

2 Peter 1, verses 16-21. 2 Peter 1, verses 16-21. Last week, we saw the ministry of reminders in verses 12-15. We saw there that the ministry of reminders is always needed and very urgent. that the Apostle Peter was diligent to give the reminders of the truths of verses one through 11 of this book to his readers over and over and over again. He wanted them to hear those great doctrines again and again and again. And that ought to be you here this morning as well. you should want to hear the glorious truths of the first 11 verses of 2 Peter regularly. And we saw that one of the ways you get to hear those sorts of truths regularly is by attending corporate worship, by preaching them to yourself, and by preaching them to one another.

Because we are forgetful people, we need these reminders. Well, with that in mind, Let us pray and ask God to bless now the reading and preaching of his word. Father, we thank you so much for this portion of your word and that we come to the very word of God, not to the ideas of man, but to the very words of the creator of the heavens and the earth, of all things visible and invisible, and the one who loves us and has drawn us savingly to himself. We come to your word, but oh God, apart from you, we can do nothing. We can't even interpret your word rightly. And even if interpreted rightly, we can't understand it spiritually. It can have no effect on our hearts apart from your spirit working. And so God, we pray for you to work by your spirit through your words such that this is not a time in vain, but a time of lasting growth in our lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. 2 Peter 1, verses 16 through 21, pay close attention to this light shining in the darkness.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory. This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain, and we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a dark place. until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Amen. Thus ends the reading of God's holy word. now the proclamation of it to our lives.

Reminders are only good if they are true. For example, in the mid 20th century, there was a Christian man named Richard Wurmbrand and he was living in communist Romania. He was thrown in prison for his Christian faith And for 17 hours a day, he would hear over the loudspeaker, communism is good, communism is good, Christianity is dead, Christianity is dead, give up, give up, give up. Those were reminders, but they were lies. They were false reminders. They were not true. They were evil. A reminder is only good if it's true. And this is why after preaching the reminders in verses 12 through 15 of chapter one, Peter now shows that these reminders are rock solid truth. He shows that the truths that he was preaching were not the ideas of men or the latest fads, that they were grounded in truth.

They are grounded specifically, he shows, in eyewitness testimony and scripture testimony. So this morning, let us see the firm foundations of Christianity. The firm foundations of Christianity. And we'll see this in two ways. Eyewitness testimony and scripture testimony. So first, eyewitness testimony.

You see that in verses 16 through 18. He begins in verse 16 by saying, for we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. See, he wants them to understand in verse 16 that the reason he is so diligent to preach these reminders is because they're true. He is an eyewitness to

the sorts of things that he is reminding them about in this book. He is not telling them some myth. He isn't espousing some man-made religion. He is preaching to them the very word of God.

And so he says in verse 16, we may know to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But to what does the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ refer in verse 16? This is almost certainly specifically a reference to Jesus's second coming.

We know that the false teachers that were in these churches were denying that Jesus was ever going to come again in power and judgment on the last day. They didn't believe that truth. You can see this, for example, in chapter three, verses one through seven. In chapter three, verses one through seven, we read this about these false teachers.

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this, first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, where is the promise of his coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. For they deliberately overlooked this fact, that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God. And that by means of these, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

You see, they didn't believe that Jesus was going to come again. They used that very word in verse four. He says that they say, where is the promise of his coming? And so back in chapter one, verse 16, when the apostle writing by divine inspiration says, we may know to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, He's almost certainly referring to this second coming. He's saying that when we preach to you, we made known to you that Jesus Christ is going to come again in power. We preach that to you when we, the apostles, were among you. And then he goes on, in essence, to say, and you know how we know this is gonna happen? Do you know how we know he's gonna come again?

Well, we know for certain because we, that is Peter, James, and John, were eyewitnesses of his majesty, his majesty at the Mount of Transfiguration, which he goes on to talk about in verses 17 and 18. That's where they saw his majesty at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now, what was the Mount of Transfiguration? Well, we read about it in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and we'll look at it in Matthew 17. Turn to Matthew 17. We're just going to read the account of what happened at the Mount of Transfiguration.

Matthew 17, we'll look at verses 1 through 8. The transfiguration, which we're about to read about, Matthew 17, 1 through 8. was a time in Jesus's ministry when he revealed a measure of his future power and glory privately to Peter, James, and John. He revealed a measure of his future power and glory here in this story. Matthew 17, we'll read the first eight verses. And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, his brother, and led

them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

And behold, There appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. He was still speaking when behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.

