

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Revelation of Our Salvation**

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:12-21

Code: 1398

As I said a little earlier, I had the opportunity this week to be in Detroit, Michigan for a few days at the International Christian Education Association Celebration. And it was the two-hundredth anniversary of Sunday School, which was begun in 1780 by Robert Raikes in England. He went up and down the street and gathered a lot of little London waifs together and started teaching the Bible. He only had two requirements for them to come to Sunday School, one was that they washed their face, the other was that they cleaned their clothes. Didn't care what kind of clothes or what kind of face, as long as they were clean, and began to teach them the things of Christ. And from there, Sunday School has become kind of a major thing in our society today.

And I was asked to give one of the addresses to this convention. And they wanted a kind of perspective for the future. And since I had been studying so much in 2 Peter chapter 1, you know, it doesn't matter what the title is they give them, I always preach the sermon that's on my heart anyway. I just change the opening lines. I thought, "Well, what could be more fitting than to say what we need for the next 200 years, should Jesus tarry, is exactly what we've been built on for the last 200 years. And that the key for us is to remember that the things that the Lord has given us in His Word never change. And that our job as teachers and ministers is to cause people to remember the great truths of the Word of God."

The Lord doesn't want us to be so creative or so innovative. In fact, if somebody comes up with something new, it's probably not true because it's the old things that are in the book that the Lord has always used to build His church. And so we've been emphasizing that in our time together that it's not for us to move ahead, it's for us really to remember the past.

It was kind of interesting, too, I had decided to speak on 2 Peter and how important it was to put people in remembrance of the things in the past. And they had...just before I spoke a guy rode down the center aisle on a horse, which doesn't always happen when I'm speaking. And he was...it was a lot of people, I don't know, thousands of people in the Cobol(?) Hall Auditorium. And this guy came down on a horse and all of a sudden we all realized that he was dressed as John Wesley. And he jumped off the horse and had his saddle bag over his shoulder and pulled out a Bible and he did about a 40 minute dramatization as if he were John Wesley. And as the Lord would have it, his text was this verse out of 2 Peter. And I had no knowledge of that. And he showed how important it was that his very conversion had occurred when he had understood the truths of 2 Peter, particularly where it says that God has given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, and so forth. And so

he went on dramatizing his own life and how God brought him to himself through this text. And as the Lord would have it, then I got up and preached on that very same chapter. So the Lord was very gracious.

And the whole emphasis that came together in that one service was the fact that when we're teaching Sunday School or sharing with someone else or confronting a person with the claims of Jesus Christ, the issue is to make sure that we go back and remember the things that are taught to us in the Word of God. And as you've known from the last three weeks as I've shared with you, this is the dimension that I sense God has put into my own heart for our ministry together in the future, that it's a ministry of remembrance. And we've been trying in the last three weeks to remember the things that we ought to remember because it's so tragic when people forget.

Remembering and forgetting are important words in the Bible. Let me just help to kind of refresh your mind and bring you up to date, if I can, by asking you to turn to two Old Testament passages. The first one is in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is a restatement and an amplification, an explanation of the law of God. As the children of Israel were anticipating entering into the promise land, being established by God as an entity, as a nation, being a theocracy over which God would rule in a divine way, being the nation supremely and superbly blessed by God, the Lord had given them some basic standards by which they were to live. And, of course, the Lord expresses the fear that they would forget those standards, that in the prosperity and the comfort and the joy that was theirs in the land, they would soon forget where it all came from. And so in Deuteronomy chapter 8 there is a refreshing of the standard given to them. In verse 1, all the commandments which the Lord says which I command thee this day shall you observe to do. I want you to just be reminded to do them all. And there will be a consequence in order that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give unto your fathers.

Now if you know the history of these people, you know that they had disobeyed God, hadn't they, all through the wilderness. And now was a new generation ready to go into the land and in effect he's saying don't you forget the things your forefathers forgot. Verse 2, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years." Don't ever forget the commands of God and don't ever forget the work of God in your life.

Down in verse 11, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes." Verse 14, "Often when your heart is lifted up, you forget the Lord your God." And that is so true, become proud, self-centered. And then you'll wind up, verse 17, saying in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." I'm where I am because of me. "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He who giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto thy fathers as it is this day. It shall be if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God and walk after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish." Very important to remember.

