

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

Holiness

Dr. Bruce Bickel

2 Peter 3:1-10

March 4, 2016

Bruce: Good morning, men!

Men: Good morning, Bruce!

Bruce: Good to be with you. Let’s open with a word of prayer, please. Merciful God, we have so much that we need to be forgiven for. Yet in Your mercy You’ve provided the redemption through the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Father, we’re just overwhelmed with the fact that You don’t treat us as our sins deserve. And all of Your perfections demand our allegiance, our worship and our praise. Father, we just pray that You would open our eyes once again, that we might behold You for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Turn in your Bibles, please, to 2 Peter chapter 3. Again we’re looking at verses 1-10. Peter is warning us about the scoffers, false teachers who were scoffing at the Second Coming of Christ. Let’s see what Peter has to tell us in chapter 3, verses 1-10.

“This is now the second letter that I am writing to you. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere minds by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’ But they deliberately overlook this fact: that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promises, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. And then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Well, last week Peter introduced this theme of these false teachers who were scoffing at the Second Coming of Christ. And the reason they were scoffing at this and making fun of it was because they basically said this. The stability of the creation of the world means inactivity on God’s part. And their conclusion, falsely, was that because we don’t see much activity on God’s part, the stability means that He’s not involved. They essentially viewed the existence of the world as a closed system. God created the world; they would agree with that. Then He just turned it loose and let it function on its own. And so they began to say that it’s a closed system and that God is not intimately involved. And their premise was this. Stability

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

means inactivity. Therefore, how could Christ come again a second time and fulfill His promise? If He’s inactive, how can He do that?

Peter’s defense is this. Stability is not inactivity. Stability is the faithfulness of God demonstrated by His providence.

Now last week we went through some of the things he told us to remind ourselves of. He has given us four things to remind ourselves of. First of all, we remind ourselves of *God’s intervention*. And today we’re going to talk about reminding ourselves of *God’s time perspective*.

Now let’s just quickly review the things we talked about last week which involve God’s intervention. Peter talked about these things by God’s providence.

First of all, he said He supports the world and all creatures in and by His power. God is involved intimately by supporting the world and all of its creatures by His power.

Secondly, He permits the worst of creatures in the world to be and act as they do. He is controlling all things.

Thirdly, we looked at the fact that He restrains the world from the doing of those things that they want to fulfill. God restrains.

Fourthly, He limits the world in its acts, assigning boundaries and lines of liberty beyond which they cannot go. He limits things. He protects His people against the world of enemies and dangers. He protects. He punishes evildoers for what they do or for what they attempt to do to His people. And lastly, He rewards.

Now those are some of the things that Peter talked to us about last week, as related to God’s intervention and His providence. Providence is how God supplies the needs of the people and how He rules the world.

Today we want to look at the second thing he talks about, and that is this. *Remember God’s time perspective*.

Now these scoffers were basically saying that because there is no activity on God’s part, how can you trust His promises that He will come again? But now he goes through his second defense—that you’ve got to trust God’s time perspective.

The second argument comes from the fact that God’s word is found in Psalm 90, verse 4.

Transcriber’s Note: Psalm 90:4. *“For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”*

Bruce: This is a cross reference to Psalm 90, verse 4. And you’ll see that in verse 8. *“But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”* That’s Psalm 90, verse 4.

They overlooked God’s time perspective. So Peter says, “Do not forget.” Now the word “do not forget” is the same word that he used in the Greek to describe what the scoffers did when they decided to purposely forget. They chose to forget. They determined to be forgetful. It means deliberate forgetfulness.

So he’s saying, “Don’t deliberately forget these facts.” The first defense was God’s intervention. The second defense is God’s time perspective, which we’ll examine today.

And then Peter goes on to say this. Be sure to remember. When we look at time in relationship to God, we must remember that the distinctive unbeknown to us are observed by Him. You and I have certain distinctions and descriptions as we look at our time life. That is not how God looks at time at all. If you look at verse 8 again, you’ll see that a thousand years is like a day and a day

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

is like a thousand years. That’s the premise of why Peter says that you’ve got to remind yourselves of that. And there are some tremendous applications about that individual thought.