When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them saying, rise and have no fear. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. You see, the Mount of Transfiguration was an anticipation of the power and glory of Jesus Christ that will come at the Second Coming when he comes to judge the living and the dead.

And so Peter goes on to describe this event in his own words here in our book, verses 17 and 18. For when he received honor and glory from God, the Father and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory. This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven for we were with him on the holy mount." Notice the stress of eyewitness testimony. In verse 18, we ourselves saw these things. We ourselves heard these things.

We were present with him on the mount. He is driving home the eyewitness testimony that the Christian faith is on firm foundations. The transfiguration wasn't an idea that Peter invented. It was an event that he attended. He was there, he saw these things, he heard these things. But why, of all the events that Peter was an eyewitness of in Jesus' life, does he choose this particular event to write about in this letter?

The reason again is because he was writing to people that had false teachers among them who said Jesus wasn't gonna come again. And so he says, well, then how do you explain the transfiguration? Because that was an anticipation of the glory that will be revealed when he comes again. You can't explain that event apart from his coming again one day to judge the living and the dead. It was an anticipation of that. So he's saying, what do you make of this false teachers? But based on all of this, I want to ask you one simple question.

What or who do you follow? Because in verse 16, we read this, for we did not follow cleverly devised myths. This word follow carries with it the idea of tracing someone's path. You might think of the image of someone walking behind somebody in the snow or in the sand and following in their footsteps. And Peter knows that everyone is following someone or something.

This word, this specific word, is only used three times in the New Testament and it's only used by Peter in this book. He uses it twice in the second chapter and applies it to following the false teachers and their ideas. For example, just one of those two places in chapter two, verse two, and many will follow their sensuality. And because of them, the way of truth will be blasphemed.

So Peter knows that everyone is following someone or something. And you need to follow the truth. And this is the truth, the word of God. You need to follow what the word of God says. You need to follow the eyewitness testimony of the apostles because it's the truth from God himself.

But how do you know you can trust these eyewitnesses? If everybody follows somebody, who were they following? How can you this morning know that you can trust the eyewitness account of Peter? How do you know you can trust the eyewitness account of John? How do you know that you can trust these eyewitnesses? Who were they following? If everybody follows someone or something, who were they following? How do you know you can trust them?

John chapter 15. Verses 26 and 27, the Lord Jesus Christ says this, but when the Helper, that is the Holy Spirit, when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about me, and you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning. You can follow the testimony of these eyewitnesses because they are following the testimony of the truth, and they bear witness about the truth, and you can trust that their bearing witness about the truth is trustworthy, Because the spirit of truth was given to these men, such that when they wrote the word of God, they wrote the word of God. So when you read your Bible, you can trust what is written in it.

But specifically, what does that mean you must follow the men in our context, in 2 Peter chapter one, verses 16 through 18 specifically, what we're looking at right now. What specifically must you follow? What doctrine, what belief? the belief, the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the specific doctrine that he is pinpointing here. If you're a follower of the teachings of scripture, Peter is saying you must follow them in this doctrine.

You must believe that Christ is coming again to judge the living and the dead. And if you follow them in this, you must find a way of escape on that day of judgment. And that means you must trust in Jesus Christ. Because there is no way to escape the inevitable reality, the undeniable fact that the Jesus of the scripture is coming again with a flaming sword and fire, bringing vengeance on all those who obey not God and obey not the gospel. That's what the scriptures say.

And so you must follow in believing that, and you must find the way of escape that the scriptures leave you with for that, which is to come to Jesus Christ. And, believing this truth, you also must strive to live a life that takes seriously the fact that you must give an account for the deeds that you do.

But secondly, we see, we've seen eyewitness testimony. Secondly, we see Scripture testimony, verses 19 through 21. We read here, and we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Peter's point is that not only should you believe in the second coming of Christ because of our

eyewitness accounts at the Mount of Transfiguration, you should believe in the second coming of Christ because the whole Scriptures preach it too. They preach it too.

And he's appealing specifically here in our context to the Old Testament Scriptures, but of course we know that would include the New Testament Scriptures as well. He calls the Bible here the prophetic word in verse 19. And this is likely a shorthand not just for the portions of prophecy in the Old Testament, but the prophetic word is most probably shorthand for the entire Old Testament. The reason we say that is because prophecy in the Bible is not just foretelling future events.

