



29 Sep 2024

2 Peter 1:12-18 – Precious Promises... To Remember Always

Small Group Questions

An outline of the message on 29th September is provided overleaf.

Pray for God's help as you turn to look at His word, to understand and respond rightly to what you'll see. Read through the passage and then discuss these questions together.

1. What is your earliest memory?
2. Peter is eager to preserve and pass on the earliest memories of the first century Christian community. Why is this so urgent for him?
3. Why does Peter want to “always remind” them of things they already know? (Reflect on 1:3 in considering this question.)
4. Do you feel that you need to be reminded of “these things” (the truths of the gospel message and the “precious promises” we have in Jesus)? How does the illustration from last Sunday's message of the pennies in the vending machine help you reflect on this?
5. If we're persuaded of our need to be “always reminded” of these things, such that the pennies drop, how might that affect our frame of mind as we come to church services, sing songs and hymns, listen to the Bible being read and preached? How might it affect our personal Bible reading?
6. “Christianity is based on a story. ... It's firmly grounded in claims about historical events and their implications.” In vv16-18 Peter refers to a specific, historical event to refute the false teaching being pushed among those he's writing to, namely that Jesus wouldn't return (see 3:3-4). Notice his *technique*. He relies on the historical story to refute error and teach truth. Why do we need to ‘rely on the story’, rather than just teach the Christian beliefs derived from it?
7. Share some difficult situations we might face as Christians – current or past, real or hypothetical – and consider how you could help yourself or another Christian in that situation, by *relying on the story* of how God has acted in history, as recorded in the Bible.

Respond to God's word in prayer

Share any answers to prayer you've seen since you last met

Take some time to pray for each other

*Our desire for small groups is that they would help us be a “people who are in the process of having their lives turned inside out and upside down by the progressive work of transforming grace.”
(Taken from ‘Lead’ by Paul Tripp, p42)*



An Outline of the message on Sunday 29th September

Introduction

- As this letter is being written, the apostolic generation is beginning to die out and Peter's mind is focussed on ensuring the church does not forget all he and the other apostles have seen and heard (which he refers to as "these things").

1. Remember these things (vv12-15)

- We need to remember these things because they contain "everything we need for a godly life" (1:3). So, we don't need anything else – any new teaching or special experience. The gospel message is all we need.
- Question: Why, then, do we not see in ourselves everything we might hope or expect to see – i.e. godliness in the form of all the characteristics listed in 1:5-9?
- Answer: Because, as in the illustration about a vending machine which has received the coins, but hasn't yet produced the coke, 'the pennies haven't dropped'. The gospel has 'gone in', but we haven't really understood it or its implications yet.
- Conclusion: We need to continue being 'slammed' with "these things" until the pennies drop, we understand what we've received in the gospel and our lives are increasingly transformed.

2. Rely on these things (vv16-18)

- vv16-18 show us both that we can rely on the apostolic testimony about Jesus (it's not "cleverly devised stories" etc) and, more broadly, that we must rely on it.
- The point that we must rely on these things is drawn from observing Peter's technique in these verses. His decision to remind them of the transfiguration (see Matthew 16:27-17:13) is not a random choice... he's chosen it precisely because it refutes the main plank of the false teaching that's being pressed upon those Christians he's writing to (we see in chapters 2 and 3 that false teachers are claiming Jesus will not return as judge).
- So, we should observe and copy Peter's technique here. We need to remind ourselves of these things (the gospel message) and rely on these things (the gospel history) to do so. In other words, we must not simply rely on the teachings we derive from the true Christian story...we must rely on the story from which those things come.
- We need to do that in the way we counsel each other as Christians.

Conclusion

- The church is a people born of a story and we must remember that story, lest we forget or disbelieve the precious promises that have been derived from it.