One other text, Jeremiah chapter 3, and I want to spend a moment or two there so I'd like you to turn to it. Let me give you a little of the history. The people went into the land and they seemed to do all right for a while, under the judges and those good and godly men that led them. Then they decided they wanted a king. And they got a king, Saul...a poor excuse for a king. Then there was David. And then there was David's wise son Solomon. But after Solomon, a disaster occurred and the kingdom split. And from then on there were two kingdoms: the kingdom of Israel in the north, and the kingdom of Judah in the south. Ten tribes went north. Only two remained in the south, Judah and Benjamin. And the north went sweeping immediately into idolatry and immorality and by the year 722 B.C., the northern kingdom was taken away into captivity from which it never returned...never. And the only reason we ever had a duly constituted Israel with all twelve tribes was because some of those ten tribes filtered back down into the southern kingdom of Judah and Judah became all the Israel that there was left after 722 B.C.

And Jeremiah refers to that frequently in his prophecy. For while Jeremiah is prophesying, Israel has already gone into captivity. They're already in dissolution as an entity. They had so abandoned themselves to the plan of God that they were long gone. At least Judah still had Jerusalem and Jerusalem still had a temple and because of that there was kind of the pervasive presence of the truth of God in their midst which acted as a little more of a preservation. And Judah at least had a few good kings. From the divided kingdom on there wasn't one righteous king ever in the history of the northern kingdom Israel, not one. And so they were long gone.

And they should have acted as an object lesson to Judah. It should have become apparent to the people in Judah that you don't go into idolatry without a very severe penalty. When God took Israel away in the north, God was giving a very graphic object lesson to Judah in the south, which object lesson they never bothered to heed. And so they find themselves basically at the very same point in history that Israel was just prior to their captivity. They are disobedient. They are rebellious. They are indifferent. They're hypocritical. They're immoral. They're idolatrous. You name it. And they are right now on the knife-edge of the Babylonian captivity. And God sends along this remarkable man, Jeremiah, whose job it is to warn them that they're going to go the same way the northern kingdom went.

And later on after they did go into captivity, He sent along another prophet named Ezekiel to tell them that that's just the way they did go.

And so, as you come to the third chapter of Jeremiah, you have a graphic illustration of the problem of the nation of Judah. They were just evil in every possible way. And so God begins to speak, verse 6, very interesting. "The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done?"

Now I want you to notice this. God has a message for His people Judah, but God speaks only to Jeremiah. And God, I believe, is using the third person because He is emphasizing the severing of the relationship between Himself and Judah. He does not speak directly to the people, He speaks to the prophet to speak to the people. The emphasis of this text is judgment, a broken relationship. He says, "Jeremiah, have you seen that which backsliding Israel has done? Did you see what happened to Israel? It was manifest. It was open. It was obvious. They didn't hide anything."

"She has gone up," it says, "upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there has played the harlot." Now the Canaanites basically worshiped Baal. And there were vestiges of the Canaanitish religion because the Jews had not done what God told them to do and that was to obliterate the Canaanites. They had tolerated them. They had tried to coexist with them. And so they had allowed their religion to continue. And the Canaanitish religion was this, they would ascend into the high mountains because they believed that the higher up the mountain you went, the closer you got to the deities. So they carried on their religious activities on a mountain. And they would find the shade of a green tree to avoid the heat. And there they would carry on their worship of Baal. The worship was really an orgy, it was a sexually perverted prostitution oriented kind of worship. And that's why its harlotry is not only spiritual, but is also physical. They were carrying on immorality in worship of the Canaanitish gods, most particularly the god Baal. And they had turned every high mountain and under every green tree into this kind of a place.

"And I said," verse 7, "after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto Me." See how gracious God is and how forgiving? After she had done this, I said turn unto Me. "But she returned not." The patience and the love and the grace and the mercy of God and Israel said no. And then He says in verse 7, "And her treacherous sister Judah saw it."

In other words, Judah knew this and saw the sin and saw the judgment. "And I saw when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committeth adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not but went and played the harlot also." I mean, the consequence, God says, was I divorced Israel. And you want to know what God thinks of divorce? Read Hosea, "I hate divorce." But sometimes God has to do what He hates, He divorced His people. They so played the harlot, they so persisted in their adultery, they so persisted in their harlotry. They never would turn. They never would come back. And He says, "And treacherous Judah, the southern sister saw it and did the same thing."

