

Keep Running the Race of Remembrance

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 July 2026

Preacher: Fraser Nicholson

[0:00] We're going to turn now to God's Word. And if you take up your Bibles and turn to Peter's second letter. If you don't have a Bible, there are some church Bibles at the side, at the back, at the front.

Do ask one of the stewards to gladly give one to you. You'll be able to then see what we're looking at and follow with us. Last week, this week, and next week, we're looking at 2 Peter chapter 1. And Fraser and Kerr and Joel are preaching through this for us. And this morning here, we've got Fraser. We're going to be looking particularly at verses 12 to 15 this morning.

But once again, we're going to read the whole chapter so we have the context. Beginning then at 2 Peter chapter 1. And it is page 1018 in those visitors' Bibles.

Peter, Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[1:08] May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises.

So that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature. Having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue. And virtue with knowledge. And knowledge with self-control. And self-control with steadfastness.

And steadfastness with godliness. And godliness with brotherly affection. And brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[2:21] For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he's blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities. Though you know them and are established in the truth that you have, I think it right as long as I am in this body to stir you up by way of reminder.

Since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that through my departure, after my departure, you may be able at any time to recall these things.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

[3:36] For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased, we ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven.

For we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Amen. And may God bless to us his word. Well, good morning, everyone. Please do open your Bibles again to 2 Peter chapter 1.

And we're looking at verses 12 to 15, as Willie said. If you don't use it, you lose it.

[4:56] This is an inevitable reality of life, isn't it? Whether it's things that we know, or it's skills that we have, perhaps even relationships, friendships that we have.

If we don't put those things to use, if we don't spend time refreshing them, then it's an inevitable reality that over time things fade. If you were to go back to school and sit your hires again, how many of them do you think you'd still be able to pass?

I haven't found much use in recent years for the things I learned in physics about the equations of motion, or things I learned in geography about the population density of Bangladesh. So these things have faded from my memory.

I'm sure if I were to do some revision, I could brush up on them again, they'd come back. But for now, that information all just lies dormant, gathering dust at the bottom of a drawer in my mind, underneath new information which has taken its place.

And the Christian life is not exempt from this principle. Complacency is a real danger.

[6:10] Forgetfulness is a real danger. Now this is one of the reasons why Peter is writing this letter. If you look over to the beginning of chapter 3, he says, this is now the second letter I'm writing to you.

In both of them, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.

See, Peter isn't writing to impart some new wisdom, some new insight that he's got. He's writing to stir them up by way of reminder.

Because the things that they know, or that they ought to know, well, maybe they're beginning to fade. Maybe they're in danger of settling and sinking to the bottom of their minds.

And the more you read the New Testament letters, the more you'll actually notice how often this is the case. The apostles aren't giving more and more new teaching all of the time, but they're reminding the believers of what they already know.

[7:15] They're reminding the church of what they know and urging them not to forget it, but to go on growing and to go on living by these things. And that's not just a New Testament idea either.

All through the Bible, throughout the Old Testament, God's people have been called to remember. So we read of feasts that are enacted, memorials that are set up, songs written, commands that are given, all with the aim of remembering and not forgetting the Lord and all that he has done.

And this is the clear message of our passage this morning. We're focusing just on this short section, and Peter is very clearly banging this remembrance drum. Three times in this short section, he makes reference to that idea.

Verse 12, I intend always to remind you. Verse 13, I think it right to stir you up by way of reminder. And verse 15, I will make every effort so that after my departure, you may be able to recall these things.

So one clear big point, we need to remember these things. But we're going to look at it from a few different angles, two risks and one reward. Peter gives these reminders because they're at risk of flagging, because they're at risk from false teachers.

[8:36] And he gives these reminders because there's a great reward in the future. So firstly, Peter gives these reminders because they're at risk of flagging. We saw last week in verses 1 to 11, that knowledge leads to action.

Things that we know affect things that we do. So Peter reminded his readers in verses 1 to 4 of some of the glorious truths of the gospel, which they know.

He reminds them that of the gift of Christ's righteousness, that they have obtained a faith of equal standing, even with the apostles, that they have been granted all things that pertain to life and godliness, and that they have been given precious and very great promises for the future.

