

Gospel Reminders 2 Peter 1:12-21

One of my favorite songs in the musical *Hamilton* is “Non-Stop,” which creatively expresses the Founding Father’s remarkable ability to write. The story is told of how he wrote 51 of the federalists papers in six months, defending the constitution. Then Aaron Burr asks Hamilton a series of questions with the same repeated line about running out of time:

How do you write like you're running out of time?
Write day and night like you're running out of time?
Everyday you fight like you're running out of time
Like you're running out of time
Are you running out of time?
How do you write like tomorrow won't arrive?
How do you write like you need it to survive?
How do you write every second you're alive?
Every second you're alive? Every second you're alive?

The Apostle Peter is writing like he’s running out of time ... because he is.

- He had the most credible source: “as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me” (v. 14).
- This is like **Peter’s farewell sermon**.

So what does he write in these final moments?

He reminds his readers of important gospel truth, and warns about false teachers.

- 3 x in 4 verses, “**remind**”
 - “I intend always to remind you” (v. 12).
 - “I think it is right . . . to stir you up by way of reminder” (v. 13).
 - “I will also make every effort so that you are able to recall these things at any time after my departure” (v. 15).
- **Why? Because they couldn’t afford to forget these things!**
- **He knows the threat of false teachers and what is at stake.**
- **Theo particular issues in view: **godliness and the return of Christ**.**
- **2 Peter 2 will show that these false teachers denied the call to godliness, and questioned the second coming.**

#1: A Reminder to Pursue a Godly Life (1:12-15)

12a: *therefore and these qualities* look back to the qualities of a fruitful Christian, which leads to entrance in Jesus’ kingdom. (1:5-11)

12b: “Established in the truth.”

- This is an encouraging compliment. “You know the truth.”
- **Established**: firm foundation, not able to be knocked over.
- They were not moved by false teachers at the moment.
- The gospel had made them a rock.
- To withstand heresy, **we need knowledge of the truth.**

- But Peter realized that it's possible to be grounded in the truth one day, **but drift away theologically and spiritually. I can give specific examples of this.**
 - He knew this from his own life!
 - He knew what it was like to be strong in one moment, but to crash in the next.
- **See 3:16b-17**

So we need to make sure we're nourishing Godliness; that we're feasting on God's truth; hearing his word; applying it to our lives.

- "Feed me" (with cupped hands)

Our passion for the gospel and growth in godliness can cool, so Peter goes on to say...

13: "I think it is right, as long as I am in this body, to stir [awaken] you up by way of reminder"

- "tent" = body (v. 13),
- Our body is temporary dwelling place that one day **would be folded up.**
- The fleeting nature of life: "[laying] aside my tent" (v. 14): the image of removing a piece of clothing.
- He's saying: "I don't have much time left."
- **So he wants to make the time count.**
- **So what's he do? He attempts to stir up their affections for Christ, and for godliness.**
- **Like all good teachers, he wants to awaken their affections for Christ's majesty.**
- Even though they knew the gospel they needed to **spiritual renewal.**

So do we!

- **We drift when our passions cool!**
- **One of the jobs of teachers and fellow members is to stir up passion, not just give the right answers.**
- **We do this for one another** (Hebrews 10, "stir up one another to love and good deeds")
- **Romans 8:35-39.** After asking, **"What can separate us from the love of God?" Paul could have said, "Nothing. Chapter 9."** But he doesn't. He spends time writing beautiful words in order to not only given them the right answer, but to move them to worship and faithfulness.
- He stirs their affections for Christ.

Often people drift into false teaching because their hearts grow cold toward Christ.

Their hearts drift before their theology goes.

