

November 23, 2008 by Steve Brandon



You Need Reminding

2 Peter 1:12-15

1. ... even if you already know (verse 12).
2. ... because it is right (verse 13).
3. ... because it is important (verse 14).
4. ... so you will remember (verse 15).

There is a children's song that has these words:

Read your Bible, pray every day, pray every day, pray every day.
Read your Bible, pray every day, and you'll grow, grow, grow.
And you'll grow, grow, grow; and you'll grow, grow, grow.
Read your Bible, pray every day, and you'll grow, grow, grow.

Neglect your Bible, forget to pray, forget to pray, forget to pray.
Neglect your Bible, forget to pray, and you'll shrink, shrink, shrink.
And you'll shrink, shrink, shrink; and you'll shrink, shrink, shrink.
Neglect your Bible, forget to pray, and you'll shrink, shrink, shrink.

Do you want to grow in Christ? Then, read your Bible and pray every day! Do you want to remain stagnant in your Christian life? Then, neglect your Bible and forget to pray. These are the most basic disciplines of the Christian faith. You have probably heard this application made in sermons many, many, many times before "Read your Bible, pray every day." I know one pastor who often says while he is preaching, "Yes, it's the 'read your Bible and pray every day' sermon once again."

Why do preachers often feel the need to preach this application? Several reasons come into my mind.

First of all, it's true. The path to all Christian growth comes through Bible reading and prayer. You show me a Christian who isn't reading his Bible, and I'll show you a Christian who isn't growing in his faith. You show me a Christians who isn't praying, and I'll show you a Christian who isn't growing in his faith.

As the Word of God saturates your mind, it constantly helps to set your mind to thinking right. As your thinking is right, your living has an opportunity to follow. Regarding prayer, as your communion with God flows in prayer, your spirit will be right. As your spirit is right, your living has an opportunity to follow.

Second, we find it difficult to follow. How many of you struggle with your times of Bible reading? How many of you struggle with your times of prayer? We need to be reminded often of the importance of these things to help us grow. Just as a healthy plant needs water and sunlight to grow, so also do we need the Bible and prayer to grow. Any good pastor will continue to remind his people of the basic disciplines to thrive.

Peter was no different. He reminded his readers to read the Bible. In his first epistle, he wrote, "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." Peter says, "Do you want to grow? Then long for the word of God with the longing of an infant, who will cry and fuss until the hunger need is satisfied, knowing that it holds the truths you need to know.

Peter also reminded his readers to pray. In 1 Peter 5:6-7, he wrote this, "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." Peter says, "Are you facing difficulties in your life?" Then, humble yourselves before God and pray to Him and trust that He will help you through your difficulties.

Thirdly, preachers often remind their listeners of this simple message because we need reminding. We need to be reminded of the story of the Bible. We need to be told of how Jesus Christ lived perfectly, but was put to death by the hands of sinful men. We need to be reminded that He was buried and was raised from the dead to sit at the right hand of God. Through His death and resurrection, God has redeemed a people for Himself, who will so live for His glory.

We can easily forget these words. The hymn-writer says it this way, ...

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love. [\[1\]](#)

So what do we need? We need reminding. We need reminding of the basics of our faith. We need the words of another hymn, ...

Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above,

Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love. ...
Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon;
The early dew of morning has passed away at noon. [\[2\]](#)

This is what we need. We need the old, old story again and again and again and again, because we can often forget it. The story is found in the bible, which is why we need to read it. Our prayers to God will help us to know the story better.

In our text this morning, Peter will remind us of the gospel of Christ, which is what we need to grow.

2 Peter 1:12-15

Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

With these words, Peter becomes very personal in this letter. Notice how all of these verses are in the 1st person. That is, Peter uses words like "I" and "me" and "my." "I will always be ready to remind you" (verse 12). "I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling" (verse 13). "My earthly dwelling. ... Jesus Christ as made clear to me" (verse 14). "I will also be diligent ... after my departure" (verse 15).

Seven times in these four verses he uses the 1st person personal pronoun. This makes section unique to the book of 2 Peter. Peter speaks in the 1st person in only one other verse (chapter 3, verse 1). The rest of the letter is spent using "us" and "we" and "you" and "they." Now, this does not mean that Peter is focusing our attention upon himself. Rather, this is indicating that Peter is becoming very personal. He's telling us about his life, so that he might make a point.

