

Life Link

Title: "The End is In Drawing Near"

Big Idea: Peter is bring to a close God's message to the pilgrims and therefore we are to be mindful of that the end is near. The End of all things, The End of sorrow and even more important The End of Waiting. Believers have been waiting for the return of Christ and that time is drawing near when God will send the Son to bring His children home. That return will not only Glorify God but it will reestablish God's dominion over all the earth. While God reigns supreme over all because of sin He has allowed evil to exist in this world but, soon and very soon it will come to an end.

Introductory Illustration: PLUNGING TO MURKY EARTH

A family was out vacationing at the lake one summer. Dad had been puttering out by the boat house. Two of his sons, a 12-year old and a 3-year old were down playing along the dock. The 12 year old was supposed to be watching his little brother, but he got distracted. The 3 year old, little Billy, thought that would be a good time to check out the shiny aluminum fishing boat tied up at the end of the dock. So he went to the dock and put one foot on the boat, and one foot on the dock. He lost his balance and fell into the water, which was about 5 or 6 ft deep.

The splash alerted the 12-yr old who let out a piercing scream. Dad came running from the boat house, jumped into the water, swam down, but unable to see anything, came up for air. Sick with panic, he went right back down into this murky water, and began to feel everywhere around the bottom. He couldn't feel anything. Finally, on his way up, he felt little Billy's arms locked in a death grip on one of the posts of the dock, about 4 ft under water. Prying the boy's fingers loose, they burst up together thru the surface to fill their lungs with life giving air.

Finally when the adrenaline had stopped surging, and nerves had calmed down a little bit, the Father asked his son, "What on earth were you doing down there hanging onto the post so far under the water? And little Billy's answer was a classic, laced with the wisdom only a toddler could give. He said, "I was just waiting for you dad. Just waiting for you."

Friends, today we celebrate that 2000 yrs ago, the God of the universe left the glory and the splendor of heaven, a place where there was no pain and no sickness, no accidents, no hurt, and no death.

And he plunged into this dark, murky world on a rescue mission, a rescue mission for all of us who are drowning, a rescue mission for all of us who are barely hanging on, a rescue mission for all of us who are lost in the darkness. (SOURCE: Story told by Gene Appel.)

Read Sermon Text:

1 Peter 4:7-11 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God

supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. NKJV

1. **The End of All Things (vs.7)**

1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. NKJV

a. **End of Worldly Living**

From the fall of Adam the world has lived a life outside the will of God. Adam, in ignored the warning of God, "not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 1:16-17). Yet Adam and Eve chose to ignore the warning of God and took the word of the "tempter" that if they ate of the "tree" they could be come as god's. Just as Esau sold his birthright for food. The actions of Adam/Eve began a pattern for mankind throughout the history of this world. Today men continue to resist the Word of God and turn the many enticements of this world. But now Peter is looking to the "end", although Peter wrote these words more than 2000 years ago there is coming a day when God will reach a point as He did in the days of Noah before the flood.

Genesis 6:5-7 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. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." NKJV

Just as it was in the days before the flood wickedness of this world continues to grow at an alarming rate. As in the days of Noah there is coming a time when God will put an end to the evil of this world by sending His Son to call home all who have accepted Jesus as Lord.

Matt 24:36-40 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. NKJV

b. **End of Struggles**

Peter statement "the end of all things are at hand" (1 Peter 4:7), he realizes that there is coming a end to the sorrow and wickedness in this world. The news is not good when no matter where we turn there are wars and natural disasters and brother killing brother. The day in which Peter lived it was no different. This phrase "the end of all things are at hand" in plies that the world events are drawing to a close. While this timed has not arrived it is on the last leg of the race of life. There will be a day when The Father will send The Son to receive His children. In the parable of Matthew 25 it depicts ten (10) virgins, five (5) wise and five (5) foolish, but all ten (10) are waiting for the coming of the bridegroom. The five wise had made sufficient preparation if the groom tarried, the other had not prepared of the

delay. But, both groups were waiting. Today we have two (2) groups the wise and the unwise. Those who are prepared to meet the groom when that time arrives. But, the unprepared are living for today and not looking for the coming of the groom Jesus Christ.

c. End Of Wandering

When "the end of all things are at hand" has arrived it will be much like the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness being led by Moses under the divine direction of God they neared the completion of their journey. Peter recognized that he and all who turn from the world to God are soon to reach their journeys end. There will soon come a day when the bridegroom, Jesus Christ will return to claim His bride, the church and we will spend eternity with Him in that place prepared for us John 14:3

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. NKJV

Illustration: F.B. Meyer stated: There is a great contrast between the believers of the apostolic age and ourselves. The voyager detects the near proximity of land by the fresh land breeze which breathes in his face, wafting the sounds and scents of forest, or prairie, or heather covered hill. So through these Epistles we inhale another atmosphere than that with which we are so familiar in Christian societies. We live in the world and pay occasional visits into the unseen and eternal; they lived in the unseen and eternal, and paid periodic necessary visits into the world. We conform to the world; they were transformed by the daily renewing of their minds. We read the society papers, discuss society gossip, send our children into society, and strive to hold our own in dress and appointments with the cream of society around us; they, on the other hand, were thought strange and ridiculous, because they lived amongst men as "the children of the resurrection." Surely the contrast is not to our credit, although we vaunt our fancied superiority.

