

II PETER 1

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Peter chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Tonight we will begin Peter's second letter to the churches in Asia Minor. These churches were, "**. . . in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia . . .**" as we are told in I Peter 1:1.

If you remember from our study of I Peter, Peter admonished them to have a steadfast faith in the midst of the persecution they were facing and to live exemplary lives or holy lives in spite of the persecution they were facing for their faith in Jesus Christ.

And this persecution came from Caesar Nero and it was only going to grow more intense until Nero's death in 68 A. D.

As we said before, Peter's first letter was written sometime in 62 A. D. and his second letter sometime in 64 A. D.

As I have said, Nero died sometime in 68 A. D. and that means that Peter was martyred for his faith before that, as Nero was the one who put Peter to death!

That would place Peter's martyrdom sometime in late 64 A. D.

So if the writing of this second letter occurred in 64 A. D. that would place Peter's execution within weeks or months of the writing of this letter.

Thus, with Peter's death being imminent, as he is sitting on death row in a Roman prison, his last words, the words of a dying man are not going to be fluff. They are going to be meat, they are going to come from his heart, he is going to speak what is truly important.

Interestingly enough Peter's focus is not the external persecution, which would continue to grow. The focus of this letter is internal persecution or the threat of false teachers spewing out their poisonous doctrines. He wants these believers to be on guard, to pay attention so they won't be overtaken by their lies. What a great and important warning for us today, we need to heed these words of Peter!

One pastor put it like this. He wrote,

Second Peter (along with Jude) is viewed by some as the "dark corner" of the New Testament. As a result, it is not often preached, studied, discussed, or quoted. The book is even neglected in scholarly circles, where critics dismiss it as a pseudonymous (forged) letter, unworthy of serious study.

But the church of Jesus Christ ignores this epistle at its peril. After all, Peter wrote it to help believers face a world filled with subtle spiritual deception.

Knowing that his death was imminent (1:14), the apostle wanted to remind his readers of the truths he had already taught them, so that those truths would continue to safeguard them after he was gone (v. 15).

Peter also knew that the deadly threat of false teachers loomed large on the horizon; he wanted to expose the apostates in order to expel their demon doctrines from the church.

Never has Peter's warning been more timely than it is today. The rapid advancement of mass media, coupled with the church's lack of discernment, has allowed doctrinal error to spread like wildfire. False teachers propagate their heresies via television, radio, the Internet, books, magazines, and seminars - doing whatever they can for their own self-promotion.

In the process, their deceit lures multitudes to exchange the truth for utter lies (cf. 1 Tim 1:19; 2 Tim 2:16-18). To make matters worse, some in today's church, motivated by cowardly fear of rejection or misguided notions of love, are reluctant to expose today's apostates. Instead of countering error, they either embrace it or ignore it in the name of tolerance.

The apostle Peter, however, had no qualms about denouncing the deceivers who threatened his beloved flock. He recognized them for what they were: wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:29), lurking to devour the ignorant with their beguiling lies.

Peter understood that false teachers are the emissaries of hell and pawns of Satan, motivated by the love of money, power, prestige, and prominence. Because they are masters of deception, they successfully peddle the doctrines of demons to unsuspecting souls, marketing eternal ruin as if it were eternal life.

The only sure defense against their tactics is found in the truth of God's Word. Peter knew this, of course, which is why he penned this epistle. As a true man of God, he was deeply concerned to protect those under his spiritual care.

- John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 2 Peter*

That is absolutely true, we need to be on guard, especially today as I have seen godly people, those that know the Word of God, fall for these deceptions!

Now, let me ask you this. How do you expose a lie?

By knowing the truth and we are set apart by the truth of God's Word. Make no mistake about it, God's Word is the truth that sets us apart from the lies of these false teachers!

Think about this for a minute. You can spend your entire lifetime trying to expose and understand all the lies, all the doctrines of demons that are out there, and you will never stop because there are always new ones.

I am not saying we should not be aware of what is happening, but if spend all our time looking for the lies, we are going to be in trouble.

