

2 Peter 1:12-15 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*. I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

Why is it that we need to be reminded of things in life so many times? Why is it that the garbage is one of those items which constantly requires such reminders, at least in our family? 'Drew, tomorrow's garbage day, don't forget to take it out tonight. (1 hour later) ... Drew, don't forget that the garbage has to go out tonight.'

It's when my wife is tying it up and taking it out of the can that I know that she didn't mean to take it out later that night, but that she wants it out now. And so I jump up and say, 'I was just coming to get it.'

We constantly need to be reminded to take action and to keep our focus on things that we sometimes take for granted. The garbage is one of those things in my life that I'm fully aware exists, and yet unless I'm sometimes pushed I'll let it pile up. I'll put it out of my mind.

Often times we'll need to be reminded of those things that we consider difficult or not very attractive, unlike those things that we can't seem to live without. How many times do we have to be reminded to get dessert after dinner? How many times do we have to be reminded to tune into our favorite T.V. show?

In the spiritual realm there seems to be a parallel. How many times do we need to be reminded to trust God when life is difficult? How many times do we need to be reminded of His love for us when the world hates us? How many times do we need to be reminded of the importance of walking faithfully after our God when it's just much easier to walk after the flesh?

It's not as though we are ignorant of these things, but because there is effort involved that sometimes we're not willing to put forward

we need a loving nudge and a reminder periodically to ensure that we keep our focus and stay on track.

And this is what Peter is doing in our text this morning. Up to this point through verses 1-3, he has declared that we have received the exact same faith as he has by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. He has reminded us that it is the grace of God we must seek and live in. He has reminded us of God's power which He makes available for every aspect of life.

In verses 4-7 he reminds us that we have escaped the corruption in this world by lust and that the Spirit of God desires to do a work in our lives, as we submit to Him, that shows itself with a life that shines for Christ.

In fact, he reminds us in verses 8-11 that if we are faithful to seek His grace and walk in His ways we will be blessed with lives full of fruit in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereas if we walk according to our own ways we show how we are walking with blinders on resulting in a forgetfulness of the cleansing we've received in Christ.

But as we are diligent, which means putting forth the effort to earnestly and faithfully walk in His ways to glorify our Savior, then we will live lives where we will not stumble and fall headlong because He will be the One we are holding on to knowing that at the end of our journey we will hear those words from our Lord, "well done good and faithful servant."

Because life can be hard at times and because we have a tendency to choose the path of least resistance we need reminders to stay true to the straight and narrow path which keeps us on course to follow our Lord as He leads us and guides us. And this is precisely why Peter continues the way he does.

2PE 1:12-15 "So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."

Peter knew first-hand what it was to have a lapse in memory, if we can be that kind. It was Peter who was reminded by Jesus Christ

Himself that he would deny our Lord three times after Christ's arrest.

And it would be Jesus Christ after His resurrection where He reminds Peter three times of his responsibility to feed our Lord's sheep and follow after the great Shepherd. It would be the apostle Paul who would remind Peter that salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ Jesus.

GAL 2:11-16 "When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs. "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

Did Peter somehow forget that we are not justified by faith in Christ alone? I don't think so. In fact, Peter was one of the first Jewish believers to bear witness to the grace extended to the Gentiles as they believed on Christ and received salvation.

ACT 11:1-4 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:...

He then went on to describe the vision he had of all the living creatures which were lowered down from heaven by a sheet three times and that he was instructed to kill them and eat. His reply was, no way Lord, most of these animals are unclean. But God insisted and said, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

The vision was to remind Peter that Christ came to claim even the unclean Gentile dogs whom the Jews looked down upon. It was right after that vision that he was led to a number of Gentiles who wanted to know how to be saved. Here's what Peter said.

ACT 11:15-18 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

Way to go Peter! And yet this same Peter needed to be reminded by Paul that the law and influential Jews played no part in separating from the Gentiles and fellowshiping with them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peter knows what he's talking about when he says, "So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have." (2PE 1:12)

What's interesting about this section in 2Peter is that this is toward the end of Peter's life, and yet he isn't giving them new and mysterious revelations. He's giving them the same truth he knew when he walked with Christ. He's giving them the same truth which would enable them to walk in a way that pleased the Savior.

