

“DOGS OR DUDES?”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: 2 PETER 3:8-15(a)

GOD’S WORD: 2 PETER 3:1-7

I – DOGS:

Somebody sent me a story a while back I’d like to share with you this morning...

A man and his dog were walking along a road. The man was enjoying the scenery, when it suddenly occurred to him that he was dead. He remembered dying, and that the dog walking beside him had been dead for years. He wondered where the road was leading them.

After a while, they came to a high, white stone wall along one side of the road. It looked like fine marble. At the top of a long hill, it was broken by a tall arch that glowed in the sunlight. When he was standing before it, he saw a magnificent gate in the arch that looked like mother-of-pearl, and the street that led to the gate looked like pure gold. He and the dog walked toward the gate, and as he got closer, he saw a man at a desk to one side. When he was close enough, he called out, 'Excuse me, where are we?' 'This is Heaven, sir,' the man answered. 'Wow! Would you happen to have some water?' the man asked. 'Of course, sir. Come right in, and I'll have some ice water brought right up.' The man gestured, and the gate began to open. 'Can my friend,' gesturing toward his dog, 'come in, too?' the traveler asked. 'I'm sorry sir, but we don't accept pets.' The man thought a moment and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going with his dog.

After another long walk, and at the top of another long hill, he came to a dirt road leading through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. There was no fence. As he approached the gate, he saw a man inside, leaning against a tree and reading a book. 'Excuse me!' he called to the man. 'Do you have any water?' 'Yeah, sure, there's a pump over there, come on in.' 'How about my friend here?' the traveler gestured to the dog. 'There should be a bowl by the pump,' said the man. They went through the gate, and sure enough, there was an old-fashioned hand pump with a bowl beside it. The traveler filled the water bowl and took a long drink himself, and then he gave some to the dog.

When they were full, he and the dog walked back toward the man who was standing by the tree. 'What do you call this place?' the traveler asked. 'This is Heaven,' he answered. 'Well, that's confusing,' the traveler said. 'The man down the road said that was Heaven, too.' 'Oh, you mean the place with the Gold Street and pearly gates? Nope. That's hell.' 'Doesn't it make you mad for them to use your name like that?' 'No, we're just happy that they screen out the folks who would leave their best friends behind.'

II – DUDES:

And all God's people said, "AWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW." You like stories like this don't you. You want to be assured that the folks at Walt Disney are correct and that "all dogs get to heaven." You want to know that all of your pets are there and will meet you at the pearly gates when you arrive there someday too. If it were up to most of us there would be no need for dog pounds because all the dogs and cats of the world would be adopted and cared for by someone until they get there. PETA would be proud of the way you are feeling right now.

This is all fine and good. I know how attached you can become to a pet. I'm glad you care so much for dogs and the likes...but what about the dudes? What about the human beings that surround you? Do you have as much compassion for them? Do you want to make sure they all get to heaven too? How are you caring for them to make sure they will get there too? What I'm afraid of is that if you changed this story and made the dog just another human being, you would not have reacted with "AWWWWWWW." What I'm afraid of is that when it comes to eternal life people care more about dogs than they do about people.

And that scares me in light of what's coming. Have you read this book (the Bible)? Do you know what's going to happen? Have you read the book of Revelation? There is coming a time when God will say enough is enough and all that we see and know will be destroyed and replaced by a new heaven and a new earth. Most believe, according to this book, that it will be done by fire. The Apostle Peter was talking about that in the Scripture you heard read this morning. But there was another line that disturbs me, the verse that said all this was being saved for the "day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed." It disturbs me that there will be people who still don't know Jesus and will be lost forever. I don't believe God wants any of them to be lost.

III – TEXT:

I base that opinion on what I read in the rest of that text we started this morning. Listen now to the verses that immediately follow those...

2 PETER 3:8-15(a) (NLT)

⁸But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. ¹¹Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, ¹²looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. ¹³But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. ¹⁴And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make

every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. ¹⁵And remember, the Lord's patience gives people time to be saved.

