

Remembering to Trust God's Word

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[0 : 00] Okay, so as Graham said, we are back in our series on 2 Peter, to know and live out the truth.

Okay, and this is the second part of the series. We had a little break last week for our church weekend, our church weekender. And I want to start with a question, okay?

Okay, maybe a bit of a silly question, but I ask that you indulge me. As you may know, I'm used to talking to the kids up here. I normally have them all here, and it's a lot easier.

I find it a lot easier to speak to them than all you guys sitting way back there. So do you have a bucket list? Okay, and this is not a list of all the different peels that you might have, or the Scots word for bucket, meaning bin.

It's probably quite useful to have a bucket list, because there are so many different bins that we have to use nowadays, and, you know, all the different times that they have to go out. But yeah, a bucket list is really a list of things that you want to do before you kick the bucket.

[1 : 07] So are there things you really want to do before you die? Okay, and I wondered if you might indulge me and give a little bit of answers here. So I looked up on the internet, you know, a list, a bucket list, and I've found 10 things that seem to be the most popular things that people want to do before they die.

And I'd say this is probably, you know, it's probably more younger people, and it's probably more American, being that I found it on the internet. Okay, what do you think I might have found on this list?

What do you think I might have found on this list? What are the kind of things? Bungee jumping. That is one that's right there. Yes, bungee jumping. Skydiving. Yes. Wasn't there, but yeah, that is the kind of thing.

Scuba diving. Okay, not in the top 10, but I'm sure it's further down there. Other things? What do you think? Yeah, you're right. Swim with dolphins, it's up there.

Not quite not. I think that's probably a bit too ambitious for most people. Yeah, there's certainly travelers on there. Yeah. Okay, let's have a quick look.

[2 : 19] Let's have a quick look. What are the... I don't know if you can read that. Okay, so yeah. Swim with dolphins. Learn a new language. See the northern lights. Bungee jump. Go on a cruise. Ride a hot air balloon. Go skydiving.

Get married. Visit a volcano. See the Grand Canyon. Okay, these are the things that people want to do before they die. And I came across this story just the other day. Somebody who left it quite late to go skydiving.

Okay, this was a 100-year-old lady who went skydiving. But for some reason she thought, yes, I want to do this before I die. And she did. She said she wasn't going to do it again, though.

She just... I think she was fine. Yeah, but she didn't want to do it again. So yeah, there are things that people want to do before they die.

Now, why am I, you know, telling you all this? It's because Peter, in verse 14 here, tells us that he knows he's going to soon die.

[3 : 21] Okay? Because I know that I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. He's talking about his life.

He knows he's going to die soon. So what is he going to do? What are the things that he wants to get done before he dies? Well, writing this letter is one of the big things that he wants to do.

And this letter Peter wrote is really his final statement to the church, reminding them of the truth and countering various accusations that were leveled against the apostles' teachings at the time.

Okay? And I'm sure you won't be surprised that we too need these same reminders. Okay? To the very same truth that Peter was reminding his readers at the time.

Okay? And the same accusations that the apostles faced then are still around today. So I wonder, if you knew you were soon going to die, what would you want to do?

[4 : 33] Or what would you want to say to people? What legacy would you want to leave? Okay? And Alistair kicked off our series, like I said, two weeks ago, looking at the first 11 verses and summed them up with this sentence.

And I thought it would be right for me to remind you of this. And that's a word that you're going to hear a lot tonight. Okay, so this is how he summed up the first part of the letter.

Because God has given us everything we need for a godly life, we must make every effort to live a godly life in order to confirm our calling and election.

Our salvation is a gift from God. It all comes from him. And we, in return, we need to respond to God's gift of salvation and grow in his love so that we won't end up being ineffective and unproductive.

This was one of the things Peter wanted to remind his readers about. Even though, as he goes on to say in verse 12, they knew this truth and they were firmly established in it.

[5 : 54] And I suspect that is the case for most of us here tonight. We know the truth of the gospel and we're probably pretty firmly established in it. But we still need to be reminded.

It seems to be human nature that we so easily forget all that God has done for us. So tonight I hope that we will all be reminded of the great truth of the gospel.

And in this section we're looking at this evening, I think the main reminder is that we need to remember we can trust God's word.

Jesus will return in power. Remember, we can trust God's word. Jesus will return in power.

Okay, we can trust God's word. We can trust God's word spoken through Jesus, through the apostles and through the prophets. And for us, that means we can trust the Bible.

[7 : 07] Peter was trusting Jesus's words in verse 14 when he said that he knew he was soon going to die.

Okay, if we look in John chapter 21, this is what it says. This is when Jesus had appeared after his death.

He'd come to Peter and he was really restoring Peter. You know, Peter had denied him three times and Jesus says to ask Peter, you know, do you love me? You know, feed my sheep.

Okay, and then this is what he goes on to say. Jesus said, feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, follow me. And Peter lived by Jesus's words.

[8 : 11] He trusted Jesus with his life and his death. And as his circumstances changed, he was aware his time has now come.

