

Virtual Vestry Notes – 2 Peter 1

Salutation

In verse one, the author calls himself both Simon and Peter, his birth name and the name Jesus gave him. He calls himself a servant first and then an apostle. Peter then addresses believers who received a precious faith, or a faith as “equally honorable (or precious) as ours”

- How does Peter view himself in these opening lines?
- How does Peter view those he is writing to, and their faith?

Growing in Faith

Peter writes about grace and peace and having everything needed to live a good life through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In verse 4, Peter talks about God’s promises, saying these promises are to help us participate in God’s divine nature and to avoid worldly corruption.

- Discuss

Peter is more concerned in Christians Godliness, escaping worldly corruption and being participants in the divine nature. He then outlines a list of characteristics to support our faith, including moral excellence, knowledge, self-control etc., finishing with love.

- What is the purpose of this list?
- Is there anything you notice about this list?
- Why do you think love is the final characteristic in the list?

We are taught that a confession of Jesus as our Lord gives us entry into the kingdom of heaven. Why then is Peter talking about this list of characteristics giving us entry into the kingdom of heaven.

- Is Peter promoting salvation by works or something else?

Peter says that anyone who lacks these things is blind and forgetful of the cleansing of past sins.

- Discuss

John 21:18, records Jesus prediction that Peter will one day die in a way that is out of his control. Peter states here that he wants to keep reminding the readers of his letter about how to stand firm in their faith because God has shown him that he will die soon (verse 14).

- What is Peter’s main concern here?

Scripture and the Prophets

A theme of Peter’s second letter is to not listen to false teachers and the need to discern false prophets. In verses 16-18, Peter reminds us that “we were not following clever stories” and reminds his readers of his experience of seeing Jesus’ transfiguration and hearing God’s voice saying Jesus was “my dearly beloved son”. These are powerful memories that have stayed with Peter all his life.

- Why does Peter affirm that the stories and teaching about Jesus is not some clever story or myth?

In Verse 19, Peter states that he/they have even greater confidence in the prophets because of what they experienced.

- Discuss.

Peter defends the gospel of Jesus Christ as true in verses above and now points to the prophets as being inspired by God and his own experiences giving him confidence in the message of the prophets. In previous VV discussions, we have tackled the concept of inspiration. We challenged the idea that “scripture” is the literal word of God that fell out of the sky and landed in the prophet’s lap. In verses 20-21, Peter seems to be arguing from a different angle, that scripture is indeed inspired by the Spirit and not just a human’s idea, i.e. the stories that seem too incredible to be true are, in fact, true.

- Discuss

In my reading for this chapter, I saw it stated that these statements by Peter gives the church the authority to interpret scripture.

- Discuss.