

Introduction: Pg. ____

Story - 7th grader . . . **Alan Chamness . . . PIC**

I began to love God's Word because of the leadership of this man and a bunch of teenagers who appeared to take the Bible seriously. Since I have discovered how true the words of Jonathan Leeman are when he says in his book, *Reverberation*, "God's Word gives life to a church like electricity gives power to a city."

"Is the Bible *really* the Word of God, and why should I care?"
2 Peter 1:16-23

As you might expect, if you've been around Redemption Hill for much time, I want to argue that . . .

The Point: The Bible is the authoritative word of God and sufficient for everything we need in life.

2 Peter is a word of exhortation to a church called to endure and pursue godliness in the midst of persecution & false teaching.

I love how he starts the letter . . .

- Look who he's writing: "To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ."
- This is Peter on whose preaching and witness Jesus would build the foundation of his church, this Peter says, "Hey, your faith in Christ puts you in the same position as me before God. *EQUAL STANDING*. How? "because of the righteousness of our God & Savior Jesus Christ"

He drops a word of greeting and blessing in *verse 2*.

And then he makes a radical claim in *verse 3*.

- "His (God's) divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. . ." You have it all. You have everything you need. God has held nothing back, and because of this, you need to fulfill your calling to follow Christ with all of your heart.
- Grace - Divine Power. You are equipped! Responsibility in Grace... "Make every effort . . . To supplement . . ." Make every effort . . .to add . . . Faith, Virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love.

Why?

- Verse 8. You'll be effective and fruitful. Sign me up. If you don't want to waste your life, zero in on this; live like this!

And then he goes on in *verse 12* to say, "you know these things, but let me be redundant!" because you need to be "stirred up."

- I love that. That is how I view what we do as pastors of Redemption Hill.
- We teach, and then we remind, we exhort, we seek to stir up one another to live for Christ.
- Some things are good enough to hear more than once!
- This is why we are exhorted to meditate . . .Why?
- *Look at Verse 15* . . You make every effort, I'm making every effort to repeat myself in order to remind you and stir you up because one day, you won't hear it from me any more, because I'm about to be martyred (church history tells us that Peter was crucified upside down), and he says, since I won't be around, I want you to be able to recall these things "at any time."
- Who needs to retire?! I want to go out like Peter. Teaching, reminding, stirring, as I'm dying.

T: Now, as we get to the passage we are going to examine this morning, we find Peter addressing the reliability of their message, defending himself against the false teachers who charged them with "cleverly devised myths." Verses 16-21 lead us to the question of the hour: "Is the Bible really the Word of God?"

I. The Bible really is the Word of God (1:16-21).

16 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.

- He's been talking about the truth (Verse 12). Now he's talking about giving them the truth.
- How does he characterize this?
 - Not a myth...
 - The false teachers were arguing that the second coming was a mere fable. They argued it had no basis in reality.
 - Peter says, "Hey, these are not clever stories we devised ourselves. On the contrary, we were eyewitnesses! That why we . . .
 - *Made known* the "powerful coming of our Lord Jesus"]
 - We reveal the revelation. Jesus came in humility during his first coming, shockingly in the form of a baby. Mary and Joseph held God in their hands.
 - But his second coming will be much different. In the words of C. S. Lewis: "he will come as God without disguise." There will be no mistake.
 - Peter says, "we were," in fact, "eyewitnesses of his majesty."
- In verses 17-19, he gets specific about Christ's majesty...

T: Look at *verses 17-18*

- Peter is referring to the Transfiguration, when Jesus took him and James and John up on the mountain to have a meeting with God the Father shortly before it was his time to go to the cross.
- In this meeting on the mountain, Moses and Elijah were also present, as recorded in Matthew 17.
- "And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light."
- The transfiguration was a divine preview. You see his glory here and now. It will be on blazing display there and then.
- The brilliant radiance of Christ will be so blinding that his very presence will fill eternity to the point where there will be no need for the sun. (Rev 21)

- I'd love to focus more on that, but what is Peter's point. We were there. We witnessed his glory.
- We saw the miracles (expound), we heard the teaching, we saw his glory (John 1:14??)
- Peter roots his claims in history. Christianity is rooted in verifiable, historic realities. Messiah born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem, raised from the dead. These are all historic claims.

And building on that, what does he say in *verse 19*?

