

- Alright guys, by now you should know what book of the Bible we are going to teach next, but if you don't – it's 2 Peter.
 - People always ask me – how do you decide what book of the Bible to teach next?
 - Do you wait to hear from God?
 - Do you spend time in mediation, slowly and patiently waiting for the Spirit to direct you?
 - The answer is - kind of sort of, but not really and the reason for my answer is:
 - My goal is to teach the entire Counsel of God,
 - And then of course, I don't care what I teach, because all of God's Word is good!
 - So – it doesn't necessarily matter to me, where I go next.
- Having said that - I don't just close my eyes and spin the pages and wherever it lands is where I go next.
 - No - I pray and ask the Lord for guidance and direction
 - In the end - it's not that hard of a decision to make – because, as I said – I want to teach it all before I go home to be with the Lord.
 - Which brings me to a recap, to date - I have taught:
 - Genesis – Revelation – Daniel – 1 Corinthians – 2 Corinthians – Acts – Colossians – Ephesians – Galatians – Hebrews – John – Jonah – Romans – Ruth – Ezra – Nehemiah – Part of Isaiah (we stalled out during the Pandemic) – and then 1 Peter and now 2 Peter
 - So roughly – 17 books of the Bible have been taught in depth, 6 OT & 11 NT.
- There 66 Books of God's Holy Manuscript.
 - Which means – we have been through roughly 25% of the Bible.
 - We could be much further down the road than we are, but the whole point of teaching God's Word is not to see how fast you can complete it, but to extract every ounce of Spiritual Wisdom available from the text.
 - This means – we must take our time, essentially it means – Quality over Quantity – that's the theme!
 - That is a re-cap of where we've been over this past 10 plus years.
- Now having said all that, if you've ever been here for “opening day”, you know – that the introduction of any new Book of the Bible is my favorite, and you also know – I always say the same thing.
 - I love the introduction because I love the history part – studying the background and giving you the setting for context – that is one of the most enjoyable parts of teaching for me.
 - Primarily because it's the most crucial part – context is key, that's why I always bring us back to that purpose – even when we are closing out the book.
 - We must stay in line with the purpose and or context of the Book or letter.
 - Without further ado – lets venture into our 18th Book of God's Word – and

segway into 2 Peter this morning.

- First and foremost – let me say this before we begin. We must start out by asking the question: Who wrote 2 Peter?
 - Well – the obvious answer would be Peter, and that is what we will go with, but I will tell you there has been some debate over that question.
 - It started somewhere around the 3rd Century, it was then that some scholars began questioning Peter as the author, even though there is a lot of evidence to the contrary.
 - Examples of that being, references inside 2 Peter itself, which point back to 1 Peter which most scholars agree – Peter did write,
- There is also other evidence pointing to Peter as the author of 2 Peter as well, one being, in that time, it was frowned upon by the church when someone tried to write in another Apostle's name.
 - Other evidence of Peter's authorship lies in specific references from 2 Peter – which tie Peter back to the book itself.
 - References such as specific details – where Jesus predicted His own death in John 21:18 – words He spoke directly to Peter.
 - And then – Peter recounts that conversation in 2 Peter 1:14
 - There are other details tying Peter to 2 Peter as well, we won't get into all of them this morning. I would just say, if you are interested in what those might be then go and study them for yourself, but for me, regardless of what some scholars have tried to say, I believe it's very clear that Peter wrote 2 Peter and so – we will assume this to be the case.
- Now let's move on– let me give you a little more information on this letter before we begin:
 - 2 Peter is only 3 Chapters long, which means we will be doing a minimum of 2 letters or books this year. (Maybe? – who knows)
 - It's a short epistle, but regardless of its size, we must first begin any book by asking the all-important question: which is, what is the context on this letter?
 - Which includes the question: Who did Peter write it to?
 - And then – when was it written?
 - Most scholars agree – that Peter wrote this letter somewhere in or around the early part of the 2 Century, and many believe it was the last NT book to have been written – which is interesting.
 - But back to the question – Who was Peter writing to?
- Assuming Peter's reference to his former letter (2 Peter 3:1) is to 1 Peter, he seems to have sent this second epistle to the same general audience, which was an audience made up of primarily Gentile believers, but also some Jew's, and Christians living in northern Asia Minor (Modern Day Turkey) (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1).
 - This makes sense because the background of the readers and the situation they faced, fit such an audience.