So to help us understand God’s perspective on time, let me offer you the following considerations. There are three or four things that I think are important for us to look at, specifically in verse 8. God views one day as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. That’s not the way that we look at time. Here are some insights for us just to help us to understand God’s perspective on time, because His perspective is not like ours.

First of all, I would offer this for your consideration. *All time is equally present with God.* When we think that something is going to happen today, it appears very near to us. And when we think that it won’t happen for a thousand years, we don’t think much of it. When it’s going to happen today, we’re all excited about it. But if something’s going to happen in a thousand years, we don’t think much about it.

Remember, God’s time perspective is this. All time is equally present with God. To God the distance of a thousand years before an event is no more to Him than the interval of one day. To God there is neither past, present nor future. All time is equally present with God.

Notice that Jesus said that he is the “I Am.” Notice what that means. He didn’t say, “I was.” He said, “I am.” If He had said, “I was,” He would have meant that He used to be something which He is not now. Some part of His character had changed, if He had said, “I was.” But He didn’t say that. He said, “I am.” He didn’t say, “I shall be,” which would lead us to think that He’s not something now that He will become in the future, which basically means that there is room for growth in God. There’s growth and progress in God. There’s advancement for God. Those are offenses to His character, because God is perfectly holy. When Jesus says, “I am,” He means that all time is present with God.

Because time is all equally present with God, time is the arena in which God works out what He has already purposed in His heart. Time is the arena in which God works out the things that have already occurred in His heart.

Turn with me to Ecclesiastes chapter 3. It’s a cross reference for us. Here Solomon discusses the significance of God’s timing for every experience in the world. You’ll notice that in verses 1-8 of Ecclesiastes 3. He’s describing God’s timing for every event and experience in the world. He uses fourteen different contrasts in verses 1-8. There are fourteen different contrasts. And then he asks a very interesting question in verse 9. He gives us tasks to do, but our work is never an end in itself. Sovereignly, God puts tasks together to make them into some eternal value. Let’s take a look again at Ecclesiastes chapter 3.

Now here is God’s time perspective with fourteen contrasts. *“For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. A time to be born, a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to tear and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace. What gain has the worker from his toil?”*

Now the question is this. God’s assignments to us are not an end in themselves. In other words, it’s not just the fulfillment of a task that is the issue. The issue is that God assigns us tasks

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

to do, and they have some eternal consequence, because we need to understand the tasks that God gives us in His sovereign grace in terms of God’s timing. There’s a time for this and a time for that. Just because you fulfill something, you may not see the results of it. But that doesn’t mean that there’s not a time involved in it. There are fourteen different contrasts. All time belongs to God for Himself. It’s neither present, past nor future.

Now look at verses 8 and 9. God sovereignly puts tasks together to make an eternal work.

Notice verses 14 and 15 again. He is dependent upon us for nothing, because it has already occurred in God’s heart. *“I perceive that whatever God does endures forever. Nothing can be added to it, for nothing can be taken from it. God has done it, so people fear before Him. That which is already has been. That which is to be already has been, and God seeks what has been driven away.”*

In other words, when God has left something happen, causing something to occur in our lifetime, it’s something He thought about in His own heart long ago. He’s just now bringing it to pass in His sovereign grace. All time is under God’s control.

Do you understand all that? In other words, when God permits something to happen in our lives, it has already occurred in His heart. That’s what it means. When God permits something to happen in our lives, it has already occurred in His heart. So there is no time element with Him. For us, it’s right now. That was something that He purposed in His heart to do.