And what I mean by that is this. If you know the truth, the Word of God, if you are immersing yourself in the Word of God, then, when a lie comes along, you will recognize it because the truth has set you free from the error!

Interestingly enough, someone called this letter “*The Believers Conflict in the Latter Days*” and how true that is today.

The lies being perpetrated by false teachers, the internal persecution is growing, and church leaders are buying into these lies.

For me, I just scratch my head and wonder how they can fall prey to this stuff when God’s Word is so clear.

I guess the reason is simple, they go outside of God’s Word and fall prey to the lies!

And they would never admit that is what they are doing, but if you are holding onto something that is against what God’s Word says, if you are adding to God’s Word or taking away from God’s word, you will and you probably are falling prey to these lies.

Listen to the warning that is given to us in Revelation 22:18-19, “**For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**”

That is pretty serious and yet, people will say things like, “*That is only the book of Revelation!*” I don’t think so!

Let give you a few Scriptures to show you what I mean.

In Deuteronomy 4:2 we are told, “**You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.**”

Sounds like what we read in Revelation 22:18-19!

Also, in Deuteronomy 12:32 we are told, “**Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**”

I think the word “**Whatever**” covers Genesis through Revelation because all of Scripture is given to us by the Lord!

And in Proverbs 30:5-6 we are told, “**Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.**”

Did you see that? God’s Word is pure, it is truth, and we are not to add to it because, if we do, we are the ones who are a liar, not God!

I think that is pretty clear and it is only three references, but they make it very clear that God’s Word is His Word, and we are not to add to it or take away from it!

And what we see in this letter is that Peter is calling for believers to grow in the Lord so they can fight the apostasy that is out there and look forward to the Lord’s return.

And in the days we are living in, he is admonishing us to do the same!

Before we get to our text this evening, let me give to you a quick outline of this letter:

CULTIVATE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER – II PETER 1

CONDEMN FALSE TEACHERS – II PETER 2

CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST’S RETURN – II PETER 3

With that said, let’s begin reading in II Peter chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we look at how we are to ***CULTIVATE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.***

II PETER 1

VERSE 1

Peter, this big, strong fisherman opens this letter up in a very humble way.

You see, Peter knew his identity, from “*shifting sand*” or Simon, to the “*rock*” or Peter.

Why did he list both names?

Possibly because he knew that even though he was saved, that flesh nature often caused him to act like shifting sand.

Also, he wanted his readers to know who he was and by using both names, there would be no doubt!

What I want you to also notice is the order of his titles.

First, he is a ***bondslave*** or ***DOULOS*** of Jesus Christ.

A bondslave was a slave who served his master and when it was time for him to be released, he refused. His love for his master was so great he remains a slave but not out of constraint, but freely he serves his master out of love.

Folks, as Peter, we are bondslaves of Christ serving our Master freely!

His second title is that of an *apostle* or one that was sent by God.

He did not exalt himself, call himself the first “*Pope*” because he wasn’t, he was a servant and God placed him in that position of being an apostle.

Too often people in ministry like to elevate themselves. For instance, there are those that call themselves or like to be called, “*The Most Reverend*” so-and-so.

That is wrong, we are all bondslaves of Christ first and then whatever position God has placed you in – *SERVE!*

In fact, Peter says that they had “like precious faith” or that we all enjoyed the same salvation experience that is only brought about by Christ and not by our efforts!

Notice that it was not just any faith that they had together, believing anything and everything that they wanted.

It is as Jude reminds us, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3.

You see, “the faith” was delivered to us “once for all” and not something different for us today. That is important for us to understand because there is a challenge today, by so-called Christians, that salvation has nothing to do with the blood atonement and really, all roads lead to God! Not at all! This faith is unchanging!

Thus, we as Christians are to be remaining faithful to and defending the truth that saves and sanctifies. And this is the core theme of Peter’s second epistle.

One more point before we move on and this is very important.

Peter speaks “of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Here is another Scripture that links Jesus to being God, not “*a god*” or a lesser God than the Father. He is the second person of the Holy Trinity who is fully God and became fully man in the Incarnation, but He was also fully God and still is!