And verse 9, "It came to pass through the lightness of her harlotry." The word "lightness" means boisterous, the party spirit. It wasn't some sneaky kind of seduced harlotry, it was a wild loud orgiastic party, they were having a ball doing it. It was just flagrant and blatant and through that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. What does that mean? Committed adultery with gods that are made out of stone and wood, became idolatrous. "Yet for all this treacherous sister

Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart...watch...but feignedly, saith the Lord."

In other words, to add to the sin of Israel, in Judah you can not only add idolatry and adultery, but you can add hypocrisy. In the northern kingdom of Israel, there really was not true religion left at all. In the south, they still carried on a ritual in the temple. There was just hypocrisy from beginning to end.

In verse 11, "The Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah." In some sense, Israel's better than Judah. Why? Because nothing is more disgusting to God than hypocrisy.

Now how did Judah ever get to this point? I mean, they ignored the lesson of the captivity of Israel. They ignored what God did in judgment. How did they ever get to this point? How did it ever happen?

You have to go down to verse 20. "Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. And a voice was heard upon the high places weeping and supplications of the children of Israel." And there the Israel, I think, refers to the folks of Judah. Judah has now become the only true Israel that's left. And the term Israel becomes used for Judah, very frequently in the prophets. And so the children begin to cry and to weep, "For they have perverted their way and they have...what?...forgotten the Lord their God." That was the whole problem.

Now who is this on the mountain crying? Well, I think it's a remnant. Some would say it's a picture of the future millennial time when Israel cries out unto God after they've looked on Him whom they have pierced. But I...it may have overtones to that. But I really see this as a sum remnant, just a small remnant in Jeremiah's time, for always God had a remnant. But the rest of the nation, they just went on. And if you read down through the end of chapter 3 and into chapter 4, you'll find that the main part of the nation never bothered to respond to Jeremiah at all and ultimately were taken right into captivity. But the real crux of the thing, and I want you to see, is at the end of verse 21, they forgot the Lord their God.

How can you possibly forget that? How can you for a moment forget the Lord your God? How can it be? Well, they had a little help. They really did. They had help coming from particularly one angle, false shepherds came along and shoved them in the wrong direction. And Jeremiah makes a major point out of these false shepherds who led them astray. And he talks about them repeatedly in his prophecy. And you add to that their sin. They listened to the wrong voices. They were getting the wrong input. And they were doing the wrong things. And the truth about God began to fade and they forgot. And God says in 22, "Return, you backsliding children, and I'll heal your backslidings. And the remnant says, Behold, we come unto Thee for Thou art the Lord our God." Just the remnant came, the rest didn't come and they went into captivity. And you know the rest because you know what we've been studying in the book of Daniel, don't you? Seventy years they stayed in that captivity.

The forgetting then becomes the theme of Jeremiah's book as he speaks of their sin. For example, chapter 2 verse 32, "Yet my people have forgotten me days without number." Don't try to follow me, just listen. Chapter 13 verse 25, "Because thou hast forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood, says God." Chapter 18 verse 15, "Because My people have forgotten Me, they have burned incense to vanity." Chapter 23 verse 26, same thing, "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart who think to cause my people to forget My name as their fathers have forgotten My name for the name of Baal."

And you go to the very end of Jeremiah, near the end, the fiftieth chapter, it's the same thing all the way through, "My people have become lost sheep. Their shepherds have caused them to go astray. They have turned them away on the mountains, back--that is--to the mountains where they worshiped the false gods. They have gone from mountain to hill. They have forgotten their proper resting place."

Ezekiel saw it. And when Ezekiel prophesied to the captives after they had already gone into captivity, he told them the same thing. He said the reason you're here is you forgot...you forgot. You didn't remember. Chapter 22, for example, of Ezekiel and verse 12, it says, "Thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion and hast forgotten Me, says the Lord God."

In Hosea, the prophet Hosea comes along and essentially says the same thing. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee that thou shalt be no priest to Me, seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

Perhaps the greatest chapter in all the Bible on the Word of God itself is the one-hundred and nineteenth Psalm. Listen to what it says repeatedly in that Psalm, just listen. Psalm 119:16, "I will not forget Thy Word." Verse 83, "Yet do I not forget Thy statutes." Verse 93, "I will never forget Thy precepts." Verse 109, "I do not forget Thy law." Verse 141, "I do not forget Thy precepts." One-fifty-three, "I do not forget Thy law." And the last verse, "I do not forget Thy commandments." The importance of remembering.

