

Title: Don't Forget What You Know (Part 1)

Passage: 2 Peter 1:12

Theme: Believers Need to be Reminded of What They Know

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{{Read Passage}}

John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, upon leaving Scotland for Geneva during the rein of Mary I (B.M.) wrote a letter to "*His Brethren in Scotland,*" that is, Christ's brethren, the Church.

Among his parting words are these:

Dear brethren, if you look for a life to come, of necessity it is that you exercise yourselves in the book of the Lord your God. Let no day slip or want some comfort received from the mouth of God. Open your ears, and he will speak even pleasant things to your heart. Close not your eyes, but diligently let them behold what portion of substance is left to you within your Father's testament. Let your tongues learn to praise the gracious goodness of him, whose mere mercy has called you from darkness to life. Neither yet may you do this so quietly that you admit no witness. No, Brethren, you are ordained of God to rule your own houses in his true fear, and according to his word.

While these words were among his last to his brethren for a time, Knox would return to Scotland and live another dozen years or so.

I think of others who gave final words of exhortation as they died.

When Samuel Rutherford (another Scottish theologian) was on his deathbed, his last words were these: "Dear brethren, do all for Him. Pray for Christ. Preach for Christ. Do all for Christ: beware of men-pleasing. The chief shepherd will shortly appear."

The historian Lyle Dorsett, retells some of the closing declarations of the great evangelist D. L. Moody. *"The ailing preacher roused from sleep and in slow, measured words announced: "Earth recedes; Heaven opens for me."* Dorsett goes on to speak of various family members coming to Moody's bedside to receive final instructions about their role in the work after his departure. [cited by Helm, 203]

That is similar to what we have here in 2 Peter. Entire letter consists of his last will and testament.

The letter was his last. Peter was in his 60s, this at a time when t/avg. man didn't live to see 50.

Much like Paul who wrote in his last letter (2 Timothy) that t/time of his departure from this earth had come, Peter writes in v. 14 **"I know that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent."**

This particular passage before us – vv. 12-15 of chapter 1 – is what we could call an interlude.

It consists of a few brief thoughts that connect vv. 3-11 to vv. 16-21.

As such, it serves 3 main purposes:

- 1) It points back to what Peter has already written in 3-11.
- 2) It serves as a bridge to the body of the letter that begins in chapter 2 with Peter's denunciation of false prophets.
- 3) It sets up the entire letter as a last will and testament.

In antiquity there was a type of address, generally related to us in written form, known "a last testament" (or "testament").

Examples from the OT would be Jacob in Genesis 49 where he gathers his sons around him at his deathbed. He predicts what's coming for them, he exhorts and encourages them, he blesses them, he speaks of his impending death.

Joshua in the book that bears his name, chapt. 24 → where he calls all the leaders of Israel together before him & does the same before his death.

Some would say that Luke 22:14-29, Jesus' farewell discourse, has elements of a last testament (as well as John chapters 13-17).

And Paul in 2 Timothy chapt. 4 who gives his last instructions to his child in t/faith, Timothy, exhorting him to preach t/Word w/o compromise knowing that many would reject that. But continue on faithfully knowing that there is a crown of righteousness that awaits you.

That's much what we have here in 2 Peter chapter 2.

Douglas Moo: "Many scholars classify it as a 'testament' or at least think that it has many of the characteristics of a testament . . . a book or part of a book, in which a person makes a final speech from his or her deathbed. . . . Typical features of these testaments are: 1. The speaker knows (sometimes by prophecy) that he is about to die. 2. The speaker gathers around him his children or a similar audience. 3. The speaker often impresses on his audience the need for his hearers to remember his teaching as an example. 4. The speaker makes predictions about the future. 5. The speaker gives moral exhortations." [As cited by Paul Helm, 204]

Those are the sorts of things we see here in 2 Peter.

As far as vv. 12-15 are concerned, the key word is "reminder."

Don't Forget What You Know

That title may seem contradictory, after all, how can you forget what you know. If you know it, you know it. If you have forgotten it, you didn't know it, right?

We're talking about forgetfulness in the sense of neglect. Don't neglect that which you know to be true!

We need reminders, even of things we know.

It's easy for us to become dull; we get out of balance.

We're basically going to look at two ==>

I. Who Needs to be Reminded of the Truth? (12)

II. Why Do We Need to be Reminded of the Truth? (13-15)

Who and Why

As for the "who" we see that in verse 12

I. Who Needs to be Reminded of the Truth? (12)

First thing we see is ==>

A. Peter's Intention

Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you concerning these things . . .

