

## 2 Peter 1:12-21

“Doing Well To Heed”

If you are a parent, or a coach, or a teacher of some kind you have undoubtedly come to discover that repetition plays a huge part in the learning process. If you have a certain play that you want your team to execute you will practice the drill over and over and over again. If you're seeking to learn to play an instrument you will practice the same things over and over and over again, if you're a parent you will find yourself repeating to your children the same things over and over and over again; in virtually every arena of life if you're to become efficient and effective at something it will demand a repetitive process. Peter recognized that as well.

But with Peter it went beyond a certain life skill, he was concerned so much that we have a particular trade, or that we learn to play an instrument, he wasn't seeking to instruct us in science, mathematics or world history as intriguing and even as important as those things may be. What mattered most to him is that you and I have a powerful working knowledge of the word of God that made for real time results in our lives. That we not sit by in idle complacency and inactive lethargy but that we be moving on into Christian maturity, growing and excelling more and more spiritually, in those things that will impact your eternity. If you're to do that, if I'm to do that it will require a consistent, a persistent repetition of certain fundamentals of the Christian faith, there's no getting around it, we need the rehearsal, the *reminder*; so Peter writes beginning in Vs 12.

Vs12

The words “For this reason” obviously lending themselves to what Peter stated previously which connects the context to the things we studied last week. He's saying that due to the fact that the things he's just gone over with us are of such epic importance, he's going to do everything he can do to ensure that we have a consistent refresher course in them. “For this reason,” so that you might grow in *each* and *every* Christ-like characteristic that makes for the overflow of fruitful faith, so that you'll neither be barren nor unfruitful as a believer, so that you won't become nearsighted being mindful of the things of this world and losing sight of the eternal perspective. So that you won't forget the purchase price of your salvation and what was involved in the cost of setting you free from the bondage of sin and death, how that Jesus poured out His precious blood and laid down His life upon the altar of the cross. So that you'll be even more diligent to make your call and your election sure, so that you'll never stumble but stay moving faithfully forward, and so that you might have *not* a meager, saved as by the skin of your teeth type entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but rather that you and me, that we might go for it with all our heart, running the race in such a way as to win the prize receiving an *abundant*, lavish and rich welcome into our Savior's everlasting kingdom. “For *this reason*, I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things.”

Let me encourage you to highlight or perhaps underline those 5 words right there in Vs 12, the words “I will not be negligent.” Because even though Peter is applying them to his role in supplying the present truth I think that they can be *equally* applied to virtually *any* aspect pertaining to our walk and relationship with the Lord. Question: how’s your devotional life been lately?

Try inscribing these words over the time that you need to set aside to seek the Lord in the simple reading of His word, “I will not be negligent.” How about your prayer life? Seal the time that you’ve dedicated to devoting yourself to prayer with these words, “I will not be negligent.” with regard to serving, place these words in the scales of your service to your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ and see how it balances out, “I will not be negligent.” Here’s one that hits close to the heart, how do you manage your finances? Do you give willingly, “wantingly,” cheerfully to God what is rightfully His? Or are you neglecting that aspect of obedience to the Lord? Consider your role as a husband or a father, how about where you’re at as a wife or a mother...you see? On and on it goes, the application is appropriately made, “I will not be *negligent*.” The word means to *make light of* or to *be careless of*. How many believers are carless when it comes to time spent in God’s word, how many people make light of the importance of prayer or their responsibility to give to God what’s His financially? They make light of their role as a dad or a mom, as a husband or as a wife...purpose it in your heart that you will not be careless of such matters, that you won’t make light of such things, you will not be negligent.

Peter says that he’s not going to be negligent to *remind* us of these principles and precepts of the word and ways of God, and how thankful we should be for that. Because if you’re anything like me you have a tendency to forget the things you should remember and remember the things you should forget. I read somewhere a disheartening statistic that said that an hour after you leave here 90% of what I’ve said you’ll forget. But, repetition, the reminders help in the learning process, we need to hear it again and again if it’s to really sink in.

