

**"The Conclusion of 2 Peter"****2 Peter 3:15-18**

**Introduction:** Tonight we have come to our last study of 2 Peter. In chapter 1 we saw the need for spiritual maturity in a world full of false teachers. In chapter 2 Peter showed us the characteristics of false teachers and what they are really like. That chapter was like a spiritual autopsy of the false teachers. Then in chapter 3 we saw the teaching of the false teachers and how they attack the promise of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ. This is because they do not want to face the truth that there will be a day of judgment for them. They deny God's intervention in human history, the curse, the flood, and the Tower of Babel. At the same time they deny God's promised intervention in the future, the Rapture, the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Peter refuted their teaching by pointing to history to show the flood, he also explained that God is not bound by time, and he explained that God is longsuffering, and His longsuffering is salvation for man. In other words the longer God delays the Day of the Lord the more opportunity people have to come to Jesus Christ.

Now as Peter ends this letter he does so with some very important Words.

**I. Paul's Words****Notice 2 Peter 3:15**

There are several thoughts to see in this verse.

**1. Peter's reference to Paul.**

Peter refers to Paul as "our beloved brother." There is a lesson in this reference for us. Let us notice something that happened between Paul and Peter.

**Galatians 2:11-16**

<sup>11</sup> *But when Peter was come to Antioch, **I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.***

<sup>12</sup> *For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*

<sup>13</sup> *And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*

*<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*

*<sup>15</sup> We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,*

*<sup>16</sup> Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Peter ate with the Gentiles before certain Jews showed up and when they came Peter separated from the Gentiles which caused Barnabas to be carried away with his actions. Paul withstood Peter to the face and called him out on his sin. Peter was sending the wrong message by doing what he did. I point all of this out because when we read 2 Peter, we see that Peter is not carrying any animosity or ill feelings toward Paul. That issue was handled in the past and it was over.

**Application:**

No one likes to be wrong, and no one likes to be called out because they are wrong, but when we are wrong, we need someone to call us out. That is what love does.

**Leviticus 19:17**

*<sup>17</sup> Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

We should be thankful when someone cares enough to tell us when we are wrong. The problem today is that when someone is confronted on their sin by another brother or sister, they take offense and will often leave the church to go and find another church. That is not spiritual growth! That is the mark of spiritual immaturity.

**Hebrews 10:22-25**

*<sup>22</sup> Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

*<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised:)*

*<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

<sup>25</sup> Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

**John 11:43-44**

<sup>43</sup> And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

<sup>44</sup> And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

**2. God's longsuffering in the life of Paul.**

**Notice 2 Peter 3:15 again.**

It is interesting here that Peter tells his readers that Paul had written to them previously. This is probably a reference to Paul's letters that had been circulated among the churches. When Paul did write his letters, he often wrote of God longsuffering and His desire to see more people saved. Paul's salvation alone shows the longsuffering of God.

**Acts 7:59-60**

<sup>59</sup> And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

<sup>60</sup> And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**Acts 8:1**

<sup>1</sup> And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

**Acts 9:1-3**

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

<sup>2</sup> And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

Paul was a terrorist in his day. He hunted down believers and he had many of them put to death. It was the longsuffering of God that preserved his life and brought him to the Damascus Road where he would get saved.

**Notice 2 Peter 3:16**

First of all we see that Peter affirms that the writings of Paul are Scripture. The second point we see in this verse is the way of the false teachers. Peter tells us that Paul's letters include writings that are hard to understand. Now he does not say they are impossible to understand but only that they are hard to understand. This means that some of Paul's points are difficult to interpret. These are the passages that the false teachers will twist to make their point of false doctrine. They will take one passage and they will twist it to make it say what they want and that is what they will proclaim. They take a passage that is unclear, and they will use it to develop a false doctrine. Let me demonstrate how the false teachers do this. I know a man who refuses to believe in eternal security and there are several verses that he points to but two in particular.

**Hebrews 10:26-27**

*<sup>26</sup> For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

*<sup>27</sup> But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

This is his foundation to support his false doctrine that we can lose our salvation.

Now what false teachers do is they stay with one passage. This is not the way to study the Scriptures. If there is a passage that is unclear, we cannot claim it teaches something that is contrary to other passages. The person I know holds to this text in Hebrews but does not want to consider other passages such as:

**John 10:27-30**

*<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

*<sup>28</sup> And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

*<sup>29</sup> My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

<sup>30</sup> *I and my Father are one.*

**Application:**

**Notice 2 Peter 3:16 again.**

Believers who are UNLEARNED and UNSTABLE are the ones who get swept away with this method. This is why it is so important for us to be learned in the Scriptures.

**2 Timothy 2:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> *Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.*

<sup>15</sup> *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

<sup>16</sup> *But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*

## II. Peter's Warning

**Notice 2 Peter 3:17**

The warning that Peter gives here is that even a believer can be led into false teaching.

**1 Corinthians 10:12**

<sup>12</sup> *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Let us never think that we are so strong that we would never be led astray. It has happened to many believers over the years and as this world approaches the Tribulation the deception will surely increase. Then there is the problem of the heart.

**Jeremiah 17:9**

<sup>9</sup> *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Let me show you how our own hearts can deceive us which also helps us to see how quickly we can be deceived.

**Revelation:**

<sup>14</sup> *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

<sup>15</sup> *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

<sup>16</sup> So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

<sup>17</sup> Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

<sup>18</sup> I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

<sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

<sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Here was a church that was under self-deception. They believed that the worldly riches were a sign of spiritual riches, but they were wrong. They believed they were walking in fellowship with the Lord, but the Lord was on the outside waiting to be invited in. These people were not deceived by false teachers, but they were deceived by their own hearts and by material riches.

### **Notice 2 Peter 3:18**

Peter ends his letter by coming right back to where he started. He exhorts his readers to grow in grace and knowledge.

I want to end this study with some thoughts on growing in grace. What does this look like?

#### **➤ Signs of not Growing in Grace.**

##### **1. No spiritual appetite.**

Someone who is sick has no appetite for their food. The person who is spiritually ill has no appetite for spiritual food. If this is you then you are not growing in grace.

##### **2. Growing more worldly.**

When your mind is fixed on things of this world and not the things that are eternal then you can be sure you are not growing in grace.

### **2 Corinthians 4:18**

<sup>18</sup> While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

##### **3. Less sensitive to sin.**

When sin does not bother you then you can be sure you are not growing in grace. If you can commit sin with little remorse, then there is a problem.

➤ **Signs of Growing in Grace.**

**1. When we are more firmly rooted in the Word.**

When a tree grows its roots go down deep and the storms may cause it to bend but it endures. In our lives one of the signs of growing in grace is strength in the storms.

**2. When we are more spiritually minded.**

We are more spiritual in our decisions, our duties, and our affections.

**3. When opposition makes us stronger.**

One of the ways we know we are growing in grace is