The key statement that Peter makes about himself is found in verse 14, "knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me." Peter uses the imagery here of folding up a tent and putting it away. He uses the imagery of removing his clothes and setting them aside. But, he's not talking about a real tent or real clothes. He's talking about his body. Putting aside his body is a reference to his death.

Peter is saying, "I am about to die! I am about to replace my tent with a palace. I am about to change from old ragged clothes to the king's finest gowns. But, in my little time remaining, I want to tell you what is of utmost importance." How does Peter know that he is about to die? It says in verse 14 that Jesus had told him so, "as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me."

I believe that this is a reference to the incident that the apostle John told at the end of his gospel. In John 21, John wrote of the time when Jesus was reinstating Peter after he had denied Jesus three times. After testing Peter's love for Jesus, Jesus instructed him to shepherd the church, tending to the flock of God (John 21:15-17). Near the end of that conversation, Jesus said these words to Peter, "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go" (John 21:18). In the next verse, John then clarifies this when he said, "Now this [Jesus] said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God" (John 21:19).

These words of Jesus are an allusion to the act of crucifixion, [\[3\]](#) when one's hands are stretched out wide to be nailed to a cross and lifted up to suffocate to death as one hangs the nails. Church tradition holds that this took place exactly as Jesus had predicted that it would, only Peter requested that he be crucified upside-down, rather than like Jesus did.

As Peter writes these words of 2 Peter, he knew that the time of his death was near. He knew that he would soon die a violent death. And so, he wants to leave the scattered believers with his closing message. Fundamentally, his closing message was one of reminder.

When you look over these verses, you see Peter using the word, "remind" or "reminder" or "remember" three times. "I will always be ready to remind you of these things" (verse 12). "I consider it right, ... to stir you up by way of reminder" (verse 13). "I will also be diligent that ... you will be able to 'remember' these things" (verse 15). Like the repetition of the 1st person personal pronouns, this repetition has significance as well. It is the burden of this paragraph. Peter is seeking to remind his readers of the most basic truths.

Spinning off of Peter's burden is my message title this morning: "You Need Reminding." In this text, Peter gives us four reasons why we need reminding. You Need Reminding, ...

1. ... even if you already know (verse 12).

Peter writes, "Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you."

There is this tendency among us all to feel belittled when someone tells us something that we already know. We almost feel as if we are insulted. "I already know that! You don't have to tell me. You are wasting my time." Lest Peter's readers turn sour, he acknowledged that they already knew the truth.

This ought to alert our attention to the fact that Peter is writing to Christians. He was writing to those "who have received a faith" in Christ (as the first verse of this epistle says) (1:1). He was writing to the same people who had already received his first epistle. They were believers scattered throughout Asia Minor. This was not addressed to non Christians. It was addressed to believers in Christ.

And these weren't new Christians who needed help in the elementary principles of the faith. On the contrary, Peter says that they "have been established in the truth." The idea here is that they were firm and steadfast. They had experienced hardships on account of their faith in Christ, and had been strengthened through them.

They had suffered through many trials of life that Peter described in his first epistle.

... trials from the government (1 Peter 2:13-17).

... trials from their work (1 Peter 2:18-20).

... trials from their marriage (1 Peter 3:1-6).

... trials from their former friends (1 Peter 4:1-4).

... trials from their flesh, which waged its war against their souls (1 Peter 1:11).

They were slandered (1 Peter 1:12; 3:16). They were maligned (1 Peter 4:4). They were reviled (1 Peter 4:14). They were accused falsely (1 Peter 4:16). And yet, through it all, they had found joy in their trials, knowing that there was a glory coming later (1 Peter 1:6, 8-9). But still, to these mature believers, Peter writes, "Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things" (verse 12).

Now, what is Peter going to remind them of? In the text we see Peter write, "these things." If you trace this phrase, you will see that it's used in verse 10, "as long as you practice **these things**." It is used before that in verse 9, "he who lacks **these things**." It is used for the first time in verse 8, "if **these things** are yours and are increasing." In each instance, each of these phrases was pointing us back to the character qualities he gave in verses 5-7. But, as these are built upon the first four verses, and as Peter's thoughts in verses 8-11 continue to progress further, I believe that Peter's reference here of "these things" refers to all of the first 11 verses.

Now, I know that we have spent several weeks already on these eleven verses, but, I trust that you will not be reluctant to review them once more. I believe that they are the core of our Christian faith. So, be reminded of the gospel of Christ. If Peter felt the need to remind these established believers of these things, then certainly, we need to be reminded this morning as well. So, hear it again.

