

WILLINGLY RECEIVE A WORD OF REMINDER

1¹²Therefore I will always stand ready to remind you of these things, even though you know and are established in the truth that is present [with you]. 13However, I think that it is right for me, as long as I am [still] in this “tent” [of my earthly body], to stir you up by reminding you of these things; 14knowing that the departure from my “tent” is soon to occur, just as our Lord Jesus Christ has informed me. 15So then, I will make every effort to insure that after my departure, you may at all times remember these things.

16We were not following cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and [glorious] appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ; on the contrary, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17He received honor and glory from God the Father when such a word as this was spoken to him by the Majestic Glory: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.” 18And we heard this word coming out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

19Also, we have the absolutely reliable prophetic word. It is good for you to adhere to it as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star arises in your hearts. 20Above all, be sure of this: No prophecy of Scripture is the prophet’s own interpretation of the divine will; 21for no prophecy was ever produced by [an act of the] human will. On the contrary, men spoke from God as they were led by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:12-21)

Introduction

The board of directors, together with the president, of the Coca-Cola Company met together at their corporate headquarters in Atlanta. At that meeting the following proposal was made: that the Coca-Cola Co. discontinue all future advertising. The grounds for this proposal were as follows: 1) the product is nationally, and internationally, known; 2) there is nothing new to be said about the product; and 3) the company will be able to save a great deal of money by discontinuing all future advertising.

Over the course of the next several months Coke received their usual calls from their clients. Movie theaters were calling to re-order Coca-Cola cups, but they were informed that no more cups would be supplied, because those cups with the Coca-Cola logo were viewed as a part of advertising and the monies for advertising were now being reallocated. Newspapers and radio and T.V. stations were calling to inform the Coca-Cola Company that their advertising spots had expired, but in every case the Coca-Cola officials politely declined to renew the ads. High school and college athletic directors and stadium publicity men began to call, notifying the Coca-Cola Company that their contracts to feature Coke logos on their scoreboards had expired, but, again, the Coca-Cola officials in Atlanta declined to renew any of those contracts.

At first, there was little noticeable difference in sales. But then it began to happen: the company was faced with a drastic plummet in sales revenue. The board of

directors and the president once again met at their corporate offices; they decided to send out their representatives to find out what was happening.

The representatives visited the movie theaters; there they found that Coke cups had been replaced by Pepsi-Cola cups, and that had been followed by Pepsi products replacing Coke products. They checked the newspapers and radio and T.V. ads; here they found that the absent Coke spots had been filled by new ads promoting Pepsi, Seven-Up, and a whole host of other soft drinks. They visited the high schools and colleges and found more of the same: the Coke logos on their scoreboards had been replaced with Pepsi logos, and soon their spectators were asking for Pepsi products. The representatives reported back to the Atlanta office. It was concluded that the board had made a mistake; continued advertising is necessary, even if you have a product that is nationally famous!

The Apostle Peter writes, *"I will always stand ready to remind you about these things,"* referring to the great matters of our Christian faith. We never outgrow our need to be reminded of the great truths and obligations of our Christian faith. Because it is intended for your spiritual well being, let us be willing to receive a word of reminder concerning the great matters of our Christian faith.

I. Willingly Receive a Word of Reminder, ...No Matter Where You are in Your Christian Life

Peter informs the church of his intention to *"always stand ready to remind you about these things."* Peter is referring to the things of which he wrote in the previous verses, namely, the need to diligently build a life of Christian virtue upon the foundation of our Christian faith:

Now, for this very reason, giving all your effort, add virtue to your faith, and add knowledge to virtue, ⁶and add self-control to knowledge, and add perseverance to self-control, and add godliness to perseverance, ⁷and add brotherly affection to godliness, and add love to brotherly affection. (2 Pet. 1:5-7)

Peter testifies that he ever stands ready to remind the church of these great spiritual matters, *"even though you know and are established in the truth that is present [with you]."* Peter acknowledges the fact that these Christian people possessed the truth. The Word of God as it had been preached by both the Apostle Paul as well as the Apostle Peter had been received by the church and was in their possession. Furthermore, Peter acknowledges the fact that the church was *"established in the truth."* These Christian people had a firm conviction of the truth and had no intention of forsaking it; they had received the truth and were committed to it. Nevertheless, Peter states that it is his purpose to *"remind [the church] of these things."* Far from apologizing for being repetitive or redundant, Peter views it as his duty to ever remind the church of the importance of leading a godly life. As he states it in verse 13, *"I think that it is right for me, as long as I am*

still in this “tent” [of my earthly body], to refresh your memory [with regard to these things].”