But this knowledge, he said, was to lead to growth in godly living. In verses 5 to 8, he spelled out the way that Christians should be living, growing every day in Christ-like living.

As Christ's divine power is at work within them, they should be making every effort themselves on their part to live more and more like Christ.

[9:49] And in verse 9, he spells it out very clearly. He says, For whoever lacks these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

So lack of godly living could just be a sign that you have forgotten where you came from. You've forgotten these glorious truths of the gospel. And you might think that's impossible.

How could you forget such a great salvation? How could we possibly forget those glorious gifts that we have been given? Righteousness and divine power, those precious promises, how could we ever forget them?

Well, is that not exactly what we were looking at with Edward last week, Sunday evening, in Hebrews? The beginning of Hebrews chapter 2 says, We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift from it.

How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? See, we might think that we could never forget something so great.

[10:51] We could never neglect such a great salvation. We would never forget the darkness of our past life and sin. We'd never forget those future promises of escape from the corruption that is in this world.

Surely not. No, we are mature Christians. We've been coming to church for years now. That might be a risk for new Christians. They need to be more deeply rooted.

We need to watch out for them. But not us. We are established. Now notice who Peter is addressing in verse 12. I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth.

These are people who know the truth. These are established Christians. These are people who have been taught by the apostles themselves. People who have been living in light of it.

And yet, Peter wants to remind them because they're at risk of flagging. Because maybe as time goes on and things don't get easier for them as Christians, they're at risk of growing cold.

[12:06] As they get older, they're at risk of their enthusiasm waning. Perhaps the relentless pressure from the culture outside of them just wearing them down.

Friends, don't ever think that this isn't a risk for you. I'm sure many of us know this from experience. I'm sure we've all had friends. Perhaps people that we grew up with in Sunday school all through our years in school. People we served in CU with. People who've sat with us in this very room. Praying with us. Singing with us. Serving with us. Sharing fellowship together. But people who are not here today.

People who knew the gospel. People who were established in the truth. But people who slowly began to drift.

[13:17] Who slowly forgot. Stopped living in light of what they once viewed. It's not always a crisis of faith that sees people fall away from church.

From God. It's not always a death of a loved one. Or a major diagnosis. It's not always falling out with people in church. Sometimes it's just forgetting.

Other things seem more important. And begin to take the place of church. Of the Lord. Other things which seem more pressing.

In Deuteronomy chapter 8. Moses warns God's people then of this sort of danger. He says, You shall remember the way the Lord led you through the wilderness. And he tells them of how God is leading them in to the promised land.

A glorious land of abundant provision. And they might have thought that in this promised land there would be no risk to them. They've been rescued by God. They've been given everything they could possibly need.

[14:25] They're being established in the land. It would have been inconceivable that they could forget the Lord. And forget what he'd done to bring them to that place. But no, Moses says, Take care lest you forget the Lord your God.

By not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes which I command you today.

Take care lest when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them. And when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied.

And all that you have is multiplied. Then your heart be lifted up and you forget the Lord your God. Who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

The house of slavery. The risk wasn't attack from enemies. It wasn't a big crisis of faith coming.

The risk here was that in their comfort they would forget. That they would forget the slavery from which they'd been saved. They would forget the journey they'd been on to get to that point.
[15 : 38] They would forget the one who had given them all that they needed. And brought them into that land of abundant provision. They would start flagging.

They'd be too caught up getting food on the table for their family. Too caught up finding just the right plot of land. To build just the right house with just enough bedrooms for all the children. Too caught up in their business looking out for the bottom line. Working longer and longer hours. Looking after their growing herds and flocks. Multiplying their silver and gold. And without even realizing it they would forget.

They'd become so short sighted that they were blind. Forgetting what they'd been saved from. And no longer growing in faith. And obedience to God.

But that couldn't happen to us, could it? Not at the Tron Church. We were established. We've had an established Bible teaching ministry going back decades. Tom Allen.

[16 : 45] George Duncan. Eric Alexander. Sinclair Ferguson. I suppose Willie's all right. We wouldn't forget, would we? Listen to Dick Lucas on these verses.