In verses 1-4, we see that we have been given "everything pertaining to life and godliness." God gave us faith (verse 1). God gave us grace and peace (verse 2). God has given to us promises (verse 4). There is nothing that we lack to live a godly life. You don't need to go out there searching for a new teaching. You don't need to go out there to find a new experience. You don't need to find a secret to living the Christian life. It's already in you. You have it. Or, as I put it, "You are ready to grow."

In verses 5-7 describe what a growing, godly, Christian life looks like. The godly life applies all diligence in trusting the Lord to supply moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. In verse 8, Peter mentions how the godly life sees these qualities as "increasing" (verse 8). This is contrasted by the observation that the professing Christian lacking these qualities is deficient in his life (verse 9). And as you see this fruit bearing in your life, you can be sure that God has chosen you unto salvation (verses 10-11).

And now, Peter gets down to verse 12 and says, "I will always be ready to remind you of these things." When you summarize it, you can say that Peter was reminding his readers of the gospel. In verses 1-11, Peter summarized to these believers the good news that "Through faith in Jesus, God has granted to us everything that we need." We can escape the corruptions of the world by faith in Him (verse 4). We are made righteous through Him (verse 1). We can live a godly life through Him (verse 3)." And this is what Peter want to remind his readers, even those who are well established in the faith.

You need reminding of the gospel even if you already know (verse 12).

Let me give you a personal illustration. Two weeks ago, we had a family over to our home for dinner after church on Sunday. After dinner, we were engaged in conversation with them. And all of a sudden, my back began to hurt. Because of other circumstances, I knew that I was suffering from a kidney stone. As with the other kidney stones that I have experienced in my life, it was incredibly painful. Fortunately for me, I had some medicine (Toradol) remaining from the last time that I experienced a kidney stone (this summer). So, I took some medicine and went to bed. Within three hours, I was feeling well enough to attend one of our small groups in the evening. The process was dreadful.

Having experienced several kidney stones in recent days, I know that I can prevent them by drinking lots of water. I also know that the particular sort of stone that I developed at one point can be reduced by drinking lemonade, which helps to dissolve any kidney stones that might be forming.

So, what do you think I did after experiencing my kidney stone two weeks ago? I did great for about five days. But since then, I haven't been doing very well. This is all despite the fact that I have been reminded to drink my water. My father called me this week and said, "Steve, are you drinking your water?" Furthermore, two families in this church approached me this morning and asked me, "Are you drinking your water?"

I know the truth of how drinking water will help me avoid my kidney stones. I have been well established in this truth. But, I still need reminding to drink my water. I will not look down on any of you who ask me, "Are you drinking your water?" Because I need to be reminded. Perhaps I'll give you a positive response, perhaps I'll confess my neglect in drinking my fluids. I need to be reminded.

This is also true of the gospel as well. You need to be reminded of it, even if you already know it (verse 12). You need to be reminded that in Christ Jesus, we have everything that we need in Christ. So, believe in Him. Trust in Him. In verse 13 Peter continues. You Need Reminding, ...

2. ... because it is right (verse 13).

Peter writes in verse 13, "I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder." Peter knew that he was soon to die. And as he considered all that was before him, he considered it to be the right thing to do to remind these scattered believers of

the truth of the gospel. As long as Peter had breath, he was going to bring to remembrance those things that he has already told them. At this point, there was no reason to bring up anything new. Rather, he was simply going to remind them of the truth.

Peter was willing to do this, because he considered it to be the right thing to do. In fact, such a methodology is at the heart of Christian ministry. As a pastor of this church, my primary job is to remind you all of the things that you already know. When you think about Christianity in the broadest of terms, our faith is fundamentally a religion of remembering. We don't gather here each Sunday morning to hear something new each week. Rather, we gather each week to be reminded of the "Old Paths" (Jer. 6:16).

The reality of the truth is this: **What's new is not true. What's true is not new.**

We are so trained to think differently about this. We naturally desire the new things. I remember as a boy going to Marriott's Great America. Back in my day, the big ride was called, "The Demon." It had a giant drop, followed by large loops and it ended with a corkscrew. It was pretty exciting. I would wait in line a long time for this ride. Today? This ride is small and tame in comparison with Batman and Superman and Raging Bull and Iron Wolf. This is such a picture of who we are. We want something bigger. We want something more exciting. That's just the way that we are. I can't wait to see what the rides are like in another 20 years.