- Now - this was not a "catholic" epistle, meaning, a general epistle sent originally to all Christians at large.
- Next – let's look at the DATE AND GENRE it was written to:
 - Peter's reference to his imminent departure from this life (2 Peter 1:13-15) suggests that the time of its composition may have been just before Peter suffered martyrdom.
 - Reason being - Second Peter bears some of the marks of a last will and testament (cf. 1:3-11; 2:1-3; 3:1-4) as well as marks of a letter: with two literary genres (meaning types of literature).
 - By framing a 'farewell testament' within features of an ancient letter, the author of 2 Peter created a novel form, with no real analogies either in the New Testament or ancient Jewish/Christian literature."
 - The writings of church fathers place Peter's death at A.D. 67-68 in Rome which consequently, gives us a date of composition – in or around about A.D. 67-68 – which seems most likely.
 - Early church tradition also says that Peter spent the last decade of his life in Rome.
 - John Calvin, however, argued that he probably did not live that long in Rome, since Nero began persecuting Christians in Rome in A.D. 64.
 - Which led Dr. Kenneth Hanna (Professor at DTS) dating the writing to somewhere around A.D. 65.
- Second Peter is known as the swan song of Peter, just as 2 Timothy is the swan song of Paul, and there are striking similarities between the two books.
 - For example - both epistles put up a warning sign along the pilgrim pathway that the church is traveling so that they could identify the awful apostasy that was on the way at some point in time – (a time which has now arrived in our day and age).
 - What was then like a cloud the size of a man's hand today envelops the sky and produces a storm of hurricane proportions.
 - Peter warns of heresy among teachers and Paul warns of heresy among the laity."
- Next to The PURPOSE of 2 Peter:
 - 'The purpose of 2 Peter is to call Christians to spiritual growth so that they can combat apostasy as they look forward to the Lord's return.'
 - "Second Peter is best understood as a document of polemical or hostile defense and moral exhortation."
 - Let me say, Peter's purpose in this letter is so relevant to today's church - it's somewhat scary.
 - Scary – because it lines up exactly with where Christians are today.
 - And to be honest – 2 Peter's purpose – has grown to become the center piece of my ministry: Maturity & Spiritual Growth after Salvation!
 - All this started for me over 20 years ago when I began to look around and examine the church, my Christian brothers and sisters, the result of which led me down a

path of discouragement.

- I was confused – and didn't know why Christians conducted themselves the way they did.
 - I mean after all – I thought they were saved, so what's the deal?
- What's the deal is the next step after Salvation, which is called Sanctification, and because the church abandoned this step, we have ended up with immature Christians.
- People who have been saved for 10-15 and 20 plus years – seemingly clueless, and I couldn't understand why, until one day God revealed it to me.
 - It all revolved around a lack of maturity.
 - Really – even more than that, in some cases – even a lack of conviction, which really bothered me.
- You know - it's one thing to mess up and sin (we all do that) – but it's another to have no conviction about it.
 - And today – I see this all time, so much so it seems to be an epidemic.
 - Now – this may sound like a judgmental statement to you, and I understand that, after all who am I to say whether someone is convicted or not, but before your mind goes there, let me start by saying, I am no one! And someone's else's conviction is not my responsibility.
 - But having said that, it is my concern, wholistically, as a Bible Teacher and Pastor, especially – when I am trying to work all this out.
- When I'm trying to apply reasoning alongside my faith, and when I see so much confusion surrounding the lives of believers, it causes me to ask why?
 - It's not me judging someone – It has nothing to do with an individual, but rather everything thing to do with me and my journey, and my pursuit of helping Christian men and women live out their Christian lives – as close to God's Will as they can, and to do that in the most God Glorifying way!
 - And of course, this has all been precipitated by the fact – that I cannot let well enough alone,
 - So, I study – and I dig – I continue to study and dig, and pray about the answers
- I began my quest – by asking myself the same question, repeatedly, How can someone attend church for years, but be so clueless about God?
 - About the detail of who He is.
 - His Character – and what He expects from us.
 - Then, of course, I had to ask myself the age-old question: What's my purpose on this earth? By the way – I start this line of questioning by focusing on me first by asking myself these questions, every week as I prepare. I can assure you that I am the first person convicted.
 - And sometimes, that conviction is so strong – I am almost embarrassed to get up here and teach it to you!
 - It's in those moments that I must remind myself, that as I study, God's Word is

