

“Hurry up and wait” by Pastor Steve Sommerer  
Second Sunday in Advent Dec. 6, 2020

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son.  
Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

The sermon text is from 2 Peter 3:8-14.

Hurry up and wait. Everything from phones to cars to computers is super-charged, but it seems all we do is wait. That’s life at the end of the world, and the Advent call is to be prepared, and make ready your hearts for His coming. Hurry up and wait!

Hurry up and wait is frustrating when you’re waiting at a train crossing or worried you’ll be late for church or school or waiting for your order to ship, but waiting’s worse with Judgment Day. God’s call to preparedness is always there, yet one day seems just about like the last, and every generation of the Church has said, He’s coming!

Of course, secularists are quick to mock John the Baptist’ Advent call: “*Repent, the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” It’s a bitter irony that so many who laugh at God’s Church for living in expectation of a Christ who has yet to return... That same group of hecklers are themselves the most apocalyptic among us; warning you the world is going to end every time you drink from a Styrofoam cup or fill your gas tank. Even in the heart of the atheist or university-trained nature worshiper, God hasn’t left Himself without witness. You can’t run from God’s Law written on every heart: the days are numbered. Climate activism or animism is a false god and cannot atone or turn away God’s day of wrath. “*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*”, and “*the wages of sin is death.*”

To which we might add: What’s taking so long? But that’s life in the last days: hurry up and wait. Already three thousand years ago, King David cried, “*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*”

To prepare God’s Church to wait with Advent expectancy and anticipation, St. Peter reminds us, “*Do not forget with the Lord a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day.*”

God is eternal. He exists outside of time. What may seem to you a long time is a mere moment before the Almighty and timeless God. That’s how it is with God, but it’s sure not that way for us. For us a day is a day, a year is a year. Peter makes no room for a fanciful notion that the world and all the living organisms in it evolved through the mechanism of natural selection and death of the un-fittest. Rather, everything about our world suggests not an upward trajectory toward sophistication and completion but rather a world, once complete, going to the dogs.

I noted with small satisfaction this week that scientists have seen enough to assure us that the canyons and topography of Mars were formed by catastrophic flooding. The fancy word for that is catastrophism. Of course, it’s my opinion that they breathlessly reported that stuff, because water would be important for life on another planet, which

they haven't found. Their atheistic religion has them crusading to prove that we aren't special creations in God's universe. While they can't succeed, federal funds never cease.

Catastrophism used to be how all scientists understood the geology of the earth. It's pretty obvious a lot of water made some pretty big canyons. Indeed, largescale flooding used to be the accepted way to view the things we see when we look out at our world until the 1830's or so. Back then Charles Lyell published a book that did away with catastrophism, in favor of uniformitarianism. That view says essentially everything is as it's always been – it's uniform - and everything you see today you have to explain by means of processes you see happening right now. And since you don't see any global flooding today, modern science teaches your children geologic features like the Grand Canyon must be explained by the Colorado River taking a 90\* turn at the Kaibab Plateau and flowing uphill through rock over millions of years. Granted, we've all seen erosion and its power but you've never seen one flow uphill through rock. But that's the kind of foolishness you've got to come up with when you don't believe the Bible.

So, science sees canyons on Mars this week and says it must have been a global flood, but refuses to say the same thing when scientists vacation in Arizona. That could only come, they say, from magical rivers that flow uphill. That's the way of the world. St. Peter warned us about the uniformitarians of atheistic science. One verse before our text, Peter wrote: *"They scoff, 'Where is this coming Jesus promised?' Ever since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since the beginning. But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. And by these waters the world of that time was flooded and destroyed. By that same Word the present heavens and earth are being ... kept for the day of judgment."*

God's creation is not evolving but devolving, *"Crying out in anticipation," Paul said, "waiting for God's sons to be revealed."* Jesus is coming again. Be ready.

