**Stowe Church May 1st 2022**

**The good news authenticated**

We continue our series from 2 Peter. As Paul mentioned last week there has been fierce debate about the author. For example during the Reformation Luther accepted it as written by Peter, Erasmus did not and Calvin was doubtful. Whether it was written by Peter, or written as if it had come from Peter to add authority to the letter, I will leave to one side and for ease of this morning I shall refer to the author as Peter. It is after all the God breathed , God inspired message this letter contains that is crucial.

Two weeks ago we were celebrating Easter and remembering the events that are at the heart of our faith. The entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus, the glorious resurrection. As John famously summarized it

“God so loved the world He gave his one and only Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life “

In our passage from 2 Peter this morning we see many years later Peter writing to young churches in what is now Northern Turkey, urging the readers to remember that message and not be distracted and turned away from what they believe. As Paul mentioned last week he feared they were being swayed by false teaching and is desperate to ensure they continue their journey of faith. He is discipling them urgently as he fears his death is imminent. He wants them to be convinced that the message about Jesus they have received is authentic.

So let me go through this passage for a few minutes and see how Peter dealt with the situation he was facing and see how what he says might help us today in our faith journey. We will look at the passage under three headings :

The need to remember

The need to trust in Jesus

The need to accept God’s word in Scripture

**The need to remember ( verses 12 – 15)**

In these verses Peter reminds his readers of the truths they had already learned.

Peter says, "I will always remind you of these things” or as one translation puts it “I will not neglect in reminding you ..." (verse 12) ; he then makes three statements:

* "You already know [these things]"
* "You have been established in the truth"
* "It is present with you"

In spite of this —even in the light of this— Peter felt they needed reminding. Peter repeats this idea of easily forgetting and needing to be reminded three times in his letter .In the Old Testament we read time and time again that God warned the Israelites that they had forgotten all He had one done for them, a constant theme being REMEMBER - DO NOT FORGET

Peter was aware his death was near ( verse 14) and he was determined to root them deeper in the truths of the gospel message and in their Scriptures so they can stand firm when he is no longer there to guide them ( verse 15).

**The need to trust Jesus ( verses 16 – 18)**

From verse 16 Peter moves on to give them confidence that the message they received is indeed authentic and sets out why he believes that to be so.

He is convinced that the message about Jesus returning again, bringing in the eternal kingdom of God, was not some made up story , an invention of the human mind and therefore was not going to happen. Peter believed Jesus was going to return as he said he would (v16). This idea Jesus was not going to come again was one of the false teachings that disturbed Peter but more about false teachers next week. Peter was so convinced because of his experience when Jesus was transfigured on that mountain top to which he along with James and John were eye witnesses , our second reading this morning

The transfiguration of Jesus Christ was a powerful demonstration of His divine nature and manifestation of His glory, which Jesus possessed prior to coming to earth in the human body. As Paul described in his letter to Phillippi.

Who, being in very nature[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A+6-11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29398a)] God,
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7rather, he made himself nothing
    by taking the very nature[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2%3A+6-11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29399b)] of a servant,
    being made in human likeness.
8And being found in appearance as a man,
    he humbled himself
    by becoming obedient to death—
        even death on a cross!

The whole purpose of that experience was to reinforce the faith of those apostles. That's exactly what Peter gets out of it when he remembers it and says we did not bring you cunningly devised fables, we made known to you the power of Jesus because we were with Him on that mountain top. We know He is Messiah and will reign as Messiah : Jesus will come again in glory .

Peter now fully understood that he had glimpsed the divine Jesus and heard the words of God say “ This is my Son whom I love :with him I am well pleased “ In one instant of transfigured clarity Peter glimpses the mystery of our faith: that God became human so that we have a savior who loves us, restores us and calls us to follow Him and promises eternal life with Him.

**The need to accept God’s word in Scripture ( verses 19 -21)**

From verse 19 Peter turns to the prophetic word. The coming of the Messiah had been foretold by numerous OT prophets and Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. Think of that marvellous passage from Isaiah 53 about the suffering servant which prophesied the cross and resurrection and is one of many passages that speak of the Jesus the Messiah . It was therefore crucial those receiving this letter paid attention to the Scriptures ( verse 19). Being soaked in the word of God is crucial,

Peter says the word of God is like a light shining in the darkness. Or as a Psalmist put it

“ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light on my path ( Psalm 119 )

And Jesus was, of course, the living word of God

captured beautifully in the wonderful opening of John’s gospel.

 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning. 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John1:1-5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26050a)] it.

 And they must pay attention to that word until he comes again ( verse 19) the bright morning star, an OT prophecy and repeated in Revelation 22

I Jesus have sent my angels to give you testimony to the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star “

So Peter warns them to guard listening to the false teaching because the prophecies about Jesus were inspired by the Spirit of God and were authentic .

His long term purpose for pointing to the Scriptures was to provide a direct and authoritative reference for his teaching so that people could refer to it after his death, so there would be no argument about what he had taught .

For Peter what he experienced on the mount of transfiguration and the evidence of the Scriptures convinced him of the authenticity of the good news of Jesus message He wanted them to be rooted in.

So what about us today – what can distract us from our faith journey, from following Jesus

I am sure there are times when for whatever reason doubts come crowding in. They could be personal times of darkness when something in our life has hit us hard. Times when we feel God is remote, just not listening, not caring about what I am having to cope with

Or there are times when we have drifted away and the stores of our faith seem unreal

Or we listen to the arguments of those in our society who see the Christian faith as of no value or relevance

Or we look at the news and perhaps cry out when will it all end, why won’t Jesus return now and lets have an end to all the chaos

So what do we take from this passage. How can we be confident in the authenticity of our faith

Three pointers from this passage might help us

Peter first said remember – don’t forget. Remember the basis of your faith in Jesus. Remember what you have been taught along your faith journey. Remember the death and resurrection Jesus. Sins forgiven and new life in Jesus and that wonderful promise of eternal life,.

Secondly your faith is not a man made invention , it is not a cleverly devised stories . Jesus was real, He was the Son of God, there were eye witnesses such as Peter to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus who were convinced of the authenticity of Jesus. They were also convinced that Jesus will come again in glory to wrap up this world and bring in God’s new kingdom and we need to cling to that truth .

Thirdly Peter basically says know your Scriptures.

When doubts and circumstances assail you turn to the promises of God in the Scriptures. Being soaked in the word of God is crucial, 14

For example when we have perhaps drifted way or feel we have let God down we can turn to a passage such as this to provide comfort and steer us back

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews4:14-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30029a)] Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

So let us not forget:

The need to remember

The need to trust in Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith: He was who he said he was

The need to let the inspired word and promises of God be a light to your path day by day

 Amen