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed,

- Wow! You just missed what he just said.
- "We *have* [we possess] the prophetic word - *more fully confirmed.*" Some translations say: "we have a more sure word."
- As reliable as Peter's own eyewitness experience of the Transfiguration was, it is not as strong and confirming and reliable and sure as the testimony of the Scripture.
- He says: "You may not have been with me on the mountain, but you can be just as sure, no more sure because you have the perfect testimony of Scripture. You could see something with your own eyes, but it would not be more real than this!"
- Peter is referring to the writing of the Old Testament Scriptures. We know this because he uses the word *graphe*. Of the 51 times the word *graphe* is used in the NT, it refers to the writings of the OT every time.

T: That is why we must “pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place,” We’ll come back to that in a bit. He goes on to say in *verses 20-21*.

- Peter is saying that the OT Scriptures find their origin in God himself, not someone coming up with their own interpretation of events in the past, present and future.
- The Bible has a divine-human authorship.
- Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. = Divine
- But Peter says the Spirit “carried them along.” The Spirit divinely, invisibly, and we can say, mysteriously guided produced through Moses, David, and Isaiah; Matthew, Luke, Paul, John & Peter the words God wanted his people to possess.
- In other words, God worked through the individual personalities and literary styles of the writers.
- We do not subscribe to a “dictation theory” of inspiration, as if men were tucked away in a room, heard the audible voice of God, and then wrote it all down.

- Paul said the same thing as Peter, in a different way, when he wrote to his younger mentee Timothy. Starting in 2 Timothy 3:14, Paul writes: **“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:14-17)**
 - Have you experienced God’s salvation through Jesus as it is revealed in the Word?
 - Are you supremely confident in the profitability of the Scriptures to equip you with everything you need for every good work?

T: Yes? I’m getting there? I’m not sure?

The Contents of Scripture: How the books of the Bible came to be recognized?

- The 66 Books of the Bible (39 OT/27 NT) are known as the canon of Scripture. Canon comes from a Greek word that means measuring rod. These books are the standard by which all truth claims and morality is to be measured.
- 3 Primary Tests
 - **Apostolicity:** The Books were tested for their authenticity first by looking at their source. Did they come from true prophetic and apostolic origin? Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, Jude; you get the point.
 - **Orthodoxy:** Were the books doctrinally sound and consistent with previously revealed truth?
 - **Universality:** Were the books accepted and utilized by the people of God (Israel & the early church) as authoritative? For example in the works of Justin Martyr, Ireneaus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Eusebius (all from the early 2nd to early 4th century (roughly 140-330 A.D.), we have (are you ready for this?) over 36,000 quotations from the NT, citing those words as authoritative for their readers. That’s seven authors. Not bad . . .
- The church did not pick and choose which books should be included. They simply recognized those that were already being received as inspired by God.

The Characteristics of Scripture

- Scripture is **Supreme:** Being God’s Word, the Bible should serve as the supreme authority for our lives. No, we do not check reason at the door. Yes, we understand our experiences are important to

God and can even help us understand the Word's relevance in our lives, but reason, experience, and tradition are all subservient to the authority of God's self-revelation in the words of the Bible.

- Scripture is **Clear**: The Bible is understandable to all who read it with care. The gospel message is simple enough for a child to understand it, and yet, because God is inexhaustible, the most brilliant among us could study it for a lifetime of lifetimes and never plumb its depths.
- Scripture is **Sufficient**: The Bible contains everything we need to know God, experience his salvation, and live a life that is fulfilling for us and most importantly, pleasing to him. There is nothing lacking, nothing deficient about this Book.
- Scripture is **Necessary**: We need the message contained in God's special revelation in the pages of Scripture in order to know him and experience his salvation.
- Scripture is **True & Trustworthy**: Because Scripture comes from the God of truth, we can not only accept it as truth, but we can trust. We can stake our lives on it.

The Case for Scripture

- **Internal Evidence:**
 - Unity of the One Story... One story... Self-Confirming...
 - Not only is the Bible a beautiful piece of literature, the 66 books have such a consistency about them, telling the One, overarching story of God (metanarrative; upper story), that it's internal consistency gives us reason to trust what it says.
 - Dating & Content:
 - Not legends: The disciples are far from heroes. They are portrayed as jealous, faithless, slow to understand; hardly what most of us would desire to speak of ourselves, unless of course it were all true to the story.
 - Additionally, take the Gospel of Mark, for example, why would Mark describe the man who helped Jesus carry his cross as "the father of Alexander and Rufus." Because Mark was probably the first gospel written (50s) and people could go verify what he was saying with Alexander and Rufus.
- **External Evidence -**
 - FAR more manuscript evidence than any other book of antiquity. That is not up for debate.
 - Reliability of Manuscripts (Dead Sea Scrolls); claims of inconsistencies. . .
- **The Testimony and Transformation of the church**
 - From the days after Christ's resurrection until today.
- **The Testimony of Jesus . . .**
 - We heard from Peter. We heard from Paul. But what about Jesus?
 - One of my philosophy professors, who has gone on to be with Christ, named Russ Bush said this: "The question of biblical authority is ultimately a question of Christology. What you believe about Jesus will ultimately determine what you believe about the Bible."
 - **"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."**
(Matthew 5:17-18)
 - **"the Scripture cannot be broken. . ." (John 10:35)**
 - **"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)**

