

The book of 2 Peter that we are studying is short book of three chapters only. If you sat down to read it in one sitting, it would take you no more than 30-45 minutes – maybe an hour, tops. But what we find is that twice in this short letter Peter tells them that he is reminding them of the things that they have learned and were taught.

A number of weeks ago we looked at 2 Peter 1:12-15: *“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.”*

He tells them that he – that is, Peter – will not be negligent to remind them of the truths that they have learned. At that time I told you that repetition was a common Biblical theme – that we find in the Scriptures that many things are repeated over and over again. Repetition is a common learning tool – telling them once, telling them again and telling them often of the things that the Lord has done for them and what He requires of them.

The writers of the Scriptures, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit do this so that the readers will not stray from the truth. Again, we remember that one of the reasons that Peter is writing is to warn them of false teachers – those that have strayed from the truth revealed and those that have distorted the teachings of the Scriptures.

Ironically – again, as I said, this is short letter – Peter tells them again, that he is going to remind them of things that they have heard and learned. Turn with me to 2 Peter 3:1-2 (READ).

Again, we see that he tells them that he is going to remind them again as he writes this 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to them.

I am reminded of the Philadelphia Eagles and all other sports teams. What is part of their practice as they prepare for games? Repetition, of course. They go over the same plays time and again – until they get it right and until it becomes natural for them ... until it becomes a way of life for them as go out on the field.

The same thing holds true for our Christian lives. We are human ... we are sinners ... and we forget. Sometimes we forget the things that we have taught in a very short time.

Think about the children of Israel, that God had just delivered from slavery in Egypt. God, through Moses, performed 10 miracles – the last one being that the angel of death went over Egypt, with the death of the firstborn in every household that did not have the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorpost. It was at this point that Pharaoh allowed them to leave.

But then the children of Israel get the Red Sea, with the Egyptian Army following them – and their response – “was there not enough graves in Egypt, that you had to bring us out into the wilderness to die?” How soon they forgot.

And we are just like them. We need to be reminded over and over again of what God has done for us and what He requires of us.

Look at what Peter says: 2 Peter 3:1: “*Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),*” We see first that Peter tells them that he loves them and that is why he is writing this second epistle or letter.

If he didn’t love them and if he didn’t want to see them remain faithful to God and His Word, he wouldn’t have written to them again. He could have just let them go on their merry way and let them be misled by the false teachers that had arisen. He could have just said: “believe and follow what you want, because it doesn’t matter.”

But no, Peter knew that there was God’s Word and truth and that there was false teaching and he wanted to let them know that there was a difference. So that is why he writes to them again.

And so, when you are listening to me or some other teacher – and you say – wait a minute, I’ve heard this before – remember that we are doing this for your benefit. I know that I have to constantly be reminded of the truth of God’s Word and I know that you do also.

So don’t get upset – but rather be thankful that those of us who have been called to be Pastors and Teachers have a God given responsibility to keep the truths of God before you. God holds us responsible for what we do.

The Prophet Jeremiah pronounced woe on the shepherds who were not faithful to their call. We read in Jeremiah 23:1-2: “*Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!*” says the Lord. *Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: “You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,” says the Lord.*”

Jeremiah took his calling very seriously ... Peter took his calling very seriously and so do I and all faithful shepherds. Are we perfect? Obviously not – but as I said a few weeks ago, it is my prayer that I will never lead you astray and that I will always faithfully proclaim God’s truth to you.

I was reading about the infamous Bishop Spong the other day – this same Bishop who says that he would not want to be in heaven with a God who demanded a blood sacrifice. This same Bishop who says Christians do not need to be born again, they just need to grow up. This same Bishop who does not believe in the Virgin birth or that God answers prayer. This from someone is supposed to be shepherd of the flock of God, but is actually destroying them.

Again, think of what Jeremiah said: *Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!* It is so easy to be led astray. And there are many in the so-called church doing exactly that – leading people astray and away from the truth of God’s Word.

As we know, Peter had been commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ himself to go and make disciples. Again, remember that this was the same Peter who denied his Savior on the night of his betrayal. After the resurrection, Jesus restored Peter and commissioned him.

Listen to words from John 21:15-17: “*So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said*

to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.”

Peter, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ had been commissioned personally to feed and tend to the sheep – that is, to tell them the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ – who he is and what he requires of them. A shepherd was responsible for all the needs of the sheep under his care – so was Peter, as are all those who are under-shepherds, like myself, responsible for those under my care.

That is why Peter reminds again. And what does he remind them of? We see the answer in 2 Peter 3:2: “*that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior...*” Peter is not telling them anything new – but simple that which had been revealed to the prophets and those who were with the Lord Jesus Christ as Apostles, like Peter.

Peter had already reminded them of things that he had taught them earlier in his letter – 2 Peter 1:16-18: “*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.*”

Peter was an eyewitness to the Lord Jesus Christ – he was there when he was transfigured. It wasn’t something that had been made up by someone else – or even in the mind of Peter. Rather, he was a personal eyewitness to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Our Savior taught him throughout his time with the Apostles, and he was an eyewitness to all that happened in the life of his Savior, and he knew that all had been revealed through the prophets. In addition, he had received direct commandments – like “*feed my sheep*” from the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

This is the very reason why he writes to the pilgrims of the dispersion – and to us. He was an eyewitness to the person and work of Jesus Christ and he wanted those who were under him to know this and not stray from the truth. So, I will not apologize for repeating myself. Yes, if I tell the same joke over and over, you can chastize me – but never for repeating the truth from God’s Word.