Message uploaded
 **The day of the Lord will come like a thief
2 Peter 3:10-18
Key Verse 3:10
“But 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.”**

One day I was taking a class by Dr. John Thompson in Fuller Seminary. Many times he openly claims he is a Calvinist. So once I asked him why he became a Calvinist during a class. He told me Calvinism makes sense the most. Now one of the assignments during his class was writing about Calvin’s predestination. During a discussion session about the paper, one question arose, that is, “What should we answer for those who say, “Since God predestined for salvation, we do not need to make an effort to live godly lives.”

Do you know what was the answer? The answer is this: The purpose of God’s salvation including predestination is what? “Holiness”. Holiness! God saves us for holiness. Since holiness is the purpose of God’s salvation, no one can argue on the basis of predestination that he or she would live according to his or her own desire of the flesh. Dr. Thompson also said the only way for us to know whether some is already predestined, saved or not is to preach the gospel.

Today we will learn the Lord’s judgment and in view of God’s judgment, we want to learn what kind of life we should live.

My message has three parts.

**Part I. The elements will destroyed by fire (v.10)
Part II. What kind of people ought you to be? (v.11-17)**

**Part III. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (v.18)**

**Part II. What kind of people ought you to be? (v.11-17)**

1. We ought to live holy and godly lives
2. We ought to make every effort to be found spotless
3. We ought to be our guard

**Part I. The elements will destroyed by fire (v.10)

Verses 10
“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.**

The word “But” shows the relationship to the previous verse. **Verse 9 says, “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.”**

So verse 9 reveals that God is patient so that everyone may come to repentance. The Lord does not want anyone to perish but he wants everyone to repent his or her sins and be saved. That is the reason why he is patient with sinners. Some people, especially false teachers and people who want an ungodly life claim that there will be no judgment day. However, verse 10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.”

We may say our times can be “the day of men”. But there will be “the day of the Lord”. On the day of men, we may live just as we want. But there will be the day of the Lord and the Lord will do what he has promised.

The day of the Lord will come like a thief. Jesus said in Matthew 24:42-44.

**Matthew 24:42-44**

**42“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.**

“Coming like a thief” means coming when we do not expect him. So what is the best way to meet the day of the Lord? Keep watch. We are commanded to keep watch and be ready for the day of the Lord because he will come at an hour when we do not expect him.

Why do you think the Lord wants to come at an hour when we do not expect him? Just for the fun? No, he does so in order to find out if we have the correct knowledge about him. The correct knowledge about Jesus and the day of the Lord is ‘when we do not expect him’. All other knowledge such as “Well, somehow I will feel something even tiniest and somehow I will know around the time when the day of the Lord comes.” Is this the correct knowledge of the Lord? NO!

The day of the Lord will come like a thief.

There was one man who practiced what it means to keep watch and be ready in the course of overcoming his sinful habit. This man really wants to overcome his sinful desire and live a holy life. But no matter how much he tried, he could not do it. Then he realized that he fails because his sinful desires are coming like a thief at an hour when he does not expect. So what did he do? He kept watching his heart every moment intentionally. He rejects even the slightest sinful desires coming into his heart from the very beginning moment. He shut down as soon as his desire just tries to start up. He kept doing it, and eventually he was able to overcome it. He was successful because he had correct knowledge about his sinful desire.

What happens when the day of the Lord comes? It means terrible judgment. **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.** We know our Lord is merciful, graceful, loving and patient. But have you ever imagine that there will be time when he determines to destroy people like you? The Israel people also could not believe their own Lord, their own God, would doom them to perish. They could not believe it. But the Lord, their God, was simply working according to his covenant with them faithfully. He clearly mentioned he would become their enemy, pursuing their destruction if they do not keep their covenant by obeying him. Their lack of the knowledge of their Lord and God brought their downfall.

So when the day of the Lord comes, he will bring fire on earth and heaven. First, the heavens will disappear with a roar. We cannot imagine the disappearance of the heavens with a roar. We do not see it even among movies. Do you see movies about destruction of heavens? I haven’t seen any because there can be no more stories after the destruction of the heavens. When the heavens disappear and is destroyed and is gone, what kind of story can you continue? No more stories.

There will be blackest darkness above us and above the earth. The heavens will be gone with a roar. What kind of roar will it be? I don’t know. It could mean whoosh sound like a great fire comes in. But probably it will not be like the roar or a lion or tiger. In my imagination, it can be some unimaginably terrible sound of roar because it is like the scream of the heavens when they disappear.

What about elements? The elements here can refer to the smallest of all matters. So they probably means all atoms, protons, electrons, modules, or anything that you can describe as the smallest elements that brings all visible things together. The elements will be destroyed by fire. Our bodies are made of cells and our body cells are made of atoms. If we assume that atoms as the most basic elements of our bodies, what will happen to our bodies when these basic elements are destroyed by fire? Our bodies will be in flames suddenly. Suddenly we experience burning of our bodies. We are burning alive!

