

Remember the Truth

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[0 : 00] This evening, we're continuing with this message as part two of a four-part series as we walk through Peter's second letter to the churches in Asia Minor.

In 2 Peter, Peter is emphasizing recalling and remembering the great truths of the Christian faith. Tonight, he wants us to remember the source of our truth, that we have a bedrock foundation upon which to base the truth and the verities of all Scripture.

I just finished reading a book, and it's called Listen Up, and it's seven ways to listen to a sermon. Now, you might think, I don't need any instruction on how to listen to a sermon.

That might be like a book saying seven ways as to how to watch TV. But Jesus says in the parable of the sower, he says that we are to consider carefully how you listen.

And he actually says that if we listen in one way, then we'll be given even more to take in. But if we listen in another way, a lesser way, that actually what we already have could slip away and be taken from us.

[1 : 36] What are those seven ways that the author prescribes that we should expect to listen up in a sermon? Well, first of all, he says, expect God to speak.

In other words, tonight, as I speak in this sermon, I am but a mere man, but we can have a note of expectancy that we're listening for the very voice of God to speak to us.

Secondly, admit, as you listen to this sermon, that God knows more than you. We need to sit under the word, not over the word and arrogant judgment of it.

We may need to change some of our opinions or our thinking tonight. Thirdly, check out what I'm speaking about.

Check out what every preacher that you listen to is saying. There's a group called the Noble Bereans who Paul applauded them because when he spoke, they not only listened, but they would cross-reference to the scriptures.

[2 : 50] Check it out against the Bible, what the Bible had already taught. Number four, hear the sermon in church. Now, we're not able to physically gather because of distancing at this time and restrictions, but we are gathered together as a fellowship online.

And as we all listen to God's word tonight together, then we can pray for one another's response. We're listening together and it puts us all together, as it were, on the same page before God.

Number five, be there week by week. Listen to the sermon as you might imagine an ID drip.

That we don't expect a quick fix from a one-off sermon that we dial into. But our faithful attendance in worship and sitting under the teaching of God's word, we can expect that God will, over time, he will speak to us.

And he will speak to us regarding those very personal matters that we have been praying and longing for him to direct us in. Six, do what the Bible says.

[4 : 17] Jesus is not out to make us a bunch of know-it-alls or, as someone said, a brain on a stick. Sermons are not simply for head knowledge.

They're actually the promises to transform us and to change us. Consider, is there an attitude that I need to change?

Is there an action that I need to begin to put into practice now that I have convictions that Scripture gives me all encouragement to practice?

And then lastly, do what the Bible says today. Whatever you hear in the following minutes of this sermon, do what it says.

For the Lord himself is speaking. Don't wait. Don't put it off. Tonight, your Father is speaking.

[5 : 24] And we're listening up. Now, Peter, in the passage we're looking at this evening, is, in so many words, telling us what to listen to and how to listen up, knowing that what Peter is teaching,

even the contents of his letter, is not just a cleverly invented story.

It's literally the voice of God. It's God speaking to men. And so he's telling us how to listen up. But at the same time, he's telling us who to not listen to.

It's as if he's saying we, as God's people, Christians, followers of Jesus Christ, we don't follow the myths of men, but we follow men who spoke from God.

We don't follow myths. We follow men who follow God, who were inspired by the very Holy Spirit to write the contents of the scriptures that we preach from, that we teach from, that we learn from, that we experience transforming change from.

Peter could say, I know what I have seen. I know what I have heard. And I know what I have read.

[6 : 51] And what I have seen and what I have heard and what I have read from the scriptures is true. So tonight, he offers us two evidences or two great foundational supports for the scriptures being true.

He offers us first the eyewitness account of the apostles. Secondly, in addition to the eyewitness account of the apostles, he offers the inspiration of the prophets.

Let's look first at the eyewitness account of the apostles. He says in verse 16, We did not follow cleverly invented stories.

The we is emphatic. It will show up again in verse 16, where he says, We were eyewitnesses of his majesty. And in verse 18, where he says, We ourselves heard that voice.

Peter has said in verse 1 of chapter 1, here in this epistle of 2 Peter, that he is Simon Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

[8 : 10] Now, what is an apostle? An apostle is an eyewitness and a disciple of Jesus Christ, and an eyewitness of a resurrected Jesus Christ.

And he is one who is charged to preach and to teach of the things that he has heard and seen of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul is an apostle, not because he was in that unique band of disciples that traveled with Jesus Christ, but he saw a risen Jesus Christ and heard him speak on the road from Damascus.

And he was given a commission then to teach. When Peter emphasizes we, it's to say that we have something.

We have an eyewitness account, but they do not. The we points to a they that is oppositional.

And we could say that the they that it is pointing to are clever inventors of stories. Peter says, We're not like them.

[9 : 23] We don't have cleverly invented stories or myths or fables that we teach and preach from. The word for clever invented is the same word that would be applied to a medical quack.

It's someone that does not have neither the training, the licensing, or the sources of truth to correctly medicate or treat someone in their illness or their want.

