We Purpose to Remember

Third in the series The Primary Purposes of the Church; Summer 2013

# Scripture: 2 Peter 1:12-2:3; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; 2 Tim. 2:2

# Key Thought: The Bible teaches that spiritual reminders are important.

# Intro ideas

What kinds of reminders are you carrying today? - black book – alarms in your cell phone? sticky notes appended to things? proverbial string on your wrist or finger? Calendar in your wallet or purse?

All of us need reminders. The older we get the more we need them.

I read a joke about an older lady on an Amtrak – as the conductor came around for tickets she was rummaging in her purse. It was obvious she couldn’t find it. She said, “I know I had it.” So the conductor replied. Well, you can just buy one from me and then when you find it you can return it for a refund. “But that’s not the point,” she exclaimed, nervously, “I don’t remember where it is I was going!”

Well, we all need reminders. In her case, she was in danger of getting off at the wrong stop. But in our lives, spiritually speaking, we can also be in grave danger without some spiritual reminders too. The book of 2 Peter is written as a reminder. What happens to us without spiritual reminders?

# The dangers that we face without reminders

## The danger that we will forget something beneficial

When we think about forgetting, we think of it very simply. – we think about the danger that the individual pieces of information that make life easier or that we need will somehow get lost up there and we will not be able to bring them back when we need them.

Actually, researchers tell us that the situation is more dangerous than that. For here is how the brain works- how the brain physically functions on the level of neurons. Old nerve connections that hold your old memories, skills that we have not used in a long time can get replaced because there is competition for brain real estate. On the other hand, physical neuron connections that are associated with reinforced memories, skills, ways of thinking, are not just retained but actually strengthened in their ability to be used.

“If we stop exercising our mental skills, we do not just forgot them: the brain map space for those skills is turned over to the skills we practice instead.” The Brain That Changes Itself, by Norman Doidge p. 59

## What happened in Peter’s time? Why did Peter need to remind them?

They had forgotten enough of what Peter had taught them that false teachers had been able to come into their church. These false teachers were not teaching some subtle heresy that was hard to detect. But the church had forgotten so much that the obvious immorality and basic wrong teachings of the false teachers were no longer obvious. What a commentary on our own country today.

* + 1. Characteristics of the false teachers 2 Peter 2
       1. Secretly introduce heresy v. 1
       2. \*\*Greedy v. 3,14
       3. Follow the corrupt desires of the sinful nature v. 10
       4. Despise authority v. 10
       5. \*\*Bold and arrogant v. 10
       6. \*\*Carouse in broad daylight v. 13
       7. \*\*Eyes full of adultery (lustful) v. 14
       8. Slaves of depravity v. 19
       9. \*\*Went back to their pagan lives v. 22
    2. Characteristics of their teachings
       1. \*\*Denying the Lord who bought them v. 1
       2. \*\*Use stories they made up v. 3
       3. Slander heavenly beings, blaspheme v. 10-12
       4. \*\*Especially seek to influence the weaker or newer Christians v. 19 – who had had less time to be influenced by sound teaching.
       5. Springs without water v. 17 - not operating with the Holy Spirit

## What happens to us-- Influence of the world around us

Our decadent culture is trying to “squeeze us into its mold” as Philips paraphrased Rom 12:2

There are many ways that the world does this

1. influencing us to adopt its value system - emphasis upon the sensual, emphasis upon pleasing the self, teaches that morality is relative,
2. Places a high value upon things. Advertising teaches us discontent with what we have. We are constantly bombarded with ads for things – the underlying thought is that things produce happiness.
3. The lifestyle of our culture influences our time priorities – keeping us too busy to focus on spiritual things—not always with the most beneficial things.
4. The world around us tends to strongly dominate our mental input – now we spend so much time with secular media. We are nearly always able to tune into music, shows, movies, sports, all kinds of stuff on phones, tablets, laptops, etc. When we do, we are unwittingly imbibing the values of the media writers – most of whom are unfriendly to Christianity, almost constantly.

# What is the solution that Peter recommends?

## We need reminders of God’s truths. One function of church is to provide those.

* 1. Peter’s reminder of his true teaching 2 Peter 1:12-15 “It is right to refresh your memory”
     1. Peter’s reminder is helpful even though they are firmly established v. 12
     2. Peter doesn’t expect to be around to remind them much longer v. 14.
     3. Peter wants them to remember the truths when he is gone. V.15 – Parents, pastors, teachers feel the same way. They want those they are teaching to remember Christian truth and values when they are no longer there to remind them.
     4. 2 Peter 3:1-2 “Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.” NIV
     5. Other Bible verses confirm that Scripture has a beautiful and wholesome influence on our lives. Without that influence we do not do so well.

Ro 12:2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.” NIV

Ps 119:127-128 “Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, 128 and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path. NIV

2 Ti 3:16-17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. NIV

## We need the true teachings to guide us. One function of church is to preserve and pass on those.

We need to know both what the true teachings are and why they are the true teachings. Peter spends most of his time in this book on why what he had taught them was true.

* 1. The true teacher and teachings 1:16-21
     1. The truth about the Lord was is confirmed by **eye-witnesses** like Peter v. 16
     2. The truth about Jesus was confirmed by God’s witness at the transfiguration which Peter also witnessed v 17,18 -- **confirmed by miraculous events – God’s own witness** at the transfiguration.
     3. This witness, God’s words from the Mount of Transfiguration, confirmed the prophet’s words
        1. Light shining in the dark - references Isaiah 9:2; Psalm 119:1-5
        2. Day dawns – refs - Isa. 58:8; 60:3; Hos. 6:3; Mal 4:2
        3. Morning star rises – reference, Rev. 22:16

## The sacrament of communion is an acted reminder. One function of church is to practice Communion as Jesus taught.

One way that Jesus acted to help us remember was to institute Communion or the Lord’s Supper. It is a special action that Jesus modeled first for us on Thursday night of Holy Week and then told us to copy, as a way to help us remember. Still today, when we observe Communion, one of its key functions is remembering what Jesus did on that night, what he did for us that weekend of his death and resurrection and what it means to us. We also remember his promise to return to earth someday. These are taught in 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

# Conclusion

Peter summarizes three positive results of our being reminded.

* + - 1. ***By implication – If we know the truth and know why it is the truth, we will be able to avoid following false teachers. In the words of Rom 12 – we will be able to discern what is good, what is in accord with God’s plan.***
      2. ***We will be able to recall the words of Scripture. 3:2 - Just like in the children’s sermon - the more we refresh our memory about God’s Word and his truth, the more our minds will be shaped by spiritual truth.***
      3. ***The end result, Peter says will be wholesome thinking, healthy thinking. 3:1 -- In other words, we’ll have minds shaped like Christ – Christ-like thinking.***