be rewarded for faithful living.

“<sup>28</sup> And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” <sup>29</sup> And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup> who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Luke 18:28-30

Therefore, I am a manager of the wonderful resources the Lord has graciously given to me. And one day, I will give an account to my heavenly Father regarding my faithfulness.

### **Regarding the new heavens and the new earth:**

“The hills and valleys of Heaven will be to those you now experience not as a copy is to an original, nor as a substitute is to the genuine article, but as the flower to the root, or the diamond to the coal.”

C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly On Prayer*, p. 84

“When Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan’s real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream.”

C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, pp. 169-170

“I’d far rather walk, as I do, in daily terror of eternity, than feel that this was only a children’s game in which all the contestants would get equally worthless prizes in the end.”

T.S. Eliot

### **Questions for Discussion:**

1. What elements lead to causing us “to overlook”, the one fact that God is patient not wanting anyone to perish but judgment will come?
2. What is holiness/godliness?
3. What is the difference between the expectation of a visit to a (very nice, congenial, and gracious) dentist and a visit to the attorney’s office to settle the will of “Aunt Louise” (your aunt who was never married and you are the only remaining heir and she is a multi, multi, multi-millionaire)?
4. Consider the quote by T.S. Eliot. Why is our giftedness a joyful responsibility?
5. What do we mean by this comment: “The reason we don’t have more joy is because we don’t think of heaven more often”? Or “It is nearly impossible for a secularist who is growing old to avoid being cynical and despairing”?