Now some like to argue that this is speaking of Almighty God and Jesus Christ, and that it is not saying that Jesus is God. That again is a lie, and it is not what the Greek is saying, not even close.

In fact, Greek scholar Wuest tells us, “*The expression God and our Saviour is in a construction in the Greek text which demands that we translate, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, the expression thus showing that Jesus Christ is the Christian’s God.*”

In other words, this statement in the Greek is Peter’s way of saying unequivocally that Jesus Christ is both our God and our Savior.

And Blum said, “*The grammar leaves little doubt in these words Peter is calling Jesus Christ both God and Savior.*”

There is no mistake about this, Jesus is God and, as Thomas said of Jesus, “... ‘My Lord and my God!’” John 20:28. I think that is pretty clear!

VERSES 2-4

These three verses are power packed. If we would only read them and apply them to our lives, truly believe them!

Today people water down God’s Word or they negate it but look at the importance that Peter applies to it.

First Peter tells us that grace and peace are increased or multiplied as we know God. In other words, we are more aware of the grace of God and we can enjoy the peace of God.

And to know God is not just a casual acquaintance but an intimate knowledge of God, a relationship with Him! The more we spend time in God's Word, in prayer, with other believers, the more we will understand His grace and His peace for our lives!

Now, what do we need for spiritual life and for that matter, physical life?

Folks, we need Jesus!

Paul, in II Corinthians 9:8 makes that point as he says, "**And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.**"

You see, it is not about how strong we are or the power we have, but it is all about the Lord empowering us for the work He has called us to do.

Why do people buy so many self-help books? Because they don't believe Jesus is sufficient and they need to look elsewhere. How foolish that is when you think about it!

Paul said in Colossians 2:8-10, "**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**"

We are complete in Christ and His Word is sufficient for our lives. In other words, everything that we need in the way of truth to be saved and live our Christian lives is contained in the Word of God. We don't need to add or supplement it with any other source of knowledge or information! The Bible is complete – it is sufficient!

In Psalm 19:7 we are told, "**The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul . . .**"

Let me explain it like this. The word "**perfect**" is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning, "*whole, complete or sufficient.*"

It conveys the idea of something that is comprehensive, so as to cover all aspects of an issue.

Albert Barnes put it like this, *“The meaning [of “perfect”] is that [Scripture] lacks nothing [for] its completeness; nothing in order that it might be what it should be. It is complete as a revelation of Divine truth; it is complete as a rule of conduct. . . . It is absolutely true; it is adapted with consummate wisdom to the [needs] of man; it is an unerring guide of conduct. There is nothing there which would lead men into error.”*

And Warren Wiersbe wrote,

When you are born into the family of God by faith in Christ, you are born complete. God gives you everything you will ever need “for life and godliness.” Nothing has to be added! “And you are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10).

The false teachers claimed that they had a “special doctrine” that would add something to the lives of Peter’s readers, but Peter knew that nothing could be added.

Just as a normal baby is born with all the “equipment” he needs for life and only needs to grow, so the Christian has all that is needed and only needs to grow. God never has to call back any of His “models” because something is lacking or faulty.”

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 930

And the Devil loves to attack at this point, the sufficiency of the Scriptures and many have bought into his lies, his deception instead of listening to what the Lord has said in His Word!

How have they stumbled? They have stumbled by buying into the lie that the Bible needs to be supplemented with the wisdom of the world if Christians are to be fully victorious and fruitful.

Now, we have seen God's grace extended to us as He empowers us and gives to us all we need to live. Not because we deserve it, but it is a gift of God to us.

Now Peter tells us of the peace of God that is found in the precious promises of God to us.

But first, Paul tells us, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”** Romans 5:1-2.

Once we have made peace *WITH* God through Jesus Christ, then we enjoy the peace *OF* God.

Look at the promises that God has given to us in His Word and that knowledge should help us to live godly lives.

Think about this for a minute. *“It is estimated that there are at least 30,000 promises in the Bible. John Bunyan once said, ‘The pathway of life is strewn so thickly with the promises of God that it is impossible to take one step without treading upon one of them.’”* (William MacDonald)

Thus, as Paul said in II Timothy 3:16-17, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

Also, peace through the storms of life can be ours as we rest in His promises.