We aren't satisfied with the old things. We want something new and exciting. The entertainment industry knows about this. The next movie needs to be more exciting than the last one. It needs to be a little more intriguing. It needs to contain a bit more violence and a bit more sex. They are always pushing the envelope. Just think about the old Star Wars movies. The effects in the first ones were good. But now, with computer aided graphics, the Star Wars movies now are stunning! All of this feeds us, because we are always wanting something bigger and better and newer.

And the church isn't any different. New things that come along the block all the time. Twenty years ago, the craze was the pragmatic church, asking non Christians what they wanted in a church, and providing it for them to get them in the door of the church. Five years ago, the buzz was "The Purpose Driven Life," devoting 40 days as a church to refocus the purpose of our life. In recent days the emerging church has been grabbing the headlines, trying desperately to "experience Jesus" in new and fresh ways.

In terms of theology, people are constantly trying to push the edge to find some new key to understand the Bible. Twenty years ago, there was much discussion about integrating psychology and the Bible. Ten years ago, the buzz in the theological worlds was about the openness of God. Five years ago, it was the New Perspective of Paul.

You may not even be aware of many of these things. And that's fine. Perhaps it's because we (at Rock Valley Bible Church) are not into the latest fad. We are into being straight-forward about the truths of the gospel.

Every good pastor knows that it's the message of the cross that his congregation needs week after week after week after week. We need to continually be reminded that our hope is in Jesus Christ and what He accomplished for us on the cross. We need to hear it again and again and again. We need to be reminded of the incarnation of Christ, that God became flesh. We need to be reminded of the perfect life that Jesus lived for us and how He was crucified upon the cross for our sins. We need to be reminded of how He was raised from the dead and thus, confirming everything that He had taught. We need reminding that it is now by faith in Christ and His work for us that we are justified in His sight. This is the only message that we need.

This was Paul's heart. When Paul was in Corinth, it was one message that he preached. He said, "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). The cross of Christ wasn't merely the bulls-eye of Paul's preaching, as if the cross was central and everything else was less-central. No, the cross was the only bullet in his gun! It was the only tool in his bag! It was the message that he had! As David Prior wrote, "We never move on from the cross, only into a more profound understanding of the cross." [\[4\]](#)

It's not merely the non-Christians who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ (though certainly, they need to hear of our wonderful savior!). But Christians also need to hear the glories of the gospel. The gospel is for believers. The message of the cross is our strength!

When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, he said, "I long to see you. ... I have often planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far). ... For my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you ... who are in Rome" (Romans 1:11-15). Think about it. He was writing to Christians in the church at Rome. And he wanted to preach the gospel to them. Isn't the gospel message for non-Christians? Don't they need it to be saved? Why is it then that Paul is eager to preach the gospel to Christians? It's because the gospel is for Christians. It's the only message that we have.

Please be reminded that the gospel is a powerful message. In the very next verses, Paul writes, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). The gospel is powerful to convert people and bring them into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The gospel is powerful to keep us saved until that final day. It's not only good to be reminded of these things, it is also right for a pastor to preach the same old story of the power of the cross to save.

In fact, the question might well come, Why would we preach anything different? Why would we try something that doesn't work, when we have the most powerful message in the world? Now, to be sure, there are many who will reject this message. Paul wrote, "Indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:22-24).

When we think of how we have been justified by faith in Christ and freed from our sins, and when we think of how God has adopted us into His family, so now we can call Him, "Abba Father," we are strengthened to live godly lives. This is how the church will be built: on the power of the message of a crucified savior. When Paul talked about his own preaching, he said the Christ sent him "to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void" (1 Cor. 1:17). In other words, there is a way that the gospel can be preached that voids the power of the cross. When the gospel comes in a clever way, it is void of the power. When the gospel comes in such

a way that people are drawn to the messenger, rather than the message, it is void of the power.

Do you want to have a powerful ministry? Focus your attention upon our wonderful Savior. Arnold Dallimore greatly illustrated this well in his biography of the 19th century preacher, Charles Spurgeon. He writes, ...

During the 1880s a group of American ministers visited England, prompted especially by a desire to hear some of the celebrated preachers of that land.

On a Sunday morning they attended the City Temple where Dr. Joseph Parker was the pastor. Some two thousand people filled the building, and Parker's forceful personality dominated the service. His voice was commanding, his language descriptive, his imagination lively, and his manner animated. The sermon was scriptural, the congregation hung upon his words, and the Americans came away saying, "What a wonderful preacher is Joseph Parker!"

