



Enemies of Truth

“The Mind of An Apostle; The Heart of A Pastor”

2 Peter 1:12-15

When we read the New Testament letters, we often read them with a little bit of curiosity about the men whom the Holy Spirit used to write them. However, we are not totally in the dark about John, or Peter. The Gospels tell us about both of these apostles as they lived with Jesus and ministered along side of Him for the duration of His earthly ministry.

As one engages in the study of their letters, it becomes quite obvious as to the passion, commitment, and love for the Church that each of these apostles have. While some of their instruction brings conviction, the vast majority brings encouragement. They both have a fierce commitment to the truth handed down to them from the Lord, and they have a fierce love for His people. They each exhibit a commitment to doctrine vigorously stand against false teachers and false teaching.

The more one studies their writings, the more one can't help but be drawn to them with a deep love and appreciation for their obedience to the call and commission the Lord gave them. We owe them a debt of gratitude. And we owe them the respect to pay close attention to what they teach and obey it. Their writings leave the very words of God with us.

In this section of 2 Peter, we get a look at the mind of an apostle and the heart of a pastor - all embodied in the same man. Christ had called Peter to pastor (*cf. John 21:15-19*).

In these few verses (1:12-15), Peter's words reveal his pastoral passion in four motivations: necessity, sensitivity, faithfulness, and brevity.

1) Peter understood the necessity of reminding his flock of the incredible spiritual benefits of following Christ. (2 Peter 1:12a)

Therefore refers back to the greatness of salvation (1:1-4) and the partnership in the divine nature that brings the blessedness of assurance (1:5-11). These themes are so crucial and important they must never be forgotten. When Peter uses the future tense, **will always be ready**, he is saying he will **remind** them of truth whenever and wherever he has the opportunity, including writing this Spirit-inspired epistle. But he was also anticipating all who, in the ages to come, would read his letter and be reminded of the great **things** God gave him to say.

2) Peter displayed a sensitivity toward his flock as he encouraged them in the truth they already knew. (2 Peter 1:12b)

Peter knew of his people's devotion to the Lord, and he encouraged them to keep moving in that same direction. The recipients of this letter were believers who had heard other inspired New

Testament letters read and preached (cf. 3:15-16). They knew and believed **the truth**, so as to be **established in** it.

3) Peter exhibited faithfulness in carrying out his pastoral role of teaching and reminding the church of the truth the Holy Spirit handed down to him. (2 Peter 1:13)

Peter understood what it meant to be unfaithful to the Lord. We all know of his utter failure of denying the Lord the night Jesus was arrested and questioned. Yet, when we read of his restoration and his call to pastor in John 21, we see Jesus' commission for him to shepherd His people. Since the lesson of the failure stuck with Peter, he knew full well that faithfulness is crucial for, not only him, but also all believers. As long as God gave him earthly life, Peter would be faithful **to stir up** those the Lord put in his life **by way of reminder**.

4) Peter embraced the brevity of his life, knowing not only that it would end but how it would end. (2 Peter 1:14-15)

Peter understood the brevity of life, especially of his own. Thus he wrote of **knowing** for certain **that the laying aside of his earthly dwelling was imminent**. The term **imminent** carried a dual meaning in that it can denote "soon," or "swift." When he wrote this he was already in his seventies; thus it was reasonable for Peter to expect that his death was not far off. He also knew that his death would be somewhat sudden, when he says, **as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me**. Forty years earlier, between the Lord's resurrection and His ascension, during Peter's restoration and recommissioning to ministry Jesus told Peter what was coming. (cf. John 21:18-19)

Peter wanted believers to avoid the hazards of spiritual negligence. Therefore, he labored diligently through his teaching and writing to reiterate the important issues. He desired to leave a Christ-centered legacy. He wanted Christians to be reminded of the greatness of salvation and of the blessedness of assurance that results from divine partnership in working out one's salvation through sanctification. He also worked to make certain false doctrine or teaching would not rob believers of their rich spiritual heritage.

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