And so they will prescribe something of their own design, of their own making, of their own opinion.

And it's a particular danger danger not to those who are skeptics of Christianity, but Peter is most concerned for those who are gullible, perhaps those that are new in their faith, perhaps those that have only learned just a little bit as they have come to receive and trust Christ as their Savior for the forgiveness of their sin.

They're still learning about Jesus, about his ways, about his truths, about his claims even. And here, there are those that are clever inventors of stories.

There are those that are seeking to draw them aside in their young faith and in their state of being gullible and mislead them, even with what would be called myths or stories.

[10 : 58] Peter doesn't lay out everything that they might be claiming falsely as truth in a cleverly invented story, but he does give us one that will show up frequently in 2 Peter in this letter.

And that is the question around the second coming of Christ. We do not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, those that are cleverly inventing stories, they're questioning and they're calling in to truth whether Christ will ever come again or not.

We'll see this as we look in the very last chapter of chapter 3 where Peter tackles this head on and says, it is going to be visible to all when Christ returns and he shall return for the saints.

But currently, there are many gullible people in Peter's congregations that he's writing this letter to that he feels are vulnerable to come under the sway of this false teaching and to begin to think maybe Christ is not going to come back.

[12 : 24] Maybe this life is all there is. And Peter offers in evidence something that I don't think that I would have offered in evidence to show indeed that this is true.

Christ is going to come again. He offers the evidence of the transfiguration. As I looked into it this week, I looked into Matthew Gospel's account in Matthew 17 verses 1 through 8 of the transfiguration.

It's important that you realize the context of Matthew 17 and the transfiguration because that passage begins six days later Jesus drew three of the disciples away to go up to a mountaintop. What happened the previous six days? Well, the previous six days Jesus had been teaching his disciples that the way to glory was for him a cross a grave but that would be followed by a resurrection.

And then he goes on to teach in Matthew 16 and verses 27 and 28 but take heart because there's going to be a day that he will come back in all of his glory along with the father God himself he will come back in the great second coming and Jesus made a rather cryptic statement when he said some of you who are hearing me will see the glory of my coming before you die you'll see the glory of my coming in the second coming before you die Peter is saying that he did that before he died on the Mount of Transfiguration he saw Christ in all of his revealed glory and that was a foretaste of not simply seeing a glorified

[14 : 36] Christ at the resurrection where he would subsequently leave once again after 40 days and ascend to the father but that was a foretaste of Christ triumphant return as the conquering king once and forever that was what Peter said he was an eyewitness to Peter says he wasn't left to his own interpretation of the facts either because at the same time he says in verse 18 we ourselves heard a voice that came from heaven and that voice was the voice of God the father saying this is my son in whom I'm well pleased this is my son he could say whom I'm pleased because he was faithful not only through the cross but he was faithful to accomplish all my holy will and he will return so

Peter says we have we are eyewitnesses of this and again when he says we this is in as much to say you're not eyewitnesses beloved he wants us to call question call into question any myths that we hear propagated even in our time that those who speak of these cleverly invented stories or myths or fables that we would ask the question are you an eyewitness of Jesus Christ do you if it refutes anything that I'm taught from the apostles were you there or do you have an eyewitness testimony to back up what you're saying now what are some cleverly invented myths today time doesn't permit me because there's so many but I would tell you right now the church Christians across the world face every day a world that reportedly speaks in the name of truth with its opinions and its world and life view and they seek to win over the gullible as hearers and converts to their truth but it's not as Francis Schaeffer would say true truth it's not based on the scriptures what could be some of these things I'll just give you a quick three number one while God may be the creator he created more than two genders there's not simply male and female there are multiple genders number two God is not cruel God has closed hell there is no hell we need not ever have any fear of any destiny of hell for all eternity because that would make God to be cruel right number three this world is more important than any world you'll ever live in you should have a care and think for yourself how you live in this world there's so many wonderful things that you should experience don't think so much about the life after as this life is more important these things can come off very very attractively to us we can hear them repeated we can hear science scientists we can hear actors we can hear news media we can hear we can read it we can see it on MSM our friends our peers and this relentless these relentless stories can unfold that we can begin to question are they true I would have you question and simply ask do they know Christ they might not be a physical eyewitness but do they know the man if they claim to speak truth do they know the truth do they know

Jesus Christ the Savior and the Lord what are they to say of him secondly Peter says that we now also have in verse 19 the word of the prophets and once again it's as if to say we have the authority of the prophets we have the writings of the prophets that we base what we teach and preach upon they do not I received a text yesterday and it said this good afternoon prophet of God now I have a lot of people in my text list and this is someone that I have I've never met physically they may even be listening tonight and joining us in this worship service yes I know their name and

