SWM 1-24-21

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise

2 Peter 3:1-9

K.V 3:9 “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.

Experiencing the pandemic, we became more aware that this world is fragile and insecure. People worry that we would have a bigger pandemic or other more serious natural disasters in the future. The pandemic is still going on and we don’t know when everything is going back to normal. Nationally, the transition of administration took place after turmoil, but there are many concerns about the future of the country. The uncertainty of the future of the world and nation makes us uneasy and even anxious. And when we are not sure about the future, we could just live day by day as it goes without a clear direction in life.

But, in fact, God has clearly revealed to us about the future of the world so that we may live with a confidence and clear direction on how to live and what to live for. What is the clear future of the world? It is Jesus’ second coming and the end of the world. We don’t know what will happen in the future. Many things will continue to happen either good and bad,but one thing we can be sure of is that the world is heading towards Jesus' second coming. The history of the world started with God’s creation and will end with Jesus’ second coming. This is the certain future of the world and God wants us to manage our life based on this truth.

In today’s passage, we can see another way how the false teachers harmed the believers. They planted doubt about Jesus’ second coming into the believers’ heart. In this passage we can see how Peter helped the believers to restore their faith. May God help us to strengthen our faith in Jesus’ coming so that we may live with confidence and clear direction for our life in this troublesome and uncertain world. My message has three parts;

I. Recall the word of God (1-2)

II. The world is reserved for fire.(3-7)

III. God is not slow in keeping his promise.(8-9)

 I. **Recall the word of God (1-2)**

Look at verse 1. **Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking**. Peter wrote two letters: 1 Peter and 2 Peter that we have been covering. He said that the both letters were written as reminders. I think we can call first and second Peter ‘book of reminder’ Peter really wanted to remind the believers of what they had received before. Peter said “to stimulate you to wholesome thinking”. This word shows the spiritual condition of the believers at that time. Their thinking was not wholesome. The meaning of ‘Wholesome thinking’ in the scripture is ‘healthy and sound thinking with a pure mind’. When the believers had wholesome thinking, they lived a holy and godly life obeying God’s command and had an eager desire to serve the work of God. But because of the false teachings, their thinking and mind got polluted with many false and evil things and they became unhealthy and corrupted. Then they became like unbelieving people in the world living by their flesh and worldly desire. They were spiritually sick and like a withering plant. When Peter heard about their spiritual condition, it caused great pain to him and he had to write the letters twice with a broken heart.

Then how can they be restored to become healthy, pure, and powerful Christians again? Look at verse 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**. The solution that Peter gave was to recall the words of God and the command of the Lord. The words of God spoken by the prophets refer to the Old Testament. And the command given by the Lord and Savior refers to Jesus’ command that the believers had received through his apostles. The word of God and the command of Jesus in the Bible was the remedy that can restore the corrupted and powerless believers to have wholesome thinking and become holy and powerful Chrsitans again!

It can happen because the word of God is holy, pure, and full of truth and power. Psalm 12:6 says **The words of the Lord are pure words: As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times**. And Hebrew 4:12 says, **For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart**. The Word of God is so pure and sharp. It can expose all our hidden sins and corruption even in our deep heart and cut them off sharply to make our thoughts and heart pure and sound.

 Like the believers in this passage, we could lose our wholesome thinking and become unhealthy powerless Christians in many ways. Living in this world we can be easily affected by the corrupted culture of the world which is so unblical, lustful, pleasure seeking, and materialistic. We should be careful about what we watch and read because those things could pollute our thinking and mind easily. Sometimes we can pay too much attention to social and political situations that our mind and thoughts are dominated by them. Very busy daily work and worries about life could let us lose our spiritual sense. In addition, our sinful flesh desire and laziness can make us corrupted and powerless. When our brothers shared their testimonies at the Men’s New Years Conference, we realized that we can be spiritually more powerless during this pandemic by neglecting our spiritual life, being lazy and spending too much time watching useless and even harmful things. All these things can cause us to be corrupted and become powerless.

