

I. Introduction

- A. Will you think with me today on the topic The Sure and Certain Word.
- B. I would propose to you that the biggest obstacle to a life of faith is something most of us could never put our finger on.
- C. Here, in our place in the Bible, Peter identifies it for us in a roundabout way.
- D. Let's see how that happens.

II. Exposition

- A. *For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. (2 Peter 1:12-15)*
 - 1. The writer here is a man named Peter, one of the original disciples of Jesus.
 - 2. The time is about two thousand years ago.
 - 3. The situation is that the Christian churches are being attacked by false teachers.
 - 4. So Peter writes this letter to them. He intends it to be copied and distributed in all the churches, and then read and explained. Just like we're doing now.
 - 5. Peter says "*for this reason*." The reason is that he wants you and me and everybody who has received Jesus to have a first class entrance into heaven... that's what we talked about last time.
 - 6. So, because of that desire, he says he wants to remind us of something. He says this three times for emphasis. Remind you. Stir you up by reminding you. I will ensure that you always have a reminder of these things.
 - 7. It's hard to miss that Peter is really committed to reminding God's people of the amazing truths they have been taught.
 - a) Included in this paragraph, Peter says, and by the way I'm going to die soon. I am living in this tent — he means his physical body — and he knows shortly he must put off his tent. He's going to die.
 - b) But he also knows that there is a part of him that will survive death. His soul, his personality, his spirit, his real self will leave his body and he will be with the Lord.
 - c) Doesn't that put everything in perspective?
 - d) Between the beginning and the end of our days, we get one chance at a life of love, a life that delivers grace into this pain machine called planet earth.
 - 8. So he reminds them, and he reminds them, and he reminds them again of biblical truths they have already been taught. He even gives us permanent reminders by writing not only First and Second Peter, but also influencing the Gospel of Mark.
 - 9. Which is why two thousand years later, here we are, reading his book, and being reminded again.
 - 10. When you list out the most important truths of our faith — the matchless grace of God, Jesus and Calvary's cross, his resurrection, being saved and born again, Christ indwelling you, the Holy Spirit, heaven, the supremacy of Scripture for faith and life — these are not truths that hit you in the face every single day. Nobody's talking about this stuff at school, at work, at play. At best, they're in the background.
 - 11. Most of your life has little mention of God. You are living and working and parenting and going to school in a daily world of sense and sensation. Secular, not sacred. And secularism is the devil's most devious false religion.
 - 12. *If your life is mainly secular, when does the sacred step forward?*
 - a) You need to be reminded that things that are seen are temporary, but things that are unseen last forever.
 - b) You need to be reminded of the emptiness of earthly fame and the vanity of earthly glory.
 - c) You need to be reminded that your treasure is in heaven, that on earth you are just a pilgrim, and that this world is always sinking into chaos until Jesus returns to establish his kingdom.
 - (1) You need to be reminded of these things so that you don't drift, don't fall away, don't backslide into a new normal where the sacred has disappeared. It happens so fast.
 - 13. The biggest obstacle to faith — and to wholeness, and holiness, and happiness, and the joy of Christ —
 - a) The biggest obstacle to power and grace and love that God wants to pour into your life is living in the present and the visible, and therefore living *for* the present and the visible.
 - 14. Earthly stuff takes over.
 - 15. Earthly stuff crowds out God.
 - 16. So heavenly stuff gets forgotten. Eternal stuff fades away.
 - a) This is the normal pattern of things.
 - b) But that normal pattern has a devastating consequence long term.
 - 17. The consequence is that you forget who you are as a Christian. You forget your forgiveness, you forget your identity, you forget your true purpose. Love fades away. Your testimony fades away. And life may be good, but it is never great. And you spend eternity in heaven's economy class.
 - a) This is a backslidden Christian, still saved, still loved by God, but sleepwalking and secularized and almost never touching the sacred.
 - b) How many Christians in our culture today live everyday with scarcely one bit of meaningful reference to God!
 - c) It's a danger for us all. Don't underestimate the devil's craftiness.
 - 18. So God sends the pastor, the minister, the preacher of the Word of God to remind you of all those invisible things, and those spiritual realities that matter most because they impact you most.
 - 19. So... with all the love in my heart I have...
 - a) I stand here today to remind you that you are a created being from the hand of the living and true God.