But for the person who would doubt the veracity and power of the Bible, I would say this: would you read it with me? Why? Because the Bible does not need my arguments, it simply needs to be read and heard, tested and tried, experienced and, we pray, elevated for what is worth. This is what Spurgeon said . . .

"The Word of God is like a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself." – Charles Spurgeon

T: The Bible is the Word of God, but why should we care? We should care because . . .

II. The Word of God leads to a glorious life (1:19).

Remember Peter's argument. I love you, I care for you. Just as I taught you before, now I want to stir you up by reminding you to clothe yourself with virtuous living because there is a rich inheritance in God's eternal kingdom waiting for you. If the false teachers are right, if Christ is not returning, we really shouldn't care how we live.

Peter was convinced that Jesus is God, Jesus is Savior, and that Jesus has checked out only to check back in, and that we as those who follow him, must put our whole heart into honoring him by how we live our lives.

So let's zoom back in on our key verse this morning. Verse 19: "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, *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,*

Let me tell you what Peter just said: 1) pay attention to the word, 2) until Jesus returns and completes his glorious work in you!

Pay Attention to the Word...

- Know the Word and pay *careful* attention to the Word.
- Why? It is like a light...
 - Illuminates our way...
 - It helps us differentiate between a good step and a misstep.
- I want you to close your eyes for just a minute. I want you to imagine a scenario in which you have no sight. Keep your eyes close. Now, imagine the fire marshall came into the theatre and told us we all have 75 seconds to exit the building in the midst of this crowd. Would that be an easy task? No. It would be potentially chaotic with great potential for injury.
- We need our eyes open and we need light to enable us to see, and yet, many of us set aside or neglect the light God has given us in the Scriptures so that we can travel safely on life's journey.
- The Scriptures are "a lamp shining in a dark place."
- **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)**

This should give us all the incentive we need to make loving God through knowing and living his Word the greatest pursuit of our life.

- I know: we're busy. I really do know... "What have time for what we want to make time for."
- It is not always easy to find time even though we really value something.
- That's why we're hear today - get stirred up and leave stirred... Stirred up gives the picture of someone who is motivated to action.

If this book is our guidebook for life, then we should straight up devour this book. Chip away. Day by day... Deut 6; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:97; Matthew 4:4; Acts 2:42;

Some advice:

- Make an appointment with God. And guard it with everything you've got! Put Jesus on your Calendar!
- Take it in: read the Word, study the Word, pray..., listen..., meditate..., memorize the Word.
- DO IT TOGETHER!! Encourage one another.
- Receive it with humility...

- Share it frequently. Does the Word of God stop with you or spread through you? (Platt)

T: How long?

Until Jesus returns and completes his glorious work in you!

- 2 Peter 1:19 provides a picture of glory. God made us to experience and reflect his glory. That is our ultimate destination because of Jesus.
- “The day dawns” (an allusion to day of judgment) “and the morning star rises in your hearts” (an allusion to Christ completing his work in us).
- In the last chapter of the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the Bright Morning Star.
- The knowledge of God that shines upon us and changes us in conversion will reach its full and completed design when Christ returns (Caulley, via Schreiner).
- We will become perfect, glorious reflections of Jesus. The miracle will be complete, only to be enjoyed with increasing pleasure forever.

Conclusion:

Here’s what I’ve discovered:

The more time I spend in the Word, the more *I desire* to spend time in the Word.

The more time I spend in the Word, the more *I delight* when I spend time in the Word.

The more time I spend in the Word, the more *quickly I am transformed to live consistent* with the Word.

The more time I spend in the Word, the more *quickly I am moved to share the Word with someone else*.

I have never picked up the Bible, sought to understand it, prayed that God would make it true in my life and then walked away and said, “What a waste!”

What would happen if our city accepted the Book as God’s Word and lived by it? Kids would be cared for. Marriages would thrive. Addictions would be crushed. People wouldn’t have to complain to the DPW about trash because people wouldn’t be trashing our city. In short, the glory of God would shine and we would thrive!

Friends, God has given us his truth, so that we can be truly alive!