

Sunday, September 1, 2024 pm

**STUDIES IN 2 PETER (16)**  
**2 Peter 3:14-18**  
**Growing in Grace & Knowledge**

With this lesson we come to the conclusion of our study of Peter's letters. In this second letter we find Peter, knowing that his time left is short, encouraged them to work to be grounded in the truth of God's word and to grow in their faith. After that encouragement, he warns them about false teachers. In chapter 3, he identifies an example of such false teachers – those mocking the delay of the Lord's return. Peter then gave reasons He is delaying (He is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish). Further, as we noted in our last lesson, he emphasized that the Lord IS going to return – we just do not know when which is why we should always strive to be prepared. That brings us to some final admonitions that Peter brings.

**I. Be diligent to be found by Him in peace...**

- a. Frequently we make reference to diligence. The word means to put forth intense effort. It is necessary to properly understand God's word (2 Timothy 2:15). And it is necessary if we are to live godly lives. Peter has used this term twice in this letter (2 Peter 1:10 – be even more diligent to make your call and election sure; and 2 Pet. 1:15 – Peter would be “*careful to ensure that you always have a reminder...*”).
- b. With everything Peter has addressed in his letters, the answer to addressing problems includes diligence. That is especially true as you seek to distinguish between truth and error.
- c. **To be found in Him in peace** – our goal ought to be “in Him” which means that we are in good standing with your Lord. Everything we do is with a desire to please Him (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:9). The peace that Peter references here is likely peace with Christ and God. That is equivalent to saying we are in a saved condition.
- d. We have also addressed the need for peace in our lives – peace is the absence of strife. It is a “fruit of the Spirit” – Galatians 5:22-23. As Christians we desire peace with God (Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 13:11) with one another (Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Ephesians 4:3) and within ourselves (Philippians 4:6-9 ties this peace to our relationship with God).
- e. When it comes to peace, if you have to chose between man or God, whom will you choose? Think about that in light of what Peter has addressed in this letter.
- f. **Without spot and blameless** – how can we be without spot? We need the blood of Jesus – Revelation 1:5. But also recall 1 Peter 1:18-19 where Peter reminded them of their redemption by the precious blood of Jesus. However, as Christians, when we sin, we still need His blood – 1 John 1:7, 9, 2:1-2

**II. Consider that the longsuffering of the Lord is salvation –**

- a. A study of Israel's history in the Old Testament reveals the longsuffering of God. It is incredibly long considering all that He has dealt with. BUT understand also, that His longsuffering had limits, and that is still true. Peter reminded them that a day is coming.
- b. Recall again 2 Peter 3:9. It ties into this verse, as we realize that as long as God delays His return that will mean more opportunities for men to be saved.
- c. Recall the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13, esp. vs. 11-12.

**III. Corroborating sources – Paul**

- a. Continuing to develop the previous statement, Peter now appeals to Paul's writings.
  - i. He calls Paul a “**beloved brother**”

- ii. Describes him as being **endued with wisdom** (from God – cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37).
  - iii. He also notes that Paul had written **letters**, likely some of which his audience had seen (they had been “**written to you**”).
  - iv. He mentions, “**all of his epistles**” (writings) noting several that were available.
- b. Exactly what letter(s) he has in mind is not known. Assuming Peter’s 2<sup>nd</sup> letter was written in the 60s, most of Paul’s letters would have already been written and begun to be circulated. How many of those had Peter seen or was he familiar with, we are not told. But we know from this text, some were there.
- c. THE POINT: Peter and Paul were preaching the same gospel!  
What were they both preaching? 1) Jesus is Savior (1 Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 1:7); 2) Beware of false teachers (2 Peter 2; 2 Thessalonians 2, etc.); 3) Be diligent – 2 Peter 1:10, 2 Timothy 2:15); 4) God is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9, Romans 2:4); 5) Jesus will return (2 Peter 3:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2), 6) The need to work out their salvation (2 Peter 1:10-11, Philippians 2:12), etc. We do not know if Peter had anything specific in mind. They were in agreement with each other! NOTE: Recall the challenge that Paul made to Peter in Galatians 2:11-16.
- d. Concerning these epistles Peter notes:
- i. **In which are some things hard to understand** – as you study scripture you will find many topics and passages challenging. This has prompted some to say we cannot understand the scriptures. But, what we must understand is that scripture is designed to be studied over and over. And EACH time you read and study it you will learn more and more.
  - ii. Consider Ephesians 5:17 where Paul noted that God EXPECTS us to understand His will. So is this a contradiction? No! When it comes to matters of how we are saved and how we are to live as Christians, God’s teachings are straightforward and simple to understand (though not always easy to apply). The difficulties lie in the finer points of doctrinal underpinnings.
  - iii. BUT notice Peter did not say, impossible. He just said hard, which means you need to work at it!
  - iv. The **untaught and unstable twist** the words of scripture. It is those who are not properly grounded that misapply God’s word (and I would appeal back to 2 Peter 2). There are many causes for this: Ignorance – both willful and accidental; confidence in men; failure to study; looking at false sources; dislike for the truth; a failure to understand and apply principles of authority, etc. The idea of twisting scripture is to manipulate it to make it say what you want it to say. Again, this is the one “*tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine*” (Ephesians 4:14). NOTE: The fact that Peter describe the character of those who fail to understand implies that if you are **taught and stable**, you CAN understand His will.
  - v. **To their own destruction** – means there are eternal consequences to their errors. We NEED to ensure that what we believe is truth. Cf. 2 Peter 2:20-22. Let us clearly remember that God says what He means and means what He says!
  - vi. **As also they do the rest of scriptures** – one point to observe: Peter has made reference to the Old Testament as being scripture (2 Peter 1:19-21). NOTE how he equates the writings of Paul to the established inspired writings of the Old Testament (the 39 books we call the OT).

#### IV. Therefore, beware

- a. Peter concludes his letter with 2 final admonitions. He begins by noting, “**since you know this beforehand**” – whether he has reference to this letter as a warning, or previous writings and teachings (or any combination of these), they have been informed. Therefore, they will have no excuse (cf. John 15:22).
- b. **Beware, lest you fall from your own steadfastness**
  - i. This book has been filled with warnings against this and we will not revisit each of them.
  - ii. But remember 1 Corinthians 10:12. Romans 11:20 speaking to Gentiles being saved, as the Jewish nation was broken off, Paul noted, “*you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.*” Paul in 1 Timothy 1:19-20 spoke of those who had suffered shipwreck concerning their faith.
  - iii. Our faith is not a game or a trivial matter. It has eternal consequences.
- c. **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
  - i. Another oft emphasized principle is our need to be continually growing. If we are not growing, we are falling behind.
  - ii. Peter admonishes them to keep growing (present tense) in grace (favor with God) and knowledge of God’s word. Colossians 1:9-10, Paul’s prayer was that they walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.
  - iii. 1 Peter 2:1-2 – He spoke of them as newborn babes desiring the sincere milk of the word that they might grow thereby.
- d. NOTE: As Peter concludes this letter, he brings them back to the beginning of this writing – 2 Peter 1:2-4 where he speaks of God’s grace and peace, and divine knowledge that leads to godliness. This is followed by the admonition to with diligence build upon our faith (2 Peter 1:5-11).

And thus we bring this letter to its conclusion: Peter closes with the benediction: “**To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**” May we, with diligent effort strive to learn God’s will through His word to the point that we will not be deceived by doctrinal error, whether it be some man or his teachings. Have you begun your walk with Him? And if so, are you growing as you ought to? Think about it!