Remember Remember Witness and Word

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Date: 08 August 2021

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[0:00] Are you good at remembering things? My wife can testify that I am not good at remembering things. I didn't get her a card for our first wedding anniversary last week. So I need reminders.

We all need reminders. An app or an alarm on your phone, a diary or a calendar, which I'm told you actually need to fill in to be of any use. We have memory aids, mnemonics. I've even heard of some rather interesting memory exercises from one of our students in St. Andrews. They were preparing for a medical exam, a diabetic foot exam, and they would sing to themselves in the shower.
You check between the toes, you tap all the toes. Songs and poems also help us remember things. Remember, remember the 5th of November, gunpowder treason and plot. I see no reason why gunpowder treason should ever be forgot. A poem written that we might remember because we're prone to forget.
The Bible and the Christian life is also filled with reminders. Reminders so that we might not forget who God is and what he has done for us. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
When God helped the Israelites cross the River Jordan before they entered the Promised Land, what's the first thing they do? They build a monument as a reminder of God's faithfulness.
[1:36] When we participate in the Lord's Supper, when we take the bread and the wine, we do so in remembrance of me. We remember Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross until he returns.

2 Peter is in itself a reminder. Will you scan with me through verses 12 to 15? Verse 12, so I will always remind you of these things.
Verse 13, I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I'm still alive. Verse 15, and I will make every effort to see that after my departure, you will always be able at any time to remember these things.
Three times Peter highlights this idea of remembrance or reminders. Peter wants us to remember all the things related to the gospel, all the things we looked at this morning in verses 3 to 11.
The fact that God in his grace has rescued us and given us everything we need to live a godly life.
That we are to make every effort to add to our faith Christ-like virtues, and that we do so as we anchor our hope in the future, a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom.
[3:02] Interestingly, does Peter's appeal to remember jump out at you as somewhat curious, perhaps? If you turn with me to verse 12 again, and let me read it.

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. Peter is reminding them of things that they already know.
Not only that, but things that they are firmly established in. Why remind someone of something that they already know and seemingly know really well?
Why does Peter treat his audience like forgetful little children? One of the real joys from our summer midweek Bible study groups in St. Andrews has been spending time with Timothy.
Timothy is one year old, he's about yay big, and he's just a bundle of Yorkshire and French joy.
Whenever Tim tries to climb some furniture he's not meant to, Dad is always at the ready to say, Timothy, no!
[4:12] You'll be glad I didn't attempt the Yorkshire accent. And right enough, he responds to Dad's warning. But having said that, almost inevitably, 20 seconds go by, and he's back at it trying to climb those bits of furniture he's not meant to.

Peter, in our passage, knows that his audience are adults and not children. Well-versed in Scripture and God's promises, and yet he is determined to remind them always, verse 12, you can note the frequency, so that verse 15, always they might remember.

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So why the overkill on remembering these things? Well, if you turn with me back to this morning's final verse, in verse 11, and it says this, And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
These things, these things that we need reminded of, they're not temporary. They're eternal. It's precisely because they are eternal and of eternal significance that we have the so, or the therefore, that begins verse 12.
Peter then is justified in his urgency and frequency in reminding us all that these gospel truths are important. And the other reason that Peter is so keen that we remember these eternal realities is that he knows he isn't going to be around for much longer.
[5:50] If you look at verse 14 with me, death brings a certain clarity to life. It's Peter's own impending death that causes him to write this letter and remind believers what they really need to know.

So, what are these eternal things Peter wants to remind us of? Well, we've said that he's referring back to verses 3 to 11.
But our passage tonight goes on to narrow it down even further. And in verse 16, we're told, The one thing is the power and coming of Jesus.
The second coming of Jesus. The very issue that the false teachers later on in 2 Peter were denying and that Peter was affirming. If you were to just look at chapter 3 and verses 1 to 4 with me, we read right at the end, where is the promise of his coming?
That is the issue at stake in 2 Peter. Hence why this letter is so relevant to us today because our world denies that Jesus is coming back in glory and power.
[7:14] Who do you know in your workplace or on your street or at school who actually believes that Jesus is coming back? Peter's message to us tonight is, But he is coming.

Remember, remember, he is coming back. And Peter gives us two reasons why we should be confident our Lord Jesus is coming back.
Two points this evening. Remember the apostolic witness. And secondly, remember the prophetic word. So first of all, remember the apostolic witness.
The problem Peter and the early church were clearly facing was that there were false teachers who were saying that the gospel was nothing more than cleverly devised stories.
Fairytale, fabricated propaganda, just a bunch of made-up stories. Jesus born of a virgin, dying on a cross, rising from the dead, and him coming back in glory.
[8:22] All of it made-up stories. They didn't deny Jesus' existence. If you go on to read chapter 2, you will find that out. But they denied all the supernatural things about Jesus, including his second coming.

