

2 Peter 3:1-10

Rev. Bruce Stanley

15th December 2013

Intro:

Trivial Pursuit...

1. What is the capital of Spain? Madrid
2. When was Queen Elizabeth II born? April 21, 1926
3. How many dogs survived the sinking of the Titanic? Two
4. What was the name of the Earth's first artificial satellite? Sputnik 1
5. What is Jack Dawkins' nickname in "Oliver Twist"? The Artful Dodger
6. How many dots are there on a pair of dice? 42
7. What is the maximum number of characters that one can use in a Twitter tweet?
140
8. What would you find in a bento box? Food! (What sort?!)

It's amazing what useless trivia facts we remember, isn't it!

Well, yet again in In 2 Peter 3, Peter is telling us to REMEMBER. Both of his letters – 1 and 2 Peter, he says were written as reminders (verse 1)

I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

These are reminders given to change our thinking. To keep our minds focused on what is important. This is why we gather together each week. This is why we study God's word. This is why we pray. It is to **remember** – to engage our mind in the important things.

How easy is it sometimes to remember the Trivia of the world, but forget the important things? Peter is saying is that if we remember the important things, then THAT will change our thinking each day. It will stimulate us to wholesome thinking.

And what does he want us to remember? Verse 2 –

2I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Remember all that has been spoken and written, by the prophets, by Jesus, and by the Apostles. Because in these last days, and WE are living in the last days – the time between Jesus' resurrection and his coming again – in these last days, scoffers will come – verse 3:

in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

There will be people, even people who have followed Jesus once, who will scoff. Mock. Laugh. And make fun of us. They will say: “So where is Jesus? He said he was coming back. 2000 years! Not here. Not coming. Everything goes on as usual. Nothing’s changed.

And that’s why Peter says to us: “Remember.” Remember the words of the prophets, and Jesus, and the Apostles. And remember this – verse 5: These scoffers forget the past! God spoke and the world came into existence! And then, Genesis 6, God flooded and destroyed the earth. And that same God, by his same powerful word is going to bring judgement on the whole earth.

Scoffers forget that God has a good track record! He speaks and things are created. He speaks and things are destroyed. And God has SPOKEN and said that Jesus will return and he will judge. Why would you scoff at that?!

And so we wait. **Confidently**. For Jesus. For judgment day. We wait. And people scoff. And people make fun of us. And they ask us – “So, where is Jesus? When’s he coming back?!” And we wait.

And then Peter answers the two big questions for us:

1. Why do we wait? And...
2. How long do we have to wait?

Why do we wait?

Verse 8:

8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

So first of all, 1000 years is not a long time for God. 2000 years is like 2 days. He’s bigger than us. He stands outside of time. You know when as a child you’re waiting for Christmas and it’s only 3 days away. But it feels like 3 months! Or when you’re waiting in line at the supermarket and 5 minutes seems like half an hour if you’re running late!

Well, for God, 1000 years = 1 day. So he’s not slow in keeping his promise to return. Not slow from HIS perspective. From HIS timing.

But the other side of that for us is in verse 9:

*9The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. **Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.***

I LOVE this verse! One of my favorites. God is not SLOW. He is PATIENT! That makes so much sense! Every moment God waits for judgment day, is another chance for

people to come to know him! That is God's patience. Think of this: In this past week, how many people have become Christians? If Jesus returned last week, they would have missed out!

The day WILL come, but every extra day is another opportunity for people to hear about Jesus, another opportunity for us to TELL people about Jesus. Another day to PRAY for people who don't know Jesus.

III – It's like that train ride to school or work. You can sit and look out the window. And that's nice. Or you can do some reading. Or you can do some work. Or you could talk to the person next to you.

You know what I see nearly every time I catch the train into the city? EVERY PERSON on the carriage is on their phone. Music, emails, texting, games...

We are in God's waiting room! How do we think of this "wait" on earth, while we wait for Jesus' return? Do we work? A little. Do we relax and look out the window? A little. Play on our phones. Yep. Some light reading? If you like. But what about talking to the person sitting next to you in life? Often that is the most frightening! But it's also probably the most life changing – for you **and** them.

This is life for the Christian. Waiting for Jesus to return. God is patient. He's only waiting because he's giving others the opportunity to hear about Jesus. Through you!

Chapter 3 says don't listen to the scoffers. And chapter 2 says don't listen to the liars. Remember the words of the Prophets, of Jesus, of the Apostles. Jesus is coming. God is waiting. **What are we doing?**

So, question 2: HOW LONG do we have to wait?

Verse 10:

10*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.*

Like a thief.

Two things we should think about when we think about thieves:

1. They are usually unpredictable as to when they will come. Often while we're out or asleep. When we're least expecting them.
2. You need to be prepared. We prepare for thieves but taking out insurance and securing our valuables. And that's what we need to do as we wait for Jesus.

Take out insurance. Because the day IS coming. It's not like a thief in that respect. It's not like: MAYBE a thief will come. Maybe a thief won't come. Jesus WILL come. BE ready. Life insurance is accepting Jesus as Lord and having the assurance of eternal life. And secure your valuables – the truth of the gospel. Guard the truth. Make sure you're not lead away by liars, or distracted by scoffers.

I wonder what distracts you the most in your day to day life? Peter wants to encourage us to always remember what's important. To stimulate us to wholesome thinking To keep our minds on things above. But there are many distractions. Many things will cause us to sometimes listen to the scoffers and almost want to give up waiting for Jesus. Or perhaps we just stop caring about it. "He'll come when he comes. Whatever."

But we MUST remember. Each day. We MUST remember why we get up and go to work each day. Why we do the gardening. Why we have relationships with people. Why we pray. We must remember why we're on this earth. We are caretakers of God's great world. And one of the great responsibilities we have in this waiting room is this:

Talk to the person next to you. On the train. Your neighbor. At work. At the shops. At the park. We are here to relate to God and relate to people. That's what it's all about while we wait.

God is patient. He will come like a thief. So we have very little time. Don't listen to the scoffers or the liars. Instead, listen to God's promise. He will come. Like a thief. Be ready to go to heaven, and be ready to take as many people with you as you can!

Let's pray.

2 Peter 3:1-10

1Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. **2**I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

3Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. **4**They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

5But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

6By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. **7**By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. **9**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.