Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Have you ever benefited from a reminder? A reminder to pay a bill, or of an appointment, or that someone is going to visit? I am always putting reminders in my phone calendar, so that I do not forget things. And I am sure we have all use and benefit from reminders at times for the same reason.

Well, as we see in verse 1, both of Peter’s letters were meant as reminders. And we are going to see what the reminder is all about, but before we do that, notice that Peter refers to his readers as “**beloved**” in verse 1. It’s a very special and intimate term of affection that we find in the Bible. So, having finished with the harsh words for false teachers in chapter 2, Peter speaks again to those he viewed as beloved. And they were beloved by virtue of their being the beloved of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. And it always helps, doesn’t it, when you know that the person reminding you about something really loves you. So, let’s consider this **loving** **Reminder from Peter** under five headings, which I will announce as we work our way through the passage.

1. And we begin with **verse 1** and the **Practical Purpose** of the Reminder. For there Peter says, “*This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder*.”
   1. And our focus here is that phrase: “*stirring up your sincere mind*.” And it is only in verses 11 and 14 that we see what Peter wanted the minds of believers to be stirred up to: It is thatin view of the reality of the Second Coming and the Day of Judgment, we ought to be living lives of “*holiness and godliness*.” And in **verse 14**, that we should “*be diligent to be found by [Christ] without spot or blemish, and at peace*.” You see, the false teachers were teaching that Jesus was not coming back, so it did not matter how you lived. And believers were starting to fall for these lies. That is why Peter gives this reminder: We must not forget that Christ *will* return and that there *will* be a Day of Judgment, and that therefore we must pursue holiness and godliness.
      1. Perhaps you can remember a time when you found out that someone was coming to visit, and you made plans to redecorate or to tidy up a bedroom, or get some special food that they like, or something like that. And you really wanted to do this, not because they would leave if you did not or be angry with you, but because you love this person. But you couldn’t do it right at that moment, so you put a reminder on your phone or on the calendar, just in case you forgot. Now, some of us may not need the reminder because we so eagerly look forward to the person’s arrival that we cannot stop thinking about it, and so we begin to do what is planned the very next day. But for most of us, even important dates can be easily forgotten, because, you know, ‘life happens.’ So, that reminder can be a life-saver. Right? Up it pops on your phone, and you remember to do what you had planned to, because in a few days, this person will be here.
      2. Well, it is also easy to forget that Christ may return at any moment. And I am sure that we all truly do want to be found “*without spot or blemish, and at peace*,” when He returns. And this is not to earn our salvation or out of fear that we might be refused entry to heaven, but for the good reasons that Peter has laid out in his letters: It is how we show our thankfulness for salvation. And we also know that the Holy Spirit who lives within us desires to make us more and more like Jesus. And our assurance of salvation is strengthened through godly living. And a holiness lifestyle keeps us from falling into doubt or denial, as happened to Peter. But life is so hectic, isn’t it, it gets so busy, and it is also easy to get used to sin and strife, to the point that it does not really bother us too much. Do you know what I am talking about?
      3. Let me put it to you this way: If you knew that Jesus was coming back next week, would you suddenly have an urgent list of things to stop doing, things to start doing, and/or relationships to repair? I am sure we all would. And this is because we so easily forget that Christ will return.
      4. So, that is the practical purpose of this reminder that we might pursue holiness.
2. But next we see the **Biblical Basis** for the Reminder. And we see this in **verse 2**: “*That you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles*.”
   1. And as an example of the **predictions of Holy prophets**, we read **Isaiah 24** earlier. It is a passage that is known as ‘Isaiah’s little apocalypse,’ because it is kind of like a small version of the Book of Revelation. It was meant as a comfort for the people of Israel and Judah, who were soon to be invaded and sent into exile. The Lord wanted them to know that He would judge the nations and restore His people. But the language is clearly more cosmic and universal than just the middle-east. Isaiah refers often to the whole earth, saying that “*the earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered*.” And the chapter finishes with the “*the powers in the heavens above and the kings on earth below*” being “*shut up in prison and punished for many days*,” and the Lord almighty reigning in His kingdom. So, it is clearly also a prediction of the return of Christ and the Day of Judgment. And there are other passages like it in the Old Testament.
   2. But Peter also speaks of the **commandment of Christ**. And if you know the Gospels, you will know that Jesus spoke often about the coming Day of Judgment. A most obvious example is **Matthew 25**.
      1. The chapter begins with **the parable of the ten virgins**. And a key part of the parable is that the bridegroom was delayed. And it was this delay that led to the five foolish virgins to run out of oil and not be welcomed into the feast. And Jesus finished the parable by saying, “*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour*” when I shall come.
      2. And then Jesus spoke **the parable of the talents**. And a key part of that parable is that it was a long time before the master returned to see what his servants had done with the talents he had assigned to each of them. And the two who had doubled the talents were invited to enter his joy. But the one who had buried his talent was cast into outer darkness.
