

Title: **Final Directions to the Last Stop (Part 2)**

Passage: **2 Peter 3:15**

Theme: **Avoiding the dangers of a lost reward**

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{Read Passage}

Jesus' words in 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel is a commentary on this passage in 2 Peter.

If you're familiar w/that chapt. you might rem. that it begins w/the parable of t/10 virgins (bridesmaids). Customary in that day for t/bridesmaids to accompany t/bride & groom to their new home after t/wedding. Sometimes weddings were in t/evening which necessitated t/use of torches to light t/way.

Parable ==>

1 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 “Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent (or wise).

3 “For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. 5 “Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 “But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 “Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 “The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 “But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 “And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 “Later the other virgins also

came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 "But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

J. Knox Chamblin, professor of NT at Reformed Theological Seminary until his death just this past Feb at age 76, comments on this text=>
The five foolish virgins represents false disciples, the five wise ones true disciples (cf. 24:45-49). The bridegroom represents Jesus Christ (cf. 9:15), the sudden coming (v. 6) the unpredictable day and hour of Jesus' return (v. 13; 24:36). When he comes he will surely judge church members for their works (16:27) and separate true disciples from false (25:10-12; cf. 7:21-23; 24:40-41). The foolish virgins' lack of oil corresponds to the wedding guest's lack of the proper garment (22:11); in each case the absence of evidential works of righteousness is in view. ewor = t/testimony of a changed life. Works that arise from true saving faith, t/absence of which testifies to a dead, non-saving faith (James 2).

Parable ends w/the admonition==>

13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Immediately after Jesus tells another parable expounding on t/first: Parable of t/Talents (talents = measure of money, not abilities).

In that parable a master (Christ) gives to his 3 slaves (professed believers) his possessions to care for while he's away on a journey.

The 1st 2 slaves, representing true believes, take good care of what was entrusted to them.

The last slave, who represents a false professor, was indifferent / apathetic.

At t/final judgment he is cast into hell, that place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. (v. 30).

That chapter continues with this ==>

31 “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. 34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

It's about fruitfulness; readiness; seriousness as it relates to being a follower of JC. Because there are many who follow in word but not in deed. IOW - they would profess to be believers, but it all ends w/their profession. With their lives they deny Him.

Either you're following after Christ or you're not.

I hope you see t/parallel to 2 Peter (these last few vv. but entire letter). Cf. 1:10-11; 3:11-12.

Point of clarification: This is not works salv. // a denial of assurance of salv. // denial of divine election, perseverance, or eternal security.

It is a denial of what has become so common in evangelical circles: Idea that your profession of faith saves you. Your profession is just that, a profession. Your profession is only as good as t/reality that lies behind it. IOW - if you are born again & thereby possess saving faith, you profess t/reality of that: JC as Lord.

But we commonly put it backwards: If you make t/profession then you are magically "in." In its extreme forms this false theology borders on incantationism: just say t/words, make a profession, say t/prayer, make a decision – poof you're forever a Xn.

What gets the emphasis? The profession / prayer / decision (not X).

What becomes t/false basis of assurance? [^]

Then you have a company of men & woman who are not born again, who are not followers of JC; they are little more than religious. It just so happens that their "religion" is evangelical. So they either negatively live like t/rest of t/world, or neutrally are just apathetic. But if you ask them, "are you a Xn?" they will utter t/right words.

Peter's 1st c. audience was being inundated w/a teaching not totally foreign to what we see today: antinomianism.

When you have a church that is beset w/worldliness & apathy & denial of t/necessity of repentance there needs to be an emphasis on sanctification.

Emphasis in James (faith w/o works is dead) // 1 John (if we say we have come to know him and do not keep His commandments we're liars & don't possess t/truth).

We need to hear t/message that true saving faith transforms; that true believers demonstrate t/reality of their salvation w/their lives.

Theologically – where there is justification there will be sanctification.

On t/other hand . . . if you have a church that is beset with legalism t/emphasis doesn't fall so much on sanctification as it does justification. If you emphasize sanctification they will all nod their heads in agreement: "yeah, we do all that." In fact, for legalists the works become their badge of honor and their hope of salvation.

When TAP addresses issues of legalism, as he does in Colossians 2, he reminds his readers of t/great fact of their justification – Christ cancelled out t/debt of sin having nailed it to t/cross.

Or in Galatians 3 where he writes that ==>

10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—

And where he expounds on that great truth of sola fide using Abraham as an example (A. who believed G. and was justified by faith alone).

Could look at t/book of Romans where we see both themes played out: Chapter 2 –

6 [God] WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

6:1–2 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

In between those 2 chapters t/great truths of justification by faith alone apart from works in chapter 4 again using Abraham as an example.