But there’s something else we need to understand and that is this, *learning it* is not *living it*. There is a very distinct and definite difference between learning something and living something. Now I think that the reminders help us in that transition between learning and living but don’t think that because you leave here having learning something (I hope) that that is tantamount to living it, it’s not, I can give you the exhortation, but *you* have to make the application, I can’t do that for you.

But check it out, Peter says that he's going to remind them of things *they already know* and are even *established* in. You see there's benefit to be found in repetition, there are professional basketball players that will take 1,000 shots a day. They're already established, they know how to make a shot, but because of the nature of what's at stake they rehearse the fundamentals over and over and over again. Professional golfers do the same kind of thing, they know the techniques and are established in them, yet they repeat the same thing over and over again so that they might excel in their arena. Here's what I'm saying, a Christian should never tire of hearing the basic fundamentals of the Christian life, to be affirmed and reaffirmed in what Christ has done for us is necessary for us, it should rejoice our heart every time.

Paul said, "*For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*" Phil 3:1 It blows my mind the amount of people who will leave a church because they think that they hear the same things over and over again...well..yeah!!! What did you want to hear? Even Jesus taught the same things, and said that He would give us the Holy Spirit so as to *remind* us of things He *already* said. John 14:26, "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*"

It's true as a new believer you'll be learning new things all the time, but there comes a point in your relationship with the Lord whereby if you come to church on Sunday mornings (which you should) and maybe you go all fanatical and even hit Wednesday evenings that after sitting through about 100 bible studies a year, year after year you're bound to start hearing some of the same things again and again. If you're not ok with that be careful because you just might find someone who'll tell you something new, but you don't need *new*, you need *true*. Here's the news flash, we're the sheep of His hand, now; what do sheep eat? They eat grass, they may eat it in this section of the pasture, or that section of the pasture but every day for as long as they live they'll eat the same thing...grass. Well, we may graze from the OT, the psalms, the prophets, the historical books, we may graze from the NT, but it's all God's word, that's what we eat. We feed our inner man on the nourishment of God's word, there's nothing else, so today you'll eat the green grass of God's word. Guess what you'll get next Sunday? Grass, it's good, it's God's word, it's what we need.

Now, this word "established" is the word found in Luke 22:32 when Jesus told Peter, "*I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.*" That word "Strengthen" is the same word "established" here. Peter *has* fulfilled and *will continue* to fulfill the command of Jesus establishing and strengthening us by reminding us of the fundamentals of the faith.

Vs13-14

You see not only to the negative will he *not* be negligent, to the positive he says it's simply the right thing to do. "I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you." When it comes to our responsibilities in the Lord we need to do the right thing, not neglect them but tend diligently *to* them.

Couple things here real quick in Vs 13, #1 We note that Peter refers to his body as a *tent*. It's a good analogy, why? Because a tent is a temporary dwelling place, they're kinda cool for what they are, but they're nothing I want to really abide in forever, I'd rather have the comforts and conveniences of the home. Tents get weathered over time, they breakdown and tear, they're not really made to go the distance like a permanent structure is. That's how the human frame that we call the body is. It breaks down over time, get's "weathered" it's just not going to go the distance. But that's ok, it's only intended to be a temporary dwelling place anyway.

Jesus said, "*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*" John 14:1-3 The word "mansions" in that passage speaks more literally of dwelling places, like a permanent place of residence, unlike the *tent* that we dwell in presently. When we die physically we "move out" of this tent (as it were) and into a permanent home in heaven. Paul said it like this, "*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*" 2 Cor 5:1

The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing I want to draw your attention to is found in the phrase, "stir you up." Peter says that as long as he's around he will "stir them up" by way of reminder. The word "Stir" means to *arouse* or *awaken*, it speaks of being woke up from sleep, or the agitation of the waters in a storm. The idea here being that Peter's not going to allow us to hit cruise control or to be lulled into spiritual sleep because we're so accustomed *to* and familiar *with* the fundamentals of the faith.