- **Young lady falls for an unbelieving guy, and she gets so captivated by him that she renounces her convictions.**
- **Successful businessman slowly grows cold toward Christ, hasn't read the Bible in months; lives on the news media and entertainment, is greedy for more stuff, eventually commits sins that ends his marriage, and says, well I never believed that stuff.**
- **We live out of our loves.**
 - **The failure to adore Christ deeply leads to all kinds of ungodly activity.**

- But if you love Jesus deeply, it will change your behavior, attitude, and relationships completely.
- It is possible to know Bible facts, but not be awed by the God of the Bible!
 - We need to be stirred up!!!!
 - This is the aim of preaching: For people to leave and say, “What a great Savior!” Not “What a great sermon!”
 - In addition to cupped hands, we should say to our friends/pastors/teachers, “stir me up”

15: “I will also make every effort” (v. 15) –

he’s passionate in his teaching! He knows how important it is to stir people up!

He says he wants them to be able “to recall these things at any time” (v. 15).

- The emphasis here is on the *scope* of the reader’s remembrance. (This letter, Mark?)
- He wants them to **always remember the essentials.**
 - We have the written word, praise God!
 - We have the **Lord’s Supper to regularly help us remember what He has done, and what he will do!**
- We always need to the ability to recall gospel truth.
- **God’s people have rebelled when they’ve forgotten his grace.**
- **“Remember Jesus Christ” (2 Tim 2)**
- We need to remember that our sins are forgiven, that we are new creations, that we have everything we need for life and godliness, that Christ, our God and Savior is coming again, and we will dwell in the new heavens and new earth.
- And we should never lose the wonder of these things!

That’s the need for reminding.

- **Won’t this get old?**
 - No! Hearing my wife loves me every day never gets old!
 - No! Christ’s glory inexhaustible! (Eph 3)
 - Exhausted people need to remember the inexhaustible grace and power and love of Jesus Christ.
 - No! We can emphasize various aspects of Christ’s redeeming work. .
 - Walking the neighborhood: **Saying hello differently... creatively**

Why? That we may be stirred up to worship and to live a virtuous life. .

#2: A Reminder about the Truth of Christ’s Return (1:16-21)

- Peter begins to defend Christ’s return, which he will do throughout the letter.
- He answers their objections by appealing to the transfiguration (as an anticipation of that return) and to the OT writings.
 - He appeals to the apostolic testimony and the prophetic witness to counter the heretics.
 - This is a rich passage on the nature of Scripture

A. Based on Apostolic Eyewitnesses (16-18)

i. A Historical and Majestic Event (v. 16)

16: They claim that the return of Christ is “a cleverly devised myth.”

- You will meet people today who argue along the same lines.
- This is all a myth; it’s an urban legend... it’s a conspiracy theory.
 - Haven’t you read the Divinci Code? Get with it man.
 - Don’t you believe in science?
 - “You might as well believe in the Easter Bunny and have the tooth fairy drive you to church.”
 - “You’re praying to an imaginary friend”
- **But the Christ events are anchored in human history.**
 - **This is a unique feature of the Christian faith.**
- NT writers exhort God’s people to **not follow myths/fables:**
 - 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14

The Greco-Roman culture also labeled not only things in the **past** as myths, **but also tales of another world as a myth.** That’s probably happening here, as the emphasis is on the coming of Christ.

16b: Peter says that the “**power and coming of Christ**” at the Transfiguration **anticipated** the power and glory of Christ’s return (see Mark 9:2-8).

- The veil was lifted and the booming voice was heard!

“**power and coming**” are to be taken together: “**the powerful coming of Christ.**”

- He appeals to what he **saw and heard in history** as preview of **what we will behold.**
- One actual event prepares us for another actual event.

Christ’s coming will be majestic, visible, and climactic! (Matt 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7-10)

The word “**coming**” is the word “**Parousia**” which was used of the arrival of a god or ruler in the Hellenistic world.

- **Whenever a famous politician or athlete or actor comes to town, there’s often fanfare, security, and great emotion. (Recently)**
- It’s regularly used of the return of Christ.
- Mark 14:61–62: “Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” 62 And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (Cf, **1 Cor 15:20-25**)
- **All comings pale in comparison to the Parousia of Jesus Christ!**
- **3:12** – “the coming day of God”
- What Peter is preaching, then, is the powerful coming of Jesus where the kingdom will be consummated, the dead raised, and judgment occurring.
- And his **first proof is the Transfiguration,** an eyewitness experience.

ii. What Happened (17)

17: The Father attributed **glory** and **honor** to the Son at the Transfiguration, and the majestic voice, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” was heard.

