

It's a True Story

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[0 : 00] And we are going to finish chapter 1 today, Lord willing. And so, Chloe, would you please give us 2 Peter chapter 1, starting at verse number 12 and down through the end of the chapter, verse 21.

Therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[1 : 20] Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Thank you. Father, as we gather, come and teach us. Spirit, please come and speak today. We know that you delight to lead and guide us, and we know that it is your word that lights our way. So would you please come and awaken our hearts, and illumine our minds, and magnify Jesus Christ.

Please come and renew our faith, and change our lives. Please, we pray that you would do this with your word of life.

We confess, we need to see you, we need to hear you, and we want to know you. Because you are the word of life.

[2 : 28] And so please help us as we continue in this time of worship. It is in the name of our Lord, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that we pray. Amen. Amen. We have all heard stories that are not true.

For example, Paul Bunyan and his blue ox. That is a tall tale, completely fabricated, even though you can travel to various parts of Minnesota and find large statues of Paul Bunyan and perhaps a blue ox as well.

That is a tall tale, completely fabricated. What about the race between the tortoise and the hare?

This is a fable. It's a made-up story that is used to teach some kind of moral or good behavior.

Hercules and Achilles and Zeus, not just our neighbor's dogs. These are myths and legends.

What about Cinderella? It's a fairy tale, right? It's magical, perhaps inspiring, but it is 100% make-believe, not true.

[3 : 46] Jesus also made up stories. Jesus also made up stories. We call Jesus' made-up stories parables. The good Samaritan.

The foolish man who built his house on the sand. The workers who started working at various points throughout the day, and then at the end of the day when it was payday, when it was time to be paid, they all got paid the same amount.

One of Jesus' parables, one of my favorites. These are not true stories. They're made-up stories. Stories that Jesus made up in order to teach truth about his kingdom.

And that brings us to what I hope is an interesting question for our time today. What kind of a story is the story of Christianity? Is the story of Jesus a myth?

Is it a legend? Is it a fable that is just intended to help us be better people? Some people say that. And some people were saying that during Peter's day.

[4 : 55] The apostles. They're just telling stories. It's not true. It's make-believe. But Peter insists in our text for today that the story of Jesus, and in particular teaching about his return, that he will come back for his people, is not a myth.

It is not a cleverly crafted tale. It's not make-believe. It's grounded in eyewitness experience. And not only that, recorded in Scripture, that was inspired for us by God the Holy Spirit. And so that means the story that the apostles told, and the story that we are still telling today, is a true story. And the word of God is totally trustworthy. And that means we must pay attention to it. In the first 11 verses of the first chapter of 2 Peter that we looked at last week, we saw God's complete provision for his people.

Faith is gifted. Grace and peace are multiplied. Promises and power are granted. The Holy Spirit indwells. And all of this is yours, beloved child of God.

[6 : 20] Through your growing knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter adds these two beautiful promises at the end of the portion we looked at last week.

If you grow in Christ's likeness, you will never fall. And instead, a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom will be yours.

Remarkable promises. I wonder if you sense Peter's urgency in this portion of text. Your entrance into the eternal kingdom is at stake.

Don't miss that. That's what leads us into our text today. If you do these qualities, if these qualities are yours and increasing, you will never fall away.

Instead, a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom. What if I don't do these qualities? Well, your eternal salvation is at stake.

[7 : 29] Peter continues this sense of urgency into our text. Verse number 12. Therefore, because this really matters, because this is an urgent matter about your entrance into the eternal kingdom, therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities.

Though you know them and are established in the truth that you have, I think it right as long as I am in this body to stir you up by way of reminder.

Since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure, you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Notice how Peter commends these Christians for their spiritual maturity. They know God's truth. But more importantly, they are established in God's truth.

It's not just head knowledge for them. It's not just information. This knowledge of God is life-changing. The truth is not just what they know.

[8 : 53] It's how their lives are being changed. And yet, despite this lovely commendation, despite this lovely commendation, Peter still wants to stir them up.

He wants to awaken them to action. I wonder how you like to be awakened. Anybody want to take this one? How do you like to be awakened in the morning?