supposed to convict me just like it convicts everyone else

- Just FYI, being convicted is one of the ways I know I am on track.
- My point is, spiritual growth and maturity in our faith is front and center for me primarily because, we cannot begin to live out Gods Will in our life, until we begin to travel down the road of Sanctification.
 - It really bothers me to see so many Christian people struggling in life, especially
 - With their faith
 - With their marriage
 - With their children
 - Many times – without any sort of moral compass or Personal Constitution – that should be grounded in a fundamental understanding of God, by way of His Word,
 - And so, Faith Bible Fellowship – was founded on the principal/concept and understanding. That we will teach the manuscript.
 - Because God's Word is what convicts people, and conviction is the first step in the “Salvation Process.”
 - And once conviction sets in - we will pray and ask God to do exactly what He said He would do. Which was what?
- That when someone is convicted, and they repent, He will be faithful and just to forgive them, and save them, and give them a new heart – one that will guide them in the paths of righteousness,
 - From there, once they are saved, we will continue to teach you His Word, so that, you can begin the process of “Sanctification.”
 - Which is simply the process of growing and become more like Jesus and less like the world!
 - Once that process begins to take hold in your life, it will cause you to align with Gods will, and when you get in alignment with His will, that’s where the magic happens in the life of a believer!
 - That’s where (even though) – the “storms of life” may be raging you will tap into the peace that Paul speaks of – which is:
 - That Philipians Peace – a “peace that surpasses all understanding”
 - Once you walk around with that type of Peace encompassing your life it becomes much like a Glow, and it will be evident to everyone around you, and that’s what causes you to become an instrument that God uses to draw other men and women to Himself!
 - It is also what causes you to become content and satisfied with yourself, and your life.
 - Which by the way is simply a derivative of understanding your purpose on this earth.
- And so – with all this said, let’s dive into 2 Peter 1:1-11. My NASB entitles this section, Growth in Christian Virtue:

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Peter 1:6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *yourself*-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

2 Peter 1:7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

2 Peter 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

- Now, this is a pretty lengthy section of scripture for us to begin with, but it has to be this way because its one long dissertation, and therefore, the scripture demands we read it all together.
 - So, let's see how far we get with it, because there is a whole lot being said here.
 - First – before I start, I want to remind you of something.
 - 2 Peter – along with all the letters in the Bible, were written by certain men of God, to a certain group of people.
 - People in a church – a church they founded or had something to do with!
 - Certainly, a group of people they cared about.
 - These letters were written, because it had been brought to these men's attention that a church or group of believers were doing something they weren't supposed to do.
 - Or they had allowed something inside their church that they shouldn't have allowed.

