

## **The Divine Purpose and Benefit of Continual Reminders    2 Peter 1:12-21**

### **2 Peter 1:12-21    Introduction**

- In the first part of Chapter 1, Peter reminded us that every Christian needs to live a Christlike life. He reminded us that God has given us everything we need to make this happen. (v.3)
- But while growing in the character of Christ is truly possible, Peter also reminded us that it is equally possible that we'll forget what God has done on our behalf. (v.9)
  
- What Peter knows is that when we grow accustomed to something, we begin to take it for granted.
- Maybe you once had a new car or a new job that you were really excited about.
- Over time it's just not the same.
- (Without getting too personal) think about a new relationship – or your wedding day – and then gauge how things have gone from there.
  
- Our human tendency is to forget how good we have it.
- We fail to hold onto the actual value of things, of people – and even of our salvation and relationship with God. Today Peter is going to remind us of the treasure that we have before us in the pages of Scripture.

**The Bible is God's Word. It teaches us the truth – and then continuously reminds us of the truth we have been taught.**

### **2 Peter 1:12-21    Outline**

- I. Know that reminders are needed. 1:12-15
- II. Know that our faith is not in myths. 1:16-18
- III. Know that the Bible is God's Word. 1:19-21

### **Know that reminders are needed. 1:12-15**

- 1:12 Jesus told Peter that his job would be to strengthen or establish others in Luke 22:32. (strengthen = establish)
- Peter's goal is to strengthen or establish his readers by means of reminders.
- Let's mark the three places in this section that Peter uses one or another form of the word "remind." There is one each in 1:12, 13 and 15.
  
- 1:12-13 Paul also saw the value of writing things that his readers already knew.
  - See Philippians 3:1.

- For that matter, Jesus said that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit would be to bring to His disciples' remembrance the things that He had said.
  - See John 14:25-26.
  
- 1:13 Peter is referring to his physical body as a "tent."
- This body is a temporary shelter.
- 1:14 The sense of the verse is:
- "I know that I am going to die soon – and this corresponds to Christ's prophecy." (Bauckham)
- Peter is likely thinking back to what Christ told him in John 21:18-19.
  
- 1:15 The phrase "be careful" is related to "be diligent" or "diligence" in 1:5 & 10.
- It means "to hasten to do something, to be zealous in doing it."
- Peter knew that he was nearing the day of his death, so he wanted to take care of spiritual business before it was too late.
- We truly don't know when we will die, so we should be zealous in doing the Lord's work.
  
- Peter sees his teaching in this letter as preventative. He is not trying to give us anything new.
- In fact, he wants to stop new teaching from flooding our minds with novelties.
- When the church strays from its original mission and message, people easily lose all their ability to discern truth from falsehood.
  
- Some want to keep the doctrines of Christianity changing – they might say it is to keep up with changing attitudes in society.
- Lucas & Green point out that Peter's concern *"is not that the second generation will codify and fossilize the truth, but rather that they will become so careless about it that they will forget it altogether."*
  
- Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said, *"the business of the church and of preaching is not to present us with new and interesting ideas, it is rather to go on reminding us of certain fundamental and eternal truths."*
- Our human tendency is to take even the most valuable things for granted once we grow accustomed to them. We need to continually be reminded of the value of God's Word.

## Know that our faith is not in myths. 1:16-18

- 1:16 fables = Greek *muthos*.
- In the ancient world people happily made up stories – myths – to try to explain the world around them or to illustrate timeless truths.
- The New Testament always uses this word in a negative way and in contrast to the truth of the gospel. For example 2 Timothy 4:4.
  
- 1:16 Peter’s opponents were probably beginning to refer to many Christian doctrines or beliefs as “myths.” Peter strongly disagreed.
- He and the other apostles did not simply concoct the stories they died for in the end.
- The Gospels, for example, were historically reliable accounts of the life of Christ.
- 1:16 In particular it seems that some had a problem with the idea of the “coming” of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Peter’s word for “coming” is *parousía*.
- While the word technically means “presence,” it is used in the NT to speak of the visible, “actually present” nature of Christ’s return.
  - See also 3:4 and 3:12.
  