- b) I stand to remind you that you are accountable to this God and before him you stand charged as guilty of moral rebellion and sin.
 - c) I stand to remind you that this same God, though he is holy, is abundant in mercy.
 - d) I stand to remind you that, in his grace, God sent his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to take your place, to bear your sins, and to accept your punishment.
 - e) I stand to remind you that God has called all people everywhere to be saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ and His shed blood alone.
 - f) I stand here to remind you that God has spoken, once for all and decisively in the Holy Scriptures, which are to be studied all life long.
 - g) I stand to remind you that no one can break God's laws, we can only break ourselves against God's laws. This is the underlying problem of all cultural breakdown today.
 - h) I stand to remind you that this fallen world is a morally broken Pain Machine, but that the Grace Machine is bigger and wins in the end.
 - i) I stand to remind you that as you have been saved by grace, so you are called and commanded to walk by grace.
 - j) I stand to remind you that you are his witness, the living proof of his saving grace, sent to call a lost and dying world to find the same treasure you find when you found Christ.
 - k) I stand to remind you of what a friend you have in Jesus. And that it will be worth it all when you see Jesus.
 - l) And I stand here to remind you that you are on your way to heaven, where you will walk on streets of God and see your Savior face to face... and he will wipe away every tear from your eyes.
20. Here we are at Pathway Church. Here to remind you.
21. Here to lift you up above the realm of the visible and mundane and to recalibrate your mind to the realm heavenly things... we remind you again and again because the world and the devil pull you down again and again.
22. As long as God gives me a pulpit and a voice, I will keep reminding of of these things till I lose my voice or see him face to face.
- B. *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16-18)*
- 1. This is how Peter validates the truths he is reminding them of.
 - 2. Listen up, he says. This stuff is real. It is really real.
 - 3. We're not talking about Aesop's fables. We're talking about something that is factual and actual and real. These early apostles like Peter were really smart. They were well versed in the mythology and fables of the Romans and the Greeks.
 - 4. They knew what myth was.
 - 5. But they had something entirely different, and they steadfastly said so to the point of death.
 - a) In 1977 a group of scholars published a book called *The Myth of God Incarnate*. These are the same people that the media networks trot out every Easter and Christmas to say that the resurrection and the virgin birth were myths to increase Jesus's popularity.
 - b) Later that year another group of scholars led by Michael Green answered with a fantastic little book called *The Truth of God Incarnate*. This book shreds the other book. It's awesome... and it's very hard to find.
 - 6. So here comes Peter to say.... I'm reminding you of this stuff and it's NOT A MYTH. Not a fable.
 - a) Creation, not a myth. The Fall of Adam and Eve, not a myth. The Promise of Redemption, not a myth. The Virgin Birth and Incarnation of Jesus, not a myth. The Cross and Resurrection, not a myth. The Actuality of Redemption, not a myth. Salvation by grace through faith, not a myth. Spiritual growth, the Second Coming of Christ, the Millennium, Heaven and Hell, not a myth, not a myth, not a myth.
 - b) There has never been a more life-giving, coherent, logically consistent, factually verifiable, and comprehensive truth claim than biblical Christian worldview, and it's time to say so.
 - 7. *This book is reality.*
 - 8. In fact, the truths in here were real enough for Peter to touch with his own hands.
 - a) *Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance changed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothing became dazzling white. Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus. Peter blurted out, "Lord, this is wonderful! If you want me to, I'll make three shrines, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But even as he said it, a bright cloud came over them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him. Listen to him." The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground. (Matthew 17:1-6, NLT).*
 - 9. Peter points back to this mountaintop experience. He says, we saw this dazzling event with our own eyes and heard it with our own ears.
 - a) We were there.
 - b) We were eyewitness of his majesty and we heard the voice of God from Heaven.
 - c) I saw it, I heard it, I felt it for myself, Peter says.
 - d) But he doesn't stop there.
 - 10. Having said *"we saw the divine glory and we heard the voice of deity,"* now look what he writes.