It's forth telling the word of God. It's telling forth the word of God. And so what is the Bible? It is telling forth the word of God. It is prophetic in that way. Every portion of it is prophetic in that way. So Peter is simply saying the Bible tells forth God's word and you better pay close attention to it.

And if you do, you will learn that it preaches the same sorts of things that I saw on that mountain. It is in conjunction with those things. What I saw on that mountain, the Mount of Transfiguration, is the same sorts of realities as what the Old Testament scriptures preach.

Now, he says that the scriptures are a light in a dark place. And if you are in a dark place, you will love it if you get a flashlight. And Peter is saying, that you are, outside of Christ, you are in a dark place. Your heart is dark, and the world is dark around you. It's spiritually dark, but he says there's a light to show you the path. There's a light to show you the way, and that light is the word of God, so pay close attention to it.

God has not left you in the dark to grope around wonder who he is or what he expects of you. God lovingly has given you his word so that you don't need to grope around in the darkness and wonder what he expects of you or who he is. He would have been just to do that. He would have been completely just to not give you a Bible. But in his loving kindness, he's given you a Bible so that you don't have to wonder who he is or what he has done or how you are to live.

And how long do you need this word of God, this light in the darkness? Verse 19b tells you, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. In other words, you're going to need your Bible until you go to glory, until either Christ returns or you go to glory. You will need your Bible. It is a necessary light shining in the darkness. And this Bible is trustworthy and authoritative. He goes on to drive this home in verse 20 and 21. Knowing this, verse 20, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

When God revealed himself to the authors of scripture, he also revealed the proper interpretation of himself and of those events. So for example, in Genesis chapter 40, Joseph has, he interprets the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker. But it is God, Genesis 40 verse eight, who gives him the interpretation, such that when Joseph gave the interpretation, it was God's interpretation. He wasn't guessing. and hoping that he was right. When he gave the interpretation of their dreams, it was the very words of God. It was the interpretation in the words of God through Joseph when he interpreted those dreams.

And this is important because what it means, for example, is when you come to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four gospels, and you read them, these are historical events of real things that took place. How do you know that you can trust the interpretation of those events that they're giving you? OK, for example, you've all had this happen at some level in some way. You and a friend see some event. I mean, it's a car wreck. And you have different interpretations of the exact same event.

How do you know that which interpretation is right? you can know that the interpretations of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John of God's revelation in the person and work of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, are true and trustworthy because God gave them the interpretation.

It wasn't their best guesses at what God did or what happened on the cross or who said this or who said that. God gave them the very words when they wrote the scriptures. He gave them the right interpretation. so that they wrote it accurately, which means it's trustworthy and authoritative. And he doubles down on this in verse 21, for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. This word, but, in verse 21 is very important.

On one side of the but, you've got man. On the other side of the but, you have God. And he's saying either the scriptures came as the source, ultimate source of the scriptures. It's either one of two things. It's either man or it's God. And if it's man, then it's no better than any other man-made document. But if it's God, it is completely authoritative and trustworthy. And which is it?

Well, he goes on to tell you. He says, human authors of scripture wrote, when they wrote, they spoke Verse 21, from God, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The ultimate source of the Bible is God himself. It is God's word. It's not merely the way we like to speak when we call it God's word. It is God's word.

And this word carried in verse 21 is loaded. Warfield comments on the significance of this word carried and he says it's not just simply saying that the spirit leads them or directs them or guides them or even controls them. It's that he carries them. to the very goals that he has. He carries them to the very words that he wants them to use, such that it is the very word of God through the human authors and personalities. This word carried, for example, is used in the book of Acts, Acts 27, to talk about how the winds carried or drove the ships along the sea. In a similar sort of way, we can say the Holy Spirit carries the human authors of scripture to the very words of God. And you see this idea throughout scripture that God works through the human authors to preach and give his word.

So for example, let's just turn to a couple of these to show how the scriptures teach this doctrine. Acts chapter 28, turn to Acts chapter 28. So you'll see that this is not just an isolated testimony. The whole scriptures speak like this. Acts chapter 28, verse 25. Acts 28, 25. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement.

The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet. The Holy Spirit was right saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit of God was speaking through Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit was speaking through Isaiah the prophet.

If you can find it, turn to Zechariah. Zechariah 7, verse 12. This is not just a New Testament concept. Zechariah 7.12. This is an incredible passage because Zechariah is a prophet and he says, the former prophets spoke through the spirit. So it's a powerful, powerful passage.

Zechariah 7.12, the they, that is the people, they made their hearts diamond hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets.

