

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Scripture Memory		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	83		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	2 Peter 1:12-21; 3:17-18		
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BE READY AND DON'T FORGET! (Part 1)

Forgetting can have disastrous consequences. Forgetting your anniversary can be more than embarrassing. Forgetting to stop at the store to pick up some important item for dinner can be equally frustrating. But there are things of greater importance that we need to always remember *not* to forget. Peter has already declared that he “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 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.” (2 Peter 1:12-15). The word *echein . . . tēn toutōn mnēmēn poieisthai* literally means “power to make to yourselves the remembrance of these things. This phrase, which occurs only here, implies the objective certainty of the apostolic message. Note that remembering is repeated three times. 2 Peter 3:17-18 is a summary of the entire letter.

I. **THE APOSTLE'S RESOLUTIONS.**

- A. **To Be Always Reminding.** What is it that he wishes them to remember? – “these things” (v. 12), a reference back to vv. 1-11 which he calls “the truth you now have.” Peter wanted the knowledge his readers possessed to result in action – to know truth in order to do the truth. Peter was, even to his dying day, always mindful of Jesus’ charge to him, “feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17).
- B. **To Cause Them to Remember.** Again, note the expression “these things” (v. 15). The Apostle’s priorities were with the great truths (doctrines) of the Christian faith – not with passing fancies of the culture.

II. **THE APOSTLE'S CONVICTIONS.** The foundation of Peter’s resolutions rested upon his firm conviction that the Gospel is true.

- A. **The Apostolic Testimony.** Peter was one of the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ earthly coming. The Apostolic testimony was this: Christ the Messiah (the promised Deliverer) is come. He is Jesus of Nazareth. He has the power to forgive sins. He was crucified, dead, and buried; and He is risen from the dead and has been exalted on high.
- B. **The Foundation of the Apostolic Testimony.** Peter, and the other Apostles, were eyewitnesses to Jesus’ majesty. What did this involve?
 1. *They Witnessed Miracles by Jesus.* Notice that Peter does not appeal to miracles done by his own hand.
 2. *They Witnessed Fulfilled Prophecy.*

- III. **THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION.** Peter urged them to pay close attention to the written Word – “as to a light shining in a dark place” (v. 19).
- A. **Pay Attention.** The King James Version (KJV) has “to take heed.” Peter used the word *prosechontes*, which literally means “holding your mind upon.” The word actually means to focus the attention of the mind. This involves reading, of course, but the thought is much stronger. “Diligent study” is implied because close attention and considerable effort of thought are the import of Peter’s words.
- B. **The Light of Scripture.** Note the reason why Christians are to take heed to the written word. It is “a light shining in a dark place.” The imagery Peter uses is picturesque. Scripture is likened to a lamp (cf. Psalm 119:104, 130). It is light shining in a “dark place.”¹ The Puritan giant John Owen wrote, “It is the Kingdom of Satan, filled with darkness and confusion. Superstition, idolatry, lying vanities, wherein men know not at all what they do nor whither they go, fill the whole world, even as it is at this day. And the minds of men are naturally in darkness; there is a blindness upon them that they cannot see nor discern spiritual things, no, not when they are externally proposed unto them.”²
- IV. **THE FINAL EXHORTATION: TO BE FOREWARNED IS TO BE FOREARMED.** Peter’s appeal resumes the exhortation of v. 14.
- A. **Be on your guard.** The Greek word is *phulassesthe* – a present middle imperative conveys the meaning “Keep on guarding yourselves.” The word is not only a notice against danger from without but an admonition to watchfulness within.³
- B. **Grow In Grace.** Peter specifies how the believer must grow spiritually: “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In a sense, Peter reiterates part of the salutation at the beginning of his epistle. There he writes, “Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (1:2). But is Peter saying that believers ought to grow in the grace and knowledge that Jesus grants them or that believers should grow in the grace and in the knowledge that they have about Jesus Christ? Because grace and knowledge originate with God and through Christ are given to the believer, commentators admit that both interpretations are possible. They generally prefer the first explanation: Peter urges the believers to appropriate the spiritual qualities of grace and knowledge that Jesus grants them. “Knowledge *of* Christ and knowledge *about* Christ are, if they keep pace with one another, both the safeguard against heresy and apostasy and also the means of growth in grace.”⁴

CONCLUSION: Martin Lloyd-Jones, in his handling of this text, says that this final exhortation “is Peter’s way of saying that I am to grow in my understanding of the truth. As Peter has been elaborating this, I need only give a summary. It means that I should increase and grow in my knowledge concerning Him, in my knowledge of what He has done and of what He has brought to this world. I can summarize it in this way. As a Christian I am not to stop merely at a knowledge of forgiveness and a knowledge of salvation; I am to grow in my understanding and in my knowledge of the whole scheme and plan and purpose of salvation. I am to learn everything that Peter has been telling us in this Epistle. I am to see the whole plan of the ages and the plan of the world and of the cosmos. I am to understand increasingly the nature of the spiritual conflict which is going on in this world round and about me. I must not stop at a sense of personal forgiveness of sin, I am to see myself in the whole economy of God. I am to be aware of this mighty spiritual struggle that is taking place in the heavenly places. I am to see God gradually working out His plan even in the realm of history and I am increasingly to understand the final consummation of it. That is partly what is meant by growing *in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*. There is knowledge concerning Him, and the implications of that knowledge. So that I must busy myself with Christian doctrine. I must learn to understand the doctrine of God and His Being, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of man, the

doctrine of sin, the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of the ultimate and the last things. I must go into all these so that I may grasp the knowledge concerning the Lord Jesus Christ more and more.”⁵

ENDNOTES

¹The idea conveyed by the word “dark place,” *auchmērōi topōi*, is very vivid. It refers to a parched, squalid, dirty, dark and murky place. This pictures the human mind that is ignorant of God. “Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people” (Isaiah 60:2).

²*The Words of John Owen IV* (rpt. The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), p. 97.

³D. E. Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expositional Commentary* (BJU Press, 1989), p. 176.

⁴S. J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude: New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1987), p. 348.

⁵D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Expository Sermon on 2 Peter* (Banner of Truth, 1983), p. 226.