

2Peter 1:12-16

Know the Truth; Never Stop Repeating It

To set the context for today's study it is helpful to look ahead to the second chapter to see where Peter is going with this message.

2Peter 2:1-2, *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”*

In First Peter, he was warning the church to prepare them for times of persecution that were coming. The focus of Second Peter is to warn the church that the enemy, who was not successful in destroying them with persecution, would try to destroy them by sending false teaching.

And in verse two he predicted that many would follow their destructive teaching.

So, in Second Peter, he is preparing the church to be protected against false teaching.

We've all heard the analogy that the best way to be able to detect a fake \$100 bill is by getting to know really well all the details and features of a genuine \$100 bill. Then when a fake comes along you can spot it immediately.

Con artists, wolves in sheep's clothing, and false teachers find it easy to deceive people who don't know the truth, because they don't know the difference between what the Bible actually says, and what these deceivers say.

The Christian who knows the Jesus of their Bible well will rarely be deceived.

2Peter 1:12, *“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.”*

This verse begins with the words, “For this reason...” So, we now need to go back and look at the preceding verses to see what He is referring to.

It really is referring to all that we have studied so far, but to quickly recap, look at verse 8.

2Peter 1:8-10, *“For if these things are yours and abound, [meaning, if you are partaking of the divine nature (vs. 4)—tapping into the indwelling life of Jesus, and every time you have a need, turning to Him and trusting Him to have a spiritual app for meeting that need. So that the characteristics of His life (vs. 5) are abounding in you (you are using all the apps He makes available.)]*

“...*you will be neither barren* [your life won’t be useless or wasted] *nor unfruitful* [your life will be a great blessing to others and bring much glory to God] *in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. [Meaning these things become reality in our life as we get to know Jesus really well.]

“...¹⁰ *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure* [prove to yourself that you’ve got the real thing—that you truly have the life of Christ in you], *for if you do these things* [if you, through your knowledge of Christ are applying everything He makes available to you] *you will never stumble* [meaning never fall defeated and destroyed in battle];¹¹ *for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly* [a hero’s welcome] *into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

In other words, through getting to know Jesus really well there are tremendous benefits, 1) your life will have great purpose, 2) you will be a great blessing to others and bring glory to God, 3) you will never fall destroyed in battle, 4) you will have great reward awaiting you in the kingdom to come.

And, by really knowing the Lord well, you will not be deceived by false teachers.

2Peter 1:12, “*For this reason* [because really getting to know Jesus as good as you can is so vital to your success] *I will not be negligent* [meaning he will be diligent, constant, never ceasing] *to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.*”

Peter acknowledges that they already know and are established in these truths, they have this stuff down and are solid in it—he is not teaching them anything new.

Nevertheless, Peter is committed to reminding the believers, over and over again, of the basic facts and doctrines of their faith, so that they may be successful.

You get to know a road like the back of your hand by driving over it many times.

It is through frequently getting together and spending lots of time together that close relationships are forged. Repetition is key to getting to know anything well, whether it is learning a song, studying for an exam, or building a marriage that will last a lifetime.

This is why in building our relationship with Christ repetition is one of the keys to success.

Daily spending time enjoying the scriptures, every week meeting together with other believers for corporate worship; frequently sharing in communion to remind yourselves of His great love; and year after year, reading through the Bible again and again.

We do these things to always **remind** ourselves of glorious, life-giving truths.

Philippians 3:1, “...For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.”
Truth matters!

To neglect these things is dangerous. To neglect the habit of repeated reading, fellowship and worship is dangerous.

2Peter 1:13-14, “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.”

It is right...to stir you up by reminding you [of these truths].

Like stirring up the hot coals in a fire that is beginning to grow dim, so that it leaps back to life again, meaning to stir up your spiritual passion, to stir up desire and courage and motivation.

We do this when we remind one another of those same glorious truths that caused us to grow in the faith in the first place.

What does Peter mean when he says, “As long as I am in this tent”? In the New Testament writing it was common to refer to our body as our tent. So, he means, “As long as I am in this body—or as long as I am alive, it is right for me to stir you up.

Peter is using pilgrim terminology, like he did in his first letter. Pilgrims, were travelers who were far from home, and they stayed in temporary residences.

Or like soldiers out on a mission, they would sleep in tents while they were away from home.

Verse 14 says, “...knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.”

Peter says that he must soon leave his body, meaning he must soon die, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

John 21:18-19, which took place following the death and resurrection of Jesus, just shortly before he ascended back to heaven.

Jesus was speaking to Peter and He said, “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 [referring to crucifixion], 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. [Implying that Peter would die for the sake of the Gospel.] And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

History tells us that Peter was put to death by crucifixion.