I think a good example of that would be in Ephesians chapter 1. God chose us from before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless in Him. He predestined us in love because of the counsel of His own will. Now that was something that God chose to do in eternity past in His own heart. And it’s just like that happened to us. God is in control of all time. There is no past, present or future in Him.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: So when we talk about the coming of the Lord in all of His glory, the application would be this. When we consider God’s timing, it ought to produce a spirit of worship in us, not a time of speculation. The issue here is not a time to figure out when the Second Coming is going to occur.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: He’s trying to help us understand that God controls all things, even time—past, present and future. And when we think along those lines, Peter is saying, “Remind yourself of God’s time perspective, because that will produce within you a spirit of worship, a spirit of awe, a spirit of reverence, not a spirit of speculation to figure out when the Lord is going to return in all of His glory. That’s going to come. God has already figured that out in His heart. That will occur one of these days. So we don’t need to worry about that, because what God has already purposed in His heart will occur. So this ought to produce within us a spirit of worship, a spirit of praise, but not to give ourselves over to these ridiculous speculations as to when the Second Coming will occur.

Not only is time equally present with God. The third thing we need to consider is this. *All time is equally obedient to God.* Now while you and I are servants of time, God is the sovereign master of time. Now I would honestly say that there are probably times when you and I would like to think that we’d like to lengthen our day or shorten our day based upon our uncertain circumstances. That would be very natural.

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

But God created time in Genesis 1:1. *“In the beginning God created.”* When did time begin? When God created it.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Genesis 1:1. And now by His providences the ticks of time are under His divine control. They always accomplish, at the right time and at the right moment, what He purposed to do. Time obeys God, not us.

Go to 1 Timothy chapter 1, verses 15 and 16. Paul says this. *“The saying is trustworthy and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason—that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life.”*

Now I would imagine that Paul might have said something like this. “I wonder why God didn’t save me more quickly. Why didn’t He save me at a younger age?” He may have asked that question.

But here’s the answer. All time is obedient to God. And notice what the result. The timing of Paul’s conversion was to demonstrate what?

Participant: God’s patience.

Bruce: God’s patience. That’s how God controls time. You see, He demonstrates His character. The way God controls times is that He does everything at the right time for the right reason, at the right moment, to demonstrate His character. And Paul might have said, “Why didn’t you save me earlier?” Well, the answer is this. God saved him at the right time, the right man at the right moment, so that God would demonstrate His righteous character. And that was the character quality of patience. Christ always demonstrates His character qualities at the time He was obedient to Him. Time obeys God to reveal His character.

Now what we need to look at is that whatever we go through in these time issues about God controlling time, we need to look behind and say, “What is the character quality that God is demonstrating by the timing of what He chose to do, the timing of what He ordained? It always reveals His character.

Fourthly, I would suggest this. *God sees time with an intensity that we lack.* What we think takes a thousand years God is prepared to accomplish today.

The evolutionists say this—millions and billions of years. God says this. *“Let there be light, and there was light.”* It doesn’t take billions and billions of years. You see, God is much more passionate about time than we are. He has an intensity with time that we lack.

This ought to give us tremendous comfort, friends, that what we perceive is impossible with time God sees as an instant in time. What we see is impossible in time He sees as an instant in time.

I think that it also ought to spur us on not to waste our time and to maximize our efforts, because God is able to accomplish so much in such little time. That is a great application for us—not to waste our time. The principle is this. God can accomplish so much in such little time. We need to maximize our time and not waste it. That is because God sees time with an intensity that we lack.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

Participant: When you were giving that example of Paul, my sense was that Paul says that after the fact. “Why didn’t you save me earlier?”—that kind of thinking. Because, in the midst of things, he might have really been enjoying persecuting the Christians, right? He might have thought that was powerful and gave him meaning. But he wouldn’t have known later that hey, this is better, until he got there.

Bruce: Correct.

Participant: So that only God could say “I did it in My timing.”

Bruce: That’s correct. It wasn’t his timing that time. I’m just saying that he might have asked that question.

Participant: That’s right. I understand that. We don’t have that sense.

Bruce: We don’t.

Participant: Eat, live and be merry, you know. Let’s have a party today. How do I know that being in Christ is better than anything I ever imagined?

Bruce: I think that Paul is writing this statement in contrast. This is what I used to be, and this is how I am now, because now I’m the chief of sinners. And the reason God saved me at the right time was to demonstrate not my conversion, but His patience.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: It was to demonstrate His patience for the glory of whom?

Participant: Of God.

Bruce: For the glory of God, not the glory of Paul.

Participant: Amen.