      3. And the chapter ends with Jesus saying, “*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats*.” And then we get the address to the sheep about how in their acts of kindness toward their brothers they were honouring the Lord Jesus, and then they are received into heaven, and the address to the goats about how their failure to be kind to their brothers was a failure to honour the Lord Jesus, and then they are condemned to hell.
      4. Now, today is not the time to unpack these parables. The point is that Jesus from the perspective of the Lord Jesus, He will return soon, but from our perspective, it seems like there is a long delay. So, we must be ready and prepared for His return.
   3. And the **Apostles** repeated the command of Christ in their sermons in Acts and in their letters to the churches. **Acts 17:31**: God “*has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead*.” **2 Corinthians 5:10**: “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil*.”
   4. So, the return of Christ and the Day of Judgment, and the need to be ready, is taught, consistently, throughout the Bible.
3. But we need this reminder also because of the **Ridiculing Reality** described in **verses 3-4**, where we read about those who scoff at any suggestion of a Day of Judgment.
   1. And a **scoffer** is a person who makes fun of or ridicules something. If you tell someone something that you did and they don’t believe you, they might ridicule you and make fun of what you did or what you are claiming. Well, in relation to the return of Christ and the Day of Judgment, the false teachers of Peter’s day were telling believers that it was just a myth; that the Bible did not teach a day of Judgment.
   2. But this was not just a problem for Peter’s time. And we see this with the reference to “***in the last days***.” You see, when the Bible mentions the last days, it typically means the whole period of time between the first and second Coming of Jesus.
      1. For example, back in **1 Peter 1:20**, the first coming of Jesus is described as having happened “*in the last times*.” And in **Acts 2**, the Day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was described as a fulfilment of what the prophet Joel said would happen “*in the last days*.”
      2. And Paul sometimes speaks about bad behaviours and philosophies that will characterize people “*in later times*” and “*in the last days.*” But then he describes behaviours and philosophies that were already happening in his day. And yet, there is also no doubt also that Paul wanted believers to understand that there would be more of these bad behaviours and false teachers, and an increasing influence of it all, just before Christ returns.
      3. So, there will always be those who scoff at the idea of the Day of Judgment, but we can expect this to become very prominent in the short period immediately before the return of Christ.
   3. But notice also what it is that drives these scoffers; Peter says at the end of verse 3 that they follow “***their own sinful desires***.” And this has been a constant theme of 2 Peter – the sensuality of false teachers. God says, I am your Creator. So, here are my commandments; this is how I expect you to live; this is the standard by which you shall be judged. And God says, “*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil*.” But this is rejected by many today.
      1. If you are wondering why there is now such wide acceptance and affirmation of the whole LGBTQ philosophy, it is because people scoff at the Day of Judgment. They refuse to let God tell them what is right and what is wrong. And they detest the idea that they will have to stand before God and receive what is due for their wickedness. So, they scoff at Christ and Christianity. They will ban it as hate speech and accuse us of being intolerant and offensive. And church after church is caving in and going along with the flow.
      2. I heard not that long ago that a professor at some US university lost his position because he argued that instead of calling those who sexually abuse children paedophiles, we should call them **minor-attracted persons**. His argument was that paedophile is a very loaded and judgmental term that makes it difficult for those struggling with these desires to seek help. And it sounds so caring, doesn’t it. And it is completely consistent with the philosophy of the age – if you have a sexual attraction of any sort, you can’t help it, it is your identity. Therefore, you should not be judged. And while today this might still seem completely taboo and forbidden, it may not be long before minor-attracted person are given a council-funded parade to celebrate their place in our diverse society. And worst of all, you can guarantee that if that should happen, there will be ministers who are happy to lead the parade and ask God to bless this ‘celebration of diversity.’
   4. So, the motivation for those who reject the return of Christ and the Day of Judgment is ultimately that they may give full vent to their sinful desires. And to excuse their sinful desires, they say, “*Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.*”
      1. Now, we have looked at this passage before in connection with **how it demonstrates Peter’s belief in the doctrine of creation**. He refers to “*the beginning of creation*” and the forming of the earth out of water “*by the word of the Lord*.” That is all Genesis 1 language, and it is an example of how the whole Bible takes the account of the six-day creation as exactly how God created the universe. So, we won’t go over that again.
      2. The major point here is the idea of these scoffers that the sun comes up and the sun goes down, just as it always has and just as it always will. In **Revelation 22:20**, Jesus said, “*He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."*” But scoffers say, 2000 years later is not my definition of soon! He ain’t coming back, soon or ever! Therefore, we can live as we please.
4. Well, to answer their scoffing, Peter provides an **Ancient Illustration** supporting the Reminder. And the ancient illustration is described in **verses 5-6**; it is the world-wide flood of Noah’s day.
   1. And the key word in verse 6 is “**these**.” It is not ‘this,’ which would just refer to water, but “these,” which is plural, referring to water *and* the word of God. And this is made even more certain by the fact that Peter highlights the word in verse 7 in reference to the coming Day of Judgment.