What should we do? We have to listen to the word of God spoken to us through Peter, “Recall the word of God and the command given by the Lord”. When we have the word of God in our heart, the word of God enables us to win the victory over all challenges inside and out and to live a holy and powerful Christian life. Especially, when the world has trouble like the pandemic and the future is uncertain, people become anxious and wonder about life losing direction. But when we have the word of God, we can get confidence and clear direction for what to do. May God help us to make all efforts to recall the word of God and Jesus’ command so that the word of God and his command may dominate our heart all the time and enable us to have wholesome thinking and live a powerful Chrsitian life.

**II. The world is reserved for fire (3-7)**

Look at verse 3-4. **3 Above 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.”** Now Peter gives a very strong warning about scoffers saying, “Above all, you must understand” He gave such a strong warning because the scoffers were the most harmful. The scoffers were the false teachers who denied Jesus’ second coming mocking that believing his coming is unreasonable and stupid. They said, **“Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything has gone as it has since the beginning of creation”** They argued that if there really was Jesus’ second coming, he should have already come. Then they said that everything has been the same without any change just as it was ever since God created the world even though their ancestors died generation after generation expecting the last day of the world. Their idea was that the world would continue in the future without any changes just as it had been.

 The scoffers’ false argument was so harmful and evil. At that time believers thought Jesus would come soon so they endured all persecutions and lived a godly life waiting for his coming. But because of the scoffers’ false teaching, their faith got shaken and they started living corrupted worldly lives. Also the scoffers denied Jesus’ second coming following their evil desires. The real motive they had in mind was they wanted to live following their evil desires without any fear of God’s judgment on the day of Jesus’ second coming

Now Peter disputes why the scoffers' scoffing was wrong. Look at verse 5-7. **5 But 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. 6 By 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.**

The scoffers intentionally forgot what actually happened in the past. First they forgot how the heavens came into being. God created the entire universe out of nothing by his mighty word. In Genesis Chapter one, we can see God created everything by saying his word. It shows how much God’s word is powerful. Now by the same God’s word, the present heavens and earth are preserved to be destroyed with fire. The soffers couldn’t believe that the heaven and earth that look so stable and seem never to change could be destroyed. But God's word has mighty power and his word never changes. Just as the world came into being by God’s mighty word, by the same word, it will be destroyed.In Mt 24:35 Jesus said,  **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away**.

Second, just as the earth was formed out of water and by water, the world will be destroyed by fire. If you take a look at Genesis 1:1-10, you can see how earth was formed. The earth was covered with water at first and God divided the water and the earth got land and sea. And after Adam's fall, when the people in the world became so sinful, God destroyed everything on earth with flood. The world already experienced God’s severe judgment on ungodly people and the destruction of the world. God’s judgment through water was the shadow of God's ultimate judgment for ungodly people and destruction of the world. Through God’s judgment by water, all breathing creatures were destroyed but heaven and earth still remained. But for final judgment, the world will be destroyed by fire and disappear. Isaiah 29:6 says, **the Lord Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. (Isaiah 29:6)** The present heaven and earth are just reserved for the final destruction with fire. The last day will come when Jesus comes back. When he comes back, all the people will stand before his judgment seat and be judged according to what they have done and the ungodly people who don’t believe and live by following their evil desires will be destroyed with eternal condemnation.

There are so many scoffers out there today who don’t believe in God’s creation of the world and Jesus’ coming and the end of the day. With all kinds of arguments people don’t believe. Unbiblical education dominates schools and campuses. People scoff at what the bible says, thinking that they are smart and scientific. But their scoffing comes from their ignorance of God and his power. Ignoring Jesus’ coming and God’s judgment the scoffers live following their sinful desires. Even many Christians don’t consider Jesus’ second coming seriously. But Jesus comes back regardless of the scoffers' denial as God said, and all people stand before his judgment seat and be judged and be destroyed as the heavens and earth is destroyed by mighty God's word.