There was an element of truth in what they were saying, but ultimately, he ain't coming back, so live how you like. I have friends much like those 2,000 years ago, and I'm sure you know people just like them, who say, I believe that Jesus existed.
I really respect him as a leader of men. He obviously had a natural authority to him, but I can't believe the miracles. Sure, he lived and died, but raised from the dead, unlikely.
Coming back from heaven. Come on, mate. So what is the evidence that Peter has that Jesus is coming back again? He hadn't come back when Peter wrote this letter, and 2,000 years on, he still hasn't returned.
Peter's answer, the transfiguration. Will you read verses 16 to 18 with me once more? For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
[9:47] He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory saying, this is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. What has the transfiguration got to do with Jesus coming back again?
Well, let me take you to Regent Street in London, where some of my friends witnessed the filming of a scene from the last episode of the show Killing Eve. They saw the actress Sandra Oh running about the streets of London.
They saw the backdrop to this scene, so they knew that it was coming in the show later on down the line. We were big fans of the show, so they announced to us that this specific scene was coming, and we were well within our right to ask, well, how do you know?

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And their answer was, well, we saw it. We saw a pre-released scene. And right enough on the last episode, we got a taster of what they saw a year prior.
[10:57] The transfiguration is just that, a pre-released glimpse of Jesus' future glory that will be seen in his second coming, a trailer, if you like, for Christ's return.

Peter saw Jesus resplendent, his face changed, and his clothes bright as a flash of lightning. God transfigured Jesus into the Jesus of the future for just a moment.
And Peter, James, and John saw it. We were eyewitnesses. In other words, Peter is saying, how do I know Jesus will return?
Well, I was there. I saw it with my own two eyes, this pre-released scene of Christ's second coming in power and glory.
It's good to note that they not only saw, but they also heard. Let me read verse 17 for us. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory, saying, this is my son whom I love.
[12:11] With him I am well pleased. When God the Father spoke that day as Jesus' face shone like the sun, this was God the Father identifying his son to the disciples.

The announcement from heaven is made up of a collection of verses from the Old Testament, and I have referenced them in the outline for you to look at later. But what it ultimately means is that this is God's way of saying, you're my king who I have installed over the world.
And this is how the transfiguration proves Christ's return in glory. The coming of Christ was disputed and still is.
Peter is saying, we're not making this stuff up. This talk of Jesus isn't myth or make-believe. It's not like believing in fairies at the end of your garden or some vision a guru claims to have received in a cave somewhere.
It's historical, verifiable fact. And Peter says, we were there. We saw it with our eyes and heard God explain it to us.
[13:29] The apostles saw and heard a pre-released scene from a future reality. Peter says to us, remember the apostolic witness to the coming of Christ.

We saw it on the mountain. Therefore, Jesus is coming back in power and glory. We'll think how this applies to us in a moment.
But first, let's look at the other thing Peter wants us to remember. We've got the apostolic witness on the one hand. Now we have, remember the prophetic word.
Will you turn with me once more to verse 19? We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable.
And you will do well to pay attention to it as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.
[14:36] Peter, when he speaks of the prophetic message or the prophetic word, he has in mind the Old Testament. But he has specifically in mind prophetic parts of the Old Testament.

I'll let you look at Psalm 2 or Isaiah 42 and Daniel 7 in your own time. But what Peter is saying is that we not only have the apostolic witness to the coming of Christ, we also have the prophetic word to the coming of Christ.
Precisely because the prophecies of Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42 are fulfilled in the transfiguration, therefore the prophetic word has been confirmed all the more.
Some claim that Peter is pitting apostolic witness and prophetic word against each other, but that doesn't seem to make much sense. What Peter is saying is, because the prophetic word from the Old Testament has been fulfilled in the transfiguration, we can all be sure that Jesus' return is certain because we saw those prophecies fulfilled.
Peter goes on to say, Peter pictures the world as a dark place while we wait for Christ's return.
[16:15] The day in verse 19 refers to the day of the Lord, which is a big theme throughout Scripture, a day of joy and judgment. Joy for those who are safe in God as they trust in Christ, but judgment for those who have rejected God.

Until the dawn and until the morning star rises, that's just poetic language that says, until Christ returns. And until Christ returns, the prophetic word about his return is to be our light in a dark world that denies his return.
Growing up in the part of Peru where we did earthquakes, were incredibly common. Dad actually texted the family group chat about six weeks ago because there was a bit of a shake in Lima, just a

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6.0 in the rector scale, nothing too serious.
But consequently, power cuts were incredibly common growing up. And so torches and candles and matches were a must in everyone's home.
We used them throughout the night and until the next morning, till the sun came up and the light came. Then you put away the torch and the candles.
[17:35] They're not needed. What Peter is saying is that when the light of the revelation of Christ comes in his second coming, when Jesus returns, then the prophetic word will be put away.

