

The Reward of Our Salvation

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:8–11

Code: 1397

REVIEW

I. THE MINISTRY OF REMEMBRANCE (vv. 12-15)

Verse 12 unlocks 2 Peter 1 for us: "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth." A key phrase is "remembrance of these things." Peter wants us to remember the things listed in the first eleven verses. Then in verse 15 he says, "Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance." That leads us to what's listed in the remainder of the chapter. Peter calls us to remember.

A. The Purpose of Remembrance

B. The Theme of Remembrance

1. Illuminated by Scripture

Jesus told the Twelve, "Remember the word that I said unto you" (John 15:20). Paul told the Ephesian elders, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:35). Peter said to the the Jerusalem church, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord" (Acts 11:16). John records that when Jesus was risen from the dead "his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John 2:22). Jude told his readers, "I will, therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this" (Jude 5). In verse 17 He says, "Remember ye the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." In 2 Peter 3:1 Peter says, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." If you look and turn away, you'll forget what you saw. But if you look and continue to look, you'll remember what you saw. That is why it is important to be reminded about remembering.

2. Illustrated by Timothy

If you are thinking you are well established and don't need a reminder, let me offer you an illustration.a) His preparationPaul wrote 2 Timothy to a young man in whom he placed a great amount of trust. Paul loved and cherished Timothy, considering him his son in the faith. Timothy had the best preparation possible for spiritual effectiveness.(1) By Lois and EuniceHis mother, Lois, and his grandmother, Eunice, were godly, virtuous women who instructed him in the Scriptures from the time of his childhood.(2) By PaulTimothy was called by the apostle Paul to be his companion--to travel with him and be disciplined by him. Timothy spent many years with Paul, and Paul invested much of his life in Timothy. Paul taught Timothy all he could about the revelation of God, the effectiveness of ministry, and the power of God. While in the presence of Timothy, Paul was able to manifest signs, wonders, and mighty deeds. Timothy saw miracles and ministries beyond any human description. He also witnessed the power of God in his own life as he preached and ministered. He was Paul's understudy and pastored churches Paul himself had founded.(3) By GodTimothy was tremendously gifted by God. He could preach, teach, and evangelize.b) His pitfallsAt a time that should have been the greatest of his ministry, something apparently went wrong. Is it possible that he had forgotten some of the the truths he knew? In 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul says to Timothy, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." The Greek word translated "fear" literally means "timidity." God didn't make us timid. If Timothy was timid, he was functioning in the flesh. God doesn't produce fear,

intimidation, and timidity; He produces power, love, and a sound mind (v. 7). I sense that Timothy was faltering to some degree in his ministry. Paul wrote 2 Timothy to motivate a young man to strengthen his faith. (1) He seemed ashamed of the Lord. In verse 8 Paul says, "Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." He implies that Timothy exhibited a sense of shame. Perhaps he became tired of being identified with Jesus Christ and taking the flack and abuse that comes with such identification. He was on the front lines battling the philosophers and religionists. (2) He seemed ashamed of Paul. Paul also told Timothy not to be ashamed of him (v. 8). When anyone reaches the place in his Christian life where he is ashamed of the Lord and the people who love Christ, he is at a low ebb. (3) He seemed unwilling to preach the gospel with power. Paul said to Timothy, "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us" (vv. 8-9). In 2 Timothy 2:3 Paul says, "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Timothy needed to please the commander, not the ones who were attacking him. Timothy may have been unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices because his level of commitment was low. In 2 Timothy 1:12 Paul says, "I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." God will sustain the believer. (4) He seemed vacillating in his doctrine. It appears Timothy was so fearful of what was happening around him that he stopped being bold and began to change the message to fit the crowd. In verse 13 Paul says, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me." Don't change the message to accommodate the society and the situation. Then Paul says, "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us" (v. 14). (5) He seemed like he would turn away. Verse 15 says, "This thou knowest, that all they who are in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes." You can sense the pathos in Paul's heart. It's as if he's saying to Timothy, "Everyone else has left me! Don't you leave me, too!" Then Paul says, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain" (v. 16). (6) He seemed faithless in his study of the Word. In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Timothy needed to pursue his studies. (7) He seemed absorbed with useless arguments. In verse 16 Paul tells Timothy to "shun profane and vain babblings." Timothy was engaging in arguments with the religionists and philosophers of his day. I don't know how deeply he was involved, but Paul's words indicate there were some significant problems. In verse 17 he says, "Their word will eat as doth a gangrene." In verse 21 Paul says, "If a man, therefore, purge himself from these [the gangrenous false prophets], he shall be a vessel unto honor." Timothy needed to separate himself from dishonorable, erroneous men. Then in verse 23 he says to avoid "foolish and unlearned questions." (8) He seemed defensive. Verse 24 says, "The servant of the Lord must not strive [fight], but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose him." (9) He seemed tempted by youthful lusts. In verse 22 Paul tells Timothy to flee youthful lusts. Apparently Timothy was being pulled by the power of those youthful lusts. c) His priorities (1) To perform the work of a minister. In 2 Timothy 3:13-14 Paul says, "Evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and been assured of." Timothy needed to hold onto his foundation--the Word of God. Then in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 Paul says, "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ ... preach the word; be diligent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." In verse 5 Paul says, "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." Four times in this epistle Paul hinted that Timothy might abandon him. In chapter 1 verse 8 he tells Timothy not to be ashamed of him. In verse 15 he says, "All they who are in Asia turned away from me." In chapter 4 verse he says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." That's why Paul issued this warning: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life" (2:4). Paul didn't want Timothy to follow the path of Demas. Then in chapter 4 verse 16 Paul says, "At my first defense

