

God's N.T.R. (Never Too Rushed)

A number of years ago my Dad used to wear a button on his jacket.

He wore that button everywhere he went.

He wore it to work.

He wore it to church.

It was a simple button.

It was a plain, round, white button.

On it was a series of letters.

The letters were P - B - P - G - I - N - F - W - M - Y.

Of course each letter was the first letter of a word.

Does anyone know what the button said?

"Please Be Patient God Is Not Finished With Me Yet."

I think we would all do well to wear a button like that.

Or we would all do well to envision a button like that on each other.

I am reminded of a little chorus we sang 30 years ago.

**"He's still working on me, To make me what I ought to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and the stars,
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars,
How loving and patient He must be, He's still workin' on me.**

(1980 by Joel Hemphill)

And that brings us to our Scripture this morning. (READ 2 Peter 3:8-18)

Peter is telling us something about God.

God's Never Too Rushed.

These verses tell us how it is possible for God to never be too rushed.

I First of all God is not controlled by time.

God isn't bound by the ticking of the clock

We can't say that for the rest of us.

Before this service started we are watching the clock.

We have to start not too early and not too late, but right on time.

But even more importantly we have to end on time.

We live in the shadow of a stopwatch.

"For God a thousand years is like one day." (vs. 8)

God doesn't get excited about the passage of time as we do.

God is eternal therefore clocks do not dictate His actions.

He has all the time in the world.

What's a day to the Lord?

It is no different than a thousand years.

God doesn't have His eye on the clock.

Instead of watching time He is watching us.

His concern isn't about time and schedules.

His concern is salvation.

God's concern is you and me.

"God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (vs. 9)

II Nor is God consumed with speed.

We get frantic if things don't change quickly.

Styles change constantly and rapidly.

We no sooner get something into our car and it is out-of-date.
A newer faster model has replaced it.
We are all wrapped up in speed.
Everything has to run faster.
More powerful cars and trucks.
More powerful computers that operate faster.
More efficient assembly lines so more product can be cranked out faster.
We try to "Keep up" with the Jones's
But God isn't caught up in this.
God is not a wasteful God.
He is not in the business of making garbage.
What He creates He wants to endure.
He doesn't want anyone to perish.
He doesn't discard us for someone newer and faster.
He never grows weary of caring for and loving us.
We aren't interested in something that is slow.
But God is not dictated by speed.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance."

III God is not confined by the physical and space.

We are all wrapped up in space.
We want our space and are offended if someone crowds our space.
There was a couple who were on vacation.
They visited a church on Sunday.
Since they liked to sit close to the front they sat in the second row.
Shortly after settling into the pew, an usher came up to them.
He tapped lightly on pew and said, "This pew is saved."
The husband replied, "So are we!"
This material world and our space are important to us.
Most people have made gods out of the things they see around them.
The world and their possessions are sacred territory.
We place a lot of value on the things we can touch and handle.
But God isn't caught up in this.
God holds the physical world loosely and so should we.

He **"will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up."**

God's never too rushed.

So what does this mean for us?

Peter asks, **"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons out you to be?"** (vs.11)

Have you ever asked yourself that question?

What kind of person am I supposed to be?

Peter tells us we are to be people who have experienced God's presence.

He speaks with vivid imagery about the Day of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord is the coming of God's presence.

It is a crackling roar.

It would be like the sound of a jet flying at full throttle 10 feet over your head.

It would be like the sound you would hear standing in the middle of a raging forest fire.

It would be the deafening sound of consumption.

The Day of the Lord will come upon everyone of us.

It is an inescapable reality.

We don't know when that Day will consume this world.

But in our life time we will have a personal Day of the Lord.

It is an inevitable day for every one of us.

We can welcome that day at any time and invite God to break in.

Or we can postpone that day and force God to break in.

There comes a day when we must die.

And for that day we must be prepared.

We cannot escape from the certainty of the entry of God into our own experience.

Peter encourages us to be people that choose to experience God.

He wants us to live in God's will

He says we ought to be holy and godly.

We ought to be patient and by doing so contribute to Jesus' return.

We ought to live in great anticipation of God making all things new.

We are to be waiting, waiting, waiting.

Waiting patiently for the dawn of the Lord on our lives.

Never too rushed.

But on our own we struggle with patience.

We pray, "God give me patience, but could you give it to me now?"

A man observed a woman in the grocery store with a three year old girl in her shopping cart. As they passed the cookie section, the child asked for cookies and her mother told her "no." The little girl immediately began to whine and fuss, and the mother said quietly, "Now Sarah, we just have half of the aisles left to go through; don't be upset. It won't be long."

He passed the Mother again in the candy aisle. Of course, the little girl began to shout for candy. When she was told she couldn't have any, she began to cry. The mother said, "There, there, Sarah, don't cry. Only two more aisles to go, and then we'll be checking out."

The man again happened to be behind the pair at the check-out, where the little girl immediately began to clamor for gum and burst into a terrible tantrum upon discovering there would be no gum purchased today. The mother patiently said, "Sarah, we'll be through this check out stand in five minutes, and then you can go home and have a nice nap."

The man followed them out to the parking lot and stopped the woman to compliment her. "I couldn't help noticing how patient you were with little Sarah..."

The mother broke in, "My little girl's name is Emma ... I'm Sarah."

On our own we are hard pressed to be patient in life.

On our own we are blind to all that God has in store.

On our own we blast away at life and bull our way through.

Humanity is like the running of the bulls.

Get in my way and be prepared to be trampled.

Peter sees something far better for us than that.

Since we are going to experience the Day of the Lord this is what he advises.

Be zealous to be found in Him without spot or blemish! (vs. 14)

Be at peace. (vs. 14)

Interpret our Master's patient restraint for what it is: salvation. (vs. 15)

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (vs. 18)

All of this and more is the message of the Communion Table.

The Lord's Supper is a vivid reminder that God's Never Too Rushed.

He continues to plead with us and wait for us.

His desire for the salvation of all never wavers.

His desire for your salvation is eternal.

For 2,000 years He has been inviting people to this Table.

He wants you to come, zealous for Him.

He wants to see you without spot or blemish through Jesus.

Jesus body was broken for this moment in your life.

His blood was shed for your salvation.

Paul, as he recounts the Last Supper quotes Jesus.

"This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Then Paul adds this phrase that reflects God's patience.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

Aren't you glad that God is Never Too Rushed?

God's Never Too Rushed because He loves and longs for you.

So what does this mean for us?

As we join together in communion we too can be patient.

Let's see the letters of the button on each other PBPGINFWMY.

Before the Throne Of God Above music video during communion distribution

I asked God to take away my pain. God said, No.

It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole. God said, No.

Her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience. God said, No.

Patience is a by-product of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is earned.

I asked God to give me happiness. God said, No.

I give you blessings. Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain. God said, No.

Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow. God said, No.

You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. God said, No.

I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me love others, as much as he loves me.

And God said... Ah, finally you have the idea.