

2 Peter 3:1-18

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ²I 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.

³Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵But 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. ⁶By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

⁸But 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. ⁹The 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.

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.

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. 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.

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

Why So Slow, Lord?
Discussion Questions

1. There are some people who mock God's slowness in returning, as if it's a pipe dream. How does Peter respond to this mockery, and why is God's coming judgment on the ways of wickedness good news?
2. Is Peter grateful for God's slowness? Why?
3. If Jesus's slowness indicates God's will and desire for all people to be saved, what should be our posture and our practice toward those who don't currently belong to God?
4. Dallas Willard, Christian philosopher and leader, once said that in order to live a spiritually healthy Christian life, "you must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life." How is technology and the practices of fast communication, fast transactions, fast travel, and fast food forming us? Have our imaginations been captivated by "a speed of life" in tension with God's speed of life, without us knowing it? What "hurry" do you need to eliminate from your life?

If you would like to discuss the subject of prayer further with Jimmy Myers, Director of Young Adults, feel free to email him at jmyers@fpchouston.org.

In addition, here is a resource on the topic, if you would like to read more:
Three Mile an Hour God, by Kosuke Koyama

“Patient Trust”

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something
unknown, something new.
And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability—
and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

Excerpts from Kosuke Koyoma's book, *Three Mile an Hour God*, that Jimmy Myers, Director of Young Adults, encourages you to read as you prepare for this small group discussion.

"I find that God goes 'slowly' ... 'Forty years in the wilderness' points to his basic educational philosophy. Forty years of natural migration through the wilderness, three generations of the united monarchy (Saul, David, Solomon), nineteen kings of Israel (up to 722 BC) and twenty kings of Judah (up to 587 BC), the hosts of the prophets and priests, the experience of exile and restoration – isn't this rather a slow and costly way for God to let his people know the covenant relationship between God and man?"

"God walks 'slowly' because he is love. If he is not love he would have gone much faster. Love has its speed. It is an inner speed. It is a spiritual speed. It is a different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed. It is 'slow' yet it is lord over all other speeds since it is the speed of love. It goes on in the depth of our life, whether we notice or not, whether we are currently hit by storm or not, at three miles an hour. It is the speed we walk and therefore it is the speed the love of God walks."