No matter how close to the Lord we have been. Or how long standing our Christian commitment. How central our position in the fellowship.

That danger of wobbling still remains. And we should check ourselves constantly for the telltale signs. The only way to be sure of not wobbling is to remember.

And so brothers and sisters, whether you've been a Christian for one year. Or 10 years. Or 50 years. Or more. Don't think that this isn't a risk for you.

Though our church has been blessed for many years with decades of faithful Bible teaching. Don't think that this isn't a risk for us. Dick said in that quote, we need to check ourselves constantly for the telltale signs.

[18 : 00] And those signs are, Peter says, a lack of godly living. Not living in line with these qualities that Peter has outlined in verses 5 to 8. Peter says, we need always to be reminded of these qualities.

We can't ever sit back and think that we know it all. We can't ever rest on our laurels thinking that we've made it. We've reached the right standard of godly living.

No, as he says in verse 8, these qualities need to be ours and increasing. Because this is the way to ensure that we will never fall. I was on holiday up north recently and James and I went kayaking. And when you're kayaking and out on the open water, the one thing that you really can't do is stay in the one place. You can't stay still. Because if you're not purposefully paddling forwards, then you're going to be drifting off wherever the water wants to carry you.

And this is like the point Peter's making here. There's no such thing as standing still in the Christian life. You can't just take a break and think that you'll pick up where you left off.

[19 : 19] You can never get to a point where you're fully established and you don't need to do any more growing. You're either making every effort to put into practice the things that you know, to live in a Christ-like manner, or you'll be drifting.

And this is exactly why we need reminding. How many times is it the case that you come to church, your sinfulness is exposed, you feel that conviction, and so you repent of it, you pledge afresh to live differently, to put off the old self, to put on the new self.

But then before the day's out, you're falling back into the same old habits. You're forgetting.

Forgetting the things you were reminded of, only ours previously.

Friends, we need reminders. And so we need to be reminding one another. We need to ensure that we're not flagging, that we're not drifting.

When I reflect now with hindsight on friends who I know, who have drifted away from church, who've turned their back on the Lord, with hindsight, the signs were there.

[20 : 47] Maybe they stopped coming to release the word every week. They got into an unwise relationship with someone who wasn't a Christian. The things they were talking about were different.

Now, we can't just blame ourselves when people walk away from church, from the Lord. But friends, we do have a responsibility to one another, to remind one another.

We should set out, as Peter does here, with the intention always to remind one another of these qualities by which we should be living our lives. To have the difficult conversations.

To challenge those whose behavior is showing signs that they might just have forgotten. To pray for and to pray with those who seem to be flagging.

And to stir them up by way of reminder, to spur one another on to good works and godly living. Well, there's one risk, the risk of flagging.

[21:57] Well, there's another risk that Peter's aware of that means they need reminding us the risk of false teachers. The risk of false teachers. Peter is explicit about this risk at the beginning of chapter 2.

He says, there will be false teachers among the church who are bringing in destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them. And here, Peter is perhaps particularly concerned about these false teachers coming in because he knows that while they're coming in, he's on the way out.

As Peter writes here, he says, he knows that the putting off of his body will be soon as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to him. It's likely here that he's referring to the conversation which is recorded for us in John chapter 21.

Jesus says to Peter there that when you're old, you will stretch out your hands, another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. And John adds the little comment that he said this to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.

And you can imagine these false teachers waiting eagerly for the day when Peter and when the rest of the apostles are out of the way. It seems that they're beginning to make their way into the church here, but perhaps traction is slow because these pesky apostles keep getting in the way, keep reminding the Christians of the true gospel, calling them back to obedience.

[23:25] And Peter wants to ensure that his departure doesn't open up an avenue for the false teachers to exploit. But notice Peter's parting words to the church here are not a brand new set of insights.

He's not been holding back the secrets to the end sitting on them as if he's got more to offer. No, his message is just the same as it always has been. And so his call is simply to remember it.

Remember that you have received a faith of equal standing with ours. You've received that by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Remember that his divine power has granted you all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Remember he has granted you his precious and very great promises. Remember he's called you to grow in Christlikeness. and remember that if these qualities are ours and are increasing then we will never fall.

