

WE DIDN'T MAKE THIS UP**2 Peter 1:12-21****(Read 2 Peter 1:12-21)**

INTRO: It was thirteen years ago this weekend that we came here to Ashland and stayed with Dale & Margaret Engle, and went house hunting. We found a wonderful home and we made an offer that too good to be accepted. It was what we could afford, but significantly less than the sellers wanted, But it was miraculously accepted. So we rushed home to Bainbridge and quickly readies the house for sale and we sold it four days later for the full asking price – in cash. God orchestrated everything! We saw his hand at work.

Almost exactly 5 months later I was installed as your pastor and I pledged do what the Brethren in Christ Manual directs; which is, God being my helper and guide, to stimulate spiritual maturity in the congregation through a well-balanced program of biblical preaching and doctrinal teaching; and to model for and lead the congregation in a vital prayer ministry and a life of godliness, and to shepherd the church. I pledged to do it all to the best of my ability. And I've endeavored to do that ever since.

This passage that I just read, is from a colleague of mine. His name is Peter, and his words come straight from the heart of a preacher and leader. Peter had been given a picture of what his death would be and so he knew that a martyr's death was in his future. For that reason there is a lot of urgency to his writing here. He says that he must teach and remind his readers of the Gospel as long as possible and even figure out ways to make sure that it's in place even after he is gone. A major point that he makes is that he didn't make this up like the other "*cleverly devised stories*" (v 16a) that were circulating in the church. He had seen too much for that to be true. No, this was the real thing and it had been proven down through the years. He wants to make that perfectly clear in this letter. So the first thing we see here is that . . .

Peter is carrying out every pastor's duty

- We all need to be reminded, no matter how often we hear the Gospel, the temptation to overlook part of it is strong. Some of it is forgetfulness and some of it is convenient disregard, but there just comes the time when we need to be pulled back into focus. The preacher does that. Barclay says ". . . *preaching is very often reminding a man of what he already knows. It is the bringing back to his memory that truth which he has forgotten, or at which he refuses to look, or whose meaning he has not fully appreciated.*" This is my job.
- Peter commends his readers that they are "*firmly established*"(v 12) but no matter how firmly we are set, we still need fine tuning and reminding in the truth, to keep it fresh and growing in our spirit. We do that by regular time in the Word.
- This is my job too. I need to remind you. Sometimes I wonder if you don't get tired of hearing over and over again of our need for holiness or to be sharing our faith or for spending time with the Lord in prayer and Bible reading. And then I realize the answer is: No! We shouldn't get tired of too much of a good thing.
- And it's your job too. You need to remind each other and me of your insights and concerns. You know this, but always feel free to talk to me and question me if you don't agree or if you feel that I'm not correct on something. We are mutual ministry, so that you need to know that you can do the reminding too. Peter says he will keep it up as long as he has memory.
- That's because it's important to remember that we keep up this message, and we keep reminding one another of it, because . . .

It is absolutely essential and it's the real thing and it is truth, and it has eternal ramifications

- Peter is saying in so many words – "*I am only telling you what I've seen with my own eyes*". He retells his experience of Christ at the transfiguration. And then he reminds them of the fact that he is also an eyewitness of the risen Lord.
- Peter's experience was pretty awesome. Not only was he there for the transfiguration and saw the resurrected Jesus any number of times before he returned to the Father, but he was also with Jesus for 3 years before that, and his memory exploded with the wonder of it. Now we weren't there like Peter was, but we need to share our experiences with the risen Lord as he did. We too can have the kind of witness Peter had. Jesus promised it.

- In John 20, as doubting Thomas realizes that the man in front of him is indeed the risen Jesus and not an imposter, his shattered emotions erupt with joy and he cries “*My Lord and my God!*” John 20:28. And Jesus replies with , *Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.* John 20:29.
- Here’s the point, while we have not physically seen Jesus, we have experienced him, and that is stuff to be shared. I think that’s why our sharing times on Sunday morning, and even our LifeGroups, are essential because we share about the work God is doing in our lives. We share our common experience of the risen Lord because he’s real, he’s alive, and he promises to transform lives. And then, add to that, the transformation he brings has eternal ramifications.
- And finally, Peter points out . . .

The essential nature of the Word of God

- He begins by saying that he and the other apostles didn’t follow those *cleverly devised stories* I referred to a bit ago. Instead, what they have witnessed to is the very word of God where we see promise of what is to come. And it’s here in the word that we see those promises fulfilled.
- In modern parlance he is saying “WE DIDN’T MAKE THIS UP PEOPLE! Later he points out that the message of the prophets is “*completely reliable*” (v 19) to which William Barclay comments “*It is Peter's insistence that Scripture does not consist of any man's private opinions but is the revelation of God to men through his Spirit; and that, therefore, its interpretation must not depend on any man's private opinions but must ever be guided by that same Spirit who is still specially operative within the Church*”.
- So we need to looking into that revelation – it’s called the Bible. But know this, a casual reading of your Bible will not suffice – we need to get into it. As we immerse ourselves in the Word we will see more and more of it as it applies to us personally. Remember, these prophets and writers didn’t just make this up. They weren’t just doing it for their health. In fact, they were risking their lives to get the Good News out. Many of them suffered and died for it but they knew that it was essential to get the word out. Peter was just one of them. But, as Peter points out, they were led by the Holy Spirit to put down on paper the very word of God. And they had a reward at the end. It was worth the risk. Never the less, we need to make they’re work worthwhile – study this Book.

Conclusion: For years I’ve been talking about transforming culture. And for years to come, wherever I am, I will keep reminding everyone who listens, we have a job to do. We need to tell people about Jesus. Just before Jesus returned to the Father he told his disciples *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* Acts 1:8. We are his disciples too. The message is for us too! We need to be witnesses. We didn’t make this up! But we are commissioned to tell the world about it. It’s an old story – but is a story about new life. The old song says:

*I love to tell the story,
 'twill be my theme in glory,
 To tell the old, old story
 Of Jesus and his love.
 Tell the world about it. Amen.*