What about the earth and everything done in it? “Everything done in it” refers to all our buildings, highways, parks, houses, beautiful computers, cars, and everything built by humans. Together with the earth, everything done in the earth will be laid bare. “Laid bare” can mean only bare minimum forms will remain or burned out.

Nothing remains on earth and everything done in it will be gone in fire. All of human achievement, the tallest buildings, the best hotels, billion dollar houses with swimming pools and tennis court and 100 rooms and 100 bathrooms and all others will become ashes.

The complete destruction of the heavens including Sun, moon, and all stars and galaxies will come by fire. The earth will be completely destroyed by fire. That is the terrible news.

**Part II. What kind of people ought you to be? (v.11-17)**

**(1) We ought to live holy and godly lives (v.11-12)**

**(2) We ought to make every effort to be found spotless (v.13-16)**

**(3) We ought to be our guard (v.17)**

**(1) We ought to live holy and godly lives (v.11-12)**

Look at verses 11 and 12.

**11Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.”**

The question is “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?” The answer is: you ought to live holy and godly lives. Why holy and godly lives? Because the holy and godly lives will survive from the destruction of everything.

Holy and godly lives can refer to the life of serving the Lord. In the end of the day, at the end of our lives, what we do for the Lord survives from the destruction of everything. Our holy and godly lives will be what remains. All other things will be destroyed by fire when the day of the Lord comes.

We can find another reason why we ought to live holy and godly lives. It is because our sin causes the destruction of the heavens and the earth, and we do not want to add our sins to the total sin of mankind. Because we know we are saved, to live holy and godly lives does not appeal to us much. We think, “We will be saved anyhow.”

But think about this way. Do you have any pets? Many of us have dogs or cats as our pets. And we have many people whom we love like our family members and relatives and friends. Now imagine, all of unbelieving loved ones will be burned to death in front of our eyes. We ourselves may be okay. But we don’t want to add our sins which can be the cause of the destruction of all our unbelieving loved ones, all innocent animals, and beautiful flowers, plants and natures.

 We, Christians, are forgiven of our sins by God. When we believe God’s forgiveness, we may not be much motivated to live holy and godly lives we will be saved anyhow. But we will make our best and every effort to live holy and godly lives when we know such destruction of all people and animals and the heavens and the earth comes because of all of people’s sin and surely we do not add our sins to it.

We know our sins are forgiven by God. But does it mean that our sins do not have any consequences? Since we are forgiven by the blood of Christ, we are not serious about sinning. We may not be serious about living holy and godly lives.

Forgiven sin does not mean it does not have consequences. It does have consequences. That is why Jesus talked about the sinning of his disciples against little ones. If we are angry at one person at one moment, it brings a negative effect on the other person such as a feeling of condemnation. When we see all of our sins adds up to the total sin of humans and it causes such destruction of human lives, innocent animals and nature, we are obligated to live holy and godly lives.

So we ought to live holy and godly lives not only because the holy and godly lives will survive the Lord’s judgment but also we do not want our sins to be a part of the cause of the destruction. It is because our sins have consequences although it is forgiven.

**(2) We ought to make every effort to be found spotless (v.13-16)**

**Verses 13-16
 13But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.
14So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”**

Verse 13 says, **But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.**

The Lord promised the new heaven and new earth for his people. The new heaven and the new earth is the place where righteousness dwells. There will be no sin. Isaiah described the new heave and the new earth in this way.

**Isaiah 11:6-9 6The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.
7The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. 9They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.**

Why is the new earth so beautiful? Because the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Beautiful expression. It is no wonder apostle Peter talks so much about the knowledge of the Lord. In the new earth even animals have the knowledge of the Lord. Wolf, lamb, calf, lion, cow, bear, ox, infant, cobra, and yearling. Even infants and young children will have the knowledge of the Lord. There will neither harm nor destruction in the new heaven and the new earth. It is the dwelling place of righteousness. No sinners will be there. No sin will be there.

Verse 14 says, “**So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.”**

Since you are looking forward to this. What is “this”? It refers to the truth that we are saved to live in the new heaven and new earth according to the Lord’s promise. Since we are looking forward to the new heaven and the new earth as our new dwelling place and it is the place where righteousness dwells, they ought to make every effort to be found spotless and blameless. It is also the place of God. So they should make every effort to be at peace with God.

For example, we don’t go to our wedding ceremony without shower. The new heaven and the new earth is where righteous people dwell.

God’s wonderful provision of the new heaven and new earth should motivate believers to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with God..