no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." Paul didn't want Timothy to forsake him and God.(2) To remember the foundation of his faithIn 2 Timothy 1:6 Paul says, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." Timothy needed to remember his God given gift. Then in 2:14 Paul calls Timothy to remind his people about the things of God. In 3:14 Paul says, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of." But the capstone is in 2:8-9: "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound." Paul encouraged Timothy to remember the humanity ("of the seed of David") and deity ("raised from the dead") of Jesus Christ. His sympathy as a man and His power as God was available to Timothy, who had the unrestrainable Word of God at his disposal. The best of us can forget. We can understand why Peter tells us to remember. If we forget, all kinds of disastrous things might befall us.

II. THE SPECIFICS OF REMEMBRANCE (vv. 1-11, 16-21)

What are we to remember?

A. The Reality of Our Salvation (vv. 1-2)

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus, our Lord"

B. The Riches of Our Salvation (vv. 3-4)

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; by which are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

C. The Responsibility of Our Salvation (vv. 5-7)

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."

D. The Reward of Our Salvation (v. 8)

"If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

When faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love are manifest in your life, you are neither barren nor unfruitful. Therefore, the reward of your salvation is your fruitfulness. God wants to produce fruit in you, but He can't unless you follow the pattern of verses 5-7.

1. The manifestation of fruitfulness

a) The result of an abundance of fruitThe Greek word translated "abound" in verse 8 literally means, "to grow and increase." The intransitive use of the verb form implies this meaning: "to have more than is necessary" or "to bring forth in abundance." There ought to be enough fruit in your life to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt whom you belong to. God is not interested in a marginal manifestation. Some Christians will manifest some productivity, then manifest nothing. However, there should be more fruit in a believer's life than necessary to prove he is a believer. Many unbelievers have difficulty understanding Christianity because so many Christians manifest no fruit. Many people claim to be Christians, but there's nothing in their life to support their claim.b) The result of a lack of fruit(1) "barren"The Greek word translated "barren" (argos) means "useless" or "unproductive." It is used eight times in the New Testament.(a) Its secular useArgos also means "unemployed." It's translated often by the word "idle." Any person who is employed is not idle. A person who doesn't work is no good to society. Titus 1:12 talks about "lazy gluttons." They sit and do nothing.(b) Its spiritual useIn a spiritual sense argos means "to produce no good for God." We know

Paul is referring to a believer because he is talking about people who have the knowledge (epign[ma]losis) of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:8) but have become barren and unfruitful. A barren Christian is spiritually useless. There are times when Christians can be barren. In 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul tells the Corinthians, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." Just how barren can a Christian become? James 2:20 provides an interesting comparison. James is talking about people who claim to believe but give no evidence of that belief: "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" The Greek word translated "dead" is not the usual New Testament word for dead; it is argos. Faith without works is unproductive, useless, or barren. The same word used to speak of the deadness of an unbeliever is used to speak of the barrenness of a Christian. An unproductive Christian is of no more use to God than an unbeliever. The Lord instructs us how to deal with a sinning believer in Matthew 18:15-17. If a believer is sinning, we're to go to him. If he doesn't repent, we're to take two or three witnesses. If he doesn't repent, we're to tell it to the church. If he still doesn't repent, we're to treat him like an unbeliever. In 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 Paul tells the Corinthians to put an immoral brother out of the church, thus turning him over to Satan. That brother wouldn't lose his salvation, but he was indistinguishable from a believer and of no more value to God than an unbeliever. People have said to me, "I have a friend who received Christ and came to church and Bible study for awhile. But now he never comes. He just doesn't seem interested. I can't figure out if he's a Christian or not." I have had the same problem. There was a man who used to come to Grace Church and teach in the children's department. But he has not darkened our door for many years. People have asked me if he's a believer. To be perfectly honest, I haven't the faintest idea because he is indistinguishable from an unbeliever. He is argos-- dead and barren. (2)