- Or they were being delivered a warning about an approaching issue of some sort.
- I want you to think about what I am saying here: Our Bible is nothing more than a compilation of letters.
 - And in those letters, these people would receive instruction, exhortation, rebuke, and or admonishment (urging) them to quit doing something.
 - Or to quit allowing something inside their fellowship.
 - Or to begin doing something – something they should have been doing in the first place.
 - And without these letters, these folks were simply flapping in the wind somewhat.
 - The gathering of those letters, and the placing of them, into one Book, which created the Canon of Scripture, was a supernatural event - One that God orchestrated perfectly.
 - The entire Canonized book of the Bible, Old Testament through the New Testament, took roughly 2000 years to complete.
 - Obviously, only God could have pulled something like that together.
- The New Testament – consisting of 27 Books or letters / epistles, was written over a span of about 70 years or so,
 - Starting with Paul's letters, written in the 40's and 50 AD, to 2 Peter, the book we are studying today, which was completed around 120 AD.
 - At that time the New Testament could not be gathered into one volume until the codex book format was created.
 - Codex format meaning: A volume in book form, of manuscripts of ancient text.
 - Taking the original scrolls – from one long scroll format, and copying it, then dividing it up into books or letters.
 - This process was much like binding a book together!
 - Anyways, I say all this to say – these letters we study in the Bible set the standard by which we are to live. The dos and the don'ts if you will.
 - I wanted to bring all this to your attention because sometimes, I don't think most Christians understand how we got our Bible.
 - They think we just went down to Lifeway Bookstore and there it was.
 - Your Bible is the most fascinating book of antiquity that has ever been created.
- Think about it, as I said - The Old Testament & New Testament combined took over 2000 years to complete, and then somehow, it was gathered back to gather.
 - (Which was) – a feat – in and of itself, because Satan tried to destroy it at every turn.
 - But God preserved it until man was able to collect it all, and then one day, canonized it – which means to declare each book written by Saint.
- In other words, men would read these letters and books and decide if the person who wrote it – was God's chosen man (A Saint), or not.

- And then – and only then - would it be voted on – to be included in the Book we have today – the one we call the Bible.
- This doesn't have a lot to do with today's teaching of 2 Peter, but for some reason I felt compelled to tell you all this!
- When we read our Bible, we aren't just reading another book. We are reading the Words of God Himself.
 - And if you study the history of God's Holy Manuscript, you will discover that had it not been but for a supernatural act of God, we would not have a Bible!
 - Study it sometime and you will be amazed!
- Anyways, back to 2 Peter:
 - Verse 1 starts out like many of, if not all, of Paul's letters, let's read it again:

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

- To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
 - Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ:
 - Believe or not – Peter is saying a whole lot here when he identifies Himself as a “bond-servant.”
 - We have talked about this many times through-out the years, but let's talk about it again. A Bond-Servant – the Greek word is “Doulos.”
 - A bond-servant – also known as a bond slave – is someone who belongs to another person, and that slave has no ownership rights of their own!
- Now, what's ironic is a doulos “bond-slave” is used in the way that denotes the highest dignity in the NT, namely, of believers who willingly choose to live under Christ's authority as one His devoted followers.
 - The reason this type of slave receives the highest dignity is because
 - A bond servant was a slave who had earned their freedom, but choose to stay a slave to the master
 - That is the sense of who Peter and Paul were, and guess what? We too are bond servants!
 - If you are saved, you are a bond-servant of Jesus Christ.
 - You are a slave – of the God most High.
 - The question is, as far as slaves go, how are you doing with that?
 - Do you even view yourself this way?
 - Do you understand what this means?
 - That your life – is not your own?
 - That you have been bought with a price?

