Reminders are Great!
II Peter 1:12

Henry Ford said, “When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.” Of course when we are in tough situations it is easy to forget that!

**Remembering is harder than you think!** Veteran’s Day remembrances are on November 11 at 11 AM. Why? It was a time they said we should always remember. December 7 is a day of infamy that we should never forget, yet today I’ll bet 50% of Americans cannot tell you what happened on that day or didn’t remember it this past Thursday. I remember as a grade schooler getting off the bus and coming home to learn that the president of our country had been assassinated. While I remember the event, I can’t tell you the date. There is a mini-park in Montpelier at the bottom of National Life Drive – many no longer remember what it’s there for. When I mentioned the computer problems of Y2K most under 35 have little idea what I’m talking about. It is harder to remember than you think.

As a pastor, I used to get really frustrated at how much people forgot. I would take a lot of time writing things for the newsletter, putting notifications in the bulletin, making a bulletin board and giving announcements, then someone would come up to me after an event and say, “Oh I never heard about that?” Inside I would get fired up and think, it’s been in the bulletin 3 times, it’s been on a big bulletin board 3 weeks, I’ve verbally announced it twice and there was a long article in the newsletter, how can you say you never heard about it! Then I realized things that are important to me aren’t always important to others. So I came up with this phrase to repeat to myself when I started to get mad – “everyone else does church part-time.” They have many other things going on in their lives. They’re not going to remember everything I do when church is my job, my ministry, most of my relationships, much of my family – my days are filled with constant reminders, but other peoples’ lives are not.

God has an important role for reminders. 126 times in the Old Testament we are called to remember. Many of our holidays are remembrances. The ancient festivals were remembrances. We have calendars, to-do lists, phone apps and alarms to help us remember. Here at BEFC we have always had a person who calls Sunday volunteers to remind them of their responsibilities for that week. Blessed are the church reminders! Things simply go smoother here when those reminders happen! Sure, some can turn positive reminders into nagging, harassing, irritating, pesky, irksome blather. “Did you remember to brush your teeth” or “Don’t forget to take a coat”, but when we have forgotten something reminders are incredibly helpful! Peter is going to tell us this as we come to the last verse we are memorizing – 2 Peter 1:12. Remember you & I are actually memorizing v 11 this week and then v 12 next week so we can give Jesus a really special gift on His birthday!

**PROPOSITION:** No matter how long we have been a Christian, how much we know the Bible or how devoted to Jesus we are, ALL of us need reminders of what is most important in life.
I. Remembering God’s truth & actions is important

A. Repetition of what is important

READ v 12. When you read this whole letter of 2nd Peter you realize that Peter knows his life on this earth is growing short. These may be the final words - the final testament - the final encouragement he is sharing with them. This is what is most important to him. We remember what we are regularly reminded of, so let’s remind each other of what is most important. READ v 12. Peter is going to remind them of the importance of reminding them of what is most important several more times in the next few verses. READ v 13. It is a good and important thing for me to refresh your memory of God’s truths as long as I am still alive on this earth. Then in v 15 we read, READ. Peter wants them to remember these truths long after he is dead. It is like your mom reminding you to brush your teeth before you leave home in the morning and before you go to bed at night. The repetition instills in us a value that keeps going long after we leave home - or if we don’t do it, we here mom’s voice again even though she is nowhere near!

Repetition of what is really important is very valuable in life. This is especially true in spiritual areas. Don’t assume that because you’ve said it before, that it will be remembered. There are only a few things we can repeat often, so make them the most important ones. Peter knows how important it is to keep coming back to these twin themes of faith and works, grace and effort. None of them are new to the early believers but it is easy to forget one or the other - when that happens our life gets out of balance! So we have memorized these verses as a reminder of what is very important in the Christian life. The intellectual knowledge of God is not a replacement for obedience and God’s grace is not a license to sin.

B. Repetition of what we already know

Notice that Peter makes it clear that he is not criticizing them or claiming they aren’t remembering God’s ways and truths as they should. These reminders are ALL in the positive - his repetition is not a condemnation of some failure on their part. READ v 12. Peter is repeating something they already know - “even though you know that”. Peter is going to keep reminding those around him of what is important even though they intellectually show evidence of already knowing those things.