In the evening they went to hear Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The building was much larger than the City Temple, and the congregation was more than twice the size. Spurgeon's voice was much more expressive and moving and his oratory noticeably superior. But they soon forgot all about the magnificent voice. They even overlooked their intention to compare the various features of the two preachers, and when the service was over they found themselves saying, "What a wonderful Savior is Jesus Christ!" ^[5]

Do you want to have a powerful ministry? Then do the right thing, keep reminding people of the cross of Christ. You Need Reminding, ... (1) even if you already know (verse 12); (2) because it is right (verse 13); and thirdly, ...

3. ... because it is important (verse 14).

In verse 14, we see Peter mentioning how close his death is. He says, "knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me." We don't need to comment much upon the approaching death of Peter (as we did that earlier already). However, I do want to comment upon Peter's point in mentioning his approaching death. I believe Peter is bringing a serious tone to the things that he is writing. I believe that Peter's point is that these things are really important.

Richard Baxter, the great puritan pastor once said, "I preach as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men." This was Peter's heart. When you are on your death-bed, you communicate to those around you the things that are most important to you. When you write a last will and testament, you write about the most important matters to attend to after you die. And when you are preaching as a dying man to dying men, as never sure to preach again, surely, you are going to focus upon the most important things. And in these verses, Peter says that the most important things are the things that he has already spoken about (and the things that he will speak about).

It's important to remember these things. It's important to remember that Christ has given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness by faith in Him (verses 1-4), that we are called to grow up in Him (verses 5-9), and that such things ought to give us assurance of our salvation (verses 10-11).

Have you taken pains to remember God's grace in your salvation? Let me ask you, when you have something important to remember, don't you take some action to remember it? If you have a dentist's appointment to keep, you put it on your calendar. If you are planning on meeting with someone, you ask for them to remind you of the meeting. If you have some task to do, you write it down on a "to do list." If you have something to learn, you post it somewhere where you can constantly look at it. If you have someone's birthday you want to remember, you put it on your calendar. If you have a password to remember for a web-site, you may write it down someplace. If you have keys that you will constantly use, you will create a special spot where you always place your keys. If you have regular medicine to take, you might put it in special containers, one container for each day. If you are at work and a customer calls in with an order, you will enter it into your computer system right away. If you are a preacher, you will find a way to tuck away good sermon illustrations and quotes for later use. If there are directions to remember, you write it down on a little map for you to follow. If you don't take some of these actions, you may easily forget. And if you forget, it probably shows that it wasn't that important to you.

Now, depending upon the importance of what you want to remember, you will take some drastic steps to see to it that you do. On more than one occasion, I have seen people take out a pen and write something on their hand, because they want to remember something. People set alarms to awaken themselves, so as to keep their meeting.

So, what about those spiritual things that are important for you to remember? Do you take actions so as to remember them? When the Lord instructed Israel about His word, He told them to take some conscious steps to help them remember what he had spoken. He said, ...

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

And to this day, devout Jews take these words very seriously. They are very diligent at teaching the Old Testament to their children. It's not unheard of to find some Jewish children memorizing the entire Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). To bind God's word on their hand and forehead, they will fold little portions of Scripture and place them into little boxes and tie them to their arms and forehead as an act of worship to the Lord. In their homes are written words from the Old Testament. They take these words seriously.

How about you? Do you make an effort to remember those things that are important to remember? Do you make an effort to remember the glories of Calvary?

In his book, *The Cross Centered Life*, C. J. Mahaney has some excellent recommendations for how to "keep the flame of gospel passion burning brightly in the drizzle of real life." [6](#) He says, ...

1. Memorize the gospel. Mahaney encourages some Bible memory to help you remember what's true about your salvation. If you have it memorized, you can bring it to your attention every day. If you are looking for something to memorize, how about the first 11 verses of 2 Peter? Such a practice would help you immensely.

2. Pray the gospel. By this, Mahaney simply tells us to "pray boldly--we're accepted in God's beloved Son. ... Thank Him that, because Jesus bore God's wrath for sin, you will never be separated from God's love. Thank Him that, because of the cross, you are reconciled to God and have been given the Holy Spirit to dwell in you, lead you, guide you, and empower you to resist sin and serve God. Then ask God to bless you graciously with all that you need to obey and glorify Him." I would encourage you, as you pray to begin every prayer with some reminder of the cross of Christ.

3. Sing the gospel. By this, C. J. encourages us to sing of the redemption. Memorize songs that focus your heart upon the realities of your crucified Savior. Memorize such lyrics as ...

And can it be, that I should gain an interest in My Savior's blood?