[20 : 11] I have sought to pray with them and minister to them on a phone call as they were referred to me for pastoral assistance but I can tell you you only need to ask Wendy what she thinks

about it as far as to know that I am not a prophet of God when Wendy heard it she laughed and it is laughable a prophet of God is not a preacher alone I hope to inspire people with preaching but I am not inspired to preach God doesn't personally speak to me and tell me what to say I'm guided even as Peter and others were guided I am guided by the scriptures of what the prophets wrote as from God so when Peter says here we have the word of the prophets made more certain he actually is saying this he's saying we are eyewitnesses

God has told us how to interpret what we saw by his very voice his word and that has been recorded and that's what he is writing from and he's saying that is not simply an echo but it's its confirmation of what the prophets wrote about the prophets wrote about it but we've added to it and only to expand it it's like a musical score that is discovered having been lost is discovered and that when you put it together with the existing musical score it sings it's a fit it's a further development of the truth their confirmation of the truth or the prophecy and so the prophets wrote under the inspiration of God and Peter says here that we would do well to pay attention to it in other words our soul and our life and our faith benefits by giving the writing of the scriptures both the prophets and the apostles we do well by giving it our attention he says it's like a light shining in a gloomy dungeon it's like a light shining in a place that's extremely dark that that light is so welcomed when it breaks through and then he goes on and says if we stay with that light then day will dawn and the morning star rises in your heart it's quite poetic morning star is a code name for day spring which is a code name for Jesus

Christ and he's saying this when we take God's holy word when we take the bible of the old testament prophets the new testament writers as apostles when we spend time listening discussing reading meditating on this then this is like a great light that shines in the dark areas of our life the places that we want for guidance or hope the places that we want for transformation that comes from convicting truth it leads us to show areas that we need to repent of or in areas that we can embrace with fresh belief but as this light begins to shine in those dark areas it's as if Jesus Christ himself rises in us so that it's no longer words on a page but it's

Jesus Christ the word who is speaking to us we began to read and this light has become a person this light Jesus Christ himself rises to speak from his word to us that is what Peter is saying the prophets offer to us that is revealed in their teaching in their writing he tells us in verse 20 he adds an emphasis that we must remember as we read the writings of the Old Testament prophets that start from Genesis with Moses and go all the way to the end in Malachi when we read the writings of the Old Testament he wants to be very very clear that we don't put them on the par or the same level of those who write stories from their own ingenuity or cleverness the prophets are not clever men writing stories they're not offering their opinions they're not offering their prejudices they're not offering things of their own resources he says they do not even offer in addition to factual accounts of things their own interpretation but even their interpretation comes from the Lord in Jeremiah chapter 23

God says this do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you filling you with vain hopes they speak visions of their own minds not from the mouth of the Lord they say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord it'll be well with you and to everyone who would stubbornly follow his own heart no disaster shall come to you this is reminiscent to those that would say that they speak from God today with a fresh word or new discovery sometimes it's very attractive to us because it's a word that seems to leave out the difficult bits of scripture that we might if we were honest rather not be there at all because they challenge us so but Peter says no beware just as [27 : 09] Jeremiah does from the Lord beware of false prophets because they're speaking of their own cleverly designed stories not that of the Lord well how does the Lord lead a prophet Peter doesn't leave us to wonder he says prophecy has its origin not in the will of men but men who spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit carried along is a nautical term it's a term that all sailors are familiar with the apostle Paul refers to this term when he was on a sailboat in Acts 27 verse 15 it's the term for being driven along by the wind the apostle Paul describes it this way in Acts 27 physically he was on a boat and they were trying to make headway but you can't sail into the wind directly and so they turned their sail and turned their boat that it could catch the full blast of the wind and as their sail filled catching all of that wind it was driven along it was carried along in other words and they simply raised their sail they surrendered themselves as

God's servant they surrendered and turned their sail as it were to his Holy Spirit's wind and the Holy Spirit led them carried them along inspired them to write down the very words of God what are we

to make of this let me conclude with a story this month 50 years ago Frank Laubach died now Frank is probably not familiar to you but he's one of my missionary heroes he ministered as a missionary in both the Congo but also the Philippines he had a nickname and his nickname was the mender of old baskets because the natives realized that if you have a basket in which you're trying to carry goods from one place to another and it has a hole in it then everything that's in it will constantly be flowing out but if you mend the hole the basket will not leak

Frank Laubach came to these tribesmen who did not have a copy of the scripture and he knew that if he wanted to fill their minds with the knowledge of God and the saving work of Jesus Christ the gospel that he was going to have to mend the basket of their mind he was going to have to stop the leak to teach them how to read and he taught them how to read with a primer composed of God's words from the scripture it would be like teaching someone to read using one of the four gospels and then as he taught them how to read and they began to continue to read through the scriptures he taught them to turn constantly to Jesus Christ for direction for everything in their life well where would they find this direction in the very thing that they were reading

God's word that it would be like a great light rising up in their life Christ himself to direct their life and their faith throughout their life that's a good word for us Peter tells us remember the word that we have the Bibles we have it's the very truth of God what's more it's the very person of Jesus Christ may we be found to turn to it and look to it as both the authority of our life as well as the guiding light this is God's word God He has what he said you