

“REMEMBER WHAT I SAID.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: II Peter 1:12-15

Introduction.

My prayer reminded me that I forgot to mention Gert VV died this past Monday, her service will be this Friday at 11 am here at First CRC.

Have you ever been in one of those awkward situations where someone is repeating themselves and you aren't quite sure how to act? Do you just act like it's the first time, do you say "You said that already?" You know, like when I repeated that announcement just now. And you all just thought I was losing my mind, right?

Peter repeats himself three times in this short passage but he's not losing his mind either, there is good reason for what he is doing.

II Peter 1:12-15.

The context for understanding our passage is twofold. *First*, our text gives us a clear sense that Peter is aware he is coming to the end of his life. Peter is repeating himself, but it's not because he is getting old. He knows he won't be with them much longer.

Second, he knows that these Christians are being hounded by false teachers who are bombarding them with lies, deceptions and distorted doctrine. They are enticing them with new and novel ideas and actually ideas that appeal to the lusts of the flesh.

Peter starts out by acknowledging that he knows that he is repeating himself. Maybe he is sensitive to the possibility that some people might be a little annoyed with his repetition or think he is getting old and losing it.

I get that. I am sensitive to the fact that I have been here long enough I am sometimes aware when I repeat stories or phrases I have used before. A couple of weeks ago I did it a couple of times in a sermon, but I flagged it by saying, "As I have said before ..."

Peter knows he is repeating some things, but he makes no apology, they are that important. There are some things that are worthy of reminders, worthy of repetition.

Paul certainly had no qualms about repeating himself.

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

Romans 15:14-15 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. 15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder

Yes, I know you know, but I am bold to repeat, it is that important.

So let me remind you of the eight qualities Peter is referring to.

II Peter 1:5-7 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

He reminds us our faith must be a growing faith, a living faith, a faith that is being supplemented by qualities that will keep us from falling and from being ineffective, qualities that will make our faith fruitful.

Peter is using one of the most ancient teaching methods. Reminders by way of repetition or is it repetition by way of reminders.

“I am writing to remind you ... by way of reminder ... so that you may be able to recall these things.” And if that isn’t enough he says it again at the beginning of chapter three.

II Peter 3:1-2 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, 2 that you should remember* the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.

We live in a world that is enamored with what is new, fresh, original. But Peter is saying don’t be taken in by all that. If you want to finish well, you need only remember a few of the basics you have already learned and that I am only reminding you of.

Like when my HS football coach spent an entire practice just going back over the basics we had learned over and over already.

I have said before it is not my desire to be new, novel and original, but to be faithful to what we have already received in Scripture.

Peter says it is right, good, best that I remind you. It is right, it is my job. This is what pastors are supposed to do. Remind, repeat, refresh, point back to the old truths and basics of the faith, underline, highlight.

The business of preachers is not to come up with new and innovative teachings, but rather to remind us of the eternal truths of God. Of the fundamentals of the faith. I don't seek to be cute or original, but faithful in dividing the Word of God.

Truth has a tendency to leak out. Look how quickly our nation is forgetting the basic truths of God concerning life and morality and health living. We have forgotten who has made us and who we belong to and why we are here and what is the true meaning and purpose of life.

Peter's day was just like our day. So Peter reminds them that the Gospel is nothing new but something old. Jesus came to earth as the Son of God to become a sacrifice and our substitute for our sin and when we receive Him and His grace by faith, that calls us to a new way of life, a life that reflects holiness and godliness and Christ-likeness. Only this Gospel saves and only this Gospel has the power to change us.

The purposes of reminders, establish us in the truth and to stir us to action.

There is a method in Peter's madness, or in his repeating himself.

Peter makes no apology for reminding them and refreshing their memory so they will be able to recall to mind the truth.

Peter is saying, "I know perfectly well that you know these things, I remember saying them to you and I know that you are even grounded and established in them; but I know myself and I know human nature and how easily we can forget or get off track if we don't keep things constantly right in the front of our minds."

We are always in danger of being uproot so there is a need to always call us to be more firmly rooted. Peter knows well the danger, how he boasted that he was firmly rooted and would never be uprooted, only to be uprooted by the first accusation of a little servant girl.