And then one more passage. 2 Samuel chapter 23. 2 Samuel 23 verses one and two. I want us to simply see that the scriptures across the board teach this doctrine of God working through the human authors such that it is his word through them. Therefore, it's trustworthy and authoritative. That's the conclusion that we must draw. 2 Samuel 23, one and two. Now these are the last words of David. The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel, the spirit of the Lord speaks by me. His word is on my tongue. And so as we think about what this means, a helpful way to capture all or at least some of what we're seeing about God's word in verses 19 through 21. Here's a way we can capture some of what we're seeing in verses 19 through 21.

It's by the acronym SCAN, S-C-A-N. Some of you all might be familiar with it, S-C-A-N. The scripture is sufficient, that's S, clear, authoritative, and necessary. Sufficient, clear, authoritative, and necessary. And verses 19 through 21 say that. They even say more than that, but they say that. And you see that in these ways.

It's sufficient because Peter appeals to the Bible to make his point. They're sufficient. He doesn't just appeal to his eyewitness testimony. He says, I can go, I can do better. I can go to the Bible itself. They're clear. He says it's a light in a dark place. That's clarity, perspicuity. It's authoritative. It's from God, not man, verse 21. It's necessary. We're in darkness. We need light. Sufficient, clear, authoritative, and necessary.

As the hymn, I'll firm a foundation says, how firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word. You here this morning do not need a dream. or some sort of vision that you don't know how to interpret. You don't know if your interpretation is right. What you need is a clear, authoritative, sufficient word from God himself that you can read. Praise God, he's given you just that in your Bible. That is the clear, authoritative, sufficient, necessary word for your doctrine and for your life. And so the takeaway is obvious, I suppose. from this sermon, it's love your Bible, read your Bible, love what he teaches you in the Bible, submit to your Bible. You know, there are always going to be false doctrines swirling around in this world, and you need this clear light to cut through it so you know what to believe.

There was once a man who was questioning Charles Hodge, who was a great theologian in the 1800s, on whether or not Charles Hodge was unsettled by the criticism of the Bible coming out of Germany. And Charles Hodge said, no. And this man was shocked. And the man said to Charles, well, what do you believe about prophecy in the Bible? Charles Hodge said, I believe the prophets were guided by the Holy Spirit.

And the man responded and said, if you believe that, you'll never be shaken. And he understood. This man, I assume he wasn't a believer. I don't know the guy who was questioning him, but he had enough sense to go, if you really believe that, you'll be fine. You'll make it through this life just fine. Doesn't mean it won't be hard, but you'll make it. You know, you don't need to be pushed around by the whims of the age. What you need to do is to be driven along by the Spirit through the Word of God.

Well, today we have seen that Christianity has firm foundations, and we've seen that because of the eyewitness testimony and the scripture testimony. And this is really how the Bible itself tells you that you can verify that something is true. In the Bible, we're told that you had to have the evidence of two or three witnesses. And Peter, following that way of doing things, has provided at least two witnesses here. Eyewitness testimony and scripture testimony.

But there's really even a third testimony here to all of the truths of Christianity. And that is the triune God. Because the Father spoke from heaven, verses 17 and 18, and they saw the majestic glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in verse 16. And it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through the prophets, verse 21.

So you here this morning ought to have every bit of competence in the truths of the Bible because of these eyewitnesses. The eyewitness testimony, or these testimonies, the eyewitness testimony, the scripture testimony, and the triune God testifies that this is the truth. Let us believe it, love it, and live according to the firm foundations of Christianity. You, believer, have no reason to be shaken if you believe what the scriptures teach.

Let us pray. Almighty God, we do praise you that we don't have to grope around in the darkness, but that you have given to us a light in a dark place. The dark place is not simply out there in the universities or out there in some place that we might think of as dark, but the dark place is our own hearts. And so we praise you that you love us enough to give us a light to shine in, that we might see who we are and we might see who you are and we might be Driven to Jesus Christ, the light of the world, in whom there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins. We praise you for light. We wouldn't know the way of salvation. We couldn't find it.

You have made it known to us and then you have given us a love for you to go and seek more light in your scriptures and to grow in grace and in holiness. Oh Lord, if there would be any saint here this morning who may be doubting, we pray, Father, that the Firm foundations of Christianity would strengthen them. And if there be, O Lord, anyone who doesn't know these firm foundations, they don't even believe that it is true. We pray that they would be persuaded and enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the gospel. God, we pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.