- So Peter takes us back to the Transfiguration – an event which was a foretaste of Christ’s coming in power for those disciples who witnessed it.
- We can read about it in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.
  - Let’s read Matthew 16:28 – 17:9.
  
- The Transfiguration was relevant to an event that was disputed by the false teachers – the Second Coming of Christ.
- Before Jesus ever went to the cross, Peter, James and John experienced a foretaste of Christ’s glory. This confirmed for them all that they already believed about Jesus.
  
- Our faith is not in myths of human origin.
- We have a New Testament that is based upon eyewitness accounts.
- Peter and others were eyewitnesses of the Majesty of Christ.
- See also what John says in John 1:14.
  
- By the way, if you’d like to dig deeper into the issue of historical reliability, may I recommend the following?
  - *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* by Craig Blomberg (over 300 pages)
  - *Is the New Testament Reliable?* by Paul Barnett (under 200 pages)

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## Know that the Bible is God's Word. 1:19-21

- 1:19 we have the prophetic word
- The 1984 NIV (the "OIV"? Or is the current version the "Newer IV"?) translated the first part of this verse as: "And we have the word of the prophets ..."
- Peter is almost certainly referring to the OT in general, rather than any specific prophetic passage – so this is a good way to say it.
  
- 1:19 The next issue is the exact meaning of the entire phrase "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed."
- The Greek (as usual) is somewhat different:
- "and we have more sure the prophetic word"
- This original allows for two rather different translations, both of which make perfect sense in the context.
- 1:19 We start with this:
- "and we have more sure the prophetic word"
- The NKJV gives us this:
  - "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed"
- This implies that the prophetic word of the OT was confirmed by Peter's experience of the Transfiguration.
- In other words, as it says in the NLT:
  - "Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets."
- Peter wants to pass that confidence in the Scriptures on to us.
  
- Or we can take it a different way, as in the ESV:
  - "And we have something more sure, the prophetic word," (close to the NKJV footnote).
- In other words, Peter has the experience, but we still have the prophetic word, which is more certain than experience alone.
  
- 1:19 We can even combine the whole thing to feel the full force of what Peter says:
  - For those present, "the Transfiguration confirmed the word of the OT prophets.
  - It gave them even more confidence in the words of Scripture that they already had.
  - We may not have Peter's experience, but we still have the Scriptures, which Peter knows (by experience) to be fully reliable."
  
- 1:19 as a light that shines in a dark place
- The Scriptures serve as a light in the darkness.
  - As in Psalm 119:105 or Proverbs 6:23.
- Until the day dawns = Until Jesus comes



## 2 Peter 1:12-21 Conclusions

- Question: What's at stake here, anyway?
- Answer: A whole lot.
  
- The church is continually suspended between the biblical faith of the apostles and oblivion – that is, complete extinction.
- And we are never really more than one generation from each.
  
- The Bible gives us a continuous connection to the apostles through their teaching.
- So in a sense, the church is never more than one generation from them.
- Still, if we stray from the legacy they have left us, we are only one generation from oblivion.
- History shows that wherever and whenever the church leaves the Bible, the Holy Spirit's power also leaves the church.
  
- Therefore we should know all of the following:
  - We continually need reminders.
    - We know that we have a tendency to forget.
  - Our faith is not built upon useless myths.
    - The Bible is our connection with eyewitnesses.
  - The Bible is God's Word.
    - It is not a book of merely human origin.
  
- Jesus gave a promise to Peter saying:
  - "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."
- However – Jesus is always using people just like us to build His church.
- If we begin to take the Bible for granted, and forget the wonderful treasure that we have, we render ourselves useless in this work.

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