



Intro:

If you knew that in 1 year, your home would burn down and you would lose everything inside it, and your bank accounts would be emptied, and you would lose your job, what would you do? If you couldn't prevent it, if there was nothing you could do to stop it happening. And it was going to happen on December 22nd 2013. What would you do for the next 12 months?

There's a website called "bucketlist", where people put down a list of things they want to do before they die. There are some normal sorts of things:

- Jade wants to walk along the great wall of China.
- Sarah wants to learn to paint.
- Zoe wants to grow her own lemon tree... Some people have very high aims.

But here are my favourites:

- DJ wants to go on a magic carpet ride...
- Sam wants to flyboard. That looks like fun!
- Rebecca wants to draw faces on all the eggs in her fridge.
Smokey wants to strap a rocket to a merry-go-round! He says: *"I've been trying to do this for months. it appears to be very difficult to find someone who knows about rockets and you can't really buy them as far as I can tell."*
- What would you do? If time was running out - if you were about to lose everything?

Verse 11:

- *"Since everything (the old creation) will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?"*

There is Peter's advice for a bucket list. Since everything is going to go when Jesus returns and the old heavens and earth will pass away. Peter doesn't ask what will you DO. He asks: What kind of a person will you BE?

If it's all going to go, who will I be? What sort of person?

And THAT is the question to ask. As an adult. As a child./ As someone with pretty much less than 100 years on earth. What sort of people will we be? Did anyone ever ask you that as a child? Probably not! We always ask children: "What do you want to DO when you grow up?" A policeman. A doctor. A singer. An artist...

What sort of person do you want to BE?

Ask yourself that today – that’s what the challenge is. What sort of person do YOU want to BE?

And Peter even helps us out by answering for us!...’

- *“You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God...”*

EVERYTHING MUST GO!

There is limited time for all of us on this earth. The old earth and heavens will pass away, BUT, verse 13:

- *“But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.”*

And that is heaven. That is where we will live. In a new heaven and earth – the HOME of RIGHTEOUSNESS! THAT is where we’ll live.

- Do you ever worry about dressing properly when you go somewhere you’ve never been?

Going to a new work place. Or a new church. Or going out to a fancy restaurant. Or a new school. Sometimes we get worried that we need to wear the right clothes. Clothes that will be suitable and appropriate for the place we’re going.

Have you ever gone out on a cold day and forgotten to take a jacket? Or a hot day dressed in the wrong clothes? Or it rains and you don’t have an umbrella? We usually take so much care with our clothes – to be dressed appropriately for where we are going.

The appropriate “dress” for God’s people is this:

“You ought to live holy and godly lives.”

And he continues in verse 14:

So then dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.”

- **III** – Have you ever “made every effort” to do something? I made every effort to clean my desk this week. But it didn’t happen. When I was at school, I made every effort to get A’s. It didn’t generally happen. When I was 12, I made every effort to make a loaf of bread from scratch. It didn’t work.

There are lots of times in our lives when we “make every effort”. And often, we fail. But we made every effort. At work. At school. At home. In relationships. We often “make every effort”, but it doesn’t mean we always succeed. And this is what Peter is saying. He’s not saying “Be perfect!” He’s saying – “make every effort” to be blameless, at peace

with God. Make every effort in your relationship with God. Make every effort to live a godly and holy life. Make every effort. Nothing more. Nothing less.

It's like our school report cards in a way. You can get 45% at the end of the year, and your teacher might say:

"Bruce struggles with this subject, but he is working hard and putting in a lot of effort"

Or your teacher could say "Bruce struggles with this subject, and makes little or no effort to improve."

Now, depending which comment your teacher makes could greatly affect the outcome when your parents read it! (Trust me!)

God KNOWS we're sinful. He KNOWS we're not perfect. He KNOWS we cannot meet his perfect standard. That is WHY he sent Jesus. Who lived the perfect life. Died a sacrificial death, and rose with a powerful resurrection – SO WE COULD SHARE IN THAT! We couldn't do it ourselves. So HE did it for us.

- The fancy terms theologians use are "Substitutionary Atonement" and "imputed righteousness"!!!

2 Corinthians 5:21 says it in a nutshell:

- *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"*

Jesus – the one without sin, became sin for us, so WE could become righteousness.

God took the righteousness of Jesus and pasted it onto us! He removed all our sin and replaced it with the righteousness of Jesus.

And what does he ask of us?

Make every effort.

As Peter finishes his second letter, he wraps up by going over it all again.

Remember – The Lord's patience means salvation – the longer God waits, the more people can be saved.

He talks about the wisdom of the apostle Paul – to read what Paul has written, even though they are hard to understand.

And finally – be on your guard – don't listen to liars. Don't be tricked by false teachers.

Instead – grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That's hard.

- Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus...

Because in our world, we're taught to measure success and to grow in worldly knowledge. To value education. To grow in fame and power and influence. To make an impact.

But here, we are called to grow in grace – that's kindness and humility. And in our knowledge of Jesus.

THAT is real growth according to God.

Think of how we measure growth in today's world.

As kids grow up, we measure their height. Their weight. Their test scores at school. Their sporting skill. We measure their ability to make friends. Their ability to use technology. And then they grow into adults who measure their own success by... their appearance, their weight, their performance at work, their money in the bank, their knowledge and degrees, the number of friends they have...

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is not a normal measure of growth! But it is the only one that matters.

What do we want for our children? And what do we want for ourselves?! How do we measure our growth as a person? We ought to BE holy people – set apart for God. We ought to LIVE holy lives – set apart for God. We ought to make every effort to be blameless and at peace with God. We ought to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

I wonder if we're more concerned to measure THOSE parts of our lives than other things?

As we finish, one exercise for us. Think over the past 12 months. What has been the greatest change for you or your family?...

If it has NOT been to do with holiness, with grace and the knowledge of Jesus, then let that be your goal and your challenge.

- Goal: 2014

For example:

Next year, I plan to grow in my prayer life.

Next year, I plan to grow in my grace towards others.

Next year, I plan to make every effort to make peace with God in these areas... a, b, c.

Let your financial and other goals take a back seat. Make every effort with what really matters.

Let's pray.