So, what's the holdup? Why the hurry up and wait? Come, Lord Jesus. We're tired of seeing loved ones hurt. Tired of the litany of terror on every evening news broadcast. We're tired of a broken world and broken relationships, aches and pains, treatments and tests, and so much frustration and anxiety that we sometimes lose sight of all the good blessings that God does give us every day in a million ways. *"How long, O Lord?"*

If we're a little impatient, Peter gives us reason to pause, *"God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance."* The Church will go on amid the convulsions of a dying world. The Church will carry out her mission of preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified until the last soul is added unto salvation through faith in Jesus. And when that day comes, so will Christ take His Bride the Church home.

Until that day, do not grow weary. Your God has you and this world in His hands. The One who called this world into being and formed our first parents from the dust of the earth. The God who *"knit you together in your mother's womb, fearfully and wonderfully made"*... The One who was born for you in Bethlehem and stepped alive from Easter's tomb, that Jesus is at the right hand of God and holds in His hands all of human history. *"All power in heaven and earth has been given to Him" who promises to "work all things for the good of those who love Him."* On those days when life in this world seems a weary slog, I love the words of that great hymn: *"And when the fight is*

*fierce the warfare long, Steals on the ear the distant triumph song, And hearts are brave again and arms are strong. Alleluia! Alleluia!"*

Christ the Lamb is victorious for you. From Mary's womb to Calvary's death, Jesus lived in perfect righteousness the whole cycle of our lives, redeeming every step of our journey by His sinless satisfaction. Jesus' resurrection has put an end to death for us who have died with Him in Baptism and been raised with Him through faith. Your salvation is assured because nothing about Jesus is uncertain. The Song of Triumph that thunders around God's throne in heaven, "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; heaven and earth are full of His glory*" is the same triumph song that resounds in this little chapel where we wounded saints gather to receive God's medicine of immortality in the true body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.

So, hurry up and wait. God's Church lives with an eye for eternity, waiting for the new heavens and the new earth, the home of righteousness. As Hebrews 11 puts it, "*We are longing for a better country, that is, a heavenly one, the city that has foundations whose Designer and Builder is God.*" But our text won't let us be idle spectators, watching the world pass us by. "*What sort of people ought you to be?*" Peter writes, "*In holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the Day of God.*"

Because we know Jesus died for the world and heaven is our future, we have today to get busy and serve God with joy. Hurry up! Talk to your unchurched neighbor. Disabuse your child or spouse of the idea that it's more important for them to make money than get to church. Talk to your friends about Jesus and invite them along to hear the Word. Pray for Dennis and Lorna and for our churches so devastated by Covid. Pray for our children mis-educated by atheism and secularism and materialism. We hasten the coming of His Kingdom by spreading the Gospel of Christ for Whose sake the world endures. We live out our callings in holiness, because God put us here to be His lights in the darkness. Plant your feet in God's Word and take your stand. Don't be the nice, useless, easily pushed fake Christian. Have God's courage to put on your big boy pants and walk in the Last Days like God's man and God's woman!

Hurry up and wait! Hurry up to be bold and truthful and faithful. Stop cowering. Stop worrying about being a hater. God's Word is always truthful and always loving, because God always wants what's best. Don't be an activist in the sense of people who have taken positions to win approval from people who are mostly wrong. Be active. Do what God's giving you to do, and hurry up about it, even as you wait for the day of Jesus' coming. You and I won't solve all that's wrong with ourselves much less this world, but Jesus already has, when He carried those sins to the cross and buried them in His tomb.

For just such as we are, Jesus lived and died to redeem and love the unlovable. His forgiveness is for you, spoken into your ears, poured over your head and given into your lips. Faith rests in Jesus' work. "*It is finished.*" And one day these bodies fed and forgiven in Jesus will stand up from the dust of death. These bodies washed and fed will be raised imperishable, strong resurrection bodies, and reunited with our souls inherit that new heavens and new earth God has prepared for those who love Him. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

And now may the peace of God which surpasses human understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.