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

What can wash away my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Jesus paid it all; All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow.

There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

I will glory in my Redeemer
Whose precious blood has ransomed me.
Mine was the sin that drove the bitter nails
And hung Him on that judgment tree

4. Review how the gospel has changed you. With this point, C. J. urges us to reflect daily upon the work of God in your life. Think of how God has changed your heart. Think of some sin that you have been able to overcome. Such thoughts will not only encourage you, but they will also remind you of the powerful working of God in your life through the gospel of Christ.

5. Study the gospel. Here, C. J. suggests an in-depth study of books of the Bible, like Galatians or Romans. He also recommends a reading through the entire Bible, looking for ways that the Old Testament anticipates the coming Savior and the way that the New Testament explains the work of the Savior. He also mentions a number of books that dig deep into the meaning of the cross. He calls us to listen to cross-centered preaching (on tapes or CD's or MP3 players). If you need any help with such resources, I'd be glad to help you out.

Let's now turn to my last point. You Need Reminding, ...

4. ... so you will remember (verse 15).

"And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind" (verse 15).

Again, we see Peter referring to his upcoming death. He calls it a "departure." Literally, it is an "exodus." He is anticipating the time when he would "exit" the earthly stage and "enter" into "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (as he referred to in verse 11). And when he is gone, he wants to make sure that we remember what's most important. And what's most important? The things that Peter has mentioned here in the first 11 verses. We have everything we need to live godly in Christ Jesus (verse 3), so grow in Him! (verse 8).

Remember that! We have everything we need to live godly in Christ Jesus (verse 3), so grow in Him! (verse 8).

Peter knows full well that there will come a time when you might easily forget these things. And your forgetfulness of the gospel can swing several ways. You can see your sin and swing into despair. The truth of the gospel will help bring you out of despair, knowing that (as verse 1 says), we are justified before God "by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ." It's not our righteousness that gives us legal standing before God. It's the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to us. Your sin is wiped away in Him. There is no need to despair over past sin.

But, you can also swing into the other side of self-righteousness. As God works in you, you can subtly begin to take credit for the ways in which you are becoming increasingly obedient to the Lord. But, as you remember the truth of the gospel, you are reminded that it's only because God is working in you that you have enjoyed a measure of righteousness. The cross removes all pride from us.

And yet, how easy is it to forget these things. But, be encouraged. God knows how easily we forget.

The book of Deuteronomy records the last sermons of Moses to the people of Israel. On multiple occasions, he warned the people not to forget the gracious dealings of God with them. He told them, "Do not forget the things which your eyes have seen" (Deut. 4:9). He said, "Watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the LORD our God which He made with you" (Deut. 4:23). Over and over and over again, he told the people of Israel to teach their children of powerful hand of God in redeeming Israel out of Egypt.

Throughout history, God has always established means by which He is to be remembered. He instituted the Passover, that the children of Israel might have an opportunity to tell their children of how God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt. Upon crossing the Jordan, the Israelites were to erect a pile of memorial stones, so as to be able to remind the children of Israel how "Israel crossed [the] Jordan [river] on dry ground" (Josh. 4:22). Furthermore, the LORD had established many feasts and festivals for the Jewish people to keep as a remembrance of His kind dealings with them. On top of that, the temple was large object lesson, teaching the people of what God requires of them when they sinned, that they might not forget what the Lord requires of his people.

But, if there is anything that you learn from the history of the Jewish people, it is that they easily forgot the LORD. Despite the warnings, they forgot. Despite the reminders, they forgot. So, never despise the one who reminds you of the truth, because, you need to remember.

With the coming of Christ, there are now two signs that the Lord has given to us to remember Him. The first is baptism, which is a visible reminder to us of how we have died with Christ and risen with Him in newness of life. The water gives a good picture of purification. The second sign that Christ has given to the church is the Lord's Supper. Jesus gave us this ordinance for the purpose of reminding us. In fact, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). We have this ordinance for the express purpose of remembering the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26). May we never forget.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 23, 2008 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Written by Robert Robinson.

[2] Written by A. Catherine Hankey.

[3] William Hendriksen writes, "'To stretch out the hands' is often used by Greek authors and by the early fathers to indicate crucifixion" (New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John, p. 490).

[4] David Prior, *Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 51, (as quoted by C. J. Mahaney in "The Cross Centered Life," p. 74).

[5] Arnold Dallimore, Spurgeon: A New Biography, p. 216.

[6] The Cross Centered Life, pp. 55-69.