We won't need it anymore. We don't need it to point us to a future reality when that reality is here.
Peter felt it right to tell us these things because there were some who attacked the Old Testament Scriptures.
Will you read verse 20 with me? Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.
The false teachers were saying that prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. Sure, God might have given some dreams or visions, but what they actually wrote down was their own interpretation, their own biased, possibly self-serving construction.
Isn't this passage hugely relevant to us then? I wonder and go along with my little thought experiment here. If this week you were to witness to some of your unbelieving friends or family, and you did so by quoting Scripture, I wonder how many would treat you seriously.
[19:04] Tell them that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died in the place of sinners, and that if you put your trust in Him, He will save you.

Tell them that He's coming back one day to judge all peoples. What do you think they'd say in reply? How do you know? And you might reply, well, because the Bible tells me.
How do you think they'd respond? You're not allowed to use the Bible. That's some pretty circular reasoning there.
Besides, how can you trust a shoddily put-together human document filled with mistakes and contradictions? In other words, your basis for the claims you're making is a document put together by fallible people.
Peter's response to that is no. Scripture is divinely inspired. Will you read verse 21 with me again?
[20:05] For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, the Bible isn't humanly inspired. It's not a collection of cleverly devised stories or the result of someone's vivid imagination.
Peter says that Scripture is divinely inspired. It's divine revelation. The expression carried along is the same used born or came from in verses 17 and 18, and it's used elsewhere in Scripture to describe how a ship or a boat might be carried along by the wind.
The idea is that the prophets opened up their sails as they wrote and the Holy Spirit carried them along as they spoke and wrote things down.
In other words, the prophetic word about Christ's coming again didn't originate by someone making it up. Rather, it originated with God.
[21:17] God, the Holy Spirit, was the source behind the prophetic word. When men spoke, God spoke. When men wrote, it was God's words.

The biblical authors weren't puppets on a string. They used their own style, their own minds, their personalities come through. However, what they wrote and however they wrote it, they were the very words of God.
Peter wants us to remember the prophetic word about Christ's return. It is divinely inspired and therefore reliable.
It's to be our light in a dark world that denies the second coming of Jesus. Second Peter is also divinely inspired.
All of Scripture sings from the same hymn sheet. It harmoniously testifies to the certain reality that Jesus is coming back.
[22:23] Remember, remember, Jesus is coming back. The apostles were eyewitnesses to Jesus' glory. The prophets, the prophets' words were fulfilled in Jesus.

So, we can have confidence in God's word. Why does Peter turn so specifically to the second coming of Jesus?

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This morning, we considered godly living in light of the fact that God has given us everything we need, saving faith and all we need to live for him. Why move from godly living to the return of Christ?
Christ? Why the therefore? Why the so in verse 12? Well, if you remember that Guy Fawkes poem from earlier, Remember, Remember, the 5th of November, the poem was written as a reminder that treason wouldn't be tolerated.
Similarly, Peter reminds us of Christ's second coming, in this case, a future event rather than an event in the past, so that we might live in light of that reality.
[23:36] Peter's aim for the recipients of this letter was that they remember all that God had done for them and all that they're to do in response.

He wanted them to remember the gospel. Likewise, my job tonight is to help you and myself to remember.
Remember that Christ died for sinners like you and me. Remember that on the third day he rose again and conquered death so that we might have life and hope in him.
Remember that Jesus is king, that he's ascended to heaven and ruling over all of creation.
Remember all of God's promises.
Remember that Jesus is coming back. I know I'm not telling you anything new tonight and if you're thinking you've heard all of this all before, good.
[24:38] There are no points for originality when it comes to the weak proclamation of the gospel. I know that for most of you I am telling you truths in which you are established in.

Peter knew that too. Still he felt it necessary to remind and remind his friends that what they'd heard is true.
They lived in a world in which people denied that Christ will come again. We live in that world too. If you're not a Christian here this evening Christ is coming back.
A rich welcome into the eternal kingdom can be yours should you repent and receive the free gift of grace he offers you.
Any of us would be delighted to talk that with you in more detail. But if you are a Christian remember and live a diligent godly life.
[25:44] Peter reminds us of Christ's return so that we might grow and live godly lives as we await the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We get on our bike and we keep pedaling. We make every effort to add to our faith and it's as we pedal or as we grow that we can have confidence in the truth of Jesus' return and it will keep us stable for a lifetime.
So remember remember and never forget. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father we thank you that we can have certainty that the Lord Jesus is coming back again.
Thank you that the apostles testify to this truth that the scriptures have always pointed to the truth.
Help us in response to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus as we wait for his return.
In his name we pray. Amen.

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