By nature, we tend to be like the Athenians, of whom it is written: *“All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas”* (Acts 17:21.) They always craved some new teaching or doctrine. That which is familiar—fundamental and foundational—tends to be viewed as boring, it tends to be taken for granted, and eventually neglected. By way of illustration: When you first get your driver’s license it is a very exciting experience. But after awhile the newness wears off and driving becomes routine. Eventually, it may become so familiar that you may become careless and neglectful.

Let us willingly receive a word of reminder with regard to the great matters of our Christian faith, no matter where we may be in the Christian life—no matter how spiritually mature we may be or how familiar we may be with the things of God. Let us receive a word of reminder as a safeguard against drifting away from Christ and His truth, as the writer of Hebrews exhorts us: *“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away”* (Heb. 2:1.) Let us receive a word of reminder as a safeguard against the danger of entertaining a re-interpretation of the Christian faith presented by subtle and unholy teachers, something about which the Apostle Paul rebukes the Corinthian church: *“If someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different Spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough”* (2 Corinthians 11:4.) Let us receive a word of reminder as a safeguard against the danger of exchanging the gospel of grace for a religion of legalism and moralism; it was Paul’s concern to guard the Philippian church against those who would seduce them to forsake Christ for such a religion:

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. For me it is not tedious to write the same things to you, and for you it is a safeguard. ²Beware of the dogs, beware of those who are working evil, beware of those who mutilate the flesh. ³We are the [true] circumcision, we who offer worship by the Spirit of God and rejoice with confidence in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:1-3)

Let us receive a word of reminder as a safeguard against the danger of perverting the gospel of grace into a religion of lawlessness, an ever-present temptation: *“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!”* (Rom. 6:15.) We need regularly be reminded of and confronted with Christ’s purpose for His people: *“our Savior Jesus Christ ¹⁴... gave himself for us, so that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people for his own possession, [a people] zealous for good works”* (Titus 2:13-14.) Let us receive a word of reminder as a safeguard against the danger of retrogressing to a merely nominal religion rather than growing in a fruitful Christian life, bearing in mind the teaching of our Lord Jesus:

I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. ²He removes every branch in me that does not bear fruit. But he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I [will remain] in you. The branch cannot bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine; so neither can you [bear fruit], unless you remain in me. (Jn. 15:1-4)

II. Willingly Receive a Word of Reminder, ...Intended to Stir You Up to Growth and Service

Peter indicates that his real purpose is “*to stir you up,*” and he intends to accomplish this by “*reminding you [of these things],*” namely, our calling to develop and to lead a godly life.

We need to consistently, even constantly, be aroused to our Christian duties and exhorted to keep our eyes upon Christ, because we encounter so many distractions. There is the distraction of seeking to maintain our life and that of our family in this present world—the “distraction” of seeking to make a living—these matters demand our time and energy, but they also threaten to distract us from the truly important matters of the soul and eternity:

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me! ⁴¹Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, you are worried and upset about many things; ⁴²but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. (Lk. 10:38-42)

There is the distraction of trials and burdens that tend to weigh us down and wear us down and discourage us from continuing to practice and develop our Christian life. The writer to the Hebrews warns the Christians to whom he writes not to allow that to happen to them, exhorting them to be like Abraham, who, “*having patiently endured, ... obtained the promise*” (Heb. 6:15.)

There is the distraction of the allurements of this present world, which tantalize us and threaten to blind our eyes to the greater glories of Christ and His kingdom, as Jesus describes in His parable of the Four Seeds: “*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature*” (Lk. 8:14.)

Peter was urgent to make every effort to stir up the Christians to whom he wrote to love their Savior and live for Him, because Peter knew that the time of his departure out of this earthly life was drawing near (vs. 14.) Spiritual fathers in the faith may here learn a lesson from Peter: Use your remaining time to arouse

the younger generation for Christ—by prayer, by example, by exhortation, by testimony that what truly matters is the spiritual life. As a true spiritual father in the faith, you have a great testimony to share. You know by experience that the things of this world do not bring lasting satisfaction nor fulfillment to the soul; as you approach your departure from this life the things of God become all the more real and precious and desirable. You are better able to affirm and join in the Apostle Paul's testimony recorded in Philippians 1:23, *"I have the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."*

Peter's concern is that these Christian people be established in the faith and continue in the faith even after he has departed this life and entered into glory: *"So then, I will make every effort to insure that after my departure, you may at all times remember these things"* (vs. 15.) Peter is well aware of the fact that he will not always be present to support the church; so he wants to make sure that they are equipped to support themselves in the faith by being able to recall his instruction. Let us recognize that our spiritual fathers are not always going to be present to support our faith; we must learn how to sustain and develop our own faith in Christ. One important means to this end is a clear grasp of the truths of the Christian faith and the purpose of the Christian life, which things are gained by an on-going exposure to them and positive response to them.

