

Pay Attention - Christ Is Surely Coming!

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[0:00] Well, we turn now to our Bible reading, so please do pick up your Bibles and turn to 2 Peter 1.

! We're going to read the whole chapter to remind ourselves of the context.

So then, 2 Peter 1, beginning at verse 1. Hear the word of the Lord. Simeon 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, 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 have pertained 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 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.

[2:25] 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.

For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is 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.

[3:29] 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, that I will make every effort so that 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.

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.

[5:17] Amen. May God bless to us this, his word. Well, very good morning, friends. It's good to be with you all this morning. If you could have your Bibles open to 2 Peter to follow along, that would be most helpful.

Now, back in April 1970, NASA launched its third moon landing mission, Apollo 13. However, two days into the mission, while en route to the moon, one of the service module's oxygen tanks ruptured and severely damaged the spacecraft.

What was planned as a routine mission very quickly became a desperate fight for survival. And being out there, over 200,000 miles away from Earth, for the astronauts, every decision, every

instruction they received was vital.

There were many things that they couldn't see, that they couldn't know from their point of view, and so they had to trust another voice, the voice of mission control. Their lives depended on listening and paying close attention to that voice to be bringing them safely home.

And friends, whilst you and I aren't space travelers, well, we are travelers in time, aren't we? And that's what the Christian life is rather like. We are journeying, pilgriming through a dangerous world, a world where the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

[6:50] We are traveling through a world filled with competing voices, voices telling us what to believe, how to live, what to put our hope in, but all of them quietly seeking to pull us away from Christ.

And so it's no surprise that Peter's great concern for the church was that they don't lose their bearings, that we aren't carried away, but that we remain stable.

Listen to how he concludes his letter in 2 Peter 3, verse 17. Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

You see, that has been Peter's burden. And as we've been spending this last three Sundays in 2 Peter 1, well, we've seen that burden unfold to hearts that have become unsteady. Well, Peter first reminds them that through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, they have obtained a faith of equal standing with the apostles, that God has granted to them all things, everything that they need for life and for godliness, that he has granted to them his precious and very great promises.

And because all of that is true, they are to make every effort to keep growing as they kept going. Then last week, Peter reminded us that our problem wasn't that we needed something new, but that we tend to forget.

[8:20] And so we need to keep remembering what we already have. Not to chase novelty, to seek fresh revelations, but to be reminded of, to keep remembering continually the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ.

But that leaves us with one question. Why? Why is Peter so determined that the believers keep growing? Why does he keep reminding them of the truth, even though that he knows his death is near?

Why is he so concerned that they remain established? Well, because Peter knows something, which the false teachers then deny, and that is Christ is coming again.

And if Christ is coming, well, then everything changes. It changes how we live, what we hope for, and what we pay attention to. And so in our passage this morning, we see that Peter gives us every reason to remain steadfast.

He wants us to keep paying attention to the word, to his word, to God's word, because Christ's coming is not a cleverly devised myth, but it is affirmed and attested by two unmistakable witnesses.

[9:31] The eyewitness testimony of the apostles and the prophetic word of God. So first, look with me at verse 16 to 18, where we see that the apostles' eyewitness testimony attests to the coming of Christ.

The apostles' eyewitness testimony attests to the coming of Christ. Verse 16, for we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, cleverly devised myths. That was precisely what the false teachers, the false prophets, were accusing Peter of and the apostles, wasn't it? They regarded their teachings to be stuff, simply religious fairy tales.

In particular, their teachings about the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus. And just to be clear, they weren't denying that Jesus ever lived, that he existed. They weren't denying his first coming, no.

They had no problem with that. But rather, they had problems with what Peter calls the coming of Christ, which is translated from the word *perusia*, which throughout the New Testament is commonly used to speak and to refer to the second coming of Christ, the future coming of Jesus in his glory, his return as judge and king of other worlds.

[10:46] To the false teachers, that was what they found to be unbelievable, what sounded like fiction. We see Peter later highlights this in his letter, exposing their mockery in 2 Peter 3, verse 4.

They will say, where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. And I mean, you can almost hear the scoffing that went around back then, can't you?

You guys keep talking about Jesus coming back. Well, where is he then? All that talk, and look, nothing has changed. Life carries on as normal. And look, even now your apostles, they're about to die, and there's no signs of Jesus returning.

It's not just wishful thinking. Don't be deceived by Peter. Don't be deluded by these apostles. You'll just be wasting your life away, waiting for a future that isn't going to come. Forget it.