And yet how often, even today, Christians are looking for some new and improved and exciting truth so that they can walk with the Lord. Don't ever forget that "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." (2PE 1:3)

How do we improve on the truth? How do we improve on the revealed word of God? How do we improve on just being faithful to that truth as we simply trust and obey? Do we need to be reminded? I don't think there will ever be a time in our lives when a reminder about these things will ever be inappropriate.

And yet, this kind of reminder seems to be drowned out these days by people wanting to find this new and improved way of seeking God. It's like watching humming birds scurry from one flower to the other diligently seeking the best nectar, never seeming to find that one flower which supplies all its needs.

I've seen people search high and low as they go from one experience to another, one Christian gathering to another, one pep rally to another, hoping that something will stick and motivate them to live godly lives as they think that in them there is a new truth that will help them.

Am I against experience or the myriad of Christian groups and motivational meetings to help us grow in Christ? Not necessarily. But what is so sad is that with all the time and effort that is often spent in this quest for drawing close to Christ it is often missed that the best place to grow and bloom is the one place God has planted a Christian, and that's in a local body of believers as He encourages them to be committed, as the word of God is taught and where fellow brothers and sisters in Christ can encourage each other to love and good deeds.

The truth can be very simple and yet profound and we need to be constantly reminded of this. You see, the time is short. We are only given so many days here on this planet to be the ambassador Christ has called us to be. And with each day that we draw breath we must be vigilant in faithfully representing our Lord.

Not even the apostle Paul believed he was above being reminded and encouraged to stay faithful in pressing forward with Christ every day of his life.

PHI 3:13-14 "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

And yet in his desire to be with Jesus Paul understood that there is so much work to be done here and that the truth of God's word must continually be proclaimed and taught so that every believer is grounded in this truth and that they would never forget the simple gospel and the responsibility that goes along with teaching it and living in it.

1CO 15:1 "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand."

Why would he want to remind them of the gospel they already received? They were already saved. And yet Paul spends the next 53 verses of 1Corinthians 15 reminding them of the gospel as he

describes Christ's redemptive work and His resurrection from the dead and how Christ's death and resurrection secures our victory over the grave. The last four verses of 1Corinthians 15 tells us why we need such a reminder of the gospel time and time again.

1CO 15:55-58 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

This is Peter's reminder for the church as well. But as we'll see later in this second letter he is also going to remind us that there are those out there who want to try and complicate and confuse the issue by bringing false teachings which create an environment for that humming bird phenomenon which allows for things other than the simple, plain teaching of the word of God, along with simple faith in His faithfulness.

2PE 1:13-15 "I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."

Peter knew he was on his way out, partly because of the promise Jesus gave to him many years before, but probably also through the circumstances in his life which would point to our Lord's prophecy.

JOH 21:18-19 "I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

By the way, it's interesting to note that Peter, like us, probably was a bit disturbed with this news of his death and thought maybe he was being picked on. In fact, the one who records these words is the one Peter brings into question.

JOH 21:20-22 "Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to

betray you?") When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."

You ever felt that way? It seems God chooses a hard path for you and we then have a tendency to look at others and ask the question, 'Lord, why is it that person seems to have an easier time in his service for you, while I'm over here knocking my brains out with little results and yet he seems to be blessed in whatever he does with little effort?'

And God gently reminds us, "what is that to you? You must follow me." I don't like that reminder. But reminded we must be.

Peter was living at a time when Nero was to bring very harsh persecution on the church and it is traditionally believed that it was Nero who put Peter to death by hanging him on a cross upside down.

Peter may have seen the writing on the wall at this point in his life, and yet notice the way he approaches this reality. "I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,..." (verse 13)

This image of a tent is something for which Peter would have had very strong feelings since his forefather Abraham spent his entire life traveling around the land of Canaan in a tent. And yet Abraham was also given a promise that this life was not ultimately going to be the place where we should put down roots.

HEB 11:9-10 "By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so too Peter was following in the footsteps of a man of faith as we are all called to do and that's part of what Peter is reminding us of.

This imagery of a tent is also that which the apostle Paul also uses.

2CO 5:1,4 "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.... For while we are in this tent,

we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life."