Let us willingly receive a word of reminder with regard to the great matters of our Christian faith, intended to stir us up to Christian growth and service and perseverance. Let us be well aware of the course of spiritual lethargy. It begins when we leave our first love—our love and personal devotion to Christ our Savior. Addressing the Ephesian church, our Lord Jesus declares, *"But I have this against you: you have left your first love"* (Rev. 2:4.) Spiritual lethargy then proceeds to produce an increasing spiritual ineptitude—an inability to understand and respond to spiritual things, note Hebrews 5:11-12, *"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you have become dull of hearing. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!"* The writer to the Hebrews desires to impart deeper spiritual truth to his hearers, but he finds that he is unable to do so, because they have regressed in a state of spiritual lethargy. Due to their present spiritual condition, they have become increasingly insensitive to receiving and understanding spiritual things. Spiritual lethargy finally results in spiritual deadness. Addressing the church in Sardis, the Lord Jesus declares, *"You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead"* (Rev. 3:1.)

Let us be well aware as to what is the cure for spiritual lethargy. The cure is, first and foremost, to keep our eyes upon Jesus: *"Let us focus our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith"* (Heb. 12:2.) Furthermore, the cure is to growing in our relationship with Jesus, as Peter will declare at the very end of this present epistle: *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet. 3:18.)

III. Willingly Receive a Word of Reminder, ...Because This is the Saving Truth of God

The apostle Peter assures us that he and the rest of the apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty (vs. 16.) In contrast to the Greek and Roman religions, the apostles were not handing down fables and myths when they preached about the glory of Jesus. On the contrary, they personally witnessed His divine glory and heard the voice of God when they were with Christ on the holy mountain. Peter is referring to Christ's transfiguration:

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. ⁴Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. ⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him! ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. Get up, he said. Do not be afraid. ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. (Matt. 17:1-8)

That historical event of Christ's transfiguration, personally witnessed by the apostles Peter, James, and John, was a preview of Christ's final coming in glory at the end of the age.

Beside the eyewitness account of the transfiguration by the apostles, we also possess the prophetic word, which is "*absolutely reliable*" (vs. 19.) Note that the Greek term, βέβαιος, (meaning, "to be firm, sure, trustworthy,") occurring in the comparative form is used here as a superlative (*A Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Arndt & Gingrich, p.137.) Hence, the meaning is not that the prophetic word is somehow "made more certain," but rather that the prophetic word is absolutely sure and reliable. The "*prophetic word*" is a reference to the Scriptures, and we learn that they are absolutely reliable because they are given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—the Greek text literally states, "*being carried by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God.*"

The biblical teaching on divine inspiration may be summarized as follows. The Lord Himself communicates by means of His apostles, and He sovereignly governs the whole process of communication. The Apostle Paul declares, "*Christ ... speaks by me*" (2 Cor. 13:3) and "*we speak by Christ*" (2 Cor. 12:19.) By way of illustration: The president (representing Christ in our illustration) employs a pen (representing the apostles) to sign a piece of legislation—so may we illustrate what it means when Scripture teaches that Christ Himself speaks by the apostles. To continue, the Secretary of State (now representing Christ) stands at the president's shoulder (now representing the apostles,) directing

him as to where to sign the piece of legislation—so may we illustrate what it means when Scripture teaches that the apostles speak by Christ.

Therefore, we are exhorted by Peter to pay close attention to the Scriptures and hold on to them (vs. 19.) We are to hold on to the Scriptures as one holds onto a shining lamp in a dark place. We are to hold on to the Scriptures “*until the day dawns*” (i.e.; the day of Christ’s appearing in glory) and “*the Morning Star arises in your hearts*” (i.e.; on the day of Christ’s appearing, we shall fully experience and participate in His glory and truth.)

Peter is informing us that we are to be building our Christian life upon the sure and inspired witness of Scripture, consisting of both the Old Testament (written by the prophets) and the New Testament (written by the apostles.) Note: When Peter speaks of the Old Testament as being “*the prophetic word*,” he is using prophecy in the broad sense of a divine communication delivered by God’s inspired spokesman, this would include all the books of the Old Testament, not merely those sixteen books known as “The Prophetic Writings.”

Let us be willing to receive a word of reminder with regard to the great matters of our Christian faith, because these things are nothing other than the saving truth of God, indeed, the very Word of God.

Conclusion

Would the Coca-Cola Company stop advertising its product? Not if they wanted to maintain their markets!

Likewise, we never outgrow our need to be reminded of the great truths and obligations of our Christian faith. Because it is intended for our spiritual well being, let us be willing to receive a word of reminder concerning the great matters of our Christian faith.