Focus on living in the present. Enjoy yourself. And friends, as we discern our own times, it's not like that mud has changed since then, has it?

[11:53] Isn't that precisely what our world, our culture is still saying today? You Christian folks keep talking about Jesus coming back. Well, it's been over 2,000 years, almost 2,000 years, and that's a long, long time.

Why hasn't he come back yet? Why should we believe you? No, no, listen to us. All that matters is here and now. You know the saying, YOLO, you only live once?

So just live. Do as you please. You don't want to be having any regrets. Go. Fulfill your desires as you see fit. And like those whom the apostle encountered in 2 Timothy, those who were claiming that the resurrection had already taken place, denying any future element of the gospel, and living as though all that matters is just the here and now.

But what is Peter's argument, his response to their false accusations? Well, he says, no. We did not follow cleverly devised myths.

This isn't just stories that we've invented or made up. This isn't just a fairy tale of our own creativity, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. Unlike that of myths and all wives' tales, Peter affirms that his teaching is true and trustworthy because of what he has seen and heard.

[13:15] And so not only can we rely on it, but we can also revel in it. Look at verse 17 and 18. 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. Now just to be clear, what event is Peter speaking of here?

On what occasion did he hear the voice of God the Father from heaven? Did he witness Christ's majesty on the holy mountain? Well, that can only be the moment of Jesus' transfiguration, can't it? The extraordinary moment recorded for us in not just one gospel account, but three, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Whereas Peter, James, and John went up the mountain with Jesus, for a brief moment, the veil was lifted.

And there they caught a glimpse of his true glory, a glorious display of his majesty. Matthew 17, his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

[14:27] And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, two men who were long since dead. And then a voice from the cloud said, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

You see, Peter is saying here, we apostles, we were there. We saw with our very own eyes that glory, and we heard with our very own ears that voice.

But in case you're wondering, why? Why does Peter appeal to the transfiguration for his argument against these false accusations? Why not speak about how he has seen Jesus perform all those wonderful miracles and signs?

All would have demonstrated his power and dismisses his myth? Well, I don't think the transfiguration was raised at random. But it was precisely the evidence that supported the apostolic teaching of the coming of Christ.

Because you see, at that breathtaking moment, when God pulled back the curtain, like watching a movie trailer in the cinema, where you patiently anticipate the movie that will later hit the screens, while Peter was given a glimpse of the future, of the eternal kingdom.

[15:42] He was given a foretaste of the glory that will one day fill the ends of the earth. Peter saw Jesus as he will be when he comes again in glory.

And that's why he knew, and the apostles knew, they knew that this was what still awaits ahead. That was the full and final realization of the precious, the very great promises, that has been granted to all those who belong to Jesus at his coming.

And so Peter wants them to know so that they can remain established in the truth that they have. Christ is surely coming. It might not sound, it perhaps even seemed hard to believe, but it does not change the fact that it is true.

This is not a cleverly devised myth as the false teachers refute, but we apostles have seen the preview. That is where all of history has been and is unfolding steadily towards.

That's why Peter says, keep growing as you keep going. Keep remembering the truth of the gospel lest you forget and forsake the race, falling short of the finish line, because there is a finish line.

[16:57] But not only is the coming of Christ attested by the apostolic eyewitness, we see in verse 19 to 21 that the prophetic word also attests to his coming.

Now, I've never been to a court before, so I'm basing this off entirely on the TV shows I've seen, but normally, in a court of law, to draw upon the testimony of just one witness, well, the verdict tends to be less than ideal.

The testimony will be seriously questioned, challenged, and perhaps even dismissed. But when several independent witnesses are called and cross-examined, and they all testify to the same truth, well, then the case becomes increasingly compelling.

Of course, Peter wasn't the only apostolic witness, for after all, James and John were up the mountain too, and so it was the apostles together who bore witness to Christ's majesty. But just in case the false teachers were wanting to accuse Peter, saying, well, that's just your experience, we weren't there to see it for ourselves, so why should we trust you?

Well, we see Peter arrest his case not just on his own testimony, but he calls another witness to the stand, a witness who has been testifying for centuries, namely the prophets of the Old Testament.

[18:15] Look at verse 19, and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed. more fully confirmed. Notice what is Peter saying here.

Peter isn't saying that the apostles' testimony are more reliable than scripture, or that scripture needed improving, no, but the transfiguration confirmed what the prophets had long been proclaiming.

What was once promised has now been previewed. The prophetic scriptures had long pointed forward to the coming king, the day of the Lord, and the glory of God's everlasting kingdom.