Here are a couple of statements about time. And men, we need to take this seriously when we think about the fact that God views time with an intensity that we lack. How responsible are you with the time that God gives you? How responsible are we with our time? Here are a couple of statements for your consideration.

Thomas Edison says this. “Time is not a commodity that can be stored for future use. It must be invested hour by hour, or else it is gone forever.”

Thomas Brooks, the Puritan divine, says this. “Time is not yours to dispose of as you please. It is a glorious talent that men must be accountable for as well as any other talent that God gives them.”

Do you view time as a talent? How much time do we waste? Remember this. The principle is this. God can accomplish so much in such little time. We may have such little time, but He can accomplish so much because God controls all time, time is obedient to Him, and God has an intensity and a passion for time that we don’t have. How do we maximize and use our time?

I see what Jesus says in John 17. “*I brought You glory on earth by finishing what You gave Me to do.*” Now Jesus may not have done everything He wanted to do in His humanity. He may not have done everything He could have done in His humanity. There may have been things He wanted to do in His humanity. But the one thing He did do is what? Accomplish what He was given to do.

Men, one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves in relation to God’s understanding of time and our understanding of God’s timing is this. What is it You have given me to do? And when you find that out, do that on a daily basis. Lord, what is it that You have given me to do this day? Remember, a day is like a thousand years. If God gives you something

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

to do this day, it’s something that He ordained in His heart before eternity past. And now He has given it to you to manage it for His glory, to demonstrate His what? His character. Carl, were you going to say something?

Carl: Yes, Bruce. I want to just add something. Dr. Benjamin Mays said it this way. He said, “I only have a minute.

Only sixty seconds in it.

Forced upon me; can’t refuse it.

Didn’t seek it, didn’t choose it.

But it’s up to me to use it.

I must suffer if I lose it.

Give an account if I abuse it.

It’s just a tiny minute.

But eternity is in it.”

Bruce: Amen to that. A wonderful little poem. Read that again. That’s worth thinking about.

Men: Yeah!

Bruce: But slow it up a little bit so we can ponder it. *(Laughter.)*

Carl:

“I’ve only just a minute.

Only sixty seconds in it.

Forced upon me; can’t refuse it.

Didn’t seek it, didn’t choose it.

But it’s up to me to use it.

I must suffer if I lose it.

Give an account if I abuse it.

Just a tiny little minute.

But eternity is in it.”

Bruce: Amen. A wonderful statement.

Participant: Who said that?

Carl: Dr. Benjamin Mays.

Bruce: Men, we need to remember this—that God can accomplish so much in such little time. And the time that we have is so little compared to a thousand years. Don’t waste the time that we’ve been given.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Be responsible for that. Use it wisely. And the way that we use it is for the glory of God. Finish what you’ve been given to do.

That’s why it’s so important that we understand the difference between the urgent and the important. Urgency is what other people want you to do. *(Laughter.)* The important things are the things that God has given you to do.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And do you know the difference? Most of us are governed by urgency. Somebody calls and says, “Bruce, can you do this? Can you do that? I want you to do this.” That’s what they want. There is always a motive behind it. It may not be bad. But it may not necessarily be

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

what God has given you to do—the important thing. You have to discern the difference between the important and the urgent. Yes, please?

Participant: It’s been referred to by some as the tyranny of the urgent.

Bruce: Yes. There’s a tyranny of the urgent. That’s exactly right, because it controls us. It runs us. It’s a tyranny. It removes our freedom.

One of the great management principles of all time, in my judgment, is what Jesus said and what I just quoted. *“I brought You glory on earth by finishing what You gave Me to do.”* It may not have been everything.

Jesus is not in heaven wringing His hands and saying, “Oh, I wish I had one more day.” What is it we ask for? We ask for more time, don’t we? Generally, we ask for more time. He’s not in heaven wringing His hands, saying, “Oh, I wish I had one more day because I could have preached to a thousand more people. I could have fed some more people. I could have preached another sermon. I could have healed somebody.”

