

II PETER

The Value of Being Reminded

January 05, 2014

- I. Be holy in all your behavior just as God is holy
 - A. II Peter 1:12-19 . . . Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. [13] I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, [14] knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. [15] And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind. [16] For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. [17] For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— [18] and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. [19] So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.
 - B. Pray
- II. The value of being reminded about spiritual matters
 - A. II Peter 1:12 . . . Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.
 1. Therefore – because these seven spiritual qualities are so essential to our abundant entrance into God’s eternal kingdom, Peter says he is always ready to remind us of their importance, even though we already know about them and their importance to us personally, and even though we have heard about this truth from the beginning of our faith in Christ and, as a result, have made worthy efforts to add them to our faith.
 - a. You see, what we know is not what matters the most. And though what we do is important, it is only matters if we do according to what we know – or as I have said so often, if we live up to what we know. Therefore, Peter is not reminding us

of these great truths because we don't know them but should, or because we are failing to live up to the truth we know.

- b. Peter is reminding us of these important truths because we are prone to lose focus, or take some steps backwards, or settle in to where we are spiritually because we have grown tired of the battle or because we think we have made sufficient progress toward being holy in all our behavior as God is holy. And when such things as these occur in the Christian's life, it inevitably leads to spiritual loss – such as loss of zeal for righteousness, tolerance of certain sins, distance from God, turning grace into license, and focusing on Christian service while neglecting holiness of life.
 - c. Peter had several sad experiences with losing focus and taking a step or two backwards. And based on what he became as a servant of Christ, I believe he looked back at those moments with a broken heart and the wish he had been more careful and vigilant.
 - (1) For example, Peter knew what it was to think he was strong enough to resist temptation and avoid failing God. Yet in spite of what Peter thought himself to be, in the moments of testing and trial following Jesus' arrest, he denied knowing the One he had pledged not to fail.
 - (2) Now I suspect it was Peter's personal experiences with failure, coupled with Jesus' words *that once he had turned again he was to strengthen his brothers*, that motivated him to repeatedly remind us of these vitally important truths.
 - d. And like Peter with us, we are wise to repeatedly remind each other of the truths so necessary to growing in and faithfully living a godly life to the end of our days.
2. Established in the truth – the essence of this statement is that the reader's of this letter have been taught the truth – be it through word or letter – and have made serious, life-affecting choices to repent, turn from their old life, and pursue living a godly life according to the truth. It is in this sense that they have been established in the truth. And in this same way, this is how we get established in the truth.
- a. Paul speaks of this kind of “establishing” in Romans 6:17-18 . . . But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to

which you were committed, [18] and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

- b. Now what is so important about being established in the truth?
 - (1) First, the truth is the truth, and anything other than the truth may sound appealing or offer experiences the truth doesn't offer, but only the truth sets us free. Therefore, being established in the truth transforms us and brings us into the abundant life – both now and throughout eternity.
 - (2) Second, the truth is the only solid, immovable rock to which we can hook our anchor. Anything other than the truth is sinking sand or movable objects. Anything other than the truth may be the perception of reality, but it is not reality itself. Therefore, without being established in the truth, we have no anchor to hold us fast when novel teachings, new theologies, so-called spiritual experiences, new models for doing church, outwardly driven worship, or the rising of old fleshly desires come along.
 3. The truth I want to convey about verse 12 is that regardless of the level of your Christian maturity and spiritual strength, you are not safe from failure or immune to falling until you reach Heaven's shore and enter into God's eternal rest. Therefore, we ought to work together as a body of believers to keep each other reminded of essential truths for godly living with the purpose of helping each other remain established in the truth.
 - a. Remember – what you feed on (*listen to, read, watch, ponder, pray about, talk about*) you become. What you review, you remember. What you remember, you can call to mind whenever needed.
 - b. Strength in any area comes from regular exercise. Reminding each other is a form of exercise for both the one reminding and the one being reminded.
 4. May we follow Peter's example and help each other stay focused for the long haul, because our flesh, the devil, and the world are constantly probing for weakness in our armor and daily tempting us to return to old ways.
- B. II Peter 1:13-15 . . . I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, [14] knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus

Christ has made clear to me. [15] And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