- C. *And so we have [a more sure prophetic word], which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture [originates in] any [human] interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21, bg).*
1. The man says, "I saw with my eyes and I heard with my ears, but the testimony to the deity and sovereignty and glory of Christ written in the Bible is more certain and sure than that."
 2. Let that in.
 3. The written Word of God is the surest source of truth there is, even more sure than our eyes and ears and human-viewpoint logic. This no substitute for the Bible.
 4. But that doesn't stop Christians from looking for one.
 - a) So many Christians are chasing spiritual experiences, but not the Word of God.
 - b) So many are on a quest for emotional highs, instead of peering into the Word of God.
 - c) Large swaths of Christians are running after health and wealth and satisfaction and success, but they have set aside the Word of God.
 - d) Others just want the mechanics, and the practical applications, and the step-by-step behaviors of the faith divorced from the doctrines of the faith, "a form of godliness without the power" (2 Tim 3:5).
 5. Here is an eyewitness of the Transfiguration saying, We have a truth packed with more meaning and power than any spiritual experience, emotional high, or health and wealth could ever begin to offer you.
 - a) Peter testifies to all the ages of Christianity that this Word, this Bible, has more authority, and more verification than all the supernatural mountain top experiences we can ever have in our lives.
 - b) I hope that in your time at Pathway you come to crave the faithful exposition of Scripture more than the mountain top experience... which I'm all for... but we shouldn't be chasing those things. Pursue God in His Word and leave the rest to Him.
 6. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - a) The Bible is inspired.
 - b) It is inerrant.
 - c) It is the perfect revelation of God.
 - d) The Bible lays bare the heart of God, reveals the will of God, and declares the plan of God.
 - e) Even the best human mind would never think this stuff up in a thousand years.
 - f) Sixty six books, 40 authors, 1,500 years, on 3 continents, yet the truth-structure of the Bible is a singular, unified, non-contradictory whole, because it all comes from one divine mind... *all those authors over all those years were moved by the Holy Spirit.*
 7. Peter urgently, passionately exhorts you to pay attention to this word... Read your Bible and pray. Why? What will happen?
 8. Peter adds...
 - a) As a light shining in a dark place.
 - b) Until the day dawns and the Morning Star arises in your heart.
 9. He's talking about something that happens inside you.
 10. Let's remember one of the lessons we've seen again and again.
 - a) Grace lives at the intersection where theology meets psychology.
 11. Peter writes two prepositional phrases...
 - a) In a dark place... the unrenewed human soul.
 - (1) I take this dark place to be the human psyche, the human soul, uncleansed by the Word of God. This is a person's internal structures of feeling, and believing, of instinct and emotion. This is where addiction lives, dysfunction lives, and all the wounds that run a person's life can live. This is where legalism, secularism, and all the other -isms reside.
 - (2) This is where the devil's lies gain a foothold.
 - (3) This is where a person surrenders their dominion and becomes a slave of lusts, passions, sin, and deception.
 - (4) Apart from the grace and truth of God, the human heart is a very dark place. Crud. Deception. Malfunction. Corruption. Sin.
 - (5) So here comes Peter... he holds up the Word of God... and he pleads with us...
 - (a) You do well to heed this Word as to a light that shines in a dark place.
 - (b) The Bible is soap for your soul.
 - (6) Pay heed, because if you pay heed, something absolutely fantastic will happen to you.
 - b) In your heart... the renewed human soul.
 - (1) What will happen in your heart?
 - (a) The day will dawn and the morning star will rise in your heart.
 - (2) This is how the Bible speaks of a complete reconstruction of your psychological health.
 - (a) The whole Grace Pathway is littered with beautifully wrapped gifts from God. Psychological wholeness is one of them.
 - (3) Spiritual maturity makes you normal. It breaks the power of the addiction and dysfunction. It enables husbands to love their wives and wives to love their husbands and both to love their children, even if you've had a horrible past, and addictions, and wounds, and dysfunctions.
 - (4) You can rise above because the Word of God can fix all those things.
 12. We don't just study the Bible for information.
 13. If you just want information, ask St. Google.

- a) Researchers have discovered that Google is changing how people think. An article in the Atlantic was headlined, *Is Google Making Us Stupid?*
- b) One researcher writes that the Internet is “*chipping away our capacity for concentration and contemplation.*” A study by the British Library found that people go through information online very quickly without evaluating it for accuracy.
- c) Researchers suggest that Google supplies answers, and too many times those answers are seen as a stopping point, not a starting point for deep thought.
- 14. Which leads to a question I’ve actually been asked:
 - a) Why do I need to know what’s in the Bible if I can just Google it?
- 15. Here’s the answer:
 - a) Because the Bible isn’t just information. The Bible is power (Hebrews 4:12).
 - b) Every doctrine, every truth, every principle, every command, every promise, every bit of revelation in the Bible is a radioactive pellet that goes into your soul and burns away the chains that hold you captive and begin to set you free to live, to laugh, to love...
 - c) The Word of God has living-giving power that no other kind of truth possesses.
- 16. If you want to be brave, if you want to be strong, if you want to be loving, if you want to see the energy and compassion and love and wisdom of God flow through your life, if you want to be whole, if you want to be healthy, if you want to be holy, if you want to be happy, then you cannot warehouse your knowledge of Scripture and of God in Google.
- 17. You’ve got to take it in all life long, so the power-pellets of divine truth can clean and fix and make you whole.
 - a) *Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!* (Psalms 119:11)
 - b) *Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart...* (Jeremiah 15:16)
 - c) *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:32)

III. Conclusion

- A. There is something which God only can say.
- B. There is something which reason cannot say, nor experience, nor discovery, nor the deepest insight, nor the most complex science.
 - 1. There is a world of heaven, which flesh and blood cannot penetrate.
 - 2. There is a world of spirit, impervious even to mind.
 - 3. There is a world beyond death, which we cannot see.
 - 4. There is a world of providence, in which God rules over all, yet we still have free will, though we cannot explain it.
 - 5. There is a fact of sin, inherited and handed on, fatal and working everywhere in hearts and lives, spoiling God’s work and ruining human welfare.
 - 6. There is the fact of redemption through the blood of Christ and Calvary’s love.
- C. We desperately need to hear these things.
- D. What can the world offer to speak to the deep things of the human heart? Is there such a thing as an inspiration of science, or an inspiration of geography, or an inspiration of history, or an inspiration of geology, astronomy, botany, or chemistry.
- E. No. Only the Bible.
- F. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. God had to tell truths which humans by searching could not find out.
- G. The Bible is a treasure. It is the very light of my life. Never will I part with that light till I reach a world which no longer needs it, because the Lamb of God will be my light, face to face.