Paul, in Romans 15:4 put it this way, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

We do have all we need to succeed in this life if we have Jesus!

But, if you lack the knowledge of Him, you will be swept away and thus, read His Word and apply it to your life and the pulls of this corrupt world will not have its grips on you!

VERSES 5-7

Peter just talked about escaping the corruption that is in this world through lust and now he tells us that we need to grow, mature in the faith.

You see, it does take effort, it does take diligence on our part and as the Holy Spirit controls our lives, as we surrender to Him, He will enable us to escape the corruption that is warring against our souls!

Remember that Peter has told us that we are partakers of the divine nature. (II Peter 1:4)

But that is not the end of what we are to do. You see, once we are made spiritual sons and daughters we are to grow, mature in the Christian life. And I am sorry to say this doesn't just happen to us. We are supposed to give all diligence to our walk with the Lord.

We are in a battle and make no mistake about it, we are living at a time when evil in our culture is so profound that even Christians are succumbing to the darkness and not living lives of moral excellence.

Thus, **“giving all diligence . . .”** We must strive, move forward, because our faith is active and it will grow, it will mature if you care for it just as you need to do with a garden.

Peter lists seven virtues or qualities that flow or should flow from our faith because our faith is not dead, it is active, it is living faith.

These virtues or qualities are:

VIRTUE – This speaks of moral excellence, good character, quality.

KNOWLEDGE – This is not just information, but the Word of God opened up to our hearts by the power of God’s Spirit. It is not only knowledge by experience but by the Word of God!

SELF-CONTROL – This is speaking of controlling our passions, not letting our passions control us!

PERSEVERANCE – This is speaking of a steadfast endurance under adverse conditions, when the heat is turned up.

GODLINESS – This speaks of holiness, of being set apart for God just as the utensils and implements used in the Temple were set apart for God, they were to be holy unto God.

BROTHERLY KINDNESS – This is speaking of a brotherly love, that we are to love the family of God.

LOVE – This is **AGAPE** love or unconditional love, sacrificial love. This is a supernatural love not a humanistic or natural love. You see, we can love someone until they wrong us and then we can’t love them, we are mad at them, we take vengeance out upon them! But **AGAPE** love is a love from God that loves others in spite of what they have done to us!

Let me show you an example of **AGAPE** love.

T. E. McCully was the father of Ed McCully, who was one of the five young missionaries killed by the Auca Indians in Ecuador.

One-night T. E. McCully prayed, *“Lord, let me live long enough to see those fellows saved who killed our boys, that I may throw my arms around them and tell them I love them because they love my Christ.”*

That is not a natural love, but a supernatural love that comes from God!

And here’s the thing. We don’t wake up one day manifesting these virtues or qualities, but we are called to give all diligence and walk with God and we will see the fruitful growth of our faith!

We need to understand that our faith must be growing if God is going to use us. And too many times we are foolish in our thoughts. We become blind to what God wants to do in our lives and we remain stagnant in our growth in the Lord.

“Lord, help us to mature in the faith, having your nature flow from our lives to touch those around us!”

As we read on Peter is going to admonish us to grow in these things. Listen to what he tells us.

VERSES 8-9

Peter’s point is this, and it is pretty simple. If we as Christians pursue the virtues that he outlined in II Peter 1:5-7, then their lives will be increasingly productive, spiritually speaking.

If not, then Peter speaks of two things that will be manifested in our lives.

First, he says that we will be **“barren.”** This word is translated from a Greek word that means, *“inactive”* or *“idle”* or *“ineffective.”*

Also, Peter says that we will be **“unfruitful.”** This word is translated from a Greek word that means *“unproductive”* and is sometimes used in connection with unbelief or apostasy.

Think of it like this. As Christians, how do people know that our faith is real, that we are mature in the faith? We don't carry signs saying we are mature in the faith. If we did it would just show that we are not mature in the faith!

Then what do we do?

We grow in the knowledge of God, we allow God to pour Himself into our lives not to be a container to hold God, but a channel from which God can flow through and touch the lives of others. Thus, if you abound in these things people will see the fruit that is born in your life.

