

## A More Sure Word

Lesson for Sunday, October 27, 2024

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:16-21

### INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Read the story from Baptist history on page three.
- ⇒ One of the primary distinctives of Baptists is their conviction about God's Word.
- ⇒ As we discussed last week, the Bible is the final authority in all matters of belief and practice.
- ⇒ DISCUSS: What do you think is the #1 competition for this distinctive? What do people (even Christians) turn to instead of the Bible?
  - After some discussion, introduce the idea that for most people, their personal experience trumps everything else.
  - We live in a world that believes and practices, "If it feels right, it must be right" – even if your feelings disagree with God's Holy Word.

### BIBLE STUDY:

1. The Authenticity of God's Word (2 Peter 1:16-18)
  - a. The entire first chapter of 2 Peter is about the Bible. As Peter begins to conclude his introductory remarks, he begins to tackle what is one of the most common objections to the authenticity of God's Word even still today.
  - b. Have you ever heard things like this before:
    - i. "The Bible was made up by a group of men so they could control others."
    - ii. "The Bible is just a collection of Jewish myths."
    - iii. "The Bible is just the Christian version of moral fables to help people navigate through life."
  - c. Peter pulls out the ultimate trump card to this argument: his personal eyewitness account.
    - i. How persuasive is an eyewitness in a courtroom?
    - ii. How many eyewitnesses are needed for an account to be considered credible?
  - d. Peter states clearly that the Bible is not just a group of "cunningly devised fables" (16a).
  - e. Instead, Peter powerfully reminds his audience that he and the other apostles were eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ and His majesty.
  - f. Then Peter introduces into the evidence an experience that would easily be greater than any other experience: The Mount of Transfiguration (17-18). The story is found in Matthew 17. Simply review the story with your class and make the following points. Think about what Peter, James and John experienced on that mountain top:
    - i. Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father (17a).

- ii. They heard the audible voice of God from heaven declare: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased"(17b-18).
  - g. Think about that for a moment! It is hard to imagine a more amazing scene! When it comes to an experience, Peter takes the first-place trophy!
- 2. The Reliability of God's Word (2 Peter 1:19-21)
  - a. The first part of verse 19 is an astounding claim. Peter (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) absolutely confirms the prophetic Word of God.
  - b. Notice what Peter writes in these verses:
    - i. Vs. 19a: God's Word is more fully confirmed than even eyewitness accounts such as the one he has just referenced.
    - ii. Vs. 19b: The reader would be wise to take heed or pay attention to what Peter is writing.
    - iii. Vs. 19c: Peter illustrates the Word of God as a lamp shining in a dark place.
    - iv. Vs. 19d: The Bible will give us guidance until Christ's return ("the day dawns and the morning star rises").
  - c. Don't miss what Peter is saying when we consider all of verses 16-19. To state it clearly: **What the Bible says is to be trusted more than your experience.**
    - i. This is a powerful message for a world that lives according to their feelings.
    - ii. But Peter's implications go further than our experience. God's Word is more reliable than any other source in the world!
    - iii. It is more reliable than people's opinions or thoughts, more certain than "trusting your gut", more than a college professor or politicians' presentation.
  - d. The Word of God is to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Period.
- 3. The Divine Origin of God's Word (2 Peter 1:20-21)
  - a. Teacher note: You don't need to spend much time on this point. It is teaching the same thing we covered last week in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
  - b. Peter solidifies his argument with a reminder of what we have already learned about the divine nature of the Bible.
    - i. No prophecy comes from one's own interpretation. The Bible means what it says.
    - ii. The prophecy was not produced by human will, but holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (Remember 2 Timothy 3:16 – God-breathed.)

APPLICATION: What does the Bible say?

- ⇒ The Christian, the local church, the Baptist defers to Scripture in every area of life.
- ⇒ Discuss: How did you do this past week deferring to what the Bible says? Did you give any unbiblical counsel? Did you rely on your own understanding, experience or intuition?
- ⇒ Encourage them to continue carrying this question with them through the week.

Baptists have always been “people of the Book”. As our lesson last week taught, the pure unadulterated Word of God is the basis of Baptist faith and practice. Throughout its history, Baptists have paid a price for this position.

Around the early 1800’s, Baptist scholars were active with the American Bible Society. It makes sense that since Baptists were so committed to God’s Word, they want to participate where they could get the Bible in the hands of as many people as possible.

The famous missionary to India, William Carey, excelled as a linguist. Along with his associate, Dr. William Yates, and Rev. William Pierce, they worked to revise the Bengali translation of the Bible, which has long been considered one of the best foreign language Bible translations. Their work was originally funded by the American Bible Society and the financial support of Baptist people.

In their work, they translated the word *baptizo* into the equivalent “immerse,” and the British and Foreign Bible Society refused to print it. When the American Bible Society got involved, the capitulated and went on to print a version where the word *baptizo* was translated “sprinkle.” They argued that different Christian traditions and missionaries should have the right to decide what words they should *transfer* and which ones they should *translate*.

The American Bible Society exiled Baptists from their ranks over the controversy. When it came time, Rev. Spencer Houghton Cone, pastor of the Oliver Street Baptist Church in New York, stood to address the Society with these words:

*“As Baptists, we dare not disobey the God we serve. We dare not cover up His truth!”*

The exiled Baptists went on to start their own Bible society. May God’s inspired, infallible, inerrant Word be our standard in our day, as well!