Peter: Living Like the People of God

FINAL WORDS

Saturday, November 6

Reading: 2 Peter 1-3

> ***2 Peter 1:12*** *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.*

Peter knows his death is imminent as he writes his last letter. He remembers that Jesus had warned him that he would die by crucifixion (see John 21:18 - "stretch out your hands" is an idiom for crucifixion). He probably now sits in a Roman dungeon awaiting that fate. Church tradition says Peter was crucified in Rome during Nero's persecution.

What were Peter's final thoughts for this "next generation" of believers? His primary concern was that they "know and are firmly established in the truth" (1:12-21). Though he will be gone, he wants them to know that these were not fairy tales made up by the apostles. Peter himself had seen Christ's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration and he had heard God's voice. Most importantly, they had the inspired written Word of God to guide them.

He next warns them about false teachers (2:1-22). With persecution heating up, it may be tempting to follow these "new ideas" that blended pagan philosophy with Christian truth to avoid persecution. But Peter warns that these false teachers and their teachings were worthless and would lead to destruction.

Finally, Peter talks about the coming Day of the Lord (3:1-18). Some may have thought that day was here because of the intense persecution they were suffering. Others mocked the idea of Christ's return because it had not yet occurred. Peter reminds them all that God has His own timetable and His delay does not mean the promise has failed. In fact, this patience of God is allowing others to come to repentance. In the meantime, Christians should "live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming."

LESSON ONE: As Peter faced death, he did not see it as something to fear. He was merely putting aside his "tent" (body) and going to be with Christ. The word "departure" (1:15) is really exodus. Peter was simply leaving one place and going to one that was far better. How do you view death? What comfort does the Bible give believers about leaving this life and entering into eternity with Christ?

LESSON TWO: Peter's final thoughts were on passing the Faith to the next generation. What are you doing to pass your faith to the next generation? When you are gone, what will they remember from the teaching and example you have left them?

LESSON THREE: Peter focuses on the reliability of Scripture as opposed to the lies of the false teachers. What false teachings are believed in society today? Do you know the Bible well enough to know the truth and recognize the false?

LESSON FOUR: The Second Coming of Christ scares a lot of people. But for Christians it should be a "blessed hope" (Titus 2:11-13), not a cause for fear. I wonder if believers fear the return of Christ because they know they are not living as they should! Are you eager to see the Lord face to face? What areas of your life might you need to work on so you can stand unashamed before Him?