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CRUISE CONTROL ?

How would your life change today if you knew the end of the world was tomorrow? Or the end of your life?

Either way, it's a sure thing that your earthly existence is going to end one day, you're going to be judged, and that will tell whether your eternity is better or bitter.

1 Peter 4:7 sends a well-timed reminder that the time that's left is short. Eternity is on the way. Both believers and unbelievers need to heed the warning.

For the unbeliever, it's a call to be saved, to receive the gift of salvation offered by Jesus. This means admitting you need a Savior, that there's nothing you can do to save yourself. You give up the hopeless idea that you could somehow be good enough to measure up against God's holy perfection. It means following God's way instead of your way. Stubborn pride keeps most people from being saved.

If you are a Christian believer, you have already experienced the grace of God's forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You've responded to the good news by simply receiving God's gift, and you've been set free from the bondage of sin and self.

Peter calls believers to clear-minded living -- not to get saved, but because you are saved. Actually, believers "have been saved" from the moment they trust in Christ. Believers "are being saved" as they live out their earthly lives from the moment of their new birth. And believers "will be saved" finally and fully the moment their earthly death ushers them into Christ's presence.

Living a good life doesn't earn you heaven, but it makes a difference as to how ready for heaven you will be – and what sort of advertisement you are for the gospel, how you help bring others to Christ.

Don't misunderstand – God isn't telling you to straighten out your own life. He offers both the want to and the how to, by the power of the Holy Spirit. That "new life" in Christ is real for the believer because the Holy Spirit indwells all who trust in Jesus as Lord.

The Savior overcomes self, and the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Before Christ was in your life, you were actually being controlled by something else. You were either on cruise control, responding to all the natural human passions within your being (the flesh) that try to run your life. Or you were on remote control, responding to all the forces outside of your being (the world) that try to run your life -- and the devil who simply tempts you by twisting the truth.

Peter says, be self-controlled. That is, your new self in Christ, so that you are Spirit-controlled. Turn off self and turn on Christ.

The good news of the gospel means you no longer have to live according to selfish passions and forces, because in Christ you have the power to say no to sin and yes to God. That's "dying to self" so you now live for Christ.

He gives you the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to empower your life, so that you fulfill God's purpose, speaking and serving so that others come to Christ.

Your task is great. The time is short. The end is near. What's controlling you?