Peter hasn't been holding back secrets. He's reminding them what they know. And this is great news for us because there are no new secret insights that we need to unlock.

[24:44] There's no level two of Christianity that we need to get to and we're not missing out on anything because we don't live in the days of the apostles. We just need to keep remembering what we've been taught and to keep putting it into practice.

Martin Lloyd-Jones said that the business of the church and of preaching is not to present us with new and interesting ideas. it is rather to go on reminding us of certain fundamental and eternal truths because the Christian gospel will never go out of date.

It will never expire or perish. There will never be a day when it is not the most pertinent thing that anyone needs to know.

And we will never exhaust that truth. Though it's true that the church is not to be coming up with ever new ideas trying to make it interesting, it doesn't mean that the message we have is in any way boring because we are drawing from an inexhaustible well of truth and goodness and beauty and so we will never get to the point where we're bored of it and where we'll know it all.

we will always be able to learn more of God and of his goodness. Even if you live a hundred years there will be new things to see.

[26:13] There will be more to learn of Jesus and his love. There will be mysteries you can delve deeper into without ever fully understanding them. And so this will go on forever even beyond our death.

There's a lovely hymn of Joseph Addison which says that through every period of my life thy goodness I'll pursue and after death in distant worlds that glorious theme renew through all eternity to thee a joyful song I'll raise for oh eternity is too short to utter all thy praise.

It's a glorious thought isn't it? That even eternity is too short to utter all of God's praise. we will never run out of things to praise God for.

But we need to keep coming back to these same glorious truths. The false teachers were advocating for a life of reckless living of sensuality. Perhaps they're bored of the Christian life. It wasn't exciting enough. It didn't fulfill their bodily desires. All this talk of judgment and of Jesus returning that doesn't seem to be materializing so let's just crack on. Let's just live however we like. [27 : 30] But no Peter says do not be taken in by them. Do not lose faith in what you've heard. Remember it and go on remembering.

Even when I'm gone don't forget. You have all that you need. You have a faith of equal standing with us. Don't let anyone entice you away but keep going and keep growing.

And Peter here is not a shouty preacher. He's not having a go with these people. You stupid Christians keep forgetting all the time. How could you be so foolish? No, he's stirring them up because he cares for them and he doesn't want to see any of them falling away because he himself knew what it was to fall away.

Peter was established in his faith. He had followed Jesus from the beginning of his ministry on earth and he made bold declarations of faith. Even though they all fall away, I will not. And yet he did, didn't he?

Three times he denied his Lord. in that conversation with Jesus in John 21, which Peter seems to be referring to here, before Jesus told Peter about his future death, he asked him three times, do you love me?

[29 : 01] Three times Peter responded, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. And after each time Jesus responded, feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep.

Three times Peter denied his master, but three times he was given the opportunity to declare again his love for him. And three times he's commissioned to care for and to feed Christ's people.

And that's what he's doing here in writing this letter. He's gently tending to the lambs, he's feeding the flock. He's not beating them over the head, telling them off, but he's urging them to remember, longing that they wouldn't drift and fall as he had done, but feeding and tending to them as they'd been commissioned to do with those comforting truths of the gospel.

And that's what we need too, isn't it? We need to be fed. We need to keep being fed by the fundamental and eternal truths of God's word.

That's one of the reasons why it's so important that we do come each Sunday to church, not neglecting to meet together, but gathering together every week to worship and to feast on those treasures of God's word.

[30 : 31] Because when our natural tendency is to drift, and when there are false teachers telling us otherwise, we need to be time and again reminded of the truth of the gospel.

And we're bombarded everywhere else in our world by falsehoods and by lies, when there are even those in the professing church who are denying the fundamental truths of the gospel.

We need to return all the time to God's word to see what he is really saying to us through it. Now we need to get the Bible into our pores, deep into our beings.

Peter says he'll make every effort so that they may be able at any time to recall these things. He wants his readers to be so saturated by God's word, by these glorious truths of the gospel, by godly living, that it fills their thinking and it fills their acting.

So when they wake up in the morning, it's on their mind. when they're commuting to work, it's on their mind. When they're on their lunch break or when they're in the staff room, it's on their mind.