Peter's Intention is one of reminder . . .

1. There are two words or phrases that relate to the context

THEREFORE, I will always be ready to remind you concerning THESE THINGS . . .

a. "Therefore" = conjunction $\delta\iota\omicron$ (saw it earlier in verse 10)

Of course, it's one of those words that works like a bridge that connects streams of thought, generally pointing backwards.

(1) Here it refers back to what we saw earlier in vv. 3-11

We spent 10 weeks in those 9 vv. (0.9 vv. per wk. for you statisticians).

There was a lot to cover in those 9 vv.

And since Peter is talking about reminders & since we haven't been there in a month let's take a brief look at that passage by way of review.

I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)

A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)

B. An Inheritance Gained Through a Knowledge of Christ (3)

C. An Inheritance Grounded in God's Call (3)

D. An Inheritance Guaranteed to Sanctify (4)

1. This gift includes precious and great promises (4)

a. Positively: We become partakers of the divine nature (4)

b. Negatively: We escape the world's corruption (4)

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Fruitfulness (5-9)

A. Seven Virtues of a Fruitful Life (5-7)

1. Moral Excellence (5)
2. Knowledge (5)
3. Self control (6)
4. Perseverance (6)
5. Godliness (6)
6. Brotherly kindness (7)
7. Love (7)

B. Staying Out of the Danger Zone (8-9)

- 1 A Positive Exhortation (v. 8)
2. A Negative Warning (v. 9)

III. Salvation's Surety: The Believer's Assurance (10-11)

A. Being Certain about Your Calling and Election

1. What does it mean? (v. 10)
2. How do we do it? (v. 10)
3. Why do we do it? (v. 10)
- 4.. What is the Goal? (v. 11)

THEREFORE, I will always be ready to remind you concerning THESE THINGS . . .

Word "therefore" looks back.

b. "These things"

The phrase "these things" does so, as well. But I think Peter also has in mind the basic, foundational truths of the faith.

If I'm right (I usually am) = "these sorts of things."

A. Peter's Intention

... I will always be ready to remind you ...

Awkward phrase, grammatically. Lit. "I will always be reminding you."

The ? comes up – "How can Peter be always reminding them (present tense) when he knows that he is soon going to die?" (cf. v. 14)

Answer is that Peter is writing from t/perspective of his readers. A letter such as this one, in the hands of his audience, represents Peter himself. Even after he is gone, t/letter will live on as a reminder to them to remain steadfast in the faith.

In a letter from that time period (roughly t/1st c.) one friend writes to another ==>

"Just as once we used to consume long hours in talk, and day gave out before our conversation was over, so now let the written word carry our silent voices to and fro, and let hand and paper play the tongue's role."

[P. Ovidius Naso, cited in Gene Green, 208]

IOW - We used to talk for hours face to face, but now we continue with pen and paper as if they were our minds and tongue.

I. Who Needs to be Reminded of the Truth? (12)

I think that question has been answered already . . .

But we see it clearly in ==>

B. Peter's Affirmation (2nd sub-point to verse 12)

. . . although you have come to know them and have been established in the truth which is present with you—

Even though you know these things, I'm going to keep on reminding you of them!

1. Is Peter being a nag? Of course not!!

a. For one thing, this was considered a polite form of address

It's like a teacher encouraging a student who is struggling by saying, *"Keep at it, I know that you know these things."*

b. Beyond that (as I said earlier) we need constant reminders of things we haven't forgotten but may be neglecting

Here in verse 12 – *"I'm always ready to remind you."*

Verse 13 - *"I want to stir you up by way of reminder."*

Verse 15 - *"After I'm gone I want you to be able to recall these things."*

3:1 - *"This is the second letter I've written to you in which I am stirring you up by way of reminder."*

3:2 - *"Remember the words spoken by the prophets."*

Very common ==>

PHI 3:1 . . . **To write the same things {again} is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.**

ROM 15:15 **But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,**
Jude 5 **Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.**

2. Noteworthy that Peter affirms two things in that regard

Two things that are true of every solid church (solid believers).

a. First ==>

... [they] **have come to know them**

b. Second ==>

... **and have been established in the truth . . .**

They have come to know the truth - $\alpha\delta\alpha$ || Perfect Active Participle.