And he wants to remind the church to keep following the truth. And he needs to deal with some of the false accusations that are going around. In verse 16, we...

In verse 16, we see this first accusation that Peter deals with in his letter. So verse 16 says this, 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. So the accusation is that Peter and the other apostles have just made all this stuff up about Jesus coming back again.

It's just a cleverly devised story. But Peter is clear that it's not the case. And he lets his readers know that he and others were eyewitnesses to Jesus's majesty.

[9 : 25] And they even heard a voice from heaven confirming who Jesus was. He is, of course, referring to the transfiguration, which is recorded for us in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

So let's now remind ourselves of the transfiguration. Let's read Mark chapter 9. You'll find this in the Pew Bibles on page 1012.

So yeah, Mark chapter 9, starting at verse 2. Page 1012 in the Pew Bibles. Okay. After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and led them up a high mountain where they were all alone.

There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses who were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. He did not know what to say.

[10:45] They were so frightened. Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud. This is my son whom I love.

Listen to him. Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what rising from the dead meant. So, why the transfiguration?

Peter was witness to many of Jesus' miracles. He saw Jesus when he appeared again after his resurrection, and he was witness to Jesus' ascension, where he went back up to heaven.

So, why out of all of these things that he could have chosen, why does he choose to reference the transfiguration? I think it's because this is the one time that Peter saw Jesus as he truly is.

[12:00] Jesus wasn't just a man. Jesus was also God. And Peter saw Jesus in his majestic glory, as we all will one day, whether we're trusting in him or not.

For those of us who are saved through Jesus' death and resurrection, it will be a wonderful day. For those who are not, it will be a terrible day of reckoning.

And last weekend, with Jonathan Lamb, it was a great reminder of how we should be living in light of Jesus' return. Okay, if you weren't there, or you haven't seen the videos yet, it's very easy to watch them on our YouTube channel, and I would recommend that you do that if you haven't seen them.

It's a great reminder that Jesus is coming back, and a great reminder of how we should be living in light of that. Peter also tells us that he heard God's voice.

And this is what the voice said. It said, this is my son, whom I love. With him, I am well pleased.

God the Father is confirming that Jesus is his son, and that he loves him, and that he approves of what he is doing.

[13:27] This was a crucial time for the disciples, as Jesus had just started telling them of his coming death. And they needed the reassurance, or the reminder, that Jesus was on the right path, and they could trust him and follow him.

But, why should we believe Peter when he claims these things? Well, first of all, there are three witnesses to the transfiguration.

It wasn't just Peter that witnessed this. And the same goes for most of the miracles and the miraculous events in the Bible. Many different people claim to have seen Jesus alive after his death.

It wasn't just Peter. And when the New Testament was written, many of these witnesses would still have been alive. This stands in stark contrast to other religions, where there will only be one witness to the supposed miracle or message from God.

Take Islam, for example. Muhammad was the only one to witness the angel Gabriel speaking to him and telling him what to write in the Quran. Or Mormonism.

[14:49] Joseph Smith, he was the only one who was able to translate the golden plates which the Book of Mormon supposedly came from. Christianity stands apart in that it has multiple witnesses to its miraculous events.

Okay, another reason that we have to trust the accounts in the Bible, particularly around the apostles, is just how unflattering the records are about them.

And Peter, especially, comes off rather badly. He is the one who all too often sticks his foot in it. In his rush to be first, he often does or says the wrong thing.

Even in the transfiguration, he manages to make a bit of a fool out of himself. We see that in verse 6, verse 5 and 6.

You know, he blurts out this sentence, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. And then we're told why he said this.

[16:04] He did not know what to say because they were so frightened. Okay, does that seem to you like a cleverly devised story? Okay, it doesn't to me.

And throughout the Gospels, you get the same thing with the other apostles too. They argue they often get things wrong. Okay, they often had little faith.

They got scared and they ran away. Does that seem like a cleverly devised story to you? Okay, I don't think it's what we would come up with if we wanted to be the new leaders of a new movement. Surely you would want to make yourself out to be better than you really are. You would want to look like the kind of leader worth following so you could take over the mantle from your leader who is gone.

But I guess it is possible that the apostles could have all gotten together and fabricated a story about their leader coming back to life just so they could keep his following going and even said that he was going to come back again.

[17:26] It's possible but I think there is good reason to doubt that that could have happened. There's a famous quote about the authenticity of the resurrection. And I've been aware of this quote for quite some time but it's only very recently that I learned about the man who said it.

It's about Watergate which is the original scandal that had this word gate in it that has given birth to all sorts of scandals over the years.

Just recently we've had Partygate that's been in the headlines a lot and now all of a sudden I'm seeing Beergate seems to be the latest scandal.

I wonder does anyone know when the original Watergate happened? Anyone remember it? Know when it happened? Very close 72.

So it's 50 years this year. 50 years next month that the original Watergate scandal happened and for anyone who doesn't know Watergate is the name of the building that was broken into by people acting on behalf of the then President of the United States of America Richard Nixon.