The idea of a tent carries with it the transient state we are in as it relates to our eternal home. This world is not our home and this fleshly, mortal body is not our final state. In fact, the way Paul puts it in 2CO 5:1 is "the earthly tent we live in.", or as the NASB puts it, "the earthly tent which is our house."

The house you and I presently live in is not that which is ultimately going to be a part of our eternal existence. This body, this tent, will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye at the appearing of our Lord and it will be raised incorruptible and immortal. It will be a physical glorified body like our Lord Jesus'.

It's not as though Peter is down-playing his physical existence, or the life he has in his physical body. He's simply making a contrast that despite the fact that his physical body will be put to death it's not the end, it's only the beginning.

And yet he understands that as long as he has breath he will desire to be used of God in reminding his readers of these truths until he departs. In other words, right up to the end he is going to be a servant and a light to the world to show that he belongs to his Lord and Master and Savior, Jesus Christ.

What's interesting about his description of being a servant until his departure is that the word departure is the Greek word exodus. Where have we heard that word before? You bet, Israel's exodus from the land of bondage and slavery. But their exodus was not simply the end of bondage, it was the beginning of a new life with the promise of entering into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Peter fully understands that he is not simply ceasing from striving in this life, but he is fully aware that he will simply leave one land to enter a new one where he will be in the presence of the very same Savior who chose him and used him to feed and encourage the sheep for whom Christ died and rose again that we might all have this hope.

This is the exact same Greek word used by Luke when describing the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. That's when our Lord took Peter, James and John up to the mountain to pray and before their eyes our Lord took on a glory which was blinding and there were two other people with Jesus.

LUK 9:30-31 "Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem."

This word departure which Moses and Elijah discuss with Jesus is the Greek word exodus. In fact, it's interesting that there is this discussion concerning the exodus of Jesus where He will shortly leave this world to go back to the Father's right hand because both Moses and Elijah had an exodus which were entirely different.

You'll remember that Elijah never saw death, but was taken up to meet the Lord without having to die and yet Moses died in the wilderness without seeing the promised land and yet both had an exodus which took them into the very presence of Christ and now here they are talking with their Lord about His upcoming exodus which would result in the hope of our exodus from this present cursed earth one day.

There are those who teach that when we die the lights go out along with all consciousness and that the grave has the final victory. That's simply not the case. Death is merely our initiation into life realized. There is also no soul sleep where we wait in the tomb for our Lord to come get us at the end. The moment we leave this body we are in the presence of Jesus.

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Jesus, on the day he died on the cross told the repentant thief, 'today, you will be with Me in Paradise.'

Did Peter fear death? No. Not in the sense that he had any uncertainty of where he was going. But, being a human being I'm certain there was some apprehension as the enemies of the cross painfully ended his life and yet even there, as many martyrs have shown through the ages, God's grace is sufficient in those times.

But Peter is not as concerned about his certain death as much as he is about leaving us with the truth to remind us of what we are to be doing up until we have our own exodus from this body.

2PE 1:15 "And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."

These things which we are to remember are certainly the testimony of our Lord's death and resurrection to which Peter has already alluded to, but he wants them to know that this truth has not been fabricated like the lies the false teachers are promoting. He is not placing his eternal destiny on fables.

2PE 1:16 "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

What Peter is referring to here is what we just read in Luke's gospel a few moments ago. Unlike the false teachers who are making it up as they go, Peter is assuring us that he literally saw the results of life beyond the grave. He not only saw both Moses and Elijah, he saw the glory of Christ without the restriction of this world.

Again, this is testimony to what God had said to Moses when he was alive on this earth.

EXO 3:6 "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

What He was saying to Moses is that these people are still alive even though their bodies, their tents, have been in the grave for years. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. You and I have this hope set before us, but we need to be reminded to live as though we have this hope today.

The truth is we don't need to reinvent the gospel or to distort the truth or to think we need some additional truth to add to what we already have in our possession, which is the very word of God. We have all that we need "for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." (verse 3)

Let's live the life and show forth a godliness which only God can give through the power of the Holy Spirit as we walk in the truth day by day. Remember what David rejoiced in.

PSA 119:105,130 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.... The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."

Let's not complicate the simple truth, let's walk in it by faith and rejoice in the One who gives it; the same one we know to be the living Word Who became flesh to take away our sin and bring us into an eternal relationship with Himself. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory!

