

# Better Way Apostolic Church – Bible Class

## Subject: Practice Makes Perfect: 2 Peter 1:12-15

**God cares for those who trust in him.**

**Nahum 1:7** The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. **Find rest in God alone. Trust in him at all times, under any and all circumstances.**

**Psalms 62:5** My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

### Only One Doctrine

An aged Christian minister said: "When I was a young man I knew everything; when I got to be thirty-five years of age, in my ministry I had only a hundred doctrines of religion; when I got to be forty years of age I had only fifty doctrines of religion; when I got to be sixty years of age I had only ten doctrines of religion; and now I am dying at seventy-five years of age, and there is only one thing I know, and that is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

### Feebleness and Duty

Feeble are we? Yes, without God we are nothing. But by faith, every man may be what God requires him to be. This is the only Christian idea of duty. Measure obligation by inherent ability? No, my brethren, Christian obligation has a very different measure. It is measured by the power that God will give us, measured by the gifts and possible increments of faith. And what a reckoning it will be for many of us, when Christ summons us to answer before Him under the law, not for what we are, but for what we might have been.

When we study 2 Peter 2, we will discover that apostate teachers try to turn people away from the Word of God and into "deeper experiences" that are contrary to the Word. These false teachers use "feigned words" instead of God's inspired Word (2 Peter 2:3), and they teach "damnable heresies" (2 Peter 2:1). In other words, this is really a matter of life and death! If a person believes the truth, he will live; if he believes lies, he will die. It is the difference between salvation and condemnation.

**Championship teams build their success upon the basics of their sport. The coaches routinely review the basics with the players. Good athletes practice them again and again. Great athletes strive to perfect them in their technique. Winners never forget the basics and build their game upon them like a house on a foundation.**

In his second letter, Peter plays the part of the coach. He does not want Christians to forget the basics of their faith, so he reviews them in this passage. The key word here is remember. How's your practice schedule?

As you read, watch also for God's escape hatch and an amazing chain or fortification for your faith. And pay attention to a call to pay attention.

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

Peter was concerned about his readers' faith surviving over the long run. Because Peter knew that he would die soon, he reviewed the basics of the faith to etch them into their memory (2 Peter 1:12-15).

**Peter wanted his readers to firmly grasp the gospel's basic message, a goal that would take repetition to achieve. He wanted them to hear again and again that Jesus had come to die for their sins, had risen on the third day, had given them eternal life, and would one day return to judge the earth. Knowing and believing those simple basics would uphold their faith and keep them strong.**

From time to time, it is good to review the basics of our faith in Christ. Doing this will refresh our memory, strengthen our faith, and dispel any spiritual falsehoods we may have begun to believe.

Do you remember the basics of the faith? Whether you do or not, be sure to review the Gospels and Epistles regularly to stay spiritually sharp.

**The best defense against false teaching is true living.** A church filled with growing Christians, vibrant in their faith, is not likely to fall prey to apostates with their counterfeit Christianity. But this Christian living must be based on the authoritative Word of God. False teachers find it easy to seduce people who do not know their Bible but who are desirous of "experiences" with the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to build on subjective experience alone and ignore objective revelation.

**Peter discussed Christian experience in the first half of 2 Peter 1, and in the last half he discussed the revelation we have in the Word of God.** His purpose is to show the importance of knowing God's Word and relying on it completely. The Christian who knows what he believes and why he believes it will rarely be seduced by the false teachers and their devious doctrines.

Peter underscores the dependability and durability of the Word of God by contrasting Scripture with men, experiences, and the world.

### **Men Die, but the Word Lives (2 Peter 1:12-15)**

Through their preaching and teaching, the Apostles and New Testament prophets laid the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20) and we in later generations are building on that foundation. However, the men were not the foundation; Jesus Christ is the Foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11). He is also the chief Cornerstone that ties the building together (Ephesians 2:20). If the church is to last, it cannot be built on mere men. It must be built on the Son of God.

Our Lord had told Peter when he would die and how he would die. "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John 21:18). This explains why, shortly after Pentecost, Peter was able to sleep in prison the night before he was scheduled to be killed; he knew that Herod could not take His life (Acts 12:1 ff). Tradition says that Peter was crucified in Rome. Like an of God's faithful servants, Peter was immortal until His work was done.