[31 : 46] It's shaping the way that they're living. When they see clips of pastors online preaching what seems to be a different gospel, they're not wobbling, they're not questioning, but they're able to recall what they know and they're able to go on living in line with what they know, with those true and unchanging truths of the gospel.

people. It's a hard thing to witness loved ones growing old and see their memories starting to fade. But it's beautiful when even as memories are fading, those older saints can still remember Bible verses. they can still remember Sunday school choruses, hymns which they've sung all their life in church.

But that doesn't just happen. Because the things which will last in our memories are the things which we fill our minds with throughout our life.

So if we spend all of our time watching mind-numbing TV, or scrolling on social media, or reading blogs, or newspapers, or whatever you want to read, it won't fill our hearts, it won't fill our minds with gospel truth.

[33 : 18] And that comes from a lifetime of remembering, a lifetime of reading God's word, a lifetime of coming to church, engaging with the teaching, a lifetime of singing good hymns, a lifetime of commitment to growing in godliness.

There'll be all sorts of influences in our lives, outside the church and inside the church. False teachers coming, teaching destructive heresies, looking to exploit the vulnerable, trying to convince us it isn't worth it to keep living in a godly manner.

that's just for the fundamentalists. And Peter says the best way to guard against the dangers of falsehood is to flood our minds with the truth, to saturate our hearts with the goodness of the gospel.

people. Because if we do that, we'll be able to spot false teaching when it comes. And we'll be able to stand on solid foundations of truth that we've heard all of our lives and that we've sought to keep growing in since we first heard it.

Peter urges his readers then to remember because they're at risk of flagging and they're at risk of false teaching.

[34 : 49] But he also wants them to remember because of the reward which waits for them in the future. As we've seen, Peter knows that he's soon to die. He says the putting off his body will be soon and that he's going to depart.

But he knows that this isn't the end because he knows that this world isn't his permanent dwelling. In chapter 3 verse 13 he says we're waiting for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

And his language here in these verses points to that too. The word translated body here in verse 13 and 14 is more literally the word tent or dwelling. It's the same word Paul uses in 2nd Corinthians and he says we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed we have a building from God a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens for in this tent we groan longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.

And the word departure in verse 15 is literally exodus and it speaks not only of the place from which he is departing but the place to which he is going. Peter's life lived as an exile on this earth wandering through the wilderness is almost at an end.

But at the end of this pilgrimage is not darkness and emptiness. Now he knows he will soon put off the earthly tent which is his dwelling and in its place he will put on his heavenly dwelling.

[36 : 26] And this is the future reward which awaits all who will persevere to the end. all who will remember and go on remembering and keep going and keep growing throughout their life in this world.

world. And we need to remember this. We need to feel the challenges. We need to heed the warnings that were given here in this letter.

But we also need to remember and never forget the precious and very great promises which are ours, which lie ahead. We need to remember that if we are practicing these qualities then we will never fall.

Look again at verse 10 and 11. If you practice these qualities you will never fall and in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is the precious promise for all of us who believe and who go on believing until the end. For all of us there will be a day when we put off our earthly tents.

[37 : 46] Some of the tents here are a bit worse for wear, maybe it's about time they were put off, but in their place we will one day put on our heavenly dwelling. We will receive the inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you.

we will be richly welcomed into our Father's home. So friends, maybe this has been a welcome and a needed reminder for you.

Maybe some of these things have been gathering dust in the back of your minds. Maybe some of the qualities Peter has been calling us to have been lacking in our lives of late.

But a stumble is not the end for the Christian. And failures need not be fatal. Because just as Peter knew from his own experience, the Lord Jesus is abundantly kind.

he is patient, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

[39 : 17] And so when we do repent, when we remember God's great mercy, we know that he will not fail us. And he will surely bring us home.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you speak to us through your word, even today. that you graciously give us the reminders that we need. That you shake us out of our stupor when we begin to flag or to falter.

And we pray, Lord, that you would help us to help one another, to remind one another of the great, unchanging, and eternal promises of the gospel.

And we rejoice to know that if we are remembering and repenting and daily seeking to live in obedience to you, then we will never fall. And there will be richly provided for us an entrance into your eternal kingdom.

[40 : 37] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.