It is the call of sanctification. Sanctification is an important part of our salvation. Some ignorant people misunderstand justification is all there in salvation. The good news of the kingdom of God is not only justification but also sanctification. If we do not make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with God, what can happen to us? We may be worse off at the end that we were at the beginning. We may have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior and are again entangled in it and are overcome. We may act like a dog returns to its vomit, and a sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.

Christian life is the life of making effort, even making every effort to be spotless and blameless. Just remaining in God’s forgiveness and justification by faith is not what the Lord wants from us. He wants us to grow in our sanctification. If we do not make every effort to be spotless, then, we are in danger of being deceived by false teachers who entice us by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh and promise us a false freedom.

One day, one man cried out to me, “Why do you teach that we should make every effort? I have already had enough burdens in my life. I come to a church to be comforted. I want to listen to the message, such as “God does all things” instead of “You need to make an effort and do this and do that”. Why do you emphasize men’s work and glorify men rather than God and God’s work?” He bitterly complained. I almost felt that he was trying to hit me.

My defense would be “If a man makes every effort in his obedience to God’s command, what he does not is not man’s work but God’s work. God carries out his work through the man who obeys him. When he obeys God he glorifies God through his obedience instead of glorifying himself.”

Church is not only the place where God comforts his people but also it is the place where God reveals who he is. It is the place where we can learn true knowledge of who God is. Our God not only saves but also judges. Our God not only comforts us but also rebukes us to repent of our sins. The day of the Lord reveals the Lord is the judge and his judgment is severe and thorough. The preparation of the new heaven and the new earth should motivate us to make every effort to be found spotless and blameless rather than having excuses to sin repeatedly.

Even Calvin and Ruther and all other reformers agree that we are justified by faith alone and grace alone, but the saving faith is the faith that produces the fruit of holiness as the result of one’s faith. If one does not have it, his faith is not saving faith. His faith does not produce salvation.

So Peter says, “**So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.** Not just effort but every effort! To make every effort is to act like the man who kept watch at his heart moment by moment so that his heart might be protected from ever attempting evil desires.

Now in verses 16-17, we see an interesting comment of Apostle Peter for the writing of Apostle Paul. This is the only part in the entire bible where we can see how apostles see others’ writings.

**15Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”**

Why do you think Peter suddenly talks about Paul? I believe it is to strengthen his point. The bible says two witnesses can make a case. So here apostle Peter says apostle Paul writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. So he claims that Paul also teaches the same way. What way is the same way? The way of the Lord’s patience means for salvation. It means the Lord is patient with us so that we may have time to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God.

Peter says Paul writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. Who knows we are hearing the very essence of all of apostle Paul’s letters. Our Lord’s patience means we have time to work on our salvation, repenting our sins and make every effort to be spotless, blameless and at peace with God!

 Peter says that Paul’s letters **contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”**

 These people described as ignorant and unstable people refers to those who do not want to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God. They not only distort what Paul wrote but also other Scriptures to their own destruction. They will be destroyed. When the day of the Lord will come like a thief, they will find suddenly their bodies will be in flames.

**(3) You ought to be on your guard.**

**“17Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.**

Believers ought to be on their guard so that they may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from their secure position. The secure position means their salvation. If they are carried away by the false teaching, they can fall from their secure position. Peter says they should be on their guard because they have been forewarned about false teaching. What is the error of the lawless? It is to believe there is no judgment of God through Jesus’ second coming and you do not need to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God.

**Part III. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (v.18)**

**Verses 18
18But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”**

As the conclusion of the whole book of 2 Peter, Peter says believers need to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He says his people should grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So we need to grow in the grace and in the knowledge.

We need to know Jesus’ grace all the more, and at the same time, we need to know who Jesus is, the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is both the Lord and Savior. When we look at how we are saved, Jesus Christ saves us by becoming our Lord. When he paid the price of our sin through his blood, he purchased us. So we belong to him. Indeed his saves us by becoming our Lord. If someone says, “Oh, Jesus is my Savior, but he is not my Lord yet”, it shows his knowledge of our Lord and Savior is lacking. Jesus Christ is both the Lord and Savior. He cannot be separated between Lord and Savior.

The grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ should be an opportunity for us to grow rather than remain as young Christians and be exposed to the error of the lawless and fall from our secure position.

Now the letter ends in “**To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”** Jesus’ glory is the purpose of our lives. It is the very purpose of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

In conclusion, today we learned God’s judgment which is so severe and thorough. There is no way for us to escape God’s judgment. Since we have knowledge of the Lord’s judgment we ought to live holy and godly lives, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God and be on our guard. God is patient because he wants us to repent our sins and live holy and godly lives.

Finally we should grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord to him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

One word: The day of the Lord will come like a thief.