But again, if you don't grow in the Lord, if you have eye trouble where your focus is on self rather than God, then you will be barren, those virtues will not flow from your life.

And by taking your eyes off of God, you lose sight of all He did for you and you will not be diligent to grow, to walk with Him.

Once we understand what we are like, wretched sinners, and then who Jesus is, a holy and righteous God who died for us, that should cause us to have a walk that is worthy of the high calling by which we have been called!

VERSES 10-11

Peter wants us to be sure that our calling and election is sure, that we are not just pretending to be saved!

That is so important, because you will have an eternity to reflect on the non-decision you have made for Christ!

But here is a problem for some Christians. They lack the assurance of their salvation because they are not good enough to be saved.

Let me say this. If our salvation was based upon our goodness, we all would be in trouble. Our salvation is based on the goodness of Jesus Christ and it is a grace gift to us. And if it is grace, then it is not of works or it would not be grace and God would owe us heaven!

Then how can we be sure that we are saved?

First of all, the Word of God gives us assurance of our salvation.

Jesus said in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

And John tells us in I John 5:13, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

Not only do we have God’s Word, but we can also look at, examine our own lives to see if we are growing for Peter tells us **“if you do these things.”**

What things?

What he just told us in II Peter 1:5-7, **“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”**

You see, we should be growing, maturing in the Lord, being conformed to His image as Paul tells us in Romans 8:29, **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”**

May we walk accordingly and not take our salvation lightly, it cost Christ His life to save us! And may we believe what the Word of God says to us instead of the lies of the Devil!

Now, Meyer reminds us that, *“There are two ways of entering a port. A ship may come in, waterlogged and crazy, just keep afloat by continual working at the pumps; or it may enter with every sail set, her pennon floating at the mast-head. The latter is what the apostle desires for himself and those who addresses. He desired that an entrance abundant should be ministered unto them.”*

He also wrote, *“Will your entrance into heaven be like that? Will you enter it, save so as by fire, or to receive a reward? Will you come unrecognized and unknown, or be welcomed by scores and hundreds to whom you have been the means of blessing, and who will wait you?”*

May we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and may the fruit of the Spirit be manifested in our lives! As William MacDonald reminds us, *“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.”*

VERSE 12

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“So I intend always to remind you about these things, although indeed you know them and are firm in the truth that [you] now [hold].”**

Notice that Peter has told them these things before, he has shared them with them, maybe they read Paul’s letters and I think they did as II Peter 3:16 tells us.

Some of you have been with me for over 25 years and we have been through the Bible almost twice now, and you have heard it all! I don't think I am telling you anything new, but I am reminding you of the things that you have already learned. You know these things!

I remember several years ago someone asked about what book we were studying, and this person was told it was such and such a book in the Bible, and this person said that they already heard a teaching on that book and they don't need to hear it again!

Well, I guess they knew better than Peter!

Peter is saying that he has taught them, and he will continue to teach them and remind of these things.

Why is it that people need to be reminded?

Because we forget things!

When I read this statistic, this research, it was a little discouraging, but I think that is why I write down so much when I go to retreats or listen to a teaching, so I can remember them.

Research shows that within an hour after hearing a message, a teaching, people will forget up to 90% of what they heard!

Thus, repetition is important. That is what God was teaching the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**"

But Israel forget the truths of God, they forgot the work of God, their memory was poor and thus, in Isaiah 17:10-11 we are told, **“Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, Therefore you will plant pleasant plants And set out foreign seedlings; In the day you will make your plant to grow, And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; But the harvest will be a heap of ruins In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.”**

Why is it we can remember a song we heard 20 or 30 years ago and sing the words to them and yet when it comes to the Word of God, our memory of God, the works of God, we can't remember?

I think it has to do with the time we put into it, the effort we put into it.

We need to spend time in God's Word and make those pathways in our brain an easy access to this information and not some off the road deserted area.

Think about athletes and the time they put in to perfect their sport. The thousands of golf balls a golfer will hit. The swings a batter will take each day. Some basketball players take 1,000 shots every day to perfect their shot.