* 1. And Peter’s point is that there was a time that God promised to destroy the world with a flood. And He told Noah that the flood would come in 120 years and that Noah was to warn the people that they might repent and live. So, Noah began to warn the people and then he did this in a very visual way by building the ark. But the people refused to listen and repent.
     1. And you can imagine the, scoffing at Noah, as one month rolled by and then a year, and then a decade. And there he was with his silly boat building project, with summer followed by autumn followed by Winter followed by Spring, repeat, repeat, repeat again. The people scoffed at Noah’s warnings!
     2. And so, they carried on with their immorality and violence and injustice, laughing at stupid Noah – ha ha! But then, one day, it started to rain. And, exactly as the Lord had promised, “*the waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than 6 meters. Every living thing that moved on the earth perished-- birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind … Noah was left, and those with him in the ark*.”
     3. And we have a record of this in Genesis. And if you get the creation magazine or visit the answersingenesis.org website, you will see piles of scientific evidence for the global flood.

1. And this brings us, fifthly and finally, to **The Reminder Itself**, which is that Judgment Day is Coming. And we see this in verse 7: “*But by the same word [that brought the global flood] the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly*.”
   1. It is in **Acts 1** that we read about **the** **ascension** of the Lord Jesus. We are told that as the disciples were looking at Him, “*He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight*.” And then some angels appeared, and they said to the disciples, “*Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven*.” So, the Lord Jesus will return to earth. And of His coming, He said, *“Surely I am coming soon.”*
   2. And then there will come **the fire** that purifies and destroys, which we will say more about in subsequent sermons. And it will bring in “*the new heavens and a new earth*,” that Peter speaks about in verse 13. And so, the same God who spoke by water as *Creator* and then by water as *Judge*, will one day speak as Judge by *fire*.
   3. And then, as we have already today heard from **2 Cor. 5:10**, “*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil*.”
      1. And I mentioned Jesus’ description of **Judgment Day in Matthew 25** earlier. The sheep He puts on His right and the goats he puts on His left. And to those on His right, Jesus says, “*Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*.” And then He describes all the good works that they did. But to those on His left, Jesus says, “*Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*.” And then He describes all their wicked deeds.
      2. But I want to draw your attention to a very important detail in the text that is easy to miss. And it is this: **The sheep and the goats are separated *before* Jesus describes what they have done or not done**. Have you noticed that? The sheep are already on the right when they hear about the good they have done. Why is this significant? Because salvation is about faith in Jesus Christ.

*Not what my hands have done, can save my guilty soul … thy grace alone, O God, to me can pardon speak … no other work save Thine, no other blood will do … ‘tis He that saveth me and freely pardon gives.*

So, it is to those who have believed, who have trusted in Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins, that Christ speaks in appreciation of their efforts to live lives of holiness and godliness and ignores all their failures because He dealt with them on the cross. But to those who refused to receive Him as Saviour and Lord, whom He places on His left, every broken commandment and failure to keep a commandment perfectly is a reason for the punishment they shall receive in hell.

But I do want to take a moment here to speak to **you young people**. Earlier I mentioned the parable of the ten virgins. The ten virgins are a picture of the church, with the ten virgins representing all those who profess faith in Christ. So, from the outside, it looks like they are all Christians. The five foolish virgins even addressed the bridegroom with a very affectionate term. But when the bridegroom came, only the five wise virgins were allowed in. And that is because they had oil for their lamps. And the oil represents the Holy Spirit and everything that He produces. In other words, the five foolish virgins were not converted. And when we listened to an explanation of this parable at Bible study on Wednesday evening, Dr Sproul said this is perhaps the most shocking parable of them all, because it tells us that many of those who profess faith are not converted and the Lord Jesus will tell them on Judgment Day, “*I never knew you*.” So, young people (but this applies to all of us as well) some or most or all of you have grown up in the church. You are used to Jesus and church and sermons. **But are you converted**? Have you truly repented of your sins and believed in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? And does this reveal itself in that you are living for Jesus? If you put on your profession of faith when you walk through these doors and take it off when you walk out, it is not genuine. If obeying God’s commandments is not important to you, and being with and serving your brothers and sisters is not a priority, and sin is not such a big deal, and Jesus is less important than sex or cars or alcohol or parties or Instagram or your studies, you need to pay attention to Peter’s reminder. Do not be like the five foolish virgins. And if these words are troubling you, tell your parents or an older member and ask them to pray with you and counsel you to seek the Lord. And remember that the Lord is merciful and gracious. He loves to forgive those who turn to Him in repentance and faith.

Beloved of God in Christ Jesus, you have heard Peter’s reminder. As we wait for Christ’s return, may we “*be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace*.” Amen.