- **Psalm 8:5 (glory and honor), humanity**, Jesus obeyed where humanity failed.
- The Father approved of the Son.

“**Majesty**” – the Son (v. 16) and the Father (v. 17) - **Also Psalm 8**, “how majestic is your name”

- **The Majesty of the Father is shared by the Son**
- **The Son’s glory was manifested at the Transfiguration in his face and clothes; and the majesty of the Father was manifested by his voice of affirmation.**
- This honor and glory and majesty is a foretaste of the glory to come.
 - **Illustration: Smoked some ribs, giving a little taste**
 - Peter is saying: “We tasted glory, and there’s more to come”
- **He is the one the law and the prophets pointed to (Moses/Elijah)**

These words “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased” is a combination of **Psalm 2:7 (my son, Royal King) Gen 22 (beloved) , Isaiah 42:1 (my servant in whom I delight)**

- The long-awaited Son of David, the Suffering Servant, the Messiah, the beloved, the one in whom the Father delights **has come and he will come again.**

iii. Eyewitnesses (18)

18: He repeats the fact that he was there and heard the Father’s voice.

- The mountain was **made holy** in that moment.
- This may be an allusion to **Psalm 2:6**, “as for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.”
- **Just as Moses met with God at Mount Sinai, so the apostles saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

When you first grasp what Peter is saying, it may be strange to use the Transfiguration as an argument for the second coming.

- However, in Matt/Mk/Lk the transfiguration follows **the declaration that God’s kingdom will come in power**, suggesting that the transfiguration anticipates our Lord’s powerful return (**Matt 16:18-17:13; Mark 9:1-13; Lk 9:27-36**);
- Read **Matt 16:27ff.**
- The transfiguration manifested the powerful coming of the kingdom.
- **Peter’s eyewitness account (along with James/John) demonstrates that they weren’t dreaming or on drugs.**

The Transfiguration wasn’t myth, and neither is his return!

- **Count on it, ladies and gentlemen, the Son of David, the King of Kings, the Beloved One will come again in power!**

B. Based on the Holy Scriptures (19-21)

- **Peter is referring to the OT, but what he says about Scripture applies to all Scripture.**
- Even in this letter Peter speaks of **Paul’s writings** as “the Scriptures” (2 Pet 3:16).

Let's look at verses 20-21, and then **back up to verse 19**, considering our responsibility to it.

i. The Reliability of Scripture (19-20)

19: Peter says because the transfiguration partially fulfilled elements of OT hope, the prophetic word is more fully confirmed (Storms).

- There's even more reason to believe the prophets.
- **It provides more confirmation of the validity and reliability of the Scriptures.**
- **For, the apostle's eyewitness account demonstrates the fulfillment of the OT promises.**

“no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own **interpretation.” (20)**

- **Not from someone's individual understanding of events or visions...**
- **The events need explanation and interpreted.**
- **The false prophets, “Sure the prophets had encounters with God, but their recording of those events are unreliable; it was guesswork.”**
- **Peter says not so.**
- **The prophets (and apostles) witnessed certain events, but then were also given the right understanding of those events, and then communicated it.**
- Two examples:
 - **Moses** — So a group of people relocated. Okay. That happened all the time. But Moses was raised up to record and interreupt these events, giving us the redemptive emphasis of the event.
 - **Crucifixion**: Many people were crucified; we need more than the event, we have Jesus explaining the meaning of his death and passed on that teaching to the apostles. We need that explanation.
- **So historical events happened.**
- **Prophets/Apostles were raised up.**
- **They recorded and interrupted the events.**
- **This record was written down...**
- **This final product, the Bible, gives us light in a dark world.**

ii. The Divine Nature of Scripture (21)

“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man” (21a)

It didn't originate from the prophets.