"unfruitful" The Greek word translated "unfruitful" is akarpos, and means the same thing as argos. It is used seven times in the New Testament. In a spiritual sense it means no fruit and no results.

Akarpos is used in Jude 12 to speak of unregenerate apostates, who deny the faith and curse Christ. In Ephesians 5:11 akarpos speaks of the works of Satan as "the unfruitful works of darkness."

Akarpos is used in Matthew 13:22 and Mark 4:19 to describe a person who receives the gospel, but eventually allows the concerns of this world to choke out its effectiveness, thus proving himself never to have been a true believer to begin with. The word is used in Titus 3:14 and 2 Peter 1:8 to refer to a believer, so again we see that a believer can be just as barren and fruitless as an unbeliever. A barren Christian is completely indistinguishable from an apostate, an evildoer, or a superficial, false Christian who is of no use to God. First Corinthians 11:30 says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." The Lord caused the death of barren Christians in Corinth. First John 5:16 indicates that the Lord will remove some Christians because of their sin. When a Christian is indistinguishable from an unbeliever, that's in a sense worse than being an unbeliever. A believer who claims to be a Christian yet lives a life that is utterly barren confuses an unbeliever's perception of Christianity.

2. The motivation of fruitfulness

How can you be fruitful? Second Peter 1:8 says, "If these things be in you." When you remember the responsibility of your salvation, the result is fruitfulness. If you don't see fruit in your life, no one can be sure you are a Christian--not even you. No believer begins his Christian life unfruitful. If you're a true Christian, there will be fruit. But by our sin we can enter into times of barrenness. In Matthew 7:16 Jesus says of false prophets, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Many of them are self-deceived. In Matthew 7:22-23 our Lord says, "Many will say ... Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me." In John 15:8 Jesus says, "In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." If you add virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to your faith, God will produce fruit in your life.

3. The meaning of fruitfulness

What is fruit? Hebrews 13:15 says the fruit of our lips is praise. In Philippians 4:17 Paul speaks of

giving money in support of the ministry as fruit. In Romans 1:13 Paul refers to winning souls to Christ as fruit. In 1 Corinthians 16:15 Paul speaks of the house of Stephanas as "the first fruits of Achaia." Fruit is winning people to Christ and investing in His Kingdom. Fruit is praying and praising. It is every righteous act. Behind the act is the attitude, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). You begin with the fruit of the Spirit and follow that with the act. If you act without the right attitude, that's legalism. I pray we might be a sacrificial, productive, and fruitful people. Fruit is not the result of standing around and doing nothing. It doesn't come from signing on a dotted line to be involved in a ministry. Fruit results when the things of 2 Peter 1:5-7 are manifest in your life. Only then will God produce fruit in you.

E. The Rest of Our Salvation (vv. 9-11)

When there's no fruit in your life because you forgot the responsibility and riches of salvation, and are not thankful for the reality of salvation, you will forfeit the rest of your salvation--the confidence and security of it. When there's no fruit in your life, no one will know you're saved--not even you. Have you ever wondered whether or not you're really saved? Have you ever been fearful that you might die and miss heaven?