Now how do we remember? I believe we remember by the constant repetition of the truth, the feeding into the heart. We avoid the false teachers. That's why in 2 Timothy 2 it says if you avoid these false teachers, you'll be a vessel fit for the Master's use. I believe we avoid the false and we let the true come in constantly. And I also believe we have to avoid sin. First laying aside all sin, then desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow. So setting aside false teaching, setting aside sin, and absorbing the Word of God plants it in our memory, as we've seen, so that your mind is so full of biblical truth that your spiritual responses are almost involuntary.

Now let's look back at 2 Peter chapter 1. And I just want to wrap the chapter up briefly in the time left. We are to remember, people, that's the issue. And exactly what we're to remember Peter speaks about in the chapter.

In verse 12 we have the key that unlocks the chapter. "Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things." What things? The things before this verse and the things after this verse. The whole chapter is a list of things that we are never to forget. Though we already know them and are already established in them, unless we continue to exercise our minds and exercise our wills in those things, they will slip from our grasp.

What are we to remember? Verse 12, "We are to remember these things." What things? The word "wherefore" is at the beginning, that takes us back, the things he's just mentioned. First of all, the reality of salvation, verses 1 and 2, that we have obtained a like-precious faith through the righteousness of God and the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the riches of our salvation, that we have all things that pertain to life and godliness. That we have received the divine nature and escaped the corruption of the world. And then the responsibility of our salvation, that we are to add to our faith virtue and knowledge and self-control and patience and godliness and brotherly kindness and love. And then the fruit, or the result of our salvation, that we're not to be barren or unfruitful.

Now we know what we're to remember: the reality, the riches, the responsibility, the result. And then last time we closed by talking about the rest...the rest, verses 9 to 11. So that we're not blind to the fact that we're saved, we must remember our salvation and what it requires and what God wants it to produce. And when we see the fruit, then we'll know we're redeemed. When we don't see the fruit, we won't know...we'll be blind.

Now that's the first part of the chapter. Then Peter speaks, as we've seen, in verses 12 to 15 about how important it is for him to remind us as long as he's in this tabernacle, he says in verse 13, I'll stir you up putting you in remembrance because I know, verse 14, that I'm shortly going to die as the Lord showed me. And He showed him in John 21.

And so then you come to verse 15, now watch it, let's begin there. "Moreover I will endeavor that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." And then he goes on to two more things he wants you to remember. And those are the two we want to talk about this morning. And really we just want to give you the interpretation of the text and then just see if we can't apply it to us.

First of all, I like to call verses 16 to 18 the revelation of our salvation, or better the revelations, plural, of our salvation. But first let's see what Peter says in verse 16. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." Now this is a tremendous statement. The main issue among the

people to whom Peter is writing is the Second Coming. False teachers have come in and they've said there's no Second Coming, Christ won't return, it won't be the way you say, there never will be a Second Coming, there never will be a judgment of the earth. We know that, don't we, because of chapter 3, verse 3, "Scoffers walking after their own lust saying, Where is the promise of His coming? All things continue as they were from the creation, nothing is ever going to change, there's no second coming, why do you want to believe that?" And Peter then moves into his theme right here and he says, "When we have said unto you things concerning the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have not followed some philosophy, some humanly devised deceitful false story, we are telling you about the second coming because we have seen it with our own eyes." Now that's a pretty amazing statement.

You say, "Peter, frankly, I think you've gotten a little carried away. How could you see the Second Coming when it hasn't even happened? What in the world are you talking about? The power and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have been an eyewitness of His majesty in coming glory?" That's right. I'm not telling you something second-handed, I'm telling you something that I myself have experienced as an eyewitness.

"Well, when did you ever see that, Peter?" Let's go back to Matthew 16 and find out. And we'll go back to when Peter walked with Jesus on the earth. And back to Matthew 16 verse 24. Now Jesus is very urgent in what He says here to His disciples. He wants them to be committed to Him so He says, "I want you to deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Me. If you're going to try to just preserve your life, pad your own chair, make yourself comfortable in this world, you're going to lose it. But if you're willing to lose your life for My sake, you'll find it. If you just want to gain the whole world, you'll lose your soul. If you're willing to lose the world, you'll gain your soul forever." In other words, get your spiritual priorities in order.

Why? Verse 27, "Because the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then He shall reward every man according to his works." In other words, He says get your life in order because Jesus is going to come back and reward you. You better make sure you're ready to receive a reward rather than judgment.