This letter by Peter is all about those "scoffers" he mentions in 3 and 4. Jesus had said he would be coming back and even in the day of Peter there were those who used the fact it wasn't an immediate return to say that Jesus wasn't the Messiah and he wasn't coming back. But Peter says don't listen to them because there are reasons God has not sent his Son back to get us.

The first is that God is not a clock watcher like his human creation. It doesn't matter to him whether it's Monday or Friday. It doesn't matter to him whether it's midnight or noon. Time is irrelevant to God...after all he created it. It was he who made seconds to add up to minutes to add up to hours and those to add up to days, which added up to years. We keep a calendar...God doesn't. So what we consider soon may not be what God considers soon.

But the main reason God is prolonging the end of the world is that he does want everyone possible to be saved. He wants everyone to hear about the sacrifice made by Jesus, to hear the Good News of Salvation through that sacrifice. He wants everyone to find the cross, repent of their sins, be washed in the blood of Salvation, so on that day they will be found innocent in his sight, they will be given a place in heaven with all the Saints instead of being cast into hell for all of eternity. His delay is not caused by his inability or indifference. It is caused by his Grace. His delay is a further act of love by the Creator for his creation.

But Peter reminds us that it will indeed come. It will come as Jesus said, unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. If we are a Christian we should be looking forward to this final act, to the coming of Jesus, and we should be hurrying it along by making sure everyone else is ready too. By living in such a way we are models of the Kingdom of God so others will come to know Jesus through us.

God is being patient, giving the world time so people can be saved.

IV – WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

So the question today is simply, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT TIME?" God is being patient; God is prolonging the end of times, so that others may come to know him before it happens. So what are you doing with the time he's given you to save the souls of others? You have a place in your hearts for stray dogs and cats, where in your hearts do you hold the stray people?

I have a new "what if?" for you this morning. What if the world ended today? If Jesus came back to claim it during the supper hour tonight. Would you be ready? If not you need to come up and see me this morning during communion. But beyond your own soul, would those around you be ready? Does your spouse know Jesus? Do all your children know Jesus? How about your grandchildren? How about that good friend from school, does he or she know Jesus, will you get to have a reunion in heaven? Does that neighbor who always talks to you over the fence, or brings you fresh vegetables from their garden...do they know Jesus? Do you know that all your family and friends will make it to heaven with

you? Will you be able to sing, “When we all get to heaven” and know you’ve left no one behind? How about the strays? How about those who live in the shack down the street, the ones who are always drunk on the weekend because it’s the only escape from reality they can afford? How about the kids who will never have a chance of getting to heaven because they’ve been raised by drunken abusive parents who’s last priority is to take them to church or pray with them? Shouldn’t we be worried about them too? Isn’t God being patient for them too?

What if...we cared as much about people as we do about animals? What if...we decided to be faithful to the fact God has given us time to make disciples for Jesus Christ. What if we reached out in love and understanding to those who will perish for ever if we don’t do anything? What if we acted like Christians?

V – COMMUNION:

This morning we will celebrate communion. We celebrate it because it reminds us of God’s amazing grace. As we do it we announce to the world that we are followers of Jesus, that we believe he lived and died for us and we believe he was resurrected and will come again to claim us and all his other followers for our place in heaven with God the Father Almighty. To a Christian that is indeed cause for celebration.

But as you take communion this morning I want you to do so with this question in mind...will everyone I know or love celebrate with me when that day comes? Will those I don’t know, who God places in my path, celebrate with me when that day comes? When the end comes will I be standing in heaven holding their hand while I’m petting my dog? What do you suppose is more important to God...”Dogs or Dudes?”

AMEN

PRAY – THEN GO TO COMMUNION WITH THIS SCRIPTURE:

²³For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread ²⁴and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “**This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.**”

(BREAK THE BREAD)

²⁵In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.**”

(BLESS THE CUP)

²⁶For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.