

FOCUS

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Aiming to glorify God by calling and equipping people to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ

Another Day, Another Delay

On the 9th of September I made a rare and adventurous trip to the swimming pool early in the morning. As I was getting ready to go home there was a conversation on the radio about those who were predicting that the world would end on the 09/09/09 at 09:09:09am. They were talking about what they would fill those last few hours with and getting people to text in what they would do.

The sort of things people were saying showed to me that no one really believed it was going to happen. Suggestions came in such as: food - I'd eat whatever I like because there is no point in the diet any more. Driving - I'd drive my car round the city setting off every speed camera I could simply because I can. There were of course more sensible suggestions like spending time with those you love but most made a joke of it.

Part of the lack of seriousness about the world ending is that I guess we've seen many predictions before that have failed to come true. So any new prediction inevitably carries a suspicion. All this started me thinking about being a Christian.

A Christian is someone who should be living everyday with the urgency of those final few hours. Listen to what the Apostle Peter says: "The end of all things is near" (1 Peter 4:7). Now that was written about 2000 years ago, which to most of us may not seem that near. But Peter is capturing the attitude a Christian should have every day. You see he goes on to say: "Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray" (1 Peter 4:7). No-one texted that to the radio show I was listening to. But the reason a Christian lives like that is they know the end is not really the end. The end of this world, or death (which ever comes first) means facing Jesus whom God has appointed as judge (Acts 17:31).

The "end" to the Christian is not a chance for one last blow-out because after that it's game over. Rather the end means a day of accountability to God who made us.

One of the problems as we try and share this truth with others is very similar to that discussion on the radio. No one really takes it that seriously! In fact we can even be mocked: "Where is this 'coming' he promised?" (2 Peter 3:4) - just another empty prediction.

But the Bible tells us that God's delay is not a sign of it being another empty prediction but a sign of His patience to us. Listen again to Peter: "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). You see, "our Lord's patience means salvation" (2 Peter 3:15).

While we may not know times and dates, we must live ready and prepared to meet Jesus, because God "will punish those who do not know God and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess 1:8). That means He will punish those who do not trust in Jesus' cross for forgiveness and hope of eternal life. It also means we must lovingly warn others so they might come to repentance and be ready to face Jesus too. Another day's delay means another day for people to be saved. Praise God!

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