Take our stain glass windows up here. Diane Badger designed these special for our church to remind us that God is always at work around us (the hands) - and God’s work is beautiful as these stained glass windows are. These windows also show us how God is always speaking to us. In the right window we see that God speaks to us through “natural revelation” - that is through His creation. We see the power, variety, beauty, magnificence and wonder of God reflected in nature around us - especially here in Vermont with our mountains, trees, wildlife, and clear water. But God speaks clearest to us through special revelation - the Bible. The Bible is God’s Word to us. The truths in the Bible show us the right path for life - not what is
popular around us or what we feel is easiest, but what will lead to an eternally
meaningful and significant life. That all goes through the cross – Jesus dying for our
sins and then bodily raising from the dead to demonstrate this IS the right way.

**C. Repetition of what we don’t waver in**

Not only is the apostle Peter devoted to reminding them of what is most important and
what they already know – but also what they are already convinced of. His reminders
are not coming because they are wavering in their beliefs. **READ v 12.** They are
firmly established in the truth they now have – that is they are living these truths
despite the opposition. They are not wavering in their beliefs despite the sacrifices.
They aren’t doubting God’s truth. This is POSITIVE repetition. It is important to be
reminded of that which we are not currently wavering in. Peter knows this better than
most. He was so confident he would not waiver in his faith and deny Jesus – but he
did. No human is strong enough not to need reminders of God’s great truths in our
lives.

On Thursday, one of the area pastors told me of an incredible happening at their
church. He had showed them a video that challenged people not to ignore God’s
warning signs in their life – because that would be like flying a plane blind. A couple
committed their lives to Jesus but what surprised him more is that over a score of
people came forward to say, **“Pastor I haven’t been listening to some of those God’s
warning signs – I’ve allowed sin in my life and I may be hindering God’s blessing
in this church.”** They needed a reminder of what they knew and were committed to!

**II. As Christians we need to be reminded …**

So what do we need to be reminded of that we both know and are firmly established in?

**A. Who God is**

**Who God is!** God is real and active in our world today. There is one and only one
God – not many gods or no God. And that single God exists in Trinity – Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit. God is perfect, holy and loving all at the same time. He always was
and always will be. **Who is God?** God has shown Himself most clearly to us in the
person of Jesus Christ – Jesus the Rescuer. Jesus is God come down in human form –
we call this the incarnation and it’s the reason we celebrate Christmas. Jesus lived a
perfect life, died willingly on the cross as a payment for our sin and then bodily rose
from the dead to prove all of His words are true. And Jesus is coming again! This time
to halt the world as we know it today, bring in true justice & peace by setting up
Jesus’ kingdom on this earth for a thousand years and binding all evil spiritual forces
during that time. We need to be reminded of who God is because our culture
constantly pictures Him as something very different – like a wishy-washy grandfather
or a cosmic bellboy or non-existent or impotent or just a nebulous force that can be
used for good or evil (**and yes I am going to that movie!**) We know these things about
God in our minds, but it’s so helpful to be reminded of them in compelling ways. We
also need to be reminded of…
B. How life works

**How life works.** We live in a broken world, comprised of broken people, involved in broken relationships. We are NOT going to experience the perfection of heaven until heaven. God alone can always bring good out of bad situations. For the Christian, no pain needs to be wasted! God wants to remake us through this life to be able to enjoy Him forever and get the most out of heaven & the millennium. Unfortunately we will all fall short – we are all sinners. We are broken. We also need to be reminded of...

C. What we are to do

**What must we do?** It starts with coming to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is more than head knowledge or statements of belief or even attending church. God reaches out to us with a way to be forgiven of our sins, be eligible for heaven, be adopted into His family and have a genuine personal relationship with Jesus. But it doesn’t stop there. We need to respond to God’s freely given gifts through our efforts, actions, praise, thankfulness and witness.

III. Our verses remind us of ...

2 Peter 1:1-12

So even though we know these truths and are firmly established in them, we need to regularly be reminded of them. Thus we have memorized these verses in 2 Peter 1:1-12. And because I also think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I am on this earth and I want you to remember these truths long after I am gone – let’s end our series on 2 Peter 1:1-12 with a reminder of the incredible truth, wisdom and guidance in these words.

A. The greatness of Jesus

**They show us the greatness of Jesus.** In verse one He is called “the Christ” – that is Jesus is the Messiah, the one that is going to rescue us from the injustice, the unfairness, and the brokenness of this world. Jesus can do this because He is “our God and Savior”. Jesus is not just a good man, He is not just a great example, He is not just a profound teacher, He is not just someone who is close to Almighty God – Jesus IS God come down in human flesh. And if anyone claims that the Bible really doesn’t say “Jesus is God”, you have it memorized in v 1 so you can be reminded of it – “the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ”. You cannot get any clearer about the deity of Jesus than that!