Because in that moment your foundation begins to erode, so he's saying here that he's going to continue to strengthen/establish and undergird us in these things. The world is a dark place, darkness invites sleep, Peter is sorta shaking us up, making sure we stay awake and aware. The writer of Hebrews said, "*...exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*" Heb 3:13 We do well to stir one another regularly/daily lest we grow spiritually sleepy, encourage one another unto godliness...

## Vs14

We've spoken in the not too distant past about when Jesus showed him, it's found in Jhn 21. Now the time is at hand and Peter is aware through various and sundry events that he'll *soon* meet his end. That's really the point that I want to press in this moment, it's the word "shortly" or "swiftly," because in reality this is the testimony of us all. David said in Ps 39, "*Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.*" Ps 39:4-5 It's difficult at times for us to grasp the brevity of life, how brief it really is, we're not really guaranteed the rest of today much less tomorrow. How important it is to set our minds on things above and not on things of the earth, to lead life with a view to the eternal. How is your life making an impact on the eternal? You've got a brief window of time, make the most of it...

## Vs 15

Which he did through writing this letter...knowing that he was going to die he wanted to leave behind something that would *never* die; the written word of God. You've heard it before, God's messengers die, but the message lives on. Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means (never) pass away.*" Matt 24:35

2 things quickly, #1 this word *decease* or *departure* is literally the word "exodus." Peter viewed his death *not* as the *end*, but as the *exodus*, that is as *deliverance* from the bondage of this life being led as it were into the fulfillment of the promise of *eternal* life in the presence of Christ. Being absent from the body and being present with the Lord.

#2, I think we do well to note the importance of passing God's word, and God's ways on to the next generation. He says, "I'm going to make sure you know these things and have a reminder *of* these things even after I'm gone." Why? Because it's *that* important, eternal life and death weigh in the balance, it's not like it's some fairy tale or nice story that invokes feelings of sentiment, people's eternal destiny depends upon it, notice.

Vs16

"We're not purporting some myth here, we didn't sit around and make this stuff up. Carefully devising each detail, examining and cross examining one another concerning various case scenarios and details to make sure that we all had it straight. We saw these things with our own eyes!" Let's say for the sake of argument that they did. What if Peter, James, John, Thomas, Phillip, Nathaniel and all the guys sat around for a few weeks coming up with this whole thing. They got every detail down to an airtight locked down story and they were all saying the same thing.

I have a question for you, how many of you would be willing to die for a story that you just made up? Maybe there's a couple of you that would be so bent of pulling off the biggest scam in world history that you'd die for your lie. Satan gave to God his evaluation of man in the book of Job when he said, "*Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.*" Job 2:4

Translation, nobody wants to die and as a general rule whatever I need to do to preserve my life, I'll do it. When you see the vat of boiling oil that you're about to be forced into because of a lie what are the odds of you sticking to that lie? When you're about to be beheaded because of something you made up what are the odds of you being willing to suffer the execution. When you're about to be sawed in half, or burned at the stake, or nailed to a cross, have your brains beat out (literally), somehow brutally tortured and killed, how many people would stick to the lie. People have a tendency to get real honest in the face of death... Yet everyone of the disciples would be brutally martyred for the sake of the gospel (with the exception of John who was boiled alive but he didn't die so they exiled him to the isle of Patmos where he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the book).

"We're not following cunning devised fables when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were *eyewitnesses* of His majesty." These are the words of a man who saw Jesus feed thousands of people with a few loaves and a couple fish, he saw the blind see, the lame walk, the dead raised to life, lepers made whole. He saw Jesus beaten, battered, nailed to a cross and put to death and 3 days later rise from the dead, he was there and witnessed with his own eyes Jesus ascend into heaven until the clouds received Him out of sight. Peter saw that stuff, He was an eyewitness of His majesty. You guys, for centuries people have been trying to blow buckshot into the bible, into the account of these men and they can't do it. If there were flaws to find they'd have been found by now; they're accurate eyewitness accounts.

