

Review

Last Sunday, we talked about the progression of faith. About how we begin this walk with Christ in faith, and then go step-by-step through a progression whose final destination is love.

After telling us this, Peter warned us that we can become blind or short-sighted, forgetting our purification from our former sins. We could go backwards down the path too. And so he exhorted us, "Make certain about God's calling and choosing you." We make certain of this by practicing those things that he listed in the progression of faith, and not stumbling backwards.

Peter begins verse 12 with the word "therefore," meaning, "Because what I have just told you is so important..."

1:12-15 Peter's Reminding Ministry

Peter knew how easy it is for a follower of Christ to stumble. He himself could have been the "poster child" for stumbling. Remember, after leaving his career to follow Jesus for 3 1/2 years, Peter found himself in a situation where he was denying that he even knew Jesus (Matt 26:69-75).

Peter didn't want anyone else to ever go through anything similar to what he had. Having experienced such turmoil in his own heart, he never wanted another Christian to backslide.

And Jesus appointed Peter to that specific ministry. He made sure Peter kept this in focus. He said to him,

Luke 22:32 ...I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

And so Peter committed himself to a ministry of reminding. Reminding Christians of the truth, even though they already knew the truth. Making sure that people like us - who are already established in the truth - never fall backwards away from the truth.

I used to have a big hang-up in the teaching ministry: I never wanted to repeat myself. I used to think, "These people have heard me say these things before." But what I have discovered in the last few years is

that repetition isn't just good for reminder, it's essential for Christians.

Paul instructed young pastor Timothy to...

2Tim. 1:13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

The word "standard" refers to a repeatable pattern, something that can be stamped in over and over, like a printing press making money repeatedly, or a rubber stamp creating the same design continually. It was used in ancient Greek to describe the blow of a horse's hoof in the dirt, creating the same image over and over.

Paul is telling Bible teachers that they should be presenting the same thing, even in repetition, because it serves as a reminder.

I have come to realize that - even after teaching through the Bible for over a decade - I am still blessed when I hear the basic truth of God's grace, God's goodness, or God's love for me. And so I no longer hesitate anymore to reminding you of the simple truths. It's one of the biggest blessings people can receive!

That became the focus of Peter's ministry: strengthening the brethren by reminding them of what they had already heard.

This Earthly Dwelling

Peter referred to his body as an "earthly dwelling" or literally "a tent."

I think Christians in that day understood this word picture better than we do. I know Paul certainly did - after all, he was a tentmaker. And he said,

2Cor. 5:1-4 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal

will be swallowed up by life.

Peter and Paul knew that tents are not intended for long-term living. They eventually wear out and become unusable. The apostles wanted us to understand that these bodies in which we live are the same. We can try to maintain them, patch them, and keep them looking as spiffy as possible, but eventually they will wear out. They're not permanent, and they're not our final form. They are just temporary tabernacles for our spirits.

Peter's Imminent Departure

Peter did understand that. Jesus had made clear to him that his life would soon be ending, and that affected the way he lived. His life had an urgency, and he didn't waste his time with distractions any longer.

Things that weren't priorities in the kingdom of God weren't priorities to Peter. As long as he was in that tent, his biggest priority was to remind believers about what was important.

Peter's Legacy

Notice that in verse 15, Peter tells us that he was conscious of the legacy he was leaving. He said that he was being diligent so that even long after he died, people would still be affected by what he was doing.

Three Thoughts That Will Change Our Lives

Three thoughts from Peter: 1) My body is a temporary tent, 2) my life could end any time, and 3) I need to leave a lasting legacy. Saints, if we took these three thoughts to heart, our lives would be radically different.

We don't have a lot of time in this lifetime, but we can do a lot with it. Some people spend all their time in front of the TV. Others use it in pursuit of personal pleasure and experience. But what if we all began to ask ourselves, "What am I doing that will leave a legacy? Who am I influencing that will build the kingdom of God after I'm gone? What lasting fruit am I leaving?" If we did, our lives would most certainly be lived differently.