

Sermon Notes for 2 Peter 1:16-18 (March 22)

- As we continue to experience these trying and unsettling times, we are learning how to better trust the Lord as we are tempted to let good concern stumble into fear, anxiety and even panic.
- We know and believe our Lord is in full control (Eph. 1:11), He's good even when it involves suffering and times of testing (Lam. 3:25, 38-39) and He has an ultimate plan that involves conforming us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). God is able and willing to "*come to the aid of those who are tempted*" (Heb. 2:18).
- Peter's recall about his eyewitness testimony of Jesus' transfiguration doesn't seem to relate to anything we are experiencing in our lives, but we should remember three encouraging truths:
 1. God's Word is **timeless** (it's not old or irrelevant) – Matt. 24:35
 2. God's Word is **transcendent** (it's not stuck in a former circumstance or story) – 2 Tim. 3:16
 3. God's Word is **timely**: Peter's obsession with remembering was a timely word on what matters most while living in uncertain times (1:12-15). Now in v. 16-18, he bolsters our confidence with the reassurance that God's message of hope through Christ ("the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ") is backed by irrefutable eyewitness testimony.
- Living in a sinful world (which includes our generous and ugly contribution) tends to make us skeptics at heart. How do we know what we believe is really true?
 - Does God really exist? If He's so good, all-powerful and loving, why does He allow so much evil to run rampant?
 - Is there really meaning and purpose in life?
 - Is the Bible really a supernatural book of timeless truths about our past, present and future life?
 - Is the core and common problem in our life sin?
 - Is Jesus Christ really God in the flesh, alive and the only Savior, Lord and hope for mankind?
 - Is there really a final, conscious, eternal destination of heaven or hell to which all mankind goes?

- Is Christianity really the only exclusive religion and all other faiths are false?
- Can we really know what is true and false? A big part of the answer to this and the other questions mentioned are found in Peter's testimony. Christianity is a defensible faith (1 Pet 3:15; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3; Acts 17:30-31)
- Peter boldly declares the truth and reality of Jesus Christ and His "*power and coming*" and strongly asserts it's not "*cleverly devised tales*" like the false teachers traffic in (v. 16). His boldness is grounded partly in his and others eyewitness testimony.
- There is no good reason to doubt the person and work of Jesus Christ, yet we do. Why is this
 - We are still in the flesh which is full of doubts We fail to check the compelling evidence
 - We can fail to check out the compelling evidence
 - If an unbeliever, you have a bent to "*suppress the truth in unrighteousness*" (Rom. 1:18)
 - If a believer, you can misunderstand God's mystifying ways and fail to remember in the middle of difficult circumstances that "*God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*" (Isa. 55:9; Rom. 8:28)
- Peter's three-verse eyewitness testimony undergirds the truth about who God is and what He says about Himself, His Son, and our past, present and future life.
- Peter gives us two reasons why eyewitness testimony matters.

1. **Eyewitness testimony matters so you can elude false narratives**
(1:16)

- Peter's use of the conjunction "*for*" is to justify his obsession about remembering God's foundational truth and it's a trustworthy message.
- Peter's appeal is grounded in the certainty of the apostolic message in contrast to the uncertainty of "*cleverly devised tales*" spewed by false teachers. Peter is most likely rebutting the phony charge of false teachers who

claimed the apostolic teaching about “*the power and coming*” of Jesus Christ was nothing but “*cleverly devised tales*”

- Peter insists he was an eyewitness of Christ’s glory, not a fiction peddler, yet false narratives seem so pandemic
 - You can save yourself, yet you can’t as Peter repeatedly notes by his focus on what Christ does for us (v. 1-3)
 - You can change you own life, yet you can’t as Peter notes regarding God’s divine power, promise and escape (v. 3-4) and our cooperation making ever effort to grow in seven virtues (v. 5-7).

2. **Eyewitness testimony matters so you can embrace true narratives** (1:17-18)

- Peter appeals to a supernatural event (transfiguration of Jesus) to confirm the identity, nature and future of Jesus Christ.
 - This transfiguration is the highest manifestation of Christ’s glory (“*majesty*” highlights the Lord’s unveiled grandeur)
 - All the apostles saw this glory (John 1:14), but not all saw what Peter saw in this event recorded in three gospels (Matt. 16:27-17:13; Mark 9:1-13; Luke 9:26-36)
 - This transfiguration is a preview or pre-fulfillment of coming attractions (“*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*”) as Matthew records (Matt. 16:28: “*until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*”)
- **Mark 9:1-9:** God provides **four credible witnesses** that testify to the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and coming Divine King of glory.
 - a) **Witness #1** was some **heavenly** eyewitnesses (Moses and Elijah were in some type of post-death intermediate bodies) Mk. 9:4-6.
 - b) **Witness #2** was some **earthly** eyewitnesses (Peter, James and John) Mk. 9:2; 2 Pet. 1:16. Peter seems to miss the moment as he was most likely thinking of the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) in the present month of Rishi, but crude earthly tabernacles weren’t appropriate shelters for glorified people, especially Jesus (Lk 9:33)

c) **Witness #3** was **God the Father's voice that was heard** (Mark 9:7; Matt. 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17-18). This created some fear (Mt. 17:6). Jesus was being recognized by God the Father as "*My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased*" (Mk 9:7; Matt. 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17-18). He must be listened to (Mk 9:7; Matt. 17:5) as the truth revealer

d) **Witness #4** was the **transforming touch of Jesus** (Matt. 17:7). They were on the ground with limp bodies and suddenly they feel the touch and soothing voice of Jesus. His touch had healed multitudes and His voice communicated the truth and greatest kind of love.

- Peter chose this event and His eyewitness testimony to communicate how vital it is to believe in God's certified, authenticated truth in the Person and work of Jesus. This is the One we must listen to and believe, not the "*cleverly devised tales*" of ravenous wolves who tragically lead people astray from the reality of eternal in Christ.