

How many times when you are listening to a sermon or a Bible teaching by me or others the thought goes through your mind – hey, I've heard that before! I know that it has happened to me as I listen to sermons and even prepare them, so I know that it probably has happened to you also.

There is a word for that – repetition – and believe it or not, it is a very common Biblical teaching. Most have just read through most of the Old Testament – and how many times did we see things repeated – the Law, Israel's history of disobedience and so forth.

And we see it clearly in 2 Peter as we continue our study in that short book. I ask that you turn with me to 2 Peter 1:12-15 (READ).

Notice clearly, that as Peter continues his letter to the pilgrims of the dispersion – that is, those who had to flee their homelands because of their faith in Christ – notice what he says: *“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things ...”*

In both of his letters Peter has reminded them of some great foundational truths of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has reminded them, among other things, that they had been chosen by God and that they have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. He has reminded them that they have the same faith as the Apostles – that they are not 2nd class Christians. He has told them that they have a guaranteed inheritance in heaven waiting for them when this earthly life is over.

He has also told them, in both letters, how they are to live their lives here on this earth for the short time that they are here as a witness to the unbelieving world around them with the truth that God has given them all things that they need for life in this world and in the world to come.

It is because of all that God has given them that he says: *“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things ...”* In other words, what he is telling them is so important to their lives that it bears repeating – that he has to continually remind them of what they have received from God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

As he goes on he tells us that they already know these things, but he is going to tell them anyway – *“though you know and are established in the present truth.”* The point is, that Peter knows human nature – he knows that we are sinners and that even if we know something in our minds – that is, the difference between right and wrong and what God's standards are – we still need to continually be reminded.

For example – we know that there are speed limits all over the place – but how many times do we routinely ignore them. Or we know that there are certain things that we shouldn't eat – like fast food – but we do anyway.

I am reminded of our confession in Morning and Evening Prayer – *“we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things we ought not to have done.”* And our confession in our Communion Service: *“We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word and deed.”*

The point of it all is that, because of our sinful natures, we have to continually be reminded of what we should

be doing and what we should not be doing. And that is exactly what Peter is doing in his letter – which, as I have said before, also applies to us.

As he has done, and what I try to do is to remind you of, are the truths that you already know. We all have been told repeatedly what God has done for us through the Lord Jesus and what He requires us as we live our lives here on this earth. We know what we should be doing and we know what we should not be doing.

But, as those who are saved by the blood of Jesus, we also know that we still sin. We know that *“we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things we ought not to have done.”* And that is why we continually need to be reminded of what is right and what is wrong – what is acceptable to God and what is not.

Again, as I have done before, I would draw your attention to the fact that our Communion Service begins each week with the Ten Commandments or at least the Summary of the Law of God. The purpose for this is that it reminds us each and every week that we need a Savior because none of us can keep the Law of God.

None of us love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul and mind and none of us love our neighbors as ourselves. And again, the Scriptures teach us that if we have broken one law we have broken them all – so we need to be reminded again and again.

This is what Peter is trying to do – to his readers and to us because he wants all those who are Christians to live as they should and to remain firmly established in the truth that God has revealed in His Word. Look at what he says in the next two verses – 2 Peter 1:13-14: *“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.”*

Peter knew that the end of his earthly journey was at hand. He knew that he would soon be executed for his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. He was not upset by this and in fact, he was probably looking forward to seeing his Savior again – he knew that time of his earthly departure was close at hand, but he still had a job to do ... a job that he had been commissioned to do by the Lord Jesus himself – to go and make disciples of all nations – that is, to train those who would follow him in the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And part of this training was to continually remind them of what God had done for them and how they should live their lives in the place that God has placed them.

One of my favorite all time movies is Chariots of Fire the true story about two runners in the 1924 Olympics after World War I. One of two main characters was Eric Liddell, a Christian, who was also a very fast runner. He would not run in a race because it was on a Sunday – that would be a violation of his beliefs.

It turned out that he would then run in a race that was 4 times longer than any race that he had participated in. He honored God and God provided the strength that he needed to win. In doing so, he was a witness to the unbelieving world around him. It was more important to him to obey God than to win a race.

Peter knew that he was about to “put off” his earthly tent – that is, his temporary body. He wanted to make sure that those he was writing to had the same faith that he did and would continue to live as they should in light of what God had done for them and that they would not be swayed by false teachers.

Remember, the purpose of Peter's letter was that false teachers were already arising in the church and he wanted to restate and emphasize the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – what God had done for them and what He required of them. He wanted to do this before he left them and received his inheritance.

That is why he was very emphatic in his reminding them of these truths. Look at what he says in the last verse that we will look at today – 2 Peter 1:15: “*Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.*”

Basically he is saying – yes, I know that I will shortly die – but that is not the issue. I want you to remember what I have taught you ... I want to give you a reminder of the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ ... I do not want you to be misled by these false teachers.

Without seeming too pompous, this is one of the reasons that I repeat things. I know that I need it, and it is my learned opinion that you all need it also. As your shepherd, one of my jobs is the “feed the sheep under my care” – to feed you the truth of God's Word.

There is a lot of false teaching out there – even in the so-called church. The largest “church” in the nation with over 20,000 members preaches a prosperity gospel – that is, God wants you rich and happy. This is a false gospel. Major denominations are teaching that there is nothing wrong with alternative lifestyles and they want to acknowledge same sex relationships because “God is Love” and never rejects anyone.

The presiding Bishop of the Episcopal church says that there is no need to personally trust in Christ as Savior and that Jesus is not the only way of salvation – this, my friends, is heresy.

False teachers were evident in the time of Peter – in that first generation of Christians and they are evident today. We don't have to look very far.

It is interesting that Friday was the birthday of John Calvin – 500 years ago! John Calvin was one who took the faith once delivered unto the saints to the common man. He preached in French – his native language – and not in Latin. He translated the scriptures and his Institutes of the Christian religion into the common language – French. He wrote commentaries on most books of the Bible – I have a set – it is 21 volumes of small print! There is also his Institutes of the Christian Religion – we a couple of thousand pages on the truths that we believe – written when he was in his 20's.

He did this so that the every day Christian would know the foundational truths of the faith. These truths have not changed in 2000 years, and I personally find those who wish to change the faith as having colossal chutzpah to do so. And I find it very reprehensible.

God has not changed and neither has His Word, or His requirements for us as His children. We have been saved by the same faith as the those very first Christians and we have the same responsibilities and requirements as those very first Christians.

So, as your listening to a sermon or Bible teaching, and you think – “Hey! I've heard that before!” – be thankful. Because the person that is saying it – whether it be me or some other pastor or teacher – we only want to continually remind you of the truth. We only want to, as Peter says, to “*stir you up*” and to keep you faithful to God and His Word.

I will not be here forever. My earthly tent, as Peter says, is temporary. I take my job seriously and do not want you to stray from the true faith. So, if I repeat things, remember, it is for all our benefit – myself as well as yours.