So verse 27 introduces the Second Coming, now look at it. He's coming in the glory of His Father. What is that? John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." What is that? The glory of the Father is the fullness of deity, that's all. God is God and God is God manifest in glory. And it's simply saying that Christ is the glory of God, which glory now in His humanness is veiled, right? But someday He will come in full blazing glory. Later on in Matthew 24 and 25 it tells us about this, how He comes in full blazing glory. There's coming a day when He pulls the veil of His flesh aside and no more humiliation but glorification. You say, "Boy, that's exciting to think about."



And then Jesus said a statement that must have just been so thrilling they couldn't have stood it. He said, "There are some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Some of you aren't even going to die before you see Christ in Second-Coming glory.

Now you say, "Wait a minute, they'd have to be 2,000 years old if He came now. How could they possibly live to see the Second Coming? Some of you standing here are going to see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom? Wait a minute. How can it be?" Well, you have to go to chapter 17, and by the way, all three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, have this same text as verses 27 and 28 and all three follow it with the same incident that's in chapter 17, showing that without doubt this is the fulfillment of that statement in verse 28. Six days later, and none of them had died in those six days, not all of them that were standing there, not all the disciples, but some of them, six days later...which ones? Peter, James and John his brother, Jesus took and brought them into an high mountain privately.

James, why? The first to shed his blood for Christ. John and Peter, the key to the develop of the gospel in the first twelve chapters of Acts, the foundation of the Jerusalem church, key people, you're going to see. Took them into a high mountain and what did they see? Verse 2, "And Jesus was transfigured." He was metamorphised, He was transformed, He was changed, He was altered before them, totally transformed. And how? His face did shine like the sun.

Now, folks, it's a very obvious point that you can't look at the sun, right? Well, can you imagine? There was Christ and all of a sudden His face was like the sun. And His raiment was as white as the light. Well, you say, what is this? Well, we know that behind the veil of His flesh there is the glory of God, right? And all He did was pull open the veil of His flesh and blazing glory burst forth, for God when God is made visible is visible as blazing incomprehensible light. And so they were seeing not the Son in humiliation but the Son in glorification. He pulls open the veil of His flesh and they saw Him in full blazing glory, the kind of glory that He will manifest at His Second Coming. This is a preview, folks, and indeed the fulfillment of verse 28. They saw the Son of Man in the essential glory that He would have when He comes in His Kingdom.

And, behold, verse 3, boy, what a fabulous thing that must have been. "And there appeared with Him Moses and Elijah having a conversation." And, of course, Peter spoke up, naturally. And said unto Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. This is terrific." You know what he was saying? Don't let it stop, don't let it end. Man, this is bliss. Moses and Elijah and here You are in blazing glory, let's build some booths here.

Now those are more permanent than they sound. Let's quick build a building and we'll capture Moses in one and Elijah in one and You in one. Man, forget all that stuff down at the bottom of the hill, let's just...this is terrific.

"And while he yet spoke," verse 5, "behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud which said, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, here ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were very much afraid." All of a sudden Peter's joy turned to total fear when he heard the voice of God. I can't imagine what the voice of God must be like but I'm sure I'd have a similar reaction.

Verse 7, I love this, "Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, don't be afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes they saw no man except Jesus only." It was over, just as fast as it had begun. But Peter had seen with his own eyes, James had seen with his own eyes, John had seen with his own eyes the power and the glory of Jesus in His Second Coming manifestation. And it was like a mini-kingdom. Just look at the individual elements. Christ is in glory, not humiliation. Moses in glory represents the redeemed who died. Elijah in glory, the redeemed who were translated. Peter, James and John, unglorified represent Israel in the flesh during the Kingdom, and the multitudes at the foot of the mountain, perhaps, could be in reference to the multitudes who will come in and out to see Christ in His glory in the Kingdom. But it's a mini picture of the whole Kingdom...a personal dazzling preview of Second Coming glory.

Let me ask you a question. Do you think Peter ever forgot that? Not hardly. I really don't think he ever forgot that. And so now you go back to 2 Peter and you get an idea of what he's talking about. He says we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. Well, when was that? I mean, when did you see that? "For He received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Well, when was that? Well, this voice came from heaven and we heard it when we were with Him in the holy mount. You see, Peter says that I had this personal experience. Peter can't ever forget because God manifested Himself in such an incredible way, he could never forget.

John had the same thing and John wrote in 1 John 1:1, "That which we have seen, looked upon, heard and our hands have handled concerning the word of life declare we unto you." I'm not talking out of the second hand, I saw Christ. I touched Christ.

