

### Warm Up

The thought of the trumpet sounding at Jesus' return makes me:

- Excited! Let's go! I cannot wait another minute!
- No difference. It could happen anytime. I'm in no hurry.
- What? Now? Oh boy, I thought I had more time!
- I'm not sure I would hear it.

### Time in the Word

Read 1 Peter 4: 7-11. Are there phrases or words that stand out to you? What are the four directives in verses 7-10 regarding our conduct prior to Christ's return? Which directive do you enjoy the most? Struggle with the most?

### Discussion Questions

Why do you think Christ's return is taking

so long? Are there reasons beyond His patience to allow all to come to Him?

There are two themes in Scripture regarding how we're to approach the return of Christ: 1) You can't know the time, so don't worry about it, and 2) He's coming soon, so be ready. How are these complementary? Do you respond to one more than the other?

Look back over the past year or so. Are there moments you are really glad Christ didn't choose to return? Why? Are there moments when it would have been a relief? Why?

If you could turn to the last page of the Bible and find in big, bold print the exact date of Christ's return, what do you think would be different about the church? Society? You?



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**Connect** - living in community, loving and supporting one another  
**Grow** - equipping believers to live in obedience to God's Word  
**Serve** - helping people discover and use their God-given talents  
**Reach** - transforming lives and communities with the good news of Jesus Christ

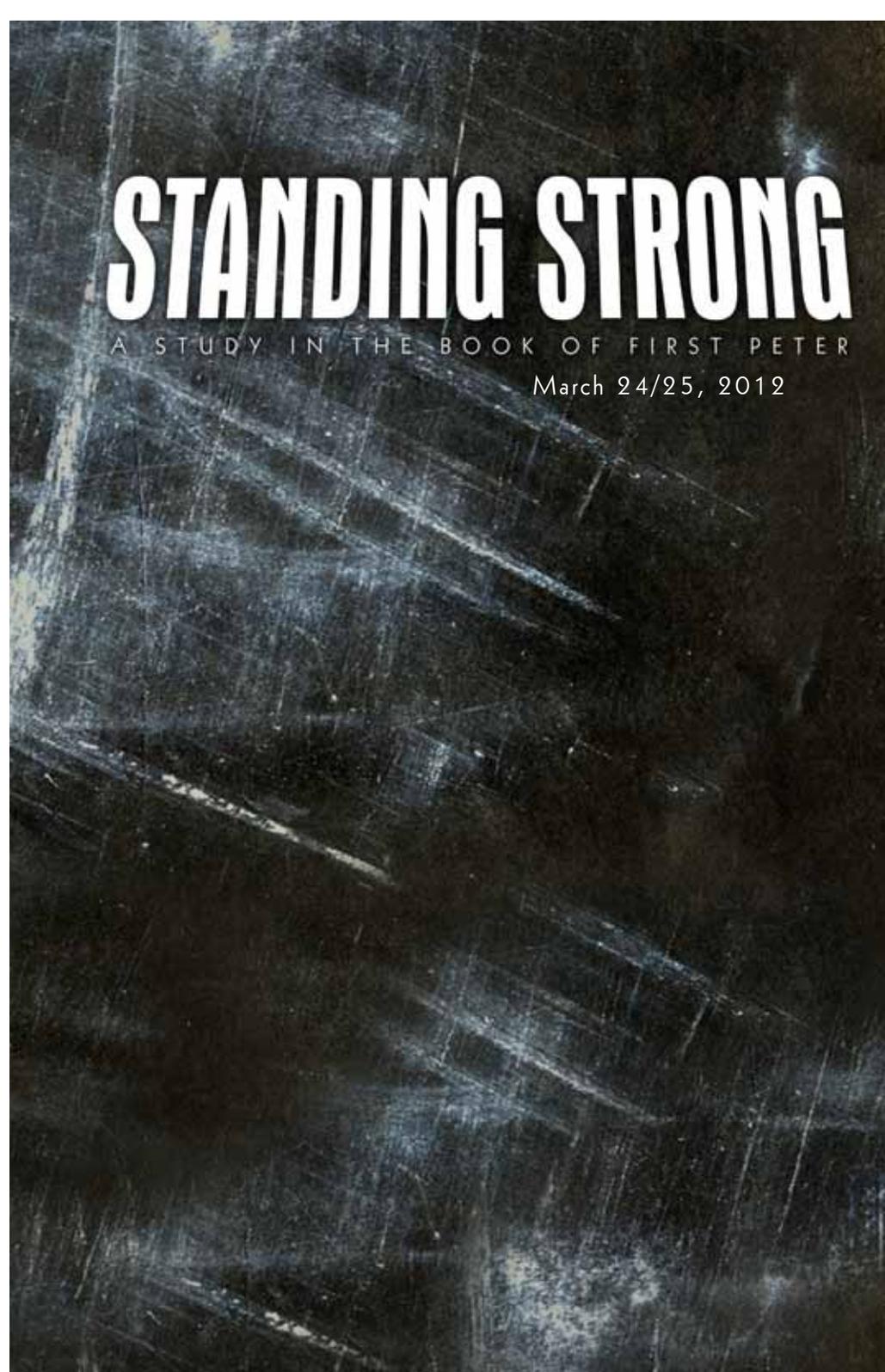
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## STANDING STRONG: Are you Ready?

