

07. The Epistle of 2Peter—1:12-18

(11/7/18)

As we have already said, the emphasis of Peter's first epistle was to encourage believers who were going thru suffering and persecutions at the hands of unbelievers outside the Church.

Whereas, the emphasis of his second epistle is to warn believers about the dangers of false teachers and counterfeit Christians who had infiltrated the Church and were trying to destroy it from within.

The devil's strategy of, "*If you can't beat them, join them!*" is as old as the church itself—in fact, it was predicted by Jesus *before* the Church was even born when He gave the parable of the tares and wheat (Matt. 13:24-30—Explain).

And so, in an effort to destroy the church from the inside, Satan has sown into it many false believers who are effectively—neutralizing its power, corrupting its witness and destroying its effectiveness in the world.

However, the first place we need to look for false Christians in the church—is in our own hearts!

Careful self-examination to determine the genuineness of our own faith is not only critical—it's commanded in Scripture!

2 Peter 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...

1 Corinthians 11:31 (NKJV)

³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

Now, as a pastor Peter is painfully aware that in any given church, on any given Sunday the congregation will contain people who think they're saved and yet who are not.

And so, with that weighing on his mind, he transitions quickly from talking about the blessings that are ours in Christ (v.2-4) to a warning directed at all *professing* Christians to make sure they are *really* in Christ.

He wants to 'shake' church-goers up so that they examine themselves honestly as to whether or not they're really saved.

Every faithful pastor has to address this from the pulpit at times (as Peter is doing here) in the hope of keeping anyone in their church from having to stand before Jesus someday and hear Him say, "*I never knew you depart from Me into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*" (Matt. 7:23; 25:41)

And that is why he started out this epistle by encouraging us (actually commanding us) to stay close to the Lord so that His character will grow in us and bear fruit thru us—the fruit of godliness and Christlikeness (v.5-7).

Not only will this help to guard us from the devil's condemnation (for living a carnal life) but it will assure us that our faith is real, and our salvation is sure.

2 Peter 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, **for if you do these things you will never stumble...**

Peter is saying, if we keep living godly lives of moral virtue as believers—we will never stumble into doubt, despair, or fear with regard to the genuineness of our salvation or our inheritance in heaven someday.

2 Peter 1:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

William MacDonald—

“Not only is there safety in constant spiritual progress, there is also the promise of a richly-provided entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Peter refers here not to the fact of our entry but to the manner of it. The only basis of admission to the heavenly kingdom is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—but some will have a more abundant entrance than others. There will be degrees of reward. And the rewards are here said to depend on the degree of one’s conformity to the Savior.”

2 Peter 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

“I will not be negligent to remind you always”

Any good teacher knows that students learn best and better retain what they learn thru *repetition*.

The word ‘**established**’ is the same Greek word translated *strengthen* in Luke 22:32—

Luke 22:32 (NLT2)

³² But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

Right here, Peter is obeying that command of Jesus in that he is *strengthening* us by reminding us of the basics of the Christian life.

The NLT Translates verse 12—*“Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught.”*

Peter is acknowledging that his readers had been taught N.T. doctrine—not the least of which thru Paul’s letters that had been circulating throughout the churches—he mentions this in chapter 3:

2 Peter 3:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

2 Peter 1:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³ **Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you...**

The word ‘**tent**’ is Peter’s way of referring to his *physical* body.

A tent isn’t a permanent structure (like a brick and mortar house)—only a temporary place where people can live.

The Bible likens our physical bodies to a tent because it isn’t the permanent ‘house’ our spirit will someday move into—

2 Corinthians 5:1 (NKJV)

¹ For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

1 Corinthians 15:51, 53 (NKJV)

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

“Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you...”
(v.13)

The term ‘**stir you up**’ is a compound word in the Greek meaning “*to arouse completely,*” or “*to thoroughly awaken*”—as from lethargy, drowsiness, or sleep.

Even true believers in Christ can become sluggish, lethargic and even fall asleep in the light by not remaining vigilant and watchful for the Lord’s return—

1 Thessalonians 5:6 (NLT2)

⁶ So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded.

Hebrews 6:12 (NKJV)

¹² ...do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Romans 13:11 (NLT2)

¹¹ This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

The way Christians remain *watchful* is by knowing what to watch for (the signs of Christ's return) and the way we learn what to watch for is by studying what God told us to look for in the way of signs that would precede Christ's return—in other words **prophecy!**

2 Peter 1:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, ¹⁴ **knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.**

Here Peter is remembering what the Lord Jesus told him about how his life would end—

John 21:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish." ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

2 Peter 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ **Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.**

Warren Wiersbe—

"Peter knew that he was going to die, so he wanted to leave behind something that would never die—the written Word of God. His two epistles became a part of the inspired Scriptures, and they have been ministering to the saints for centuries. Men die, but the Word of God lives on!"

It is possible that Peter was also alluding to the Gospel of Mark. Most Bible scholars believe that the Spirit used Peter to give John Mark some of the data for his book (see 1 Peter 5:13). One of the church fathers, Papias, said that Mark was 'Peter's disciple and interpreter'...

If we did not have a dependable written revelation, the church would be at the mercy of men's memories. People who pride themselves on having good memories should sit on the witness stand in a courtroom! It is amazing that three perfectly honest witnesses can, with good conscience, give three different accounts of an automobile accident! Our memories are defective and selective. We usually remember what we want to remember, and often we distort even that.

Fortunately, we can depend on the written Word of God. "It is written" and it stands written forever. We can be saved through this living Word (1 Peter 1:23–25), nurtured by it (1 Peter 2:2), and guided and protected as we trust and obey."

2 Peter 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

In this verse, Peter is talking about the experience he had (along with John and James) on the Mount of Transfiguration.

"cunningly devised fables"—literally means *"sophisticated lies"* or *"well-crafted deceitful fabrications* (the Greek is a word we get the word 'myths' from)"

2 Peter 1:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

What Peter saw on the Mt. of Transfiguration was fantastic and unbelievable—but absolutely true—let's read the account:

Matthew 17:1-9 (NKJV)

¹ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves [*probably Mt. Hermon*]; ² and He was transfigured [Greek—metamorphosis] before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" ⁶ And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." ⁸ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but

Jesus only. ⁹ Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

Now, this was quite a powerful experience—attested to by not one, or two, but by three eye witnesses.

Our whole system of juris prudence is built on eye witness testimony—even as God established in *His* law: "*You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one [eye] witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.*" (Deut.19:15)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ had hundreds of eye witnesses who testified they had seen the risen Christ—even as Paul talked about:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV)

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Peter was an eye witness of both the resurrected Christ and His Second Coming glory (Matt.17:1-2)—and yet, he acknowledges that eye-witness testimony isn't infallible.

(Talk about people in a room watching a car accident taking place on a screen and then being asked separately to describe what they saw)

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