He’s not saying that. He said, “I finished what You gave me to do. And that’s how I glorified you.” He was the Master of time management. And that was because He understood the difference between the urgent and the important. Notice the number of times that after Jesus healed somebody, what did He do? He said, “Don’t tell them about it. Don’t tell anybody.” Why did He say that? Because it wasn’t the right time, because it would have interfered with His mission. His mission was not to heal people. His mission was not to preach to people. His mission was not to feed people. His mission was to—

Participant: Die.

Bruce: Die for people. And this was not the right time for Him to die. So he said, “Don’t go and tell anybody what I just did.”

Now look at this socially and humanly. If somebody says, “Here’s a miracle. And the person is going to go and tell somebody about it so people will come around you.” You see, He knew that would interfere with His mission. His mission was not to heal, preach or teach or feed. It was to die. And it was not the right time to do that.

Look at it logically. Why would you want to eliminate a Man who could institute free health care? You wouldn’t want to do that.”It’s not the right time; don’t tell anybody.” Why would you want to eliminate a Man who could remove poverty and hunger? You wouldn’t want to do that. Jesus said, “It’s not the right time.”

You see, He understood the difference between the urgent and the important. The urgent things were all the things that the people wanted Him to do. The important thing was what God wanted Him to do. There was a right time for Him to die, and there was not a right time for Him to die.

You see, time is obedient to God. And to Him a thousand years is like one day and one day is like a thousand years, which means this. If God can accomplish so much in such little time, we need to maximize the time that we have, because God will accomplish much more than we could ever anticipate.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: That said, can you talk to us as American men who try to overdo everything? Now maybe some of us parents may look at the time that’s so urgent that we don’t do enough

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

leisure with those around us to build relationships because we’re so worried about getting things done? We look at it like time is of the essence and that we’re using it well. But maybe we’ve missed the mark of serving others. Any insights on that?

Bruce: Well, I would say this. All ministry is based upon relationships.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Ministry is based upon relationships, not activity.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Now I can’t tell you what to do in the context of your relationships. All I can tell you is this. You need to trust the Lord to give you the wisdom to discern the difference between the urgent and the important, and to give yourself to complete those things that are important in the context of those relationships with your children and with your wife. I’m always asked to do so many things.

In fact, somebody called me from Kansas City and wanted me to come out there and do something.

But I said, “You know, this retirement bit takes up a lot of time.” (*Laughter.*) I mean, it’s taking up a lot of time. When do I get to rest? When do I relax? Retirement takes up a lot of time, because of all the stuff that people want you to do.

So I can’t answer that question with “here are the ten things that you need to do.” But I can say this. All ministry, whatever it is, is based upon relationships.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: When you and I manage our time and do the right things at the right time, God will accomplish so much more than we could ever plan ourselves. I think that there’s a tremendous need for us not just to trust God’s timing, but also to have the discernment to know what we should be doing and what we shouldn’t be doing, because all ministry is really a function of our relationships. Does anybody want to add anything to that, to Brian asking the question? Yes, Ted?

Ted: I think we’re living in a time almost like no other. I remember when I started working for Ketchum twenty-three years ago. I had an associate. I had a secretary. I had everything I needed, and I was expected to do all of that. But I went to get an Amish quilt fixed. It took two weeks to set up the appointment because it was by telephone and getting his letters back. That’s the way humanity has lived for all this time. And now we’re in a time in which everything is immediate and urgent all the time, and there’s no time to think about things. There’s no time to kind of let things ruminate in my brain. I mean, it’s a very difficult process in terms of time.

Bruce: It is. That’s good insight, Ted. That’s why Peter is saying this. Remember, call back to your attention God’s perspective on time. He’s teaching us to do that. We need to reflect and monitor our mindset on that and think about time usage. That’s why I’m trying to give you these insights on how God views time, which is different from us. God’s view of time is radically different from our view of time. And we need to think about that.

Now I don’t tell you what you’re going to do with it. But all I can say is this. The admonition of Scripture is to remind yourself of that. Just remind yourself of God’s providence, as we talked about last week. Then remind yourself of God’s perspective on time. That’s why I’m trying to give you these insights, to help you to just think about it. The Holy Spirit will take that. He’ll

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

germinate that within you, and you’ll begin to express that differently, as we’re focused upon Him, not ourselves.