Anybody? Josie? The alarm set to music? Very nice. I also enjoy that. Somebody else? How do you like to be woken up in the morning?

The sun shining into your room? Very nice. I enjoy being awakened that way as well. Anybody else? Does anybody just answer that question by saying, I don't like to be awakened.

I want to stay asleep a little longer? I remember saying to one of our kids, although I can't remember which one, so I didn't even ask permission to use this story because I guess at this point it's just my own memory, but I remember saying to one of our kids, listen, I want to see you moving.

[10 : 10] I'm not just coming in here waking you up so that you can go back to sleep. I want to see you moving. Peter seems to have something like that in mind.

He knows that their entrance into the eternal kingdom is at stake. He knows that we can sleep on God's promises. He knows how we can tap the snooze button on becoming more like Jesus and say, I'll get to that in nine minutes.

Not now. He knows that we sometimes can sleepwalk through the motions of life, forgetting that the Holy Spirit is indwelling us.

And it's almost then like Peter says, I want to see you moving. I'm going to stir you up by way of reminder. Peter realizes that his death is going to be soon.

And this adds to his sense of urgency. It motivates him to make every effort so that the believers will be able to remember what they've been taught.

[11:25] Whenever I hear about a person who has been given two or three months to live, or two or three weeks to live, or two or three days to live, it makes me pause and reflect.

What would I do if I knew that I only had a couple of days? Who would I want to talk to? Who would I want to call and say goodbye to?

Who would I want to be with? If I knew that my time was short, how would I respond to that? What would I want my last recorded words to be?

Peter knows that his time on earth is short. Do you see that there in 14? He talks about putting off his body. He means dying. And again in 15, after my departure.

He doesn't mean he's leaving them. He means he's dying. That's what's going to happen. He knows his time on earth is short. And so with death on the horizon, he focuses on what matters the most.

[12:39] And what matters the most to him is that Christians remain confident that scripture is totally trustworthy. Look at verse 16.

for we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased, we ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

Now, look back up in your Bible at verse number 16 and just try to piece together what is Peter doing here? What is he saying? Why is he talking this way?

It seems that accusations have been raised against the apostles. And perhaps those accusations sounded something like this.

[14:03] All that teaching about Jesus' return, you don't really believe that, do you? This just made up myths.

Look, I know that you've heard about Jesus, and I know that you believe in Jesus, and that's really great for you, but come on, you don't really believe that he's coming back, do you?

It's just made up. The apostles, the apostles, they're trying to control you. They're telling you that Jesus is coming back to manipulate you, to get you to do what they want.

Don't let them rain on your parade. You believe in Jesus, you're going to be fine. Jesus is not returning, it's just a fairy tale.

The apostles, some might say today, are capping. They're just capping. They're making all of this up.

[15:03] Peter says, if you hear an accusation like this, don't fall for it. Jesus will return.

True story, no cap. Remember, Peter says, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. What is Peter talking about when he says eyewitnesses of his majesty?

He has in mind the transfiguration. Let's look at it. Let's look at Mark's account, since he's closely connected to Peter. Back in Mark, chapter 9, I want to start reading at verse number 2.

It'll be on the screen as well. Mark, chapter 9, verse number 2. After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, here's our guy, Peter and James and John, and he led them up a high mountain by themselves, and he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

I love that little addition that Mark gives us in his gospel. As no one on earth could bleach them, and there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus, and Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here.

[16:23] Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, for he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of heaven, this is my beloved son. Listen to him.

And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only. Here it is, the transfiguration.

Peter, James, and John glimpse the glory that Jesus has, that while he is on earth, he is choosing willingly, humbly, graciously, condescendingly to veil.
But there, up on that mountain, on that day, God took away the veil so that they could see Jesus in all of his glory.

[17 : 40] And this matters. Do you know why it matters? Mark tells us, and it's up in verse number one of this same chapter, and it's possible that your scripture, your Bible, breaks up verse one from verse number two, and that's unfortunate.

Look what happens in verse number one. Mark tells us why this matters. And he, Jesus, said to them, truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John. Here's why this verse matters. Don't let anybody fool you that this verse is some sort of a contradiction in scripture because none of the disciples are still alive today.