- **They didn't wake up and say, “Feels like a good day to write the Bible.”**
- **It came from the will of God, not the will of man.**
- **When the prophets spoke, their words came from God.**
 - **Inspiration not Inspirational**
 - It's from God; it's breathed out by God.
- **When God called his prophets, he commanded them to speak what he gave them (Jer 1:7-10; Ezek 2:7).**

“but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (21b)

- **Divine**: Holy Spirit (**recall 1 Pet 1:11**)
- **But there was a human aspect** (dual authorship of Scripture) in a sense that they actually spoke as they were carried along by the Spirit.

- Scripture **didn't drop from the sky or appear under a rock**.
- It was transmitted through human writers who were "carried along by the Holy Spirit"
 - *pheromenoi*, "were carried along." A ship carried by the wind (Acts 27.15, 17)
 - (cf. wind: Acts 2:2; John 3:8).

Therefore, the Scriptures are accurate and authoritative.

iii. Our Response to Scripture: Pay Attention to it!

- We weren't there to see Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration, but we see his glory in God's Word.
- The Scriptures lead us to Christ!
- Therefore, we should "**pay attention**" to God's Word, as it is fully reliable and it fills us with hope!
- "**A lamp shining in a dark place**" drives home the point that we live in a world of darkness, so we fix our eyes on the glory of Christ and the truth of God's Word.
- The point is that the prophetic word provides guidance, particularly in defense to second coming.
 - We are like pilgrims journeying in the night and we need Scripture to light up our path (Ps 119:101)
 - Implications of this metaphor
 - Scripture has a practical purpose — it shows us the way to live, and ultimately the way to heaven.
 - Scripture is understandable. It's not a puzzle, or a riddle; though it does have some difficult aspects.
 - We believe in the clarity of Scripture.

Regarding this idea of showing us the way to glory, Peter fills us with eschatological hope: "**until the day dawns and the morning star shines in your heart**"

- We're waiting on "**the day**" – the arrival of God's eschatological acts.

"**morning star**" is used symbolically and is a phrase taken from the story of Balaam (**Num 24:14-19**) who prophesied that in the latter days God would raise up a royal person to defeat God's enemies and exercise dominion where Adam did not.

- Peter then is telling his readers to fix their eyes on the return of Christ, this one who will defeat our enemies and establish this kingdom.

Revelation 22:16 - This is what Jesus calls himself!

- Names are important.
 - We take time to select names.
 - We give nicknames.
 - We identify people by their names.
- Here, **you might say that we read about Jesus' last name!**
 - It's not Smith or Jackson ... or some other popular names, but "Morning Star"

- Previously, others have called him the Christ, the Anointed One, the Word, the Holy One, the Lion of Judah, the Root of Jesse, The suffering servant, the Prince of Peace, All are precious. All packed full of meaning.
- Morning Star is **so important because we will experience many dark days on this earth.**
 - The nights can get very dark due to suffering and sin...
 - The darkness reminds us of how valuable light is, and how much we need it.
 - Praise God we have the Morning Star
 - In the midst of despair, and hopelessness, we declare that there is hope and salvation and a new creation that will dawn!
- Jesus came into this dark world, and experience darkness himself, as he died on the cross in the place of sinners, so that we may have the light of salvation.
- John says we won't need the sun because Jesus will enlighten heaven with his presence.

What's in a Name?

- It's simple: It's the promise of dawn— a new day.
- The dawn is coming for all who see and claim Christ as their Morning Star, their blessed hope.
- This hope is given to us in the Scriptures.

When Christ returns, we will perceive this revelation in our “**hearts**”

- He will illuminate our hearts with love and wonder and pure delight.
- Davids: “Then the light of Christ will be in our hearts, and we will no longer need the Scriptures. One treasures a love letter while the beloved is absent, but once he or she is present, the letter is laid aside and exchanged for the personal contact.”

And today we gladly confession, Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again!

- This isn't myth; this is gospel truth.
 - Believe it!
 - Proclaim it!
 - Rejoice in it!
 - Stir others up with it!
- Like you're running out of time ... because we're running out of time...
- Soon we will see our Christ!