Antinomians need to be reminded of their sin – they can't live in it & be a true believer.

Legalists need to be reminded of their sin – they can't keep t/law & have no hope of salvation if they think that their good deeds contrib. to it.

Both Antinomians & Legalists need X.

So keep in mind that Peter here in his 2nd epistle is focusing on false teachers who deny judgment, repentance, & t/need for personal holiness. They were carnal, sexual, worldly – & they believed that they could be all of those things & yet belong to X.

So Peter writes in v. 14 {cite }

If you are a genuine believer don't allow this to depress you.

I know what it's like to look at my own sin // failures // apathy & say, "I don't measure up." "I'm a wretched sinner w/no hope apart from X."

That's t/point, isn't it?

I think it's a truism (very imp.):

Genuine Xns struggle to see their good works through their sin.
False believers can't see their sin through their good works.

True Xns find almost repulsive t/idea that "I do good things" or "I live some kind of pure, holy life." We know our sin. We comprehend (at least in part) what it means to live before a Holy God.

Religionists have no problem focusing on their good works. "I'm basically a good person // I go to CH // I believe certain things so I'm okay."

See t/difference?

If you have sensitive conscience don't lose heart. Your only hope is t/Gospel of X. When you doubt, flee to t/cross. Cling to it.

We noted last time that like a general giving his troops their final marching orders, Peter here gives his last words of exhortation to t/CH.
Final Directions to the Last Stop.

There are 5 points ==>

I. A Day to Remember (14)

II. A Delay to Consider (15)

III. A Danger to Avoid (16)

IV. A Discipline to Pursue (17-18a)

V. A Doxology to Cherish (18b)

I. A Day to Remember (14)

We don't want to be like the foolish virgins of Matt. 25 who lost sight of t/bridegrooms coming. We need to be mindful of that day.

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things . . .

(vv. 10-13)

. . . be diligent to be found by Him spotless and blameless, [and] in peace.

εὐρίσκω "to be found" = in this context carries t/idea of judgment. When X comes you want to be found by Him, the righteous judge, spotless, blameless and therefore in peace.

Contrast to the false teachers.

2:13 ==> ... **They are stains and blemishes...**

I. A Day to Remember (14)

II. A Delay to Consider (15)

And consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation . . .

A. What's the delay?

Relates to God's "patience" – where have we seen that before?

1. 3:8-9

But do not let this one thing escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

a. God is not Procrastinating; He is Patient! (9)

(1) His patience relates to His promise

The Lord is not slow about His promise . . .

(a) What's the promise?

Goes back to v. 4 {cite} — ahead to verse 13 {cite and summarize}

The Lord is not slow about His promise, *as some count slowness*,

Clearly a reference to the false teachers.

(1) His patience relates to His promise

(2) His promise relates to His people

. . . but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

1) Perish means to be eternally lost in hell (same word used in John 3:16 – ἀπολλυμι) – also used in John 10:28 in contrast to eternal life [I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish]

2) to come to repentance means to be saved from hell and given eternal life. (Acts 11:18 = "repentance that leads to life" / 2 Tim. 2:25 "repentance that leads to t/knowledge of t/truth")

(3) There are basically 4 views on how to interpret this

(a) Universal Salvation View

(b) Arminian / Free-Will View

(c) Calvinist / Sovereign Election View (actually views x2)

i. There is the secret vs. revealed will of God view

(2 wills in God view).

ii. Gathering of the Elect View

If you take note of the key words in vv. 8 & 9 I think they paint a picture that Peter is not referring to all men w/o exception, but specif. to t/elect, to all who will believe.

Peter ==> *"I know there are those out there wondering why God's judgment is slow in coming. There are mockers saying, 'yeah, God's coming to judge. JC is returning. You Xns have been saying that for a long time!' But listen, God is patient toward you, beloved. He's patient toward **you**. Not one of Christ's sheep will be lost. That may take 2 thousand years to accomplish. But a 1000 yrs. is to a day to God."*

2. God is not Procrastinating; He is Patient! (9)

a. His patience relates to His promise

b. His promise relates to His people

II. A Delay to Consider (15)

And consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation . . .

So this is how one is to think about the long wait that the church has endured with respect to the Parousia. It is salvation, salvation for many of those whom Peter addresses who had recently come to repentance, salvation for the millions of followers of Jesus who have lived throughout the ages, and salvation for peoples around the world about whom our author is not even dimly aware, but whom we know have come to repentance and thus will not perish, people living from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic Circle and from the east coast of China right around to the west coast of the United States. And especially in our age we remember the millions of believers in the global South since the average believer today is not Caucasian or Western but black or

otherwise colored and probably living in the southern hemisphere, far beyond the worldview of our author. But this is what our Lord's patience has meant: it has meant that salvation has reached them, and it has meant that salvation has reached us. [Davids, 297-98]

Our "even so come Lord Jesus" must be tempered w/the joy of knowing that the delay in X's coming means that there is still work for us to do. There is joy in our knowing that the church is being grown.

Peter adds ==>

... just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him wrote to you–

B. Here we have The Apostle Paul introduced for the first time

1. What's Peter emphasizing?

Not only that we are to consider the patience of t/Lord to be salv.

Beyond that – Peter is referring to Paul's teaching these same 1st c. Xns t/same things that Peter has been emphasizing t/o this entire letter:

Have a right perspective on t/Second Coming;

Be prepared;

Don't be deceived into thinking that obedience is optional.

2. May be that the opponents had seized on Paul's writings to advance their own agenda

That is, they took out of context some things that Paul had written to support their bad theology.

That seems to be indicated in v. 16.

Not uncommon.

May be that some took what Paul wrote in passages like Eph. 2:6 (**raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenlies**) to support an "over-realized eschatology".

2TI 2:17-18 **17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 {men} who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.**

More to the point in this context - taking Paul's great themes of justification by faith turning it on its head saying that *"If it's all grace and I just have to believe, then how I live afterward is irrelevant."*

Paul addresses that issue head on in Romans ==>

5:20-21 increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more . . . even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ . . .

6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?

6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Also an issue in Corinth

6:12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

6:13 Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.

1CO 6:9-10 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor {the} covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

I once heard a popular Christian psychologist on the radio discussing why so many in t/CH today fall prey to adultery & fornication. His reasons centered on lack of self-esteem; a desire to feel "worthy" and "worthwhile;" the need to fill some inner need. The solution: realize that you have inherent value and worth; build your self-esteem.

Never once did he mention sin. Never once did he mention repentance. Never once did he mention the very real possibility that we're talking about people in t/CH who aren't regenerate in the first place.

Do not be deceived; . . . the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God!

Peter says ==>

"Paul wrote to you concerning these same matters.

Even at this early date (AD 68) we see that Paul's letters were being collected and circulated.

(We'll see some fascinating things in that regard next time in v. 16.)

I believe that Peter was writing to Xns in Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1 **aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**). We don't know exactly what letter's of Paul he's talking about.

Scholars have suggested Romans; Ephesians; Colossians; Galatians; 1-2 Thess.

We do know from Col. 4:16 that Paul encouraged t/CHs to circulate his letters.

At any rate, Paul was familiar to them. Not only Paul, but his letters.

. . . our beloved brother . . .

Many, esp. in more recent history, who have falsely assumed that Peter and Paul were in conflict (reading too much into Gal. 2:11-21).

However, Paul recognized Peter's ministry (Gal. 2:7-10) and Peter while defending his mission to the Gentiles during the Council at Jerusalem also affirmed Paul's ministry to the same (Acts 15:7-12).

Peter refers to ==>

. . . the wisdom given to him . . .

Divine passive (NIV - "God gave to him.").

Sets the stage for v. 16 where Peter refers to Paul's letters as Scripture.

We'll look at that next time - along with ==>

III. A Danger to Avoid (16)

IV. A Discipline to Pursue (17-18a)

V. A Doxology to Cherish (18b)

Remember how I began w/Matthew 25? You know how that chapter ends? Judgment.

All τ/ἔθνοι (peoples) will be gathered before X in that day.
He will separate them, τ/righteous from τ/ unrighteous.

Here's how he characterizes those 2 groups ==>

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 ‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 ‘When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’

Not only do they not recognize that serving others is tantamount to service X – There's also sense in which τ/righteous don't see themselves as such. "When did we do this?"

41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat;

I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ 44 “Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’

They don't see their sin. They're like t/RYR – *"All these things I have kept."*

45 “Then He will answer them, “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

One group says, "When did we do this?"

The other group says, "When didn't we?"

46 “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

I can only trust that, when my life is over, God will see some of t/things I have done as being worthy of His honor and glory (and that only through X). I certainly don't see it.

Big news over the weekend was the conviction of a certain college football coach for unspeakable crimes against children. As I read through the breaking news stories I also noted some of the comments that readers left. One such comment struck me. 2 short sentences:
"Thank God. He deserves to fry in hell."

When I read that my first thought was, "So do I." We know that as wicked as certain sins are, the bottom line is that all of our sin is just plain wicked.