Notice how Mark uses it. Mark says when Jesus said those words, six days later, that was fulfilled. Six days later, Peter, James, and John saw the glory that Jesus has and the glory that he will put on display in his kingdom when he returns.

What makes a good eyewitness? Give it to me. What makes a good eyewitness? You can't just hear about it on the internet or read about it on social media, right?

[19 : 21] You got to see it with your own eyes. You got to hear it with your ears. You got to be present there. You can't be an eyewitness if you weren't actually there.

Verse 16, 2 Peter 1, we were eyewitnesses of his glory. Peter says we saw it.

We saw the glory that Jesus will have in his new kingdom. Not only that, verse 18, we heard the voice from heaven.

How could you say that you saw it and that you heard it? Because Peter said we were with him on the holy mountain. We were there, present when this happened.

So what? How does Peter's eyewitness testimony refute the accusation that the apostles are making up myths?

[20 : 24] how does it refute that accusation? Why does Peter choose this particular story? Why not the resurrection? Why this story to prove his point?

Isaiah 42, verse number 8. God does share my glory to no other.

God does not share his glory. But at the transfiguration, the disciples saw Jesus in glory.

And they heard the Father himself commending Jesus as his son, as his beloved son, as the one that they should listen to.

But God does not share his glory. If God shared his glory with Jesus on the mountain that day, and Peter, James, and John saw it and heard it, then Jesus must be God.

[21 : 58] He must be God. And if he is God, then the stories about him are true. And he will come back.

Look at verse 19. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed.

This is tricky, I understand, in the original. Smart people tell me this. This is a tricky little portion here. But I think this makes the most sense.

the transfiguration is what makes the prophecies about Jesus more fully confirmed.

Do you see that there in verse 19? We have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[23 : 03] I think this is Peter's reasoning here. If Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies when he came the first time, and we can agree, he did, didn't he?

He did fulfill all of the messianic prophecies that needed to be filled when he came the first time. If Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophets writing during his first coming, and he did, and if the three disciples that day on the mountain saw Jesus' future glory, and they did, then the transfiguration confirms that Jesus will return in glory.

And not only that, it refutes the accusation that the disciples are myth makers. and that means that we should pay attention to the scripture.

Like when it's dark outside, and you are happy to find a light. Like when it's dark in the room, and you're happy to feel your way towards the light switch, and flip the lights on, and you're happy that the lights come on.

Like when there's a thunderstorm, and the power goes out, and you go find your battery, and you're happy that when you turn your flashlight on, the batteries are actually good. We should pay attention to scripture.

[24 : 42] And this brings Peter back to what is most important, what he thinks about as he is dying. He wants Christians to know, believe, and act like scripture is trustworthy.

thee. Verse 20. Knowing this, notice in your Bible if you're taking notes, first of all, this is important. Don't miss this. Don't sleep on this. Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

No prophecy comes from someone's own interpretation means that no prophet made this up. We're not just telling stories. This isn't make-believe or a fable or a fairy tale.

[25 : 51] These were not the prophet's own ideas or perspectives or opinions about what the Messiah would do and say. The disciples were not spinning divine sounding stories.

Yes, God used humans to write scripture and the personalities of those human authors certainly comes out in various ways that we grow to love and appreciate as we read the different genres of scripture, but it was the Holy Spirit who carried them along so that they spoke and wrote God's words.

Interesting little note on this word carried along. The same root word is used two times in verses 17 and 18 about the sound of the voice of the Father coming to Jesus.

It was carried to him. It was born to him. But this same word is also used in Acts 27 and there it's used to describe a ship that's being driven by the wind.

Now let's not press that analogy too far. The human authors were not passive. They were active recipients of God's word. You might say that they hoisted their sails.

[27 : 23] They hoisted their sails, but it was the Holy Spirit who supplied the wind and the direction of the wind to carry them along as they are writing down the story of Jesus.

The true story of Jesus. Since the Spirit always points to Jesus, we can be sure that all of Scripture from start to finish points us to the one who will come again in glory.