Our spiritual lives are more important, may we not neglect these things but be diligent to grow in our knowledge of God through His Word!

VERSES 13-14

Why is it right for Peter to remind them of the things of God?

Peter knew his life was coming to an end as he sat in prison in Rome. In fact, his martyrdom could have been just weeks to months away and thus, he wanted to pass on to the people the things of God so that they can grow and mature in the faith!

Peter realized some of the believers became complacent in the faith, they were lethargic, so he says that he wanted “**to stir you up**” or DIEGEIRO, (dee-eg-i’-ro) in the Greek and the idea here is “*to arouse completely*” or “*to thoroughly awaken.*”

Any pastor who loves his people would have a passion like this, to stir his people up, to be spiritually alert.

Remember what Peter said in I Peter 5:8-9, “**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.**”

And Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5:14-17, “**Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**”

Both Peter and Paul are admonishing them to wake up, be spiritually alert and what they warned them back then, we need to take heed today and be alert because the enemy is prowling and the way to resist Him is in the faith!

Also, Peter is telling them that he is going to put off this tent of flesh and enter into a mansion that God has prepared for his Spirit and soul to dwell in.

In John 14:1-3 we are told of these mansions or bodies the Lord is preparing for us, “**Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**”

Also, Peter says that he is going to die just as the Lord showed him.

What does Peter mean that the Lord showed him how he was going to die?

In John 21:18-19, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, as Jesus restores Peter after Peter denied the Lord three times, we are told, **“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.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”**

Peter was going to be crucified and tradition tells us that he refused to be crucified like His Lord, he was not worthy, and thus, they crucified Peter upside down!

So Peter knew the time of his departure was soon, but that was not going to distract him from reminding these believers the things of God because he knew to be absent from this body was to be present with the Lord!

And listen to how Peter finishes up this section on his departure.

VERSE 15

Peter did not leave behind money, a few camels, some jewelry or even his fishing business.

Peter left behind the truths of God written down so that others can learn and be reminded.

What are you leaving behind?

You see, we make out wills to leave behind our physical wealth to those we like, but what are you leaving behind in a spiritual sense because that is what will last? What have you left for your children, your friends, even your enemies so they will not forget the Word and works of God?

The legacy of seeing your family walk with God, your friends, even your enemies, watching them grow in the Lord is more valuable than anything else we can leave behind!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this. He wrote,

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."

The church of Jesus Christ is always one generation away from extinction. If there were no dependable written revelation, we would have to depend on word-of-mouth tradition. If you have ever played the party game "Gossip," you know how a simple sentence can be radically changed when passed from one person to another! We do not depend on the traditions of dead men; we depend on the truth of the living Word. Men die, but the Word lives forever.

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.

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, p. 934

But really, how important is the Word of God? Peter is going to show us as we read on! But before he speaks of the Word of God, he will speak of what he experienced or saw on the Mount of Transfiguration and then he will speak about the Word of God!

VERSES 16-18

It is interesting how much we haven't changed from the people of Peter's day. Many, like today, see the Word of God, the Bible as a bunch of fables or myths. They don't believe God's Word is true.

Listen to how Hayden V. White describes the Enlightenment or Skepticism that began in 1725 and it continues on today. This is what he wrote,

The Enlightenment attitude of mind was complex and internally varied, but it can be characterized roughly as a dedication of human reason, science, and education as the best means of building a stable society for free men on earth.

This meant that the Enlightenment was inherently suspicious of religion, hostile to tradition, and resentful of any authority based on custom or faith alone.

Ultimately the Enlightenment was nothing if not secular in its orientation; it offered the first program in the history of mankind for the construction of a human community out of natural materials alone.

- Robert Anchor, *The Enlightenment Tradition*, p. ix

And many in the church have continued to use that kind of reasoning, worldly reasoning in what they do and what they teach in these churches!

Also, David Hume of Scotland had one of the greatest adverse effects regarding Biblical authority. Listen to what his views are and compare them to what we hear today from such groups as the Jesus Seminar who deny that Jesus said a majority of what is written in the Gospels, they deny His deity, His resurrection and many follow their flawed and dangerous thinking. And the Jesus Seminar from some twenty years ago, which was nothing more than a group of men who voted on what Jesus said and what He didn't say, continues on in the Emergent Church movement!