Remember back in Acts 12, when Peter was still a very young man, he was put in prison Herod, and was awaiting the death sentence for his faith in Christ.

Acts 12:6 says that the night before his scheduled execution, “Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers.”

Some believe it was because he believed Jesus’ prophecy, saying that he would not die until he was old. Because he believed prophecy, he could sleep, knowing that it wasn’t yet his time to die.

But now, in Second Peter, again, because he believes God’s word of prophecy, Peter realizes that he is getting older, and his time to die of crucifixion could come any time.

And yet he speaks of his looming death in this beautiful way, “*I must soon put off my tent,*” implying, “my mission is almost over, it’s time to go home.”

He seems to be fearless, and there is no hint of regret or of shrinking back, or of clinging to this life. He was not attached to this world, nor was he attached to his body—this mortal life.

Look at how Peter’s ministry colleague, Paul, spoke of death in **2Corinthians 5:1, 4**, “*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent [both the word house, and the word tent refer to our body], is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house [meaning a body] not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*”

The meaning of this is that when we put off this tent, (when this body dies), it is no big deal, we go to a better place and we get a better body.

This body is a temporary tent to live in on this mission, but our next body is a building in comparison, much superior to a tent, and it is permanent.

For the child of God, the best is always ahead.

I love the passion and attitude of Peter here, the persecution against the church that, in his first letter, he had prophesied would come, has come. He knows that at any time he could be arrested and put to death, but where is his focus?

Verse 13, “*Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent [as long as I am alive], to stir you up by reminding you,*” of the truths of our faith.

Peter firmly believed the truth is worth dying for.

2Peter 1:15, “*Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease [better translated, after my departure].*”

Here Peter is promising that he will be diligent to make sure that the believers will have a written reminder of these things that he has taught them when he was alive.

He has already written First Peter, and now Second Peter, but also, it is widely believed that Peter is referring specifically here to his plans to write the Gospel of Mark.

John Mark was a ministry partner of Peter's, and it is believed that they worked together to write the Gospel of Mark.

The content is believed to be Peter's teaching and over the years Mark is thought to have taken notes and was possibly asked by Peter to organize them and to get copies of the notes to the churches.

Peter knew he was soon going to die, and it was important to the Holy Spirit, who inspired this writing, that the believers he had taught would always have a reminder of the truths of the gospel.

Men die, but the word of God stands forever. The church was not built on Peter, but on Jesus Christ. The church did not need Peter, but they needed the word of God.

***1Peter 1:22-25**, "...you have purified your souls in obeying the truth ... ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, ²⁵ but the word of the LORD endures forever."*

Peter knew he was soon going to die, and he knew that false teachers would secretly come among them and bring destructive heresies, but God's answer to this need was not to send them another man, like Peter, but to give them the written word of God to ensure that they always have a reminder of these truths.

***2Peter 1:16**, "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."*

Up to now Peter has been emphasizing the importance of repeating the truth of God's word to the believers.

Fables are fictitious myths, they are invented stories that have no credibility, they are not true.

Peter emphatically declares that they did not use cunningly devised fables—that is the way Satan works.

In the very beginning, Satan used cunning to undermine the word of God and to deceive Eve, ***Genesis 3:1**, "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

***Daniel 8:25**, speaking prophetically of the Antichrist, says, "Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity [or when they feel secure and at peace] ..."*

We are living in a day of so much deception, and yet many believers wonder how big of a deal is the truth?

But the truth matters. This letter of Second Peter is written to prepare and protect the church from the deception of false teachers and the primary defense is to get to know the truth really well, repeat it often, and don't follow cunningly devised stories—that is what Satan uses to bring people into bondage and destruction.

We need to be like the people of Berea, *Acts 17:11*, “...they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

Not just when hearing people teach spiritual things, but when you are listening to the news—truth matters, and truth sets you free. But lies will deceive you and bring you into bondage.

When listening to the news, don't be gullible, recognize that we are living in the last days when lies and deception are everywhere, and search to find the truth—ask yourself, is this true?

Now in verse 16 Peter is addressing a specific doctrine or teaching of the scriptures that the apostles had taught the churches, which being challenged by false teachers.

2Peter 1:16, “*For we [Peter and the other apostles] did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming [the Greek word is Parousia, meaning the second coming, (Gene Green, p. 219)] of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*”

The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, is an expression that is used often in the New Testament to describe the return of Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation, to bring judgment upon the nations of the world.

Matthew 24:30, “...and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Mark 13:24-26, “*But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*” (Also, Mat. 24:30, etc.)

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