But Ted’s exactly right. Time controls us. Everything is urgent. And we have to have the courage and the grace and the stamina to make those decisions to do the important things rather than the urgent. Yes, please?

Participant: I think what Ted has said is very pertinent because we take that urgency that we have in our daily lives and expect it from God.

Bruce: That’s a good point. Say that again. That’s excellent.

Participant: I think that the urgency that we live in our lives right now gravitates over into us extracting the same urgency from God.

Ted: Yes.

Participant: When things don’t happen in the time you expected them to.

Bruce: Great insight. We translate that and say, “Because I want this to happen now,” we expect God to do that.

Ted: Right.

Bruce: How many times, when somebody leaves the church, or some other relationship, is it because God didn’t fulfill what He said He was going to do? That’s because we’ve limited His activities to our frame of time work rather than His perspective on time. Yes, Ted?

Ted: When the programs the church is offering itself are not as urgent and exciting, our modern ministry is driven by huge amounts of urgency.

Bruce: Right.

Ted: That produce results. So there’s not enough intensity there! I need something more intense!

Bruce: That’s exactly right. And what we need to do, men, is just that we need to think about God’s timing. He’s going to accomplish so much in so little. So spending time with some person in such a little amount of time might accomplish a great deal of good because God is behind it. All ministry is based upon relationships, not programmatic activity. Yes, Bill?

Bill: A long time ago, I heard of a church in Washington, d.C., where to become a member he not only had to pledge 10% of his income, but ten percent of his time—to be a member!

Bruce: I see.

Bill: I don’t think that went over very well with other churches.

Bruce: (*unclear.*)

Bill: I don’t think it would go over well today.

Bruce: All right. Let me give you one more insight that we have time to look at. So far, we’ve looked over the fact that all time is equally present with God. Secondly, we’ve seen that all time is equally obedient to God. And then we’ve seen that God sees time with an intensity that we lack. And lastly for your consideration, men, I would offer this for us to ponder. *God sees time with a calmness that we lack.*

We regard things that happened a thousand years ago without much anxiety and with a great deal of calmness. We don’t give it much consideration. That is the way in which God regards events the very day they happen. God is very calm about it. They are to Him as if they had happened a thousand years ago, so calm is His divine temperament.

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

Yet strongly, and strangely, while God takes things so calmly and never hurries, He at the same time never forgets time. He is as much in earnest in His purpose at the end of a thousand years as we are on the day we get a great idea. The day we get a great idea, we get so excited about it. God is in earnest about His purpose at the end of a thousand years just as much as we are at the end of a day when we have a great idea.

Now remember that Peter’s instructions are simply these. We are to remind ourselves of these things, which means that he is throwing us into the lap of the Holy Spirit, who will individually apply this to us personally. That’s why I cannot give you ten things to do under each of these categories. All I can do is take and teach you what the Scripture says. He says to teach the people to remind themselves of God’s time perspective. Now you have to do something with that yourselves. You have to meditate and just think about that and trust the Holy Spirit to give you some wisdom to know how to apply it.

Participant: Thinking through that, if you no longer have to take that field, wouldn’t it simply be to think to yourself on a regular basis, “Is what I’m doing right now what I should be doing to glorify God? Is what I’m doing right now the best way to glorify God? Do I trust His sovereignty, His timing, rather than other people’s influences on how quickly I’m doing things. Do I think and trust that I’m doing the right thing and allowing God to have the results?”

Bruce: That’s a good insight. Jesus’ lifestyle was this. He was an aggressive responder to what He saw the Lord doing. In John 5 and John 8, Jesus says this. “I initiate nothing on My own. I only do those things I see the Father doing, or say those things the Father teaches Me.” Now there is a great principle—that Jesus is an aggressive responder to what He saw the Lord doing around Him. Brian, I think we can take that as a great admonition for us and say, “Lord, what is it that You’re going to do around me today? I’m going to join that and use my time wisely.”

