

Lesson 9

2 Peter 1

Growing, Knowing, Wake Up and Remember!

Memory verse: “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,” (Titus 3:5 NIV)

If anybody in the early church knew the importance of being alert, it was the apostle Peter. He had a tendency in his early years to feel overconfident when danger was near and to overlook the Master’s warnings. He rushed ahead when he should have waited; he slept when he should have prayed; he talked when he should have listened. He was a courageous, but careless, Christian.

But he learned his lesson, and he wanted to help us learn it too. In his first epistle, Peter emphasized the grace of God (1 Peter 5:12), but in this second letter, his emphasis is on the knowledge of God. The word “*know* or *knowledge*” is used at least thirteen times in this short epistle. The word does not mean a mere intellectual understanding of some truth, though that is included. It means a living participation in the truth in the sense that our Lord used it in John 17:3 – “Now this is eternal life: that they **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Peter opened his letter with a description of the Christian life. Before he described the counterfeits, he described the true believers. The best way to detect falsehood is to understand the characteristics of the truth. 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 was 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.

Through their preaching and teaching, the apostles and New Testament prophets laid the foundation of the church (Eph. 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 Cor. 3:11). He is also the chief Cornerstone that ties the building together (Eph. 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. “Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” (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 12:1ff.). Tradition says that Peter was crucified in Rome. Like all of God’s faithful servants, Peter was immortal until his work was done. In this chapter, Peter made important affirmations about the true Christian life and also underscored the dependability and durability of the Word of God.

To learn in this lesson: 1) The true Christian Life 2) Contrasting humans with the Word of God 3) The Word and the World.

Discussion Questions:

1) What do you think are the exhortations given by Peter in verses 1 to 11 about the true Christian life? (20 minutes)

2) What did Peter want to accomplish when he contrasts humans and their experiences with the Word of God in verses 12 to 18? (20 minutes)

3) What are the affirmations from Peter about the Word of God and the world in verses 19 to 21? (15 minutes)