And what Peter saw, therefore, wasn't a new revelation as such, but a confirmation of an old promise. The apostles' witness and the prophetic word, they weren't competing voices, but they were complimentary, both testifying to the same truth, pointing forward to the coming of Jesus in fullness of glory and majesty.

And how, why can we trust the prophetic word? Well, look at what he tells us in verse 20 and 21. 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 men, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

[19:44] What's clear, isn't it? The prophets, they weren't simply recording their own opinions. They weren't profound thinkers who were trying to make sense of their world of their times.

None of them just happened to get out of bed one morning and thought, you know what? Perhaps I'll write a book about judgment, about God's judgment, that might make life a bit more interesting. Well, no.

In fact, many suffered because of what they proclaimed. Many were rejected, ridiculed, persecuted. And why would they do that? For precisely because the message they preached wasn't their own concoction.

They were messengers of the Lord God who testified to what had been revealed to them. They were speaking on God's authority like a sailing ship carried along by the wind.

So were the prophets carried along by the Holy Spirit. And that's why Peter says, pay attention. Pay attention to the prophetic words. Pay attention to the word of God.

[20:52] And why? For two reasons. Verse 19, first, because it is a lamp shining in a dark place. Friends, you see, Peter knows just the kind of will that God's people still live in.

He knows that in these last days, until Christ returns, we still live in a world darkened by sin, by sinful desire. That this is a world that rages and plots, that sets itself against the Lord and His anointed.

That this is a world where God's truth is constantly challenged, and instead, falsehood is champion, celebrates it. And think about it, living in a dark world, well, the great danger isn't just the darkness

that surrounds us, is it?

No, but it is that we stop noticing the darkness, that we slowly start becoming more comfortable living in it. That's precisely what Peter goes on later in 2 Peter 2 and 3 to highlight.

False teachers would have come in among the people, arose from within the people, described to be ignorant, unstable people who twist the word of God, imposing their own interpretation, their own will, secretly bringing in destructive heresies, denying the Master, basseeming the way of truth.

[22 : 17] They were people driven by greed, desperate to exploit, counting it pleasure to revel in the daytime, to revel in their deception. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin, hearts trained in greed.

They speak loud boasts of folly, enticing unsteady souls by sensual passions of the flesh, promising freedom, but they themselves are enslaved, having turned back away from the way of righteousness.

They offered things that sounded attractive, but only led to destruction. I mean, isn't that just a sobering thought? These were people who once sat under the truth, heard the gospel, they even walked among God's people, and yet somewhere along the way, they stopped paying attention. They stopped paying attention to the prophetic word. instead of letting God's promises shape their lives, they were enticed away, captivated by the world's promises.

They grew complacent, drifted from the truth, and eventually turned back, turned away from the way of righteousness. Now, if Christians then living under the ministry of the apostles needed these reminders because they were prone to drifting, well, then how much more do we?

[23 : 52] For we live in a world bombarded by distractions, endless opinions, temptations. Just think about it. How many voices there are each day competing for our attention all around?

And if you and I are really honest with ourselves, well, we know, don't we, how quickly our hearts begin to wander, how easily our confidence shifts and rests on what we can see rather than what God has said.

We start chasing success, finding security in tangible things to put our hope in the immediate circumstances, and how quickly we begin living as though this world is all there is.

perhaps even this morning, when you look around, familiar faces come to mind. Friends that once sat, gathered in our midst, opened the scriptures with us, sang hymns with us, confessed the same truths as us, but slowly, subtly, had fallen prey to the enticing but empty promises of this world.

But career became more important than Christ. Happiness more desirable than holiness.

[25 : 18] Acceptance by the world became more important than pleasing Christ. Christ. Yes, it stings and it saddens us when that happens, but know this, the crisis wasn't simply at the moment where they turned away completely, when they stopped walking with the Lord altogether.

No, rather it comes way before. It starts when we stop paying attention and instead we start to neglect, to forget, and eventually to forsake.

And that's why Peter says, don't. Watch out. Pay attention. Keep fixing our eyes on God's Word. Keep reminding one another of it.

Because this is the light that mercifully exposes the lies, the vain, empty promises that we so wrongfully desire. This is the light that helps us to see and to confess our sins.

This is the lamb to our feet, guiding and reminding us that no compromise is ever reasonable. And this helps us make proper sense of our lives in this world.

[26 : 35] We will not, and we cannot be spiritually healthy to be living a godly life if we aren't shaped by God's Word. And so we need to pay attention so that our souls are steadied, stable, and remain established in the truth.