I don’t have to go and create ministry. I am the ministry wherever I am. Remember, ministry is who you are, where you are. So we just need to become aggressive responders to whatever it is that we see the Lord is doing around us. And one of the things that is going to trigger that reminder is this. Think about God’s time perspective.

Think about His providence. Did you think about God’s providential activities in your life over the past week? I just began to think about that as a result of my studies last week. I just began to look at the number of times God’s providence intervened in my life, for His glory. Think about that stuff! And you’ll see what happens, as God starts to work this out more, and it will be part of our sense of what the Lord is doing in our lives, when we think about His providences and about His time perspective.

Remember, Peter says this. Tell people to remind themselves to think about it. Let them have common sense about the way they think about God’s providence and God’s timing. When we do that, we’re going to have a greater sense of what God is going to do around us, and we can become aggressive responders to what the Lord is doing. Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: I was just thinking of Jesus’ willingness to be interrupted.

Bruce: Mm-hmm.

Bishop Rodgers: They dropped this guy through the roof. He’s in the middle of a teaching session. He stops and heals the guy and reveals the fact that He has the power to forgive. So we’re called to have the same freedom to trust God to be right in the world, not ourselves.

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

Bruce: Amen. Yes, Carl?

Carl: And we also use that patience that you were just talking about, because Jesus was always patient. You’ll notice that He was never in a hurry, even when Lazarus had died. He made him alive.

Bruce: Good illustration. Why did He delay three days after Lazarus died?

Carl: To show His power.

Bruce: To show His power. It was not the urgency of raising His brother from the dead.

Carl: That’s right.

Bruce: It was to call attention to the glory of God. We need to recognize, men, that time management is a responsibility for us. But we may be interrupted. But that’s okay, because ministry is the result of relationships.

Jesus says at His first staff meeting, *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”* Mercy is the ministry of interruptions. That’s what mercy is, because you can’t plan it. It just happens. And you notice in the ministry of interruptions, when you need to be merciful, that’s when you need to do something to be an aggressive responder to what the Lord is doing around you.

What Peter reminds us, his second defense against these scoffers against the Second Coming, was to remind us to have a right view of time. A right view of time produces a heart of worship toward God, and not unwholesome speculations about the Second Coming.

When we consider God’s control of time, and His use of it for His glory, we remember this. God did the right thing at the right time.

Let me remind you of a couple things. Look at Romans chapter 5, verse 6. God always does the right thing at the right time.

Look at Romans 5:6. *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”*

How about Galatians 4:4? *“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights as sons.”*

And Titus chapter 1, verse 3. *“That God promised beforehand, before He created time.”* He has now provided that act. What God promised in eternity, He has made known to you in eternity present. What God chose to do in eternity past, He now reveals to you in eternity present.

Go to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1 is a wonderful reminder of what we need to think about God’s timing. Verse 3 of chapter 1: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.”*

You see, what God purposed in His heart, men, in eternity past, is now for us an eternally present reality. God controls the time. It’s all obedient to Him.

“Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined.” Timing. *“In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glory.”*

Yes, God is the Master of time keeping. And all Peter says is this. Trust the Lord. When you think about it, remind yourself to remember these things. And trust the Holy Spirit to give you

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 2

the wisdom to apply it. And ask for discernment—proper discernment and use of timing, because God can accomplish so much in such little time.

And what you do with Christ in eternity present will seal your destiny in eternity future. Notice Mark 1:15. *“The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.”* May God give us the grace to do that, for Jesus’ sake.

Let’s pray. Father, You’ve given us much to remind ourselves about. There’s a lot that we don’t understand. Help us with our unbelief in our understanding. And Father, give us the grace to ponder these things, to ponder the providential activities of Your being in our lives. And Father, give us the grace to think about and remind ourselves of Your perspective on time—that all time is present with You. All time is obedient to You. All time is something that You monitor for Your glory. And what You desire to have in eternity past now involves ourselves in eternity future. And may it be so, Lord, that all the things that we do will demonstrate Your character as we manage our time wisely. Give us the discernment to know the difference between the urgent and the important. Do it for Your glory. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.” (*Applause.*)