Vs17-18

What mountain is that? The mountain upon which Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured before them whereby He became so bright that it was difficult to look at Him, Matt 17 tells us that His face shined like the sun. Of course the real miracle there wasn't that Jesus revealed His glory, it was that He was ever able to *conceal* it in the 1<sup>st</sup> place. Leave 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter turn quickly to Matthew 17 (vs1-8)

## Vs1-4

Luke tells us that the boys were pulling out of the fog of sleep to see this, and it freaked them out (understandably so). Now there are those who have something to say, and those who have to say something, Peter found himself in the latter category here. Be that as it may we read in Vs 5.

## Vs5-8

Peter made the mistake of placing Jesus on par with the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah), the Father was making it clear that Jesus is not on par *with* them but is far *above* them and He *alone* is who we look *to* and trust *in*. The Law and the prophets were pointing *to* and would culminate *in* that which would be fulfilled in Christ. Those things were the foreshadow, the substance is of Christ.

## Vs19-21

Back in Vs 19 Peter tells us that the prophetic word is confirmed, it crescendos and culminates in Christ. But with regard to His experience on the Mt he's telling us that the prophetic word of God is even more sure than any experience he's ever had... That the word qualifies our experience, our experience does not qualify the word.

We're to trust God's word over and above personal experience, if the word doesn't confirm what I've experienced I disregard my experience. Now when you place that in the light of Peter making that statement with in the context of hearing the voice of God that's a pretty power testament to the word of God; we're to look to the word of God even over the miraculous.

Now if you have a KJV it speaks of the "more sure word" of prophecy. What does that mean? Same thing, it's more sure than even a miraculous encounter. Do you realize that there are over 300 prophecies throughout the OT that relate to Jesus Christ and He fulfilled every one of them? It's a statistical/mathematical impossibility. Because every time you add detail it reduces the odds, that's the nature of prophecy. For instance if I say that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem what are the odds of that happening? Well you take the population of Bethlehem at that time divided by population of people on the planet at that time and you discover that the odds of 1 person being born in Bethlehem at that time would be 1 in 300,000. When I add more details like, He'll come out of Egypt, be a Nazarene, ride into Jerusalem on a specific day on the back of a donkey's colt that's never been ridden, He'll be betrayed by 30 pieces of silver and the silver will be used to buy a potter's field. He'll be innocent but won't try to defend Himself when He's on trial, His hands and feet will be pierced, He'll die with the wicked but His grave will be with the rich; the more details I add I substantial decrease the odds of someone fulfilling that. Especially when you consider that I've made these statements centuries before they'd occur.

As a matter of fact a man by the name of Peter Stoner did a study and this is what he discovered. After examining only eight different prophecies (Idem, 106), they conservatively estimated that the chance of one man fulfilling all eight prophecies was one in  $10^{17}$ . To illustrate how large the number  $10^{17}$  IS (a figure with 17 zeros), Stoner gave this illustration :

If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They'll cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would've had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom (Idem, 106-107).

In financial terms, is there anyone who would not invest in a financial venture if the chance of failure were only one in  $10^{17}$ ? This is the kind of sure investment we're offered by god for faith in His Messiah.

From these figures, Professor Stoner, concludes the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of the prophecies (Idem, 107) - the likelihood of mere chance is only one in  $10^{17}$ !

Another way of saying this is that any person who minimizes or ignores the significance of the biblical identifying signs concerning the Messiah would be foolish.