1. I understand that these three verses are a continuation of Peter's explanation about reminding us of essential truths for the sake of living a godly life to the end of our days. However, I want to use these verses to speak for a few minutes about the Christian's view of life in light of the certainty of death.
2. Peter knew, for many years, that he would die a horrible and painful death (John 21:18-19). And though it seems that he did not know specifics, he never sought to avoid or stall the inevitable. Instead, Peter speaks as one who embraces death, not just as an inevitable reality, but as the only way to shed his temporary housing and enter into God's eternal kingdom.
 - a. Paul speaks about this in II Corinthians 5:1-2 . . . For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.
 - b. The writer of Hebrews talks about this same subject when talking about Abraham in Hebrews 11:9-10 . . . By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; [10] for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
3. So what is the Christian's view of life in light of the certainty of death? And what is our view of death to be?
 - a. Today, we are a bit handicapped in two ways when it comes to a Christian view of life and death.
 - (1) You see, we have been raised during a time when the most prized treasure of salvation is freedom from hell rather than Jesus Christ, reconciliation to God, and a transformed life. And this is our first handicap.
 - (2) Our second handicap is being raised in a land where wealth is so common and life is so good that even if we can imagine a better place, only those enduring the most adverse circumstances want to leave.
 - b. However, these two handicaps haven't always been available to induce Christians to an uncommon view of life and death.
 - (1) Down through the ages, Christians have commonly seen life's main purpose to be that of providing the opportunity

to be restored to a right relationship with God, to be transformed to the image of Christ, and to enjoy fellowship with God as much as possible in this life.

(2) Though Christians understand their body is important to life here on earth, they see it is a temporary home for the soul – which is why they often refer to their body as a tent or temporary dwelling. And because it is temporary, the Christian is looking for a permanent body or dwelling, and that is only gained when we pass from this life to God's eternal kingdom.

(3) And though life has many wonderful and varied people, circumstances, and experiences, the Christian joins all nature in groaning for release from this body for it ties us to sin and sin's corrupting forces (Romans 8:18-25). In other words, death is not a loss, but the culmination of all the Christian has looked forward to from the point of repentance and salvation.

4. What is your view of death? As you treasure God above all else, and as you grow to love Him more than anyone or anything else, and as you become more and more intimate with Him, death becomes your longed-for passageway into God's eternal kingdom and the door to your true home. Truly, it is only when this building is torn down and this body dies that we can walk through the door of our eternal dwelling and gain a new body capable of things we cannot imagine and free of things that not only bind us to earth, but to sin and death.

C. II Peter 1:16-18 . . . For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. [17] For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— [18] and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

1. Notice the "WE" at the beginning and end of verse 16, and its use two more times in verse 18. This "WE" represents a unity of truth that Peter and his fellow disciples were proclaiming, defending, and protecting. Now the result of proclaiming, defending, and protecting this unity of truth is that within the Church there was a unity of message and a unity of life.

2. Paul affirms this unity of message and life in Ephesians 4:3-6 when he said we are to diligently preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.
3. From the disciples until the time of Martin Luther, the church universal proclaimed, defended, and protected a unified truth and a unified life.
 - a. Following the time of Martin Luther, the Body of Christ in the West lost its means and its will for protecting and defending the unity of the faith. The result is that now there are many lights (*theologies, doctrines, denominations*) shining different degrees of brightness and even different colors.
 - b. Though many claim this is good, it leaves the unbeliever uncertain as to the right way, and it leaves the believer free to pick and choose the light he wants to follow – which all too often is decided on the basis of what is easier and most satisfying rather than what is God pleasing and most transforming.
4. Therefore, it seems to me that the unity we have lost has come at a significant cost to the spiritual health of the universal body of Christ.
5. Finally, Peter adds his personal experience as additional support for the truth he is proclaiming, for he was among those who were on the Mountain when Jesus was transfigured, and Moses and Elijah joined them. The point I want to make clear here is that Peter used two means to authenticate his gospel:
 - a. First, a unified message and life, beginning with Jesus, who passed it on to the disciples, and who in turn passed it on to the Church.
 - b. Second, a supernatural personal experience with Jesus Christ that was shared by others of like mind and heart.
6. When we are speaking to others of our faith in Christ and in support of the Christian life, we ought to speak of the long-standing truths handed down from the disciples to us today, and we ought to add support to those truths by speaking of personal experiences with God that are common to Christians around the world.

III. Conclusion

- A. II Peter 1:19 . . . So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.
 - 1. Peter concludes this portion of his letter with an exclamation that makes way for an exhortation.
 - 2. Peter's exclamation is that his two authentications for the gospel he is preaching are sufficient reason for us to pay close attention to his message and life, from this day forward and until we pass from this life into the next.
- B. May we, as born again Christians, do exactly what Peter is exhorting us to do.