Paul says the same thing in Galatians. He says, I didn't get my gospel from any man, I didn't even get it from the people in Jerusalem, I got it from Jesus Christ Himself. In other words, Peter says I remember, I remember the revelation of God to me in my own life.

Now how does that...or how can that apply to us? I believe that God endeavors to help us to remember by revealing Himself so frequently in our lives that we really can't ever forget. You know, I look back in my life and I can remember a lot of things and I can remember so many things that God

has done in my life that I would have to deliberately determine to forget in order to forget. But as long as I deliberately determine to remember, I'm flooded with memories of what God has done. You see, praise is simply reciting the things that God has done, that's all, which involves His attributes and His works.

I can remember as a little boy, my father had preached a sermon, I don't know what it was that he preached, I can't remember the words but I know I was under conviction and I went up to him and we sat on the steps of a church after everybody had left, a church in Indiana. And he said, "What's wrong, Johnny?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. I just don't know if Jesus is in my heart." And we prayed together and I felt a sense of God's presence and forgiveness in my life.

I can remember an automobile accident, it's as vivid to me as if it were today, when God took me another great step and added to me another dimension of understanding in my life. I can see so many things that God has done....I...they're uncounted to me. And as long as my will is to remember those things, I'll never forget. If I expose myself to false doctrine and false principles of living, I can wash those things away. But I choose not to do that by His strength.

I don't know how it is in your life but I have so many evidences of God's revelation, I'm not having visions and that kind of thing, but I've seen the providential caring, loving, sustaining hand of God so many times. Why, I've seen people come to Christ so many times. I've seen that miracle over and over and over.

I was in Detroit and a lady came up to me and she just stood there and looked at me and then she started to cry. You know, and ladies do that. And, you know, you always kind of wonder about that, kind of like the old joke of the guy who went to make the hospital call and he just stood by the bed and the woman broke out in tears. And he realized he was standing on her air hose, you know. When somebody does that...when somebody does that, you don't always know just exactly what's going on, you know. But this lady began to kind of weep and then she just said, "Christ had changed her life. And somebody had given her some tapes and God was changing her life." And she just wanted to say thanks. I've seen it too many times. I've seen God doing marvelous things that are great things that just defy any natural explanation. And I've seen the little things, you know, where God's hand is in your life.

So many times on our trip this summer we saw God just so wonderfully bless in little things. I was thinking about when we were in Kansas...in Wichita, to meet some folks from the radio ministry there. And we were just there for two nights. And we were staying in the largest...the tallest building in Kansas which is the Holiday Inn. Kansas doesn't have a lot of tall buildings. It's about 26 floors in Wichita. It was 113...it was when that heat wave was there, and the air was about a 45 mile an hour hot wind, like a big blow dryer, just horrible. And they had closed all the restaurants in the hotel, all the hotel services. There was no one around. It was like some eerie end of the world thing, just really

strange, just everything was dead. And we...and they put us on the twenty-third floor in a room. And I never could understand that, you know, there was one other group in the hotel that we found and they were also on the twenty-third floor. I mean, I never did understand that.

But anyway, we wondered why we were on the twenty-third floor. We left there and three days later we picked up a newspaper and saw that three days or two days after we had left, the twenty-third floor burned. And we just thanked God for His timing. You know, He has all those things in control.

We were coming down out of the Adirondack Mountains and had to make a meeting in the Philadelphia area, Pennsylvania area, Lancaster. And we had 60 miles of nothing but wilderness and a little single-lane deal and the car started to give us problems. And I just said, "It's Your car, Lord, so, You know, You take care of it...get us where You want us to get." And so it just would stop and then go and I kept it going as much as I could and it would jerk and jolt and all the kids were nervous and Patricia was nervous. And we just said...I think if we can make it to this hill, it will go down and maybe we can coast down and there will be a city somewhere. So we came over the last hill and sure enough at the foot of this long slope was Utica, New York. And so everything shut off, everything went, no power steering, power brakes, no nothing, everything shut down, the engine, the whole thing. And we just coasted down and came to a stop in front of a Ford agency. See. See, they didn't know why they built that Ford agency there. Pulled in, the guy said you need a new alternator. I said fine, he put it in and we went away. And the Lord got us where we needed to be. Just the little things in life that the Lord takes care of.