But, of course, there are many more than eight prophecies. In another calculation, Stoner used 48 prophecies (Idem, 109) and arrived at the extremely conservative estimate that the probability of 48 prophecies being fulfilled in one person is the incredible number  $10^{157}$ . In fact, if anybody can find someone, living or dead, other than Jesus, who can fulfill only half of the predictions concerning the Messiah given in the book "Messiah in Both Testaments" by Fred J. Meldau, the Christian Victory Publishing Company is ready to give a ONE thousand dollar reward! As apologist Josh McDowell says, "There are a lot of men in the universities that could use some extra cash!" (Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, California: Campus Crusade for Christ, 175).

How large is the number one in  $10^{157}$ ?  $10^{157}$  contains 157 zeros! Stoner gives an illustration of this number using electrons. Electrons are very small objects. They're smaller than atoms. It would take 2.5 TIMES  $10^{15}$  of them, laid side by side, to make one inch. Even if we counted 250 of these electrons each minute, and counted day and night, it would still take 19 million years just to count a line of electrons one-inch long (Stoner, op. cit, 109).

With this introduction, let's go back to our chance of one in  $10^{157}$ . Let's suppose that we're taking this number of electrons, marking one, and thoroughly stirring it into the whole mass, then blindfolding a man and letting him try to find the right one. What chance has he of finding the right one? What kind of a pile will this number of electrons make? They make an inconceivably large volume. This is the result from considering a mere 48 prophecies. Obviously, the probability that (Over 300) prophecies would be fulfilled in one man by chance is vastly smaller. According to Emile Borel, once one goes past one chance in  $10^{50}$ , the probabilities are so small that it is impossible to think that they will ever occur (Ankerberg et al., op. cit., 21). As Stoner concludes, 'Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact, proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world (Stoner, op. cit., 112).'

Is there any wonder that we're exhorted with the words that we do well to heed the prophetic word of God concerning the testimony of Christ that shines as a light in a dark place. God's word is a lamp unto our feet, it's a light unto our path, there's no other book on this planet that will dare to place its veracity, its authenticity upon its prophecy...that book doesn't exist. And with hundreds and hundreds of prophecies concerning Christ alone it's never missed not even once...what more do you want? It's a source of light to us showing us the reality of who Jesus is that we might turn to Him and trust in Him with all our heart.

For unbelievers, things will get darker and darker, until they end up in eternal/outer darkness; but you and me await the return of Jesus Christ and the dawning of the new day of glory.

"No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation." Be careful of that guy, or that group that has a personal line on prophecy that no one else has, that has no correlation in the written word of God in its context. The J.W.s have told us when Jesus would return on more than one occasion, the "prophet" Joseph Smith said that He'd return in 1891, he said that the temple for the New Jerusalem would be built in the western portions of Missouri and dedicated by his hand...

Of course the problem with prophets that miss is that they're *false prophets* that the Lord never sent, because God never misses and even if they hit 99 but miss the 100<sup>th</sup> the bible says reject everything they said because God never sent them.

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being moved by the Holy Spirit.” That is being carried along like a ship being carried by the current, the writers of scripture simply “raised their sails” as the winds of the Spirit blew and carried them in the direction He wished.

Now, concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ, out of hundreds and hundreds of prophecies not so much as 1 missed. What are the odds of 1 missing concerning His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming? You and I do well that we *not neglect* our role or our responsibility as the people of God. But rather that we take heed to the light of God's word, walk *in* it, be obedient *to* it, and stand ready for His appearing...

#### Prayer Points:

Father may we watch and be ready, help us that we not sleep or slumber, but that we be spiritually alert, ready to stand *before* You, that You might find our lives pleasing *to* You. We thank You that You've confirmed Yourself to us over and over again in Your word, give us obedient hearts and help us to shine bright as the light of the world...

Jesus will come again, He will either come to meet with us, or we'll be called to meet with Him on that day when like Peter we put off our tent. Are you ready to appear before Him? Have you been forgiven of your sin, have you been washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ? God has so loved You that He's given His only begotten Son for You so that if you'll simply believe upon Him (turning *from* sin and *toward* Jesus) He'll forgive you, make you brand new and save you from the wrath to come...