There were at least three motives behind Peter's ministry as he wrote this letter. **The first was obedience to Christ's command.** "I will not be negligent" (2 Peter 1:12). "When thou art converted," Jesus had said to Peter, "**strengthen thy brethren**" (Luke 22:32). Peter knew that he had a ministry to fulfill. **His second motive was simply that His reminder was the right thing to do.** "I think it meet," he wrote, which simply means, "I drink it is right and suitable." It is always right to stir up the saints and remind them of the Word of God!

His third motive is wrapped up in the word endeavor in 2 Peter 1:15. It is the same word that is translated diligence in 2 Peter 1:5 and 10. It means "to hasten to do something, to be zealous in doing it." Peter knew that he would soon die, so he wanted to take care of his spiritual responsibilities before it was too late. **You and I do not know when we will die, so we had better start being diligent today!**

What was it that Peter wanted to accomplish? The answer is found in the word that is repeated in 2 Peter 1:12-13 and 15 - remembrance. Peter wanted to impress his readers' minds with the Word of God so that they would never forget it! "I think it meet ... to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:13). The verb stir you up means "to awaken, to arouse." This same word is used to describe a storm on the Sea of Galilee! (John 6:18) Peter knew that our minds have a tendency to get accustomed to truth and then to take it for granted. We forget what we ought to remember, and we remember what we ought to forget!

The readers of this letter knew the truth and were even "established" in it (2 Peter 1:12), but that was no guarantee they would always remember the truth and apply it.

**One reason the Holy Spirit was given to the church was to remind believers of the lessons already learned (John 14:26).**

Often time , I have received letters from listeners who get upset when I repeat something. In my reply, I often refer them to what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:1 - "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." Our Lord often repeated Himself as He taught the people, and He was the Master Teacher.

Peter knew that he was going to die, so he wanted to leave behind something that would never die - the written Word of God. His two epistles became a part of the inspired Scriptures, and they have been ministering to the saints for centuries. Men die, but the Word of God lives on!

It is possible that Peter was also alluding to the Gospel of Mark. Most Bible scholars believe that the Spirit used Peter to give John Mark some of the data for his book (see 1 Peter 5:13). One of the church fathers, Papias, said that Mark was "Peter's disciple and interpreter. "

The church of Jesus Christ is always one generation away from extinction. If there were no dependable written revelation, we would have to depend on word-of-mouth tradition. If you have ever played the party game "Gossip," you know how a simple sentence can be radically changed when passed from one person to another! We do not depend on the traditions of dead men; we depend on the truth of the living Word. Men die, but the Word lives forever.

If we did not have a dependable written revelation, the church would be at the mercy of men's memories. People who pride themselves on having good memories should sit on the witness stand in a courtroom! It is amazing that three perfectly honest witnesses can, with good conscience, give three different accounts of an automobile accident! Our memories are defective and selective. We usually remember what we want to remember, and often we distort even that.

Fortunately, we can depend on the written Word of God. "It is written" and it stands written forever. We can be saved through this living Word (1 Peter 1:23-25), nurtured by it (1 Peter 2:2), and guided and protected as we trust and obey.

### **Giving in Loving Service**

J. R. Miller once said: "Mary's ointment was wasted when she broke the vase and poured it upon her Lord. Yes; but suppose she had left the ointment in the unbroken vase? What remembrances would it then have had? Would there have been any mention of it on the Gospel pages? Would her deed of careful keeping have been told over the world? She broke the vase and poured it out, lost it, sacrificed it, and now the perfume fills all the earth. We may keep our life if we will, carefully preserving it from waste; but we shall have no reward, no honor from it, at the last. But if we empty it out in loving service, we shall make it a lasting blessing to the world, and we shall be remembered forever.

### **The Rooted Christian**

I saw one day a number of beech trees which had formed a wood; they had all fallen to the ground through a storm. The fact was they leaned upon one another to a great extent, and the thickness of the wood prevented each tree from getting a firm hold of the soil. They kept each other up and also constrained each other to grow up tall and thin, to the neglect of root growth. When the tempest forced down the first few trees, the others readily followed, one after the other. Close to that same spot I saw another tree in the open, bravely defying the blast, in solitary strength. The hurricane had beaten upon it but it had endured all its force unsheltered. That lone, brave tree seemed to be better rooted than before the storm. I thought, "Is it not so with professors?" They often hold together, and help each other to grow up, but if they have not firm personal roothold, when a storm arises they fall in rows. A minister dies, or certain leaders are taken away, and over go the members by departure from the faith and from holiness. I would have you be self-contained, growing each man into Christ for himself, rooted and grounded in love and faith and every holy grace. Then when the worst storm that ever blew on mortal man shall come, it will be said of your faith, "It could not shake it."