1. The result of spiritual blindness (v. 9)

a) A loss of security (v. 9a, c) "He that lacketh these things is blind ... and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." The main verb in verse 9 is translated "blind." When fruit is absent the believer is blind. What is he blind to? The cleansing of his sins in past times. He has forgotten he has been saved. He's filled with doubt when he sees barrenness and fruitlessness in his life. He doesn't know if he is a Christian. b) A loss of perspective (v. 9b) "[He] cannot see afar off" The blind believer is nearsighted. He has spiritual myopia. The Greek modifying participle here gives us the English word myopia. Myopia is a condition of the eye in which parallel rays are focused in front of the retina. Nearsighted people focus right in front of them, but the further out they look, the worse their vision becomes. Distant things are not in focus. That's what Peter is referring to spiritually. A believer who has no fruit as a result of adding nothing to his faith goes blind because his perspective is limited. He focuses on the earth and the things of the earth--the passing fads and fashions of the time. By the time he tries to look to eternity, it is so out of focus he can't perceive it. He is a victim of spiritual myopia. The believer becomes blind when he loses his eternal perspective by focusing on the earth. Some people spend all their time on material things such as cars, clothes, and houses. When they try to see into eternity, it is out of focus for them. When there is no fruit in their lives, they lose the ability to see spiritually. Confidence, security, and rest are replaced by doubts and fears. Second Corinthians 4:3-4 speaks of unbelievers as being blind. A Christian who is barren is just as blind as an unbeliever to the realities of God. When you ignore the eternal perspective and stare at the things of the earth long enough, one day you'll look up and you won't have any eternal vision. Be fruitful; don't be barren. Add to your faith; don't be blind.

2. The reinforcement of secure salvation (vv. 10-11)

a) Our present rest (v. 10) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure [deeply rooted]; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." We don't need to make our calling and election sure to God-- He's very sure about who's elected. He wrote the names of the elect in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. God is not the issue here; you are. When you are manifesting the reality of your salvation by bearing fruit, you will never fall from confidence into doubt. There is nothing worse than to fear hell and fear you're not saved. I enjoy my life. I love my wife and kids. I enjoy every day. I enjoy my friends. I love the church. I love the men and women who are a part of the fellowship. I'm a happy person. I know I have more than my share. I can enjoy life, but if at any moment I was in doubt about my eternity, I would not enjoy one day of my life because I would live in fear. But I don't worry about that because I have confidence about my future. And that frees me to enjoy every day as a gift from God. b) A future rest (v. 11) "An entrance

shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." Even a barren and fruitless Christian will enter into the kingdom. But the key word in verse 11 is "abundantly." When you are fruitful, your entrance into the Kingdom will be abundant. The Greek text is in this order: "for so richly will be supplied to you the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." All Christians are going to enter into the Kingdom, but some of us will have our works burned up because they were shown to be nothing but wood, hay, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:15). However, some will enter in with rich rewards because their works have been proven to be gold, silver, and precious stones.

Conclusion

Have you forgotten your salvation? Are you thankful? Have you forgotten the riches of your salvation? Have you forgotten the responsibility of your salvation? Are you fulfilling it? Do you have fruit as the result of your salvation? Do you have that rest--the confidence that belongs to the obedient believer?

Focusing on the Facts

1. Describe how Timothy was prepared to be spiritually effective.
2. In what ways might Timothy have been struggling in his ministry? Explain each one.
3. What did Paul charge Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 3:13-14 and 4:1-2, 5?
4. What was the key thing Paul wanted Timothy to remember?
5. What is the reward of the believer's salvation?
6. Why is it important for believers to be fruitful?
7. Describe a "barren" Christian.
8. How can a believer be fruitful?
9. What is the fruit of a believer's life?
10. When a believer has not been consistent to add to his faith, what is he blind to (2 Peter 1:9)?
11. Define spiritual myopia.
12. Why do believers need to be diligent to make their calling and election sure to themselves (2 Peter 1:10)?

Pondering the Principles

1. Timothy suffered through a time in his ministry when he was undergoing tremendous pressure from the opposition. Review the section that discusses Timothy's pitfalls (see pp. 2-4). Are there times when your behavior might indicate you are ashamed of the Lord? Which of Paul's exhortations might help you to be more courageous in your stand for the cause of Christ? Memorize that passage for recall during times of discouragement.
2. John 15:8 tells us that God is glorified when we bear fruit. Second Peter 1:8 says that when we add virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to our faith, we will be fruitful. Is God producing fruit in your life? Review the section that defines fruit (see pp. 8-9). Make a list of some of the specific fruit God is producing in your life. Thank God for all he is doing through you. If your list is small, perhaps you need to determine if you are being responsible to add the ingredients of 2 Peter 1:5-7 to your faith. Whether your list is small or large, continue being diligent to add those ingredients to your life.
3. Are you happy? Do you enjoy your life? Are you secure in your future with Christ? If not, perhaps you are suffering from spiritual myopia. Are you guilty of focusing on the things of the earth rather than the things of heaven? If you are, you need to correct your spiritual vision. Instead of spending your time on material things or worldly issues, spend more time studying the Word of God and praying to your heavenly Father. Center the majority of your conversations on spiritual issues rather than worldly ones. As you make that commitment you will find your spiritual vision returning.

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