[18:41] And they broke in there so they could spy on his political rivals the Democrats and there was a massive cover-up and it all got way out of hand. And here is the quote.

I know the resurrection is a fact and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead.

dead. Then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned, and put in prison.

They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks.

You're telling me 12 apostles could keep alive for 40 years? Absolutely impossible. Now this quote isn't just from someone looking on at Watergate, at the Watergate scandal, and coming to this conclusion, but rather it was from someone deeply involved, this guy, Charles Coulson.

[19:58] He was an American attorney and political advisor who served a special counsel to President Richard Nixon from 1969 to 1970.

He was once known as Richard Nixon's Hatchet Man. He gained notoriety at the height of the Watergate scandal for being named as one of the Watergate Seven and also for pleading guilty to obstruction of justice.

And in 1974 he served seven months in prison for this obstruction of justice. However, in 1973 he became a Christian and his midlife conversion sparked a radical life change that led to the founding of his ministry, Prison Fellowship and then Prison Fellowship International.

This is the power of the gospel. When the newspapers at the time first heard of his conversion, many of them said it was a made-up story just so he could get out of some prison time.

But eventually when it became clear that it was true that he had become a Christian, one of the newspapers said about him that if even he could repent of his sin, then there's hope for all of us.

[21:26] you see, the truth of the gospel is a real lived-out experience. Peter experienced Jesus' transfiguration where Jesus was changed and his majesty was there to be seen.

But we can experience the transformation of the gospel and it's good to be reminded of that. It's one of the reasons that baptisms are so great.

To hear people's testimonies, to see them want to proclaim that they are now followers of Jesus and to tell us how God has transformed their lives.

It's good to be reminded of the transformational power of God's words. So yes, we can remember, sorry, we remember, we can trust God's word.

Jesus will return in power. The apostles didn't make it up. So, what about the rest of the Bible then? Peter goes on to say in the last chunk of our passage tonight, he says this, 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.

[22 : 58] Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 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.

When Jesus appeared on the scene the first time, it was not completely out of the blue. His life, death, and resurrection were all foretold by the prophets.

In fact, Jesus fulfilled at least 300 prophecies in his earthly ministry. Isaiah 53 was written about 700 years before Jesus was on earth.

And it amazes me every time I read it. It almost seems like something that was written after Jesus' crucifixion because it describes it so well.

And although the Bible has roughly 40 different human authors, in reality, as Peter says, it has only one author, God.

[24 : 20] And that is why these 66 books work together so well, and why their prophecies have come true, and why we can trust the prophecies that have not yet come true.

And even at the transfiguration, with Moses and Elijah there, Elijah appearing is the fulfillment of a prophecy in Malachi 4.

And when you look at what's called the meta narrative, the big overarching story of the Bible, you see how wonderfully it all fits together. The themes repeat and they grow wonderfully.

something that I find really helpful in seeing that overarching story is a thing called the Bible Project. If you've not come across it before, I'd recommend that you look it up. It does a great job of working through the themes as they go throughout the whole Bible. So yes, remember, we can trust God's word.

[25 : 33] Jesus will return in power. The prophets confirm it. So as I come to an end here, I hope that's been a good reminder to you.

I hope it's given you some confidence in God's word if you didn't have it. But if you are struggling with doubts, then I would urge you to be like the Bereans who we heard about this morning. Search the scriptures. The Bible stands up to our inquiries. If we're willing to put the time in, if we're willing to ask God to help us, I guess that's one of the key things.

We need the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to us. These points that I've made about how true the Bible is, they're not going to convince someone without the Holy Spirit at work in their lives.

But for us, hopefully, it is a good reminder of these things. And as you go into this week, how are you going to be reminded of these truths?

[26 : 51] How are you going to be reminded of the truth of the gospel? We talked about this last weekend with Jonathan Lamb. He asked us, you know, he talked about it and we were asked to discuss it as well.

And some of us, we talked about there was mention of having post-it notes up, post-it notes up of the truth so that we would, you know, whenever, whatever we're doing, we would see them.

someone I was talking to talked about having alarms on their phones so that it would pop up, a verse would pop up and it would be a reminder of the truth or there would be a reminder to pray.

So I want you to think about that. What are you going to do this week to remind yourself of the truth? And then how are you going to be like Peter?

Are you going to be like Peter? Are you going to remind others? You know, that's another thing that we need. We need each other to remind each other of the truth of the gospel.

And we are going to take communion tonight. And again, that is a great reminder of all that Jesus has done. You know, Jesus himself told us to do that, to remember him.

[28 : 19] So let me just pray to finish. Heavenly Father, help us to have confidence confidence in your word.

Lord, help us to remember that we can trust your word and that we can trust that Jesus is going to come back again and he is going to come back in power.

And Lord, as we pray together, as we take communion together, Lord, I pray that your Holy Spirit would be at work in our lives. Reminding us of all that Jesus has done for us.

Lord, and help us to respond to that in love. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Him. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[29 : 41] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.