But secondly, Peter says, pay attention because not only is the Word a lamp shining in a dark place, but it is needed only until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Now friends, isn't that such great encouragement and hope? Because what is Peter reminding us of the night? The night will not last forever. That you and I will not always remain in this dark place, but one day the sun will rise and Christ himself, the bright morning star, will appear in all his glory.

The day spoken off here refers to the great and dreadful day of the Lord, a day of salvation as well as judgment. the day which the Old Testament all looked and pointed forward to, the day where faith will finally give way to sight, where every promise will be fulfilled.

And that's what we have to look forward to. That what Peter saw and experienced at the Transfiguration, one day we will see and experience so much more, so much more.

[28:13] as we stand before the throne, before the Lamb. Friends, just think about it. If the apostles had gotten it wrong, if the false teachers were right, and that this was all just a cleverly devised myth, that Jesus isn't coming back, then how is the gospel good news?

What good news is it to anyone? Because it means that all we're experiencing now, all the sin, all the sorrow, all the suffering, well, this is as good as it gets.

But no, truly, the best is still yet to come. And so, friends, perhaps you're here today and you're new to church, you're new to the Christian faith, you've looked around at the world and all its cruelty, its chaos, its cynicism, and you quietly wonder, where is all of this going?

You wonder, is there a voice that could speak sense to it all? Or perhaps you wondered if all this talk about Jesus returning, is it just fairytale stuff of make-believe?

Well, please, pay attention. Please listen. Listen to the apostles' testimony. Listen to the prophetic word of God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is coming again and he is coming to judge the world.

[29:50] Both the living and the dead, all will have to give an account to him and face his just and righteous judgment. And all the ungodly, the unrighteous, all those who will not turn to trust in his Son, will perish.

But those who take refuge in his Son, in Jesus, will find shelter. They will be cleansed from their former sins and he will sustain them until the day comes and they enter his eternal kingdom.

And so before that day comes, before his anger is quickly kindled, our friends, please, turn to him in repentance. don't perish, but choose life.

Choose life. But as for you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, perhaps you've been forgetting the truth of the gospel, the hope of the gospel.

Perhaps you started to grow complacent, secretly and slowly enticed away by the empty, false promises that the world offers. You've become, as Peter described in chapter 2 and chapter 1, so nearsighted, blind, losing sight of the glory that is still to come.

[31:17] Or perhaps even you've been diligently practicing these qualities. You've been fighting the good fight, standing firm, but you're just starting to lose steam, to take your foot off the gas.

But then please also hear and heed Peter's warning and encouragement. Pay attention. Christ is surely coming. Don't listen to the scoffers.

Don't be enticed by a world that says, well let us eat and drink and be merry today, for tomorrow we die, as if there's no consequences ahead. Don't go exchanging God's precious and very great promises, an eternal kingdom, for temporary passing pleasures.

Don't be as Peter described in chapter 2, like a dog returning to its own vomit, or a sow after washing itself, returning to wallow in the mire.

But keep remembering the gospel truth. Keep paying attention to the word of God, for this is the soil in which our Christian lives are rooted and grows.

[32:31] And keep growing, keep growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ as you keep going, making every effort to confirm your calling and your election.

Because friends, each passing day is not a sign that Christ has forgotten his promise, but it marks one day closer to its fulfillment.

The sands of time are sinking, yes, but the dawn of heaven breaks. And so the king who once revealed his glory on that mountain, the holy mountain, will one day reveal it before every eye.

And all those, all those who have remained steadfast in him, will partake in that glory forever. So pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart.

Amen. Well, let us pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you for you are the God of every grace, the God who saves and sustains, and the God who speaks.

[33:51] we thank you that you have not left us to wander aimlessly through this dark world, to fall as easy prey to its empty promises, but you have given us your sure and trustworthy word, the prophetic word that points us, reveals Christ to us, and assures us that he is surely coming again.

And so, Father, forgive us for the many times we have paid more attention to the voices around us than to your voice. Forgive us for how quickly we forget, how easily we are distracted and enticed by the passing promises of this world, losing sight of the glory that is still to come.

And we humbly ask that by your Spirit, would you refresh us again of the truth of the gospel? Help us to keep paying attention, careful attention to your word as a lamp shining in a dark place.

Keep us growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that we might remain steadfast as we patiently and purposefully await his glorious return.
For we ask all these things in his name and for his glory. Amen. Amen.