And so we should reject every and any accusation that the Scriptures claim about the return of Jesus is a myth or a legend or a fairy tale and instead we would do well to pay attention to Scripture.

because it is the totally trustworthy Word of God. And so from our statement of faith, we believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction, that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter, that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us and therefore is and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

Now you may hear statements like the Christians that Peter wrote to heard. You may hear someone say something like this, it's so great that you believe in Jesus.

[29 : 29] It's so great that you believe in Jesus. You're good now. you're covered. You got that taken care of. Now you just go and live your life.

Do whatever makes you feel good. Don't worry about whatever is going to happen next. All that stuff at the end is just made up anyway.

You may hear statements like that. And whether you've been a follower of Jesus for a very long time or only just recently began trusting in Jesus, you may be tempted to listen to that.

It's tempting, isn't it? To say, I believe, I have received grace, I know that my sins are forgiven, so I can just go ahead and do whatever I want.

That's a temptation that we all face. Even as God's redeemed people rescued by grace, we still wrestle with sin.

[30 : 34] We're still tempted to be indifferent and apathetic and lazy, and so we need Peter's urgent reminder of the trustworthiness of Scripture.

Jesus will return to judge his adversaries and to save his people. And so we let the lamp of God's word burn bright in our hearts, in our homes, in our church, in our neighborhoods, in our communities, in our workplaces.

faith. We mature in our faith. How? How are we going to grow spiritually? How will my knowledge of Jesus grow?

God's God's word? By being in places where God's word is spoken and rehearsed and taught by digging in and studying with people who love and care about you and God's word and want you to grow.

We read, we study, we meditate, we memorize. Why? Because it matters and Jesus will return. we don't just hear the word, do we?

[31 : 51] I hope not. I hope we don't just hear the word. I won't soon forget Ryan's illustration about the card game. We don't just hear it.

We actually put it into practice. We obey. We pursue Christ likeness. So if I can echo Peter's words, I want to stir you up.

Don't tap the snooze button one more time. I want to see you moving because scripture is totally trustworthy.

No cap. Peter mentions the morning star rising. I want to call your attention to this because I think it's an important cross reference.

Listen to these words from the very end of scripture. Revelation 22 and verse 16. Jesus is speaking. The risen, glorified, returning, Jesus is speaking.

[33 : 00] And he says this, I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

And then the spirit and the bride respond to Jesus saying that he is the morning star. Listen to what the spirit and the bride, that's the church, that's you and me, brother and sister.

Listen to how we respond. the spirit and the bride say to Jesus, come. And let the one who hears say, come.

And let the one who is thirsty, come. Let the one who desires take the water of life without price. brothers and sisters, in spite of what cynics or skeptics or scoffers might say, we really are waiting for our blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[34 : 17] Come is a longing cry. It's a cry of longing for Jesus to set all things right, but it is also a call to readiness.

Until the day dawns and the morning star, Jesus himself, rises in our hearts, we say, come, Lord Jesus.

Come in power and glory. And until that day, we say, we're so thirsty. We're so thirsty. Won't you come?

quench our thirst. Fill our hearts with yourself by your Holy Spirit. Until that day, when Jesus returns, we grow in grace by holding fast to Scripture, by believing God's promises, by making every effort to become more and more and more like Jesus, and we stir one another up by way of reminder, because we remember that the Scripture is totally trustworthy.

Let's pray. good Father, we are grateful to receive your word. Thank you for it. Thank you for answering our prayer and giving so much help during this time so that we could read your word and understand it, make sense of it.

[35 : 54] Holy Spirit, you have been so kind to illumine your word to us. Oh, we know there is more for us to learn. We know there's so much more that could be said.

We know there's so much more truth about the importance of your word that we need to revel in and we'll do that as we continue to live and love together.

But Father, we are grateful for this word from the last portion of the first chapter of 2 Peter and we confess that we need it. We need to be stirred up. We need to have our hearts reawaken to the trustworthiness of Scripture because we know that there are cynics, there are skeptics, there are scoffers, and we don't want to give in to their temptations.

Would you please help us to grow in the knowledge of our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask this for your glory and our good.

In Jesus name, Amen.