That is what David Hume believed.

He rejected the claim that Scripture is inspired or that the Bible is an authoritative revelation of God to humanity. He also denied the deity of Christ and rejected miracles as he sought to make theology the subject of empirical testing.

- Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 140

Now please understand that the Bible has been the most studied and scrutinized book in the world and it still stands as strong as it did almost 2,000 years ago!

Also, look at the Reformation and those who died trying to get the Bible out to the common people. Those who were martyred because they believed the Scriptures and not the doctrines of man!

Bush and Nettles tell us,

The Reformers believed Scripture to be God's Word written. It was trusted, not doubted. It was studied, not ignored. It was taken as the final authority with regard to those matters on which it spoke or made affirmations.

God had not revealed everything. The Bible did not expressly contain all the truth that could be known. But what the Bible did teach was believed to be completely trustworthy.

Truth in any other area would not contradict biblical truth. Starting from Scripture, one could find the true knowledge of reality.

- L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, p. 175

Now let's think about this for a minute. How do we know that a certain event happened?

By eyewitness accounts, people who saw the event and then testified of it or left a record behind of what they saw.

That is what Peter is doing. Peter says he, as well as others saw the power and majesty of Jesus!

And Peter's point goes back to the Mount of Transfiguration found in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:1-9 and Luke 9:28-36.

Thus, Peter, James and John were eyewitnesses of this event and of the resurrection of Jesus as well.

In fact, the Bible tells us that there were over 500 witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

In our court system today, you can convict a person with just 1 or 2 witnesses let alone over 500!

And you have to love Peter here at the Mount of Transfiguration. As Jesus, Moses and Elijah appear before them, Peter put Jesus on the same level with Moses and Elijah.

But God the Father said, **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** You see, it was not about Moses or Elijah, it is always about Jesus! It is not that Jesus is on the same level as the Law and the Prophets, which Moses and Elijah represented. He is even better because He is the beloved Son, and we are to listen to Him. You see, it is like comparing apples and oranges, they don't compare. *Jesus is God!*

And Peter is just recounting what transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration and what a memory it was.

For many Christians today they run to and fro after signs and wonders because they believe that is where the power is at, that is where they will grow.

They are into the experience and yet this experience that Peter saw did not transform his life! It was a passing experience even though he still remembers the glory of the Lord as He shined that day.

Then what is the point here? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 19

For those that doubt God's Word, Peter says that what he saw with his own eyes, Jesus in all of His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, was wonderful but it does not compare to the Word of God!

In other words, God's Word is more sure, it can be trusted more than what Peter saw with his own eyes on Mount Hermon in Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration!

Thus, experiences will come and go but God's Word will last forever. Experiences may pump us up for a time, but God's Word will transform our lives!

Now, when Peter speaks of the "**prophetic word**" he is not only speaking of prophecy or foretelling future events.

Yes, the Bible is over 25% prophetic in nature and some of these prophecies have already come to pass. No other religious book has prophecies, as does the Bible with 100% accuracy!

There are over 300 prophecies of Christ's first coming that have been fulfilled down to the tiniest detail. The chance of that coming to pass in any one man is beyond any mathematical possibility, it is impossible and yet they were all fulfilled in Christ!

Professor Peter Stoner has calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies of Jesus is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power). That number of silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Then mark one, blindfold yourself and find that silver dollar on the first try. Those are the odds.

Stoner says that if you consider 48 of the prophecies, the odds become one in 10 to the 157th power.

And there are over 500 prophecies related to His second coming – I think we can be assured – He is coming back – it is a done deal!

But Peter's point goes even farther, he is also speaking of forthtelling the things of God and thus, he is speaking of the entire Old Testament at this point. He is saying that the Old Testament is the inspired, infallible Word of God, it is even more sure than what he has seen with his own eyes! And we can continue that through the New Testament as well!