You know...you know, you can look at those things and say, "Ah well, a lot of guys have that." Sure, and that's right and a lot of times that is just coincidental. But when you put the whole picture together you see God moving in your life, providentially in little things and big things. I'm committed in my own heart to remember those things because as I recite those things and willing to constantly be remembering them, they are the things that strengthen my confidence in God for the future. People say, "Well, do you think this church can continue to grow? Do you think you can reach around the world with missions? Do you think you're going to...we're going to have enough money to build a new building?" And all of those kinds of things. "Do you think these things are going to happen? Your schools are going to grow and expand?" And I just say well I know God to be the God who has done it in the past and that's enough to make me believe Him for the future.

I can remember when I came to Grace Community Church and stood up for the first time in that chapel on a Wednesday night and there were 35 people. And I've seen what God can do by the power of His Word and His Spirit. I choose to remember that.

Peter says I will remember the revelation of God in my life. Hope you remember what He's done. But there's something better than that that you must remember and that's the key in verse 19, the resource of our salvation. And this is the bottom line for all of it. This is what makes it all happen. You

can't remember the reality of your salvation. You can't remember the riches of it. You can't remember the responsibility. You can't remember the result. You can't remember the rest and you can't even be sure of the revelation unless you know what the resource is and the bottom line is in verse 19, "We have a more sure word, more sure than experience and it is the Word of God." Verse 20, "It is the Scripture." Don't forget the Scripture, people. Don't forget the Word of God. We have a more sure, more sure than a personal manifestation of God, more sure than a transfiguration on a mountain. Why? Because you cannot always believe your senses. And you cannot always believe your experiences. And your experiences have to be qualified by biblical truth. And if you want to know there is a Second Coming, it's fine if you've had a personal revelation of God in your life, but a better proof of it is that the Bible says so...the Bible says so. We have a more sure word of prophecy, and here he's talking about the prophecy of the Second Coming. There is a more sure word. Watch how this verse should be read, "Unto which you do well that you take heed," and then you jump to the end, "in your hearts." You take heed to the more sure word, you remember the more sure word. And the words in between, by the way, are a parenthesis. The statement "as unto a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise" is a parenthesis, just put parentheses around that statement.

We have a more sure word of prophecy and we do very well to take heed to it in our hearts. Remember the Word, Peter says. The Bible is the issue. Don't listen to false prophets. Don't listen to these people who want to deny the truth. You go right to the Word of God. You know God is alive and at work because you've experienced Him. More than that you know it because His Word says it.

Verse 19 is a tremendous statement. The word "sure" there is the word for certain, the word for firm, the word for strong, the word that is used earlier in the chapter to refer to strong, firm roots. If you're going to defend the Second Coming, or any other truth, you'll defend it out of the Word of God. That's the best place. The Bible says it.

And then I love this parenthesis, "You should listen to the Bible as a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise." You know what the day dawn is? That's the Kingdom of Christ. You know who the day star is? That's Christ Himself. Revelation 22:16 tells us that. And so he's saying this, until the day dawns, until the dawning of the millennial day, the day when Christ comes, you must look to the Word as a man in pitch blackness looks to a light. There's darkness all around us and the only light is the Word. And so you do well to take heed as you would to a light shining in a pitch black place. And you will continue to take heed to the Word until the day dawns. And, beloved, when the millennial kingdom comes and the day star arises and we enter into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ, we'll no longer need the Word of God because we will know as we are known, we'll have the fullness of knowledge.

And then I love this. He says you can take confidence in this more sure word, verse 20, when you know this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture...watch how I translate this...is of any private

origination. That's how it's to be read. He's not talking about how you interpret the Scripture, he's talking about the source of it so that epilulisis best seen as an origination. By the way, the word is not in the New Testament anywhere else in that form. So it's a unique word. And the context argues for the fact that he is talking about origination, not interpretation because in the next verse he speaks of how it originated. For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, or of a man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Now watch how we sum this text up. Remember the Word of God which is the most sure word, run to it as you would to a light in the midst of darkness and have confidence because you know that it didn't come from any private origination, or initiation, it wasn't the invention of any man but holy men of God spoke as they were born along, or carried along...it's a word used of sailing, like a wind in a sail...they were born along by the Holy Spirit.

Why should you run to the Word? Because it's authored by God's Spirit. Beloved, don't forget the Word of God.

You know how to tell a false prophet? They either deny parts of the Word of God, or they add something to it. You don't need either. So Peter is saying remember the Word. And that's what Jesus said in John 15, remember the Word I said unto you. This is the greatest thing to remember. This is the source, the resource of everything. If you want to remember the reality of your salvation, you'll find it in the Word. The riches in the Word. The responsibility in the Word. The result's in the Word. The rest in the Word. And you're revelations and manifestations of God must be that which coincide with the Word.