That experience stayed with Peter the rest of his life and was the motivation for what he says here. Peter writes to us so that we will not fall. And faithful to Jesus' command to him, he is now writing to strengthen us.

Here Peter is, two thousand years after his death, still strengthening his brothers. When we get to heaven we should make a point of finding Peter and thank him for this good word to us, for strengthening us and helping us to run the race well and to finish well.

These eight qualities are meant to give us foundational and vertical and horizontal stability, structural integrity for our souls.

I did a little digging to find out about the foundations under three of the tallest buildings in the world. The old Sears Tower, the new World Trade Center in NYC and the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. The tallest has a foundation of 167 feet deep, WTC is 80 feet deep, and the Sears Tower is 100 feet deep. And extra things were done to supplement the integrity of those foundations.

Christian who want to keep from falling, who want a faith the flourishes, who want to finish well, and resist the winds of culture, and be able to grow further up and further in, will take Peter's words to heart.

Make every effort to add to your faith virtue and knowledge. Add to that self-control and steadfastness or perseverance. Show yourself to be godly through your affection and love for others. That's the capstone. Didn't Jesus say that it is by love that we will prove we are His disciples and are walking in the faith?

The importance of memory and the danger of forgetting.

Memory plays an important role in our spiritual life. In Scripture there are well over 200 calls to remember. Remember the Lord, remember what He has done remember the Sabbath, remember the Word of the Lord.

Psalm 77:11-12 I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. 12 I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.

Memory is something that must be *constantly stirred up*, roused awake, fanned into flames.

Is there anything more common in our lives than *forgetting*? All of us have memory lapses. We like to call them senior moments but the truth is we forget all kinds of things all through life.

We forget appointments, where we left the keys, what that person's name is, and what the password is for our online banking site.

We make New Year's resolutions and then forget them. We make vows and oaths and promises and then forget to keep them.

As a parent walking out the door what do we say? "Remember what I said. Don't forget what I told you, do this and don't do that."

When you put your child on a bus or plane, you have a few last words.

Graduation speeches are a time for last words, hopefully things of first importance.

We have days like Memorial Day and Veterans Day to help us remember the sacrifices of others for our freedoms, yet we forget to appreciate what we have and why we have it.

We are reading Peter's last will and testament. Like Deuteronomy is for Moses and II Timothy for Paul. Like the last words of Jacob from his deathbed to his 12 sons at the end of Genesis.

Peter knows the end is near, he writes to his friends who are like children to him. He exhorts them to remember his teaching and he gives them final charges for moral living.

This letter is Peter's way of helping them remember. He puts it in black and white. This is one way of preserving the truth past his death.

Implications and application.

First, one of our most important ministries to each other is to help each other to remember what we know and to remind each other of the truths of our faith.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

I need this. I was discouraged about a few things this week and someone's words in a letter and some of my dear wife's words were needed to remind me what is true.

We are too easily and quickly overcome by the enemy of our souls and by the weakness of our own flesh.

For most of us our forgetting doesn't take the form of forgetting who God is or who Jesus is or what Jesus did for us. If asked we could recite much of the 10 Commandments and Lord's Prayer and John 3:16. We could talk about the Gospel and grace.

We know how we are to live, but we forget to do it. We know what we believe but we forget to live it. We know the truth but we forget it in the face of a crisis or trial. It is easy to forget what we already know.

Hebrews 3:12-13 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Preach the Gospel to yourself. Preach the Gospel to each other.
Do you want help to be a better counselor, learn to remind others of the Gospel.

Second, make it one of the goals of your life, to pass something on, to leave something behind, to leave a legacy, a testimony, a witness. To point the way and show the way.

Before we die, leave behind something that will never die, the truth concerning Jesus. We die, but the Word of God abides forever.

Peter is living wisely, he knows life is short and fleeting, and his time remaining is short. He seeks to use it well. He writes a letter.

Look how much we profit from Peter's writings which he wrote down just before his death, so he could pass something on and leave something good behind.

And as age or health changes it ought to spur us on to a greater diligence in carrying out our calling and responsibility. Don't miss or pass up an opportunity to do or speak some good.

May we follow his good example and do the same.