

2 Peter 1:12-21

Week 2 - Not Just Based On A True Story

Learning Objectives

- The Bible isn't just a myth; it's the truth. It's God's message to His people. We need to be reminded of this—to encourage us and to focus us.

Pray for your time together as a group.

? Have you ever spent a long time on something without knowing whether it would work out? How did this make you feel when you were working on it?

Optional Transition: In this section of the letter, Peter is encouraging Christians to remember the truth of the Gospel and act accordingly in their lives. Rather than work towards God's purposes without being confident in the truth - and thus being uncertain - Peter is reminding workers that they can be secure.

Read Out Loud: 2 Peter 1:12-15 (NIV)

¹² So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. ¹³ I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, ¹⁴ because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

Read Out Loud: Peter is referring to verses 10 and 11 when he says these things: "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

? Why does Peter refer to his body as a tent? What significance might that have to his audience?

Possible Answers: A tent is not a permanent structure, it's temporary, just like our bodies are temporary and heaven is permanent. While Peter is here, in this temporary place, he is reminding them of what needs to be done now. He is reminding them now so that when he's gone, his reminders will last.

? What things do you need constant reminders of in your life? Why do you need to be reminded of things you already know?

Possible Answers: No matter how well we know something, it's easy to get distracted and to forget, with other things on our minds. It's why we need to study for tests, even though we went to all the classes; it's why we have apps on our phones to remember household tasks; it's why we have calendars at work.

? What truths of the Gospel are hardest to hold onto for you? Why do you need to be reminded of these truths?

Possible Answers: Identity in Christ, I've been forgiven, I'm called to share what Christ has done in my life. Sometimes we just don't spend enough time reminding ourselves of these things. Sometimes there are Gospel truths that we don't like, and it can be easy to fall into non-Gospel ways of thinking.

? How do we distinguish the difference between myths and truths?

Possible Answers: Researching whether something actually happened or not. Googling / checking Wikipedia. Asking people who would know / who were there.

Optional Transition: Peter is using two types of arguments to back up his statements. He is calling upon his firsthand experience of Jesus and His ministry, miracles, and teachings. He is also using how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies as additional evidence to who Jesus was and is, and how what they believe has merit - that what they believe in came true.

Peter's Eyewitness Account

Read Out Loud: 2 Peter 1:16-18 (NIV)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

? What type of evidence in this passage does Peter offer that Christ is our God and Savior?

*Possible Answers: He offers an eyewitness account of the transfiguration of Christ.
Leader's Note: This is reported in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36.*

? How does this evidence remind us of the truth of the Bible?

Possible Answers: Apparently, false teachers were claiming that Christ was not the Son of God, that the stories about Him were fables and myths. Peter is saying, "Forget the stories - I was THERE." It's a reminder that the Gospel accounts are not just fables - they are based on first-person accounts of people that were there.

Peter's Mountain of Evidence

Read Out Loud: 2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV)

¹⁹ We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

? What type of evidence in this passage does Peter offer that Christ is our God and Savior?

Possible Answers: He notes that Jesus's life fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies - in effect, using the prophecies as proof that Jesus was Christ.

? How does this evidence remind us of the truth of the Bible?

Possible Answers: Peter is pointing out that Jesus's life wasn't just a good life - it was the fulfillment of centuries of expectation of the coming of God's Son. It's a reminder that the Gospel accounts aren't some new story, but the continuation of the story that's been told by God's prophets since the beginning.

There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly. The combination of this evidence together, from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming!! Professor Peter Stoner has calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power). That number of silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Stoner says that if you consider 48 of the prophecies, the odds become one in 10 to the 157th power.
https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_2Pe/2Pe_1.cfm

? Optional: What are some of the

prophecies from the Old Testament that Christ's life fulfilled?

Possible Answers:

- *The time of birth: Foretold: Daniel 9:24 - 25, Fulfilled: Luke 2:1 - 5*
- *Jesus born of a virgin: Foretold: Isaiah 7:13 - 14, Fulfilled: Luke 1:26 - 31*
- *Declared the Son of God: Foretold: Psalm 2:7, Fulfilled: Matthew 3:13 - 17*
- *Deaf, blind are healed: Foretold: Isaiah 29:18 - 19, Fulfilled: Matthew 11:5, Mark 7:37*

? What is it that leads you to believe the Bible is true? How would your attitude toward your Christian life change if you didn't think the Bible was true?

Possible Answers: Life would be filled with much doubt and question. If the Bible isn't true, and we live our lives based on a fable, then everything about our lives is up for discussion at every moment - about the interpretation, or the truth, of whatever convictions we have.

Leader's Note: If you have people in your group who are "kicking the tires of Christianity," you may wish to adjust this question slightly and expand your discussion for their benefit.

? What things in your life distract you from biblical truth?

Possible Answers: No matter how deeply we believe in biblical truth, we can be distracted by outside influences. Family, friends, and other people have their own ideas and opinions, and our culture places importance on other things; it's easy to be pulled away from the Gospel by any and all of these factors.

? What things are viewed as true in our culture today that go against the Gospel as you know it? What are some Gospel-centered responses when you encounter those issues?

Possible Answers: That family is the most important thing, that money and status and power represent our worth, or that friendships are the things that give us value. Christ gave up everything, including his own life, for us. In the same way, he said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26)

For Discussion And Accountability

? Do you sometimes feel doubt and uncertainty about your life in Christ? How do you respond in those moments?

? How can you keep reminding yourself of biblical truth and its application to your life?