The phrase "**dark place**" in the Greek is a reference to "*the murky blackness of the fallen world.*" Make no mistake about it, it is a darkness of spiritual deception that can only be penetrated by the light of God's truth. And it is getting darker and darker out there, more deception than ever before.

Thus, with all the garbage that is out in this world, with all the darkness that seems to permeate this world, God's Word is a light that shines in our hearts first and then through us to touch the lives of others, to bring light to this dark world.

That means we need to cling to God's Word, hold onto it, apply it to our lives until Jesus returns and He will!

VERSES 20-21

I do realize that people, even Christians put down the Word of God. But that tells me that they are just plain foolish. Sorry, but true.

Listen to what David said in Psalm 138:2 about the Word of God and how God sees it. We are told, "**I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all your name.**"

In other words, the name of God is everything that He is. So if we can't trust the Word of God, then we can't trust God! Do you see how important this is for us! If His Word is not trustworthy, then neither is He! I hope you understand how important this is.

Now, the classic evangelical position with regard to the Scriptures is described with the phrase, “*verbal plenary inspiration.*”

What does this phrase mean?

Let me show you.

First of all, *Verbal* inspiration means that *every word* of Scripture is God-given.

The idea is that every single word in the Bible is there because God wanted it there, there are no exceptions.

Now keep in mind that this only applies to the original manuscripts not to subsequent copies and later translations.

And the word *Plenary* means that *all parts* of the Bible are divinely inspired and authoritative.

That is what we believe here at Calvary Chapel and I believe that is exactly what the Scriptures are saying!

Now it is true that people can take the Scriptures and twist them to say what they want. I’ve used this example before from Leviticus 13:40, which says, “. . . he is bald, but he is clean.”

Thus, we need to shave our heads to be clean before God!

No, that is not what the text is saying, but again, people can twist the Scriptures to make them say whatever they want and that is wrong. It is not beneficial, and it is dangerous. As true as that is, I don’t believe that is Peter’s point here.

In the Greek, the way it is structured, Peter is speaking of the Word of God, of prophecy, that it is not from man’s doing but God speaking through man.

In fact, if verse 20 is confusing, verse 21 I believe clears things up for us.

That phrase, “**as they were moved**” in the Greek speaks of being “*continually carried*” and Luke uses this word to describe how the wind blows a sailing ship across the waters, (Acts 27:15, 17).

Thus, as these men of God raised their sails you might say, as they submitted their lives to God, the Holy Spirit carried them along in the direction He wanted.

God was the writer and man was the instrument He wrote with. He didn’t change the character or styles of the individuals but just spoke through them.

As I close this evening may you desire to cultivate Christian character – to grow in the Lord!

Why do we need to do that?

So we know what we believe, so we know our Lord and because false teachers are here and the only way to defend yourself from their lies is to know the truth.

That is the only way you will be able to stand against them and we will deal with these false teachers and their destructive doctrines next time!

And I will close with these words from Warren Wiersbe who wrote,

The best defense against false teaching is true living. A church filled with growing Christians, vibrant in their faith, is not likely to fall prey to apostates with their counterfeit Christianity.

But this Christian living must be based on the authoritative Word of God. False teachers find it easy to seduce people who do not know their Bible but who are desirous of “experiences” with the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to build on subjective experience alone and ignore objective revelation.

Peter discussed Christian experience in the first half of 2 Peter 1, and in the last half he discussed the revelation we have in the Word of God. His purpose is to show the importance of knowing God's Word and relying on it completely.

The Christian who knows what he believes and why he believes it will rarely be seduced by the false teachers and their devious doctrines. . . .

Men die, but the Word lives. Experiences fade, but the Word remains. The world grows darker, but the prophetic light shines brighter.

The believer who builds his life on the Word of God and who looks for the coming of the Saviour is not likely to be led astray by false teachers. He will be taught by the Spirit and grounded on the sure Word of God.

Peter's message is, "Wake up - and remember!" A sleeping church is the devil's playground. It is while men slept that the enemy came in and sowed the tares (Matt 13:24 ff).

"Be alert!" is the Apostle's message. "Wake up and remember!"

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, pp. 933-934, 938