They have been established in the truth – there it's a Perfect Passive Participle.

Similar to 1:3-4.

Word "established" relates to the world of architectural or engineering.

One structural engineer has written:

"Most people readily think of vertical stability and can quickly relate that to the need for securing solid foundations. Heavier loads require deeper, more solid foundations lest they become unstable. Also important is the horizontal stability of a structure. This is what ensures that a building doesn't blow over in a hurricane, or shake loose during a seismic (earthquake) event."

Buildings need secure foundations.

So do Christians. So does the church of JC.

What sort of things establish churches and Xns? New things? Novel things? Being on the "cutting edge" or church growth, or following a new and improved, scientifically-proven discipleship program?

Note that Peter is reminding them of foundational truths. The basics of Christian theology and living.

Acts 2:42 isn't a bad pattern to follow folks ==>

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Apostolic Doctrine / Expository Preaching

Fellowship

Prayer

What you win them with is what you win them to. Shallow messages, compromise, so-called worldly believers make shipwreck of faith.

I'm appalled at what's out there!! I really am. I've come to think that the American Church is worse than 1st century Corinth.

Just heard about another local pastor who was defrocked after a 2nd moral failure.

Last week I read about a Baptist pastor in another state that has been charged with the shooting death of a man in his church. The pastor was allegedly having an affair with t/man's wife & took him out. For good measure he even officiated at the man's funeral before he fled t/state.

What's happening in the pulpit reflects what's happening in t/pew and vice-versa.

This is why I say so often that the Evangelical Church today is largely unregenerate.

It's about truth. About knowing it; living it; being reminded of it over and over again.

In fact, t/reminders are the means by which we are being established.

"He calls that the present truth, into the possession of which they had already entered by a sure faith. He, then, commends their faith, in order that they might remain fixed in it more firmly." [Calvin]

A sure faith. Firmly fixed. Standing strong in the grace of X.

Preview ==>

II. Why Do We Need to be Reminded of the Truth? (13-15)

A. It Fuels Our Passion for the Supremacy of Christ (13)

Supremacy of Christ brings us back to the Gospel.

What's the Gospel? Word is used nearly 100 x in NT. εὐαγγέλιον (εὖ = good; ἀγγέλιον = message).

Certainly there's a sense in which all of the Bible is Gospel. BTIM you can find Gospel in every book of the Bible.

Specifically, t/Gospel answers t/question ==>

"How can a sinful man who is destined for God's wrath be forgiven and restored to peace with God so that he may worship and enjoy him forever?" (supremacy of X)

What's the answer? It is only thru t/redemption provided by God in JC. I recognize my sinful condition; I agree w/God that I am sinful, separated from Him, deserving of his condemnation due his holiness. By his grace I see JC, Himself God, t/2d person of t/Trinity, who came to earth to live & die for me. I turn from my sin & trust in JC as my Lord and my Savior. I am B.A. T/Father placed my sin on a perfect, sinless X; T/father imputes or credits the righteousness of X to me.

That's a truth that's not only relevant to the moment we believed it, but it continues to sing peace and joy to our hearts.

An anonymous Puritan wrote of that many years ago. I shared this back when we were in 1 Peter (relates to 2:24). But I see it as a very relevant way to close this morning.

O Lord, No day of my life has passed that has not proved me guilty in Your sight.

Prayers have been uttered from a prayerless heart;
Praise has been often praiseless [noise]
My best services are filthy rags.

Blessed Jesus, let me find a [shelter] in Your appeasing wounds.
Though my sins rise to heaven, Your merits soar above them;
Though unrighteousness weights me down to hell,
Your righteousness exalts me to Your throne.

All things in me call for my rejection,
All things in You plead my acceptance.

I appeal from the throne of perfect justice to Your throne of perfect grace.

Grant me to hear Your voice assuring me:

that by Your stripes I am healed
that You were bruised for my iniquities
that You have been made sin for me
that I might be righteous in You
that my grievous sins, my manifold sins, are all forgiven, buried
in the ocean of Your concealing blood.

I am guilty, but pardoned; lost, but saved; wandering, but found; sinning,
but cleansed.

Give me perpetual broken-heartedness.
Keep me always clinging to Your cross.
Flood me every moment with descending grace,
Open to me the springs of divine knowledge,

sparkling like crystal
flowing clear and unsullied
through my wilderness of life."

[cited in Richard Mayhue, The Healing Promise 260]