I wrote a book called Why Believe the Bible, it has another edition of it called Take God's Word For It. I hope some of you will read that. It will help you to really know how to get into the Word. You've got to remember the Word, that's the key to everything else. You want to know why we have ACTS electives and Bible studies and home Bible studies and books and tapes and LOGOS classes and seminary classes? It's because we will never ever ever change this emphasis. We are men in the dark who must run to the only light there is and the only light there is is that Scripture which came by God through His Holy Spirit. That's the primary issue. That's why our church emphasizes that.

At this convention this week they gave some awards to the fastest growing Sunday schools in America and Canada. They gave ten in Canada and 50 for each state in the United States. And these are churches that have grown and some of them doubled their Sunday School. Some were small and went from 75 to 200. Some were big and went from 2500 to 3000. But they figured out all the percentages and they gave all these awards. And it's wonderful that there's growth in these places. And I'm sure many of them are blessed of God.

After that was over, two pastors came to me on two different occasions in two different days. In a sense they said the very same thing. The first young man came to me and said his name was Paul. He said, "I pastor a church." And he said, he said, "I've been raised in a kind of a pentecostal movement where they don't want the Word of God they just want feelings and it's kind of wild and..." He said, "I've pastored the church and I've kind of went along with them." And he said about a year ago I decided to teach them the Bible. I decided that I was going to learn the Bible and I was going to teach them the Word of God and he got a hold of some tapes and some books and he really began to feed his soul. And he said, "I...first God changed my life and then I'd get in the pulpit and I began to see that these things we're doing was wrong. And I began to feed them the Word of God." And he said, "I just want you to know that since that, my church has gone from 75 to 25. But he said, "We're going to start to grow pretty soon because the 25 are so thrilled. The rest said we don't want that stuff."

Another pastor came to me the next day, he said, "I pastor a Wesleyan church." And he said, "I never knew what it was to teach the Bible in an expository way." And he said, "My people were into all of this 'God will make you rich if you obey' approach to Christianity." And he said, "Boy, they were wanting to have all the positive stuff and all the positive thinking," and he said, "I started teaching them the Word of God. I started doing Bible exposition." And he said, "Forty-three of the key people out of eighty-nine in our church have left and now they're voting whether to keep me."

I said to myself, what kind of an award do they get? Who awards them something for cutting the church in half by doing it right? The Word of God is always a purifying agent, isn't it? You know, one pastor said to me this summer, he said, "Studying the Bible has almost ruined my ministry." That's what he said. He said, "I'll be real honest with you. I was doing great until I started teaching the Word. It's nearly ruined my ministry. People can't stand it." Then he smiled and said, "But it sure is glorious to know you're obeying God."

The second guy that talked to me yesterday, he said, "Am I doing right even though they leave?" I said, "Well, what are you teaching them?" And we talked and I said, "Yeah, I think you're doing right. I just think maybe the Lord's purifying the troops and when you get it down to what it ought to be it's going to really grow." He said, "Well, I hope so." He said, "Could I write you and maybe you could encourage me as I go?" I told him, "I never saw anybody in the middle of a church ministry who changed to really teaching the Word of God in a positive way who didn't lose people because some people just don't have the appetite to hear that. They're going down a track that's very different."

Somebody ought to give those guys an award just for being faithful to teach the Word. Remember the Word, beloved, with a sense of urgency. When it's all summed up, Peter says, chapter 3 verse 18, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to Him be glory both now and forever, amen." And where are we? Growing in knowledge. Where do you get it? Out of the Word of God, it is the resource for everything.

Beloved, I'm committed in the years ahead as in the years past to make you remember most of all the Word of God and out of remembering that will come all the other things you must never forget. Let's pray.

Thank You, Father, for our time this morning. We thank You for the classes that are going on right now around this church campus where Your Word is being faithfully taught that Your people might remember. Thank You for the Bible studies, classes that will go on all week long here with the LOGOS students and the seminary, women's meetings, Bible studies out in the community, FLOCKS meetings. May the Word be central in all of these things that we may never forget. O God, may we not be like Israel of old, may there be no need for a Jeremiah to tell us we forgot. May we remember. Help me to be faithful and not negligent to put you in remembrance of all these things, though you know them and are established in the present truth. Help all of us who lead in this church to be faithful to that calling for Your glory in Christ's name, amen.

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