1 Peter 4:7-10

Pastor Rick Countryman

*The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.*

1 Peter 4:7-11 (NLT)

**What does Peter mean when he says, The end of the world is coming soon? He's talking about the \_\_\_\_\_.**

### Important passages that relate to the rapture

*No one knows when that day or time will be, not the angels in heaven, not even the Son. Only the Father knows.*

Matthew 24:36 (NCV)

*Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns.*

1 Corinthians 1:7-8 (NLT)

*We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 (NLT)

*For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 (NLT)

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

Titus 2:11-13 (NIV)

*Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.*

James 5:7-8 (NLT)

*These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.*

1 Peter 1:7 (NLT)

*Yes, my children, remain in union with him, so that when he appears we may be full of courage and need not hide in shame from him on the Day he comes.*

1 John 2:28 (GN)

*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and we have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is.*

1 John 3:2 (NCV)

*Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

Jude 21 (NIV)

*God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.*

Revelation 1:3 (NLT)

*Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. I am coming soon.*

Revelation 3:10-11 (NLT)

*Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.*

Revelation 22:12 (NLT)

**The Bible was written more than 2,000 years ago. Why is it taking so long for Jesus to rapture His church (His bride)?**

**God is \_\_\_\_\_ and doesn't want anybody to \_\_\_\_\_.**

*This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles. Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created." They deliberately forget that God made the heavens by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. But 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. The 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. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief... And remember, the Lord's patience gives people time to be saved.*

2 Peter 3:1-10 & 15 (NLT)

### How should you live while you wait for the Lord's return?

**1. Dedicate yourself to \_\_\_\_\_.**

*The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers.*

Verse 7

**2. \_\_\_\_\_ about one another deeply.**

*Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.*

Verse 8

**3. Live a life of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.*

Verse 9

**4. Devote yourself to \_\_\_\_\_.**

*God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

Verse 10



### Memory Verse

*So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*  
1 Peter 4:19

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### Monday – Begin the day in prayer; meditate on the memory verse.

Review the sermon outline and read through all the verses. Through which verse did God speak to you? Spend time meditating on the verse. What do you sense God saying to you?

From the sermon, how were you challenged to live differently as you wait for the Lord's return?

### Tuesday – Begin the day in prayer; meditate on the memory verse.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19. From verse 12, why shouldn't we be surprised at the painful and fiery trials we suffer?

From verses 12-19, what instructions does Peter give to those who are going through a painful trial?

According to Acts 9:4, when we feel persecuted, who is really being persecuted?

### Wednesday – Begin the day in prayer; meditate on the memory verse.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19. From verses 13-14, what does it mean to participate in the sufferings of Christ?

How is it possible to rejoice in the sufferings of Christ? How is rejoicing beneficial to spiritual growth?

How do you typically respond when participating in Christ's sufferings?

Why should we consider it a blessing if we are insulted for the name of Christ?

### Thursday – Begin the day in prayer; meditate on the memory verse.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19. From verses 15-18, what type of conduct brings suffering without blessing?

What did Jesus say about persecution in Matthew 5:11-12? Why might a Christian be persecuted?

What were the consequences for Peter and John's witness about Christ?

- In Acts 4:1-22

- In Acts 5:12-33

How did they respond in Acts 5:41-42?

### Friday – Begin the day in prayer; meditate on the memory verse.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19. Spend time meditating on verse 19. Write ways you have experienced God as your faithful Creator.

How does verse 19 encourage you?

### Personal Reflection & Application

Since Satan cannot attack God, he attacks God's people. How have you felt attacked for being a Christian?

Read Philippians 1:29; 3:8-10. According to these verses, how should believers feel when God trusts them with trials?

What does our response to trials reveal about our relationship with God?

How can this be a blessing which leads to spiritual growth?

### Reaching Out

Identify someone who isn't ready to meet Jesus face to face. Ask if you can share with them how they can be ready.