East 91st Street Christian Church | **Message Guide**

Refined	You Will be Pure
November 29, 2026	Rick Grover
Week 8	2 Peter 3

We've spent the past several weeks talking about being Refined, and one thing we've discovered is that everybody likes the finished product, but nobody particularly enjoys the process it takes to get there. We like refined gold, but we don't necessarily want the fire. We want stronger faith, greater patience, and deeper character, but we'd prefer that God produce those things without allowing anything into our lives that actually requires faith, patience, or perseverance.

Throughout 1 and 2 Peter, we've seen how God uses suffering, temptation, relationships, opposition, and uncertainty to shape us so that we increasingly become the people He created us to be. The process isn't always easy, but God doesn't waste any of it. Now, as we come to 2 Peter 3, the final chapter in Peter's final letter and the final week of our Refined series, Peter lifts our eyes beyond the refining process of this life and points us toward something much greater.

There is a day coming when the refining will finally be finished. Sin will be gone. Death will be gone. Temptation will be gone. The brokenness within us and around us will be gone, and everything that keeps us from being fully what God created us to be will finally disappear. Here's the bottom line: We will be pure. Not because we finally perfected ourselves, but because Jesus will finish what He started in us.

1. Do you ever think about or anticipate Christ's return? What do you think it might be like to live in a world where there is no sin, temptation, brokenness, or death?

But if we really believe Jesus is coming again and eternity is waiting for us, how should that change the way we live today?

Peter begins in chapter 3 with the reality of God's promise, and it leads us to the first component of thinking through how what is to come changes how we live today. First of all, we:

Remember what God has promised. (2 Peter 3:1–7)

Peter begins: "This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder..." (2 Peter 3:1, ESV). Peter isn't necessarily telling them something they have never heard before. He's reminding them of what they already know, because sometimes the greatest problem in the Christian life isn't that we don't know enough; it's that we forget what we already know.

In the Christian faith, we need to keep being reminded because we can forget God's faithfulness, His promises, what Jesus has already done for us, and where history is ultimately going. And When we forget eternity, temporary things begin to look incredibly important.

2. What temporary things in your life have become so big that you forget Jesus is coming?

"Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing...They will say, `Where is the promise of his coming?'" (2 Peter 3:3–4, ESV). Two thousand years later, people are still asking the same question. But Peter says don't let the delay shake your confidence, because God's timetable is very different from ours. Peter reminds us that history isn't drifting aimlessly. God hasn't forgotten His promise; He's operating according to a timetable and purpose much greater than ours. And we can have confidence in His timetable, even if it doesn't match ours, because God's timetable actually has an underlying purpose. And that's what we see next.

God's delay is actually God's mercy. (2 Peter 3:8-10)

Peter writes: "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" (2 Peter 3:8, ESV). Peter isn't giving us a mathematical formula. His point is that God isn't bound by time the way we are. He is never hurried, surprised, or behind schedule. Then Peter gives us one of the most beautiful explanations of God's patience anywhere in Scripture: "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." 2 Peter 3:9, ESV)

Why hasn't Jesus returned? Because God is patient. Every additional day is another day of grace, another opportunity for someone to repent, another opportunity for someone to hear the Gospel, another expression of God's mercy toward people who haven't yet come home.

3. How has God's patience given you opportunities to grow and live in His grace?

So, God's delay isn't indifference. God's patience is mercy. But His patience will not last forever: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief..." (2 Peter 3:10, ESV). The point is that we need to be ready. Which raises Peter's next question: If all of this is temporary, what should we be living for? Live today in light of that day. (2 Peter 3:11-13)

"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness..." (2 Peter 3:11, ESV). Peter doesn't say, "Since Jesus is coming back, quit your job, move to a mountain, and spend the rest of your life staring at the sky." Instead, Peter says If you really believe Jesus is coming again, then live a holy and godly life right now.

Biblical prophecy isn't primarily given to satisfy our curiosity about the future; it's given to shape our character in the present. If Jesus is coming again, live like Jesus today. Rich Mullins, the Christian artist from years ago, had a song that said, "Live like you'll die tomorrow, die knowing you'll live forever. Live right." In other words, if eternity is real, invest in things that matter eternally. And if this world is temporary, stop asking temporary things to give you permanent satisfaction.

4. What would be different if followers of Jesus were less concerned about prophetic events, and more concerned about living godly lives right now?

Peter says we are: "...waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13, ESV). The biblical picture is resurrection and restoration.

5. Read these following passages. What do they have in common?

- Revelation 21:1-4
- Romans 8:18-23
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-57

Let your future purity shape your present life. (2 Peter 3:14-18)

Peter says that's where history is headed—not toward nothingness, but toward a renewed creation where righteousness is finally at home. "Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish,

and at peace" (2 Peter 3:14, ESV). There's our Refined theme one final time. If we're going to be completely pure then, Peter says we should pursue purity now. If we're going to live in perfect righteousness then, pursue righteousness now. And if we're going to be completely like Jesus then, allow Jesus to make us increasingly like Himself now.

John says: "We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. Everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." (1 John 3:2-3, ESV)

Future hope produces present holiness. Biblical hope isn't wishful thinking. Its confident expectation based upon the character and promises of God, and if I know where I'm going, it changes how I live along the way. Paul says in Philippians 3 that our citizenship is in heaven and that Jesus will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body. That's our future: complete transformation, complete purification, complete restoration.

The refinement we're experiencing now is simply a shadow of what God will complete then. So, all of this, then, leads us to this question: How should we live while we wait?

- We live with Hope instead of fear because history is going somewhere and Jesus is already at the end of it.
- We pursue Holiness instead of compromise because we're becoming the people we'll one day fully be. We live with Urgency instead of complacency because God's patience means people still need to hear about Jesus.
- We begin looking at our lives from the perspective of eternity, because many of the things consuming our attention today won't matter nearly as much as we think they do.
- We keep Jesus at the center.

6. How will you live while you wait?

Peter closes his entire letter with these words: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18, ESV).

Grace AND knowledge:

- Grace reminds us that no matter what we've done, no matter how many mistakes we've made, no matter how dysfunctional our family or our lives may be—Jesus still loves us. He is waiting and willing to forgive and wash away everything that brings you shame and guilt.

- Knowledge reminds us that Jesus calls us to surrender. We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We confess Him as our Lord and Savior. We repent of our sins—we turn away from our old life, and we turn to Him. And we are baptized into Him—where we are bearing witness that we have died to sin and been raised by Jesus into new life. And then, by the power of the indwelling Spirit: Keep growing in Jesus.

Throughout this series, we've talked about the fires God uses in our lives—the suffering that tests us, the temptations that expose us, the relationships that stretch us, the opposition that challenges us, and the truth that corrects us. And sometimes, when you're in the middle of one of those fires, it feels like the fire is the whole story. It's not. There is a day coming when faith will become sight, when the last temptation will be behind you, the last tear will have fallen, the last funeral will have been held, and the last battle with sin will finally be over. Everything broken will be restored, everything wrong will be made right, and everything God has promised will finally be fulfilled.

So, what are you living for? Are you living as though this life is all there is, spending most of your energy accumulating things you can't keep, protecting a body you can't preserve, and worrying about circumstances that one day won't matter nearly as much as they seem to matter right now? Or are you living for the hope God has stored up for you?