Jesus is the one who gives us faith as special as that which the apostles got. Jesus is righteous (v 1), provider of grace and peace (v 2), divinely powerful, glorious and good (v 3). Jesus has broken our hopeless slavery to self, worldliness, and evil desires (v 4). Jesus chooses to have a personal relationship with us – this is our knowledge of Him in verse 2, 3, & 8. Jesus is Lord – Lord of all (v 2, 8). Jesus has cleansed us from our past sins (v 9). And He will lead an eternal kingdom of righteousness, joy, justice, and love (v 12). Christmas is a great time to be reminded of the greatness of Jesus!!!

B. What God has done and is doing in our lives
Our verses remind us of what God has done and is doing in our lives. Verse 3 tells us that His divine power has given us everything we need for godly life – none of us is missing anything we need to stay on that path to a godly life. God has called us by His own glory and goodness – we are not spending our life trying to impress God so He will choose us on His team! We have already been called to heaven and this God did out of His goodness (we don't earn it) and glory (He is the one who is going to make something special of our life). And don't you love v 4. God has given us very great and precious promises that He will surely carry out. Through them we get to participate in the divine nature – we get to SHARE IN some aspect of the moral excellence that belongs to God. It may be peace beyond understanding in the toughest situations – it may be genuine love for our enemy – it may be hope in the most hopeless of situations. We get to experience some characteristic of God's nature that we couldn't experience any other way. WOW! And this is after God breaks our slavery to the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

C. The real path to a meaningful & significant life
Our verses also remind us of the real path to a meaningful and significant life. By the time we die, it is too late to find out we have been on the wrong path of life! We need to know what the right path is now and how to stay on it because in a broken world, with lots of deceptive claims by evil spiritual forces we can't see, with some strong wrong desires inside of us and with wrong pushes by the culture around us, it's easy to get off the only real path to a meaningful and significant life!

Jesus encourages us in His path by seeing something & developing in us something special that we cannot see. Jesus gave Simon the name “Peter” because the impetuous Simon would become a rock for God's work. Like Simon, Jesus has a unique name for each of us! V 1 also reminds us of the importance of putting servanthood before privilege – Peter is a servant before an apostle. That is key to staying on the path to a meaningful and significant life.

Also key is for us to recognize and appreciate what God has done, is doing and will do in our lives – like those things we have already mentioned in verses 2-4.

Then in verse 5 – 7 we are encouraged to put our own intentional effort into 8 virtues – faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection (phileo love) and love (agape love). God then takes our feeble but hard & sacrificial efforts on our part and multiplies them so that those qualities grow in us more than our mere human effort alone could do. If you think of the other places the Bible calls us to put effort like the spiritual disciplines or telling other people about Jesus or caring for one another or serving Jesus’ mission, these help put effort into one or more of those 8 virtues. This path to a significant and meaningful life is the same whether we live in a slum in India, a city in the ancient Roman world, or a technologically advanced country today. God is transforming us through Jesus Christ. These verses remind us of that.
D. The way to true, lasting assurance

Our verses remind us of the way to true and lasting assurance. Assurance doesn’t come by what we’ve done, what we have or how popular we are, but assurance comes in seeing evidence of what God does. READ v 8-9. As verse 8 and 9 remind us, real assurance comes from seeing some growth (some advancement) in these 8 virtues in our own lives. This is not a comparison thing to other people, but a comparison of where we are now compared to where we were last year or last decade. The more we grow as Christians, the more aware we will be of how short we fall from God’s perfection. So all true believers in Jesus Christ will face times when they begin to doubt their own standing with God. This doubt is something satan & the demonic encourage. Satan will satanize – the accuser will accuse. “You are no good”, “God could never forgive you”, “You’ll never please Jesus”, “You are worthless trash, only fit for destruction”.

E. How to better overcome in both the problems and blessings of the future

Finally our verses remind us of the way to overcome problems and receive a rich welcome when we die and go to heaven. How cool is that! That is in v 10-11. READ. Every time you recite these 12 verses, think about these verses, share these verses you also are reminding yourself and others of some of the most important truths for eternity! Keep overcoming in the power of Jesus! Thus ends our teaching series on 2 Peter 1!