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2. End of Sorrow (vs.10)

1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. NKJV

a. End of Waiting

While we wait on the return of Christ we must realize that we have a responsibility to our fellow pilgrims. When the opportunity presents itself we must minister not in our own strength but with the ability which God has given us. Every believer has been provided the gifts needed to participate in the ministry that God has called us to. Many believers today are like the foolish servant who hid what God has given them and don't use that which they have for God's kingdom. Peter encourage us as we wait for the end of time to use our gifts for the kingdom.

Matt 25:24-25 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' NKJV

Revelation 1:6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. NKJV

Text Illustration: WHAT IS YOUR COLT?

Bill Wilson pastors an inner city church in New York City. His mission field is a very violent place. He himself has been stabbed twice as he ministered to the people of the community surrounding the church. Once a Puerto Rican woman became involved in the church and was led to Christ. After her conversion she came to Pastor Wilson and said, "I want to do something to help with the church's ministry." He asked her what her talents were and she could think of nothing---she couldn't even speak English---but she did love children. So he put her on one of the church's buses that went into neighborhoods and transported kids to church. Every week she performed her duties. She would find the worst-looking kid on the bus, put him on her lap and whisper over and over the only words she had learned in English: "I love you. Jesus loves you."

After several months, she became attached to one little boy in particular. The boy didn't speak. He came to Sunday School every week with his sister and sat on the woman's lap, but he never made a sound. Each week she would tell him all the way to Sunday School and all the way home, "I love you and Jesus loves you." One day, to her amazement, the little boy turned around and stammered, "I---I---I love you too!" Then he put his arms around her and gave her a big hug. That was 2:30 on a Sunday afternoon. At 6:30 that night he was found dead. His own mother had beaten him to death and thrown his body in the trash....."I love you and Jesus loves you."Those were some of the last words this little boy heard in his short life---from the lips of a Puerto Rican woman who could barely speak English. This woman gave her one talent to God and because of that a little boy who never heard the word "love" in his own home, experienced and responded to the love of Christ.....

What can you give? What is your "colt". You and I each have something in our lives, which, if given back to God, could, like the colt, move Jesus and His message further down the road.SOURCE: Mark Adams, "The Roads He Walked - Palm Avenue." Illustrations for April 13, 2003. www.esermons.com.

3. End of Waiting (vs.11)

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. NKJV

It is our dependence on God and not on our ability to speak and minister in these last days. Peter warns the believer to "be watchful", to demonstrate Christian fellowship and charity, love toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and use the ability that God has supplied each one us to "glorify God through Jesus Christ.

Illustration: (John Rodgers) Love must be fervent: -- The manner or kind of love required is a large, continued, stretched out, constant love. As a cloth folded up is in a little room, but when it comes to be cut is stretched out into many men's uses, so our love must be stretched out to many persons, to many duties; as in giving and doing good to body, soul, goods, good name, and that not sparingly, but liberally, so in forgiving both much and often, neither must this be

only when we can well do it, or when we have nothing else to do, but when it is against our profit, pleasure, ease, etc., so as we neglect not ourselves too much, and thereby more pleasure may be done our neighbors than hindrance come to us.

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Conclusion: The disciples who witness the ascension of Jesus, asked if He was going to restore the kingdom at that time and Jesus response to this question was to not to worry about that time but, while that time was coming to tell others and make disciples of as many as possible

Acts 1:6-8 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." NKJV

Text Illustration: Can't Wait Until Morning

Dr. W. A Criswell, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas Texas, said on one occasion on an airplane flight he found himself seated beside a well-known theologian. He desperately wanted to start a conversation and they did get to talk. The man told Dr. Criswell about how he had recently lost his little boy through death. Dr. Criswell listened as he told his story:

He said he had come home from school with a fever and we thought it was just one of those childhood things, but it was a very virulent form of meningitis. The doctor said we cannot save your little boy. He'll die.

And so this seminary professor, loving his son as he did, sat by the bedside to watch this death vigil. It was the middle of the day, and the little boy whose strength was going from him and whose vision and brain was getting clouded said, "Daddy, it's getting dark isn't it?" The professor said to his son, "Yes son it is getting dark, very dark." Of course it was very dark for him. He said, "Daddy, I guess it's time for me to go to sleep isn't it?"

He said, "Yes, son, it's time for you to go to sleep."

The professor said the little fellow had a way of fixing his pillow just so, and putting his head on his hands when he slept and he fixed his pillow like that and laid his head on his hands and said, "Good night Daddy. I will see you in the morning." He then closed his eyes in death and stepped over into heaven.

Dr. Criswell said the professor didn't say anymore after that. He just looked out the window of that airplane for a long time. Then he turned back and he looked at Dr. Criswell with the scalding tears coming down his cheeks and he said, "Dr. Criswell, I can hardly wait till the morning."

You see the morning is coming. And we will see our loved ones. That's what Jesus is saying, "The gates of hell, the gates of DEATH, shall not prevail against the church!"