- Or do you view yourself in the good ole American christianity way, where you are the center of attention.
 - Where you the center of God's Universe!
 - Where your wants and desires on this planet are the most important thing.
 - And that's not only to you but to God as well!
- Much different way of looking at things,
 - Don't you think?
- If we are slaves to the God most high, then guess what? We must act like it!
 - We must act like a slave, think like a slave, react like a slave, see ourselves in the way slaves would have seen themselves.
 - Which was not and is not, the center of all things, but rather through the lens of a servant, on bended knee as we honor and revere the God of Creation!
 - Unfortunately, in the Church of today, as well as the society of today, this is simply not the case!
 - Everything around us – screams me, me, me!
 - Customer service is key, and the center of customer service is the customer – us!
 - Which means, if they put pickles on our hamburger, when I clearly told them not to, then O my word – Heaven help us!
- I want to challenge you to do something this week. As you roam about the country over the next 5-6 days, think about what I am saying. Look around you, at everything you do and say, and see if you can identify what I am trying to convey.
 - Even the most humble and non-selfish of us, are self-centered at the core!
 - Large in part – because that is exactly how our society is set up, which is a result of Capitalism. Capitalism demands it!
- I'll digress on this point and move on. Next, in the second half of verse 1 – Peter says something interesting. At least something I think is interesting. He says:

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

- Interesting how Peter slips that in there. It's his way of saying, If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, if you have the same faith we do, then you are, you should be – you will do etc. so on, and so forth.
 - In other words, if you are declaring yourself to be a believer, but you are living another life, another set of values or morals or whatever it is, you may want to check yourself, because you and I may not be working for the same boss!
 - Interesting – how Peter slips that in, it's as if he doesn't want to offend someone, at least not right out the gate. So, he softly and subtly says: If you have received the same faith we have, then guess what? You will act like we do!

- So, believe what we say, and follow our commands.
- Once again, we must ask ourselves the question, Do we, by our behavior, run the risk of anyone mistaking us for Christ followers.
 - In other words – if we couldn't tell someone we were Christ followers – we couldn't speak, then would anyone ever say, I know, (by their behavior and actions) they must be a Christian.
 - It's just a thought – something to ponder, but I think a good one.
 - Remove our ability to speak and then see how we are viewed by the world around us!
- Moving on, verse 2 – and this is where we will close.

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

- Once again, we see a blessing of sorts being pronounced on this group, which is just an extension of Peter and Paul's prayer.
 - Paul always prays for wisdom for the people,
 - Notice – Peter doesn't say, may God bless you so that you may be healthy or wealthy.
 - He doesn't even pray for what they may be going through
 - Not at all – He prays for their wisdom, but it's not just any ole wisdom. It's not wisdom in the ways of the world. It's not wisdom as it relates to wealth or health.
 - No! It's wisdom in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
- Now what exactly does that mean, if we aren't careful, we will just blow right by this but we shouldn't, because in this statement lies the keys to so many things.
 - First, in this statement lies the key to your salvation.
 - You cannot be saved unless you know Him. Specifically, you know and understand what He did for you!
 - And then secondly, you cannot mature unless you know Him.
 - And what's interesting is, one of these is quick – it comes by way of the Revelation of God – in a moment.
 - It's that moment, when you hear God's Word, i.e. you hear His voice through His Word, and then you are convicted about your sin, at which time, you respond in the affirmative with repentance, salvation then ensues!
 - From there, we then move into the next phase - which is maturity, and maturity does not arrive in any other form then through a deeper understanding of God!
 - Specifically, through knowledge as it relates to God and Jesus Christ. I am going to touch more on this next week, so I don't want to belabor the point this morning.
 - Only to say this – Peter and Paul both pray the exact same thing for the people over

and over again, and by extension the same prayer applies to you and I.

- Their prayer is always the same - that you and I may increase in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ!
- But why? Because in that knowledge lies the key to your peace, your gratitude, your thankfulness, your attitude, and ultimately your contentment!
- Now - I'm going to stop here this morning because I really want to spend more time on this concept. More time than we have on our introduction day of a new book!
 - But do me a favor:
 - Go do a word study this week and see how many times the prayer for knowledge and wisdom is prayed for the people!
 - Also, see if you can find, anywhere in scriptures, where the types of prayers that we often pray are prayed by these men of God!
 - Just think about how you pray, and think about how preachers and other Christian brothers and sisters pray, and see if you can find those prayers anywhere in scripture!
 - I think you will be stunned at what you discover! Amen Amen.