Many things will still continue to happen in the future either good or bad. But the future of the world is very clear. It will go just as what God says in the bible and history is moving toward Jesus’ second coming. Our Christian life on earth is the life to prepare Jesus’ coming no matter what happens.

 **III. God is not slow in keeping his promise.(8-9)**

Now someone can still ask a question. “OK. If there will be Jesus’ coming, why God takes so long until Jesus’ coming?” Good question. Peter answers this question.

Look at verse 8-9. **8. But 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.** We have to know that the dimension of God’s time and the dimension of man’s time are very different. A day with God is like a thousand years with us and a thousand years with us are like a day with him.The fastest man in the world, **Usain Bolt** can run at a speed of 27.78 mph. Do you know the speed of light? It is 671,000,000 mph. It is 24million times faster than man. I think Peter calculated the difference between man’s time and God’s time so generously. 2000 years have passed since Jesus resurrected. It sounds a long time but with God it is like just two days. So we should not think that God is taking too long thinking based on our time. When we think about the difference between our time and God’s time, we can know how much God is great and how much we are limited and it makes us really humble. We should not become doubtful when there is something hard to understand or believe about what the Bible says or what God is doing. Instead of doubting based on our limited knowledge and understanding, we should keep a humble attitude acknowledging that God is too great for us to understand fully. When we deeply know who God is and how great he is, it is a lot easier to believe and understand what the Bible says.

Look at verse 9a. **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness**. God is not slow in keeping his promise as some people think based on their thoughts. Instead, God keeps his promise at the best and perfect time according to his perfect plan and schedule. Also Our God is so faithful. He never fails at keeping his promise. When we pray sometimes God’s answer seems to come slowly. But that is from our perspective.From God’s point of view, he is answering our prayer at the best and perfect time. So we should not be anxious or become doubtful. Instead we should keep absolute faith in him and wait for God’s time with patience in prayer.

God runs his redemption history according to his perfect will and plan. Jesus will return at God’s perfect time according to his plan. We don’t know when Jesus will come, maybe while we are still alive or after our death. But one thing we can be sure of is that he will come back absolutely at God’s right time. Also we should focus on why Jesus comes back more instead of the time when he comes back. Jesus comes back to judge us and reward us according to what we have done. All of us, bother believers and nonbelievers will stand before Jesus’ judgment seat and receive proper things according to what we have done. Even if Jesus comes back after our death, we will still be called and stand before the judgment seat. We have to live our life considering the moment of his judgment. When we live holy and godly life by faith, the moment will be the happiest and glorious moment for us ever.

Now Peter explains why God takes a long time until Jesus’ second coming .Look at verse 9b. **Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** God takes a long time to give us time to repent in his great patience. He could have judged us a long time ago because of our sin. But he has been patient with us for such a long time to give us a chance to repent and be saved. Here we can see how much God is patient with us. Because of his patience we are saved. Thank God for his long patient with us. Here we can also learn that God doesn’t want anyone to perish but wants everyone to come to Jesus and repent and be saved. Even though he knows not all people would repent but he still wants everyone to come to repentance. With this desire God is taking a long time to give time to everyone to repent. This shows us what we should do waiting for Jesus’ coming? First, we should repent our sins. The time until Jesus’ coming is time for us to repent our sin. God wants us to repent our sins and live godly life until Jesus comes so that we may not perish but to live when Jesus comes back. Second we have to serve what God wants which is everyone to come to repentance. God’s best interest in the last days is saving people. Participating in God’s life saving work is the thing that we should do as our first priority waiting for Jesus’ coming.

In conclusion, We have a very clear future in Jesus Christ. God is the sovereign Lord and everything is under his control and the future of the world is in his hand. Jesus will come back to judge at God’s perfect time. God is so patient with us and wants everyone to come to repentance. May God help us recall the word of God everyday and repent our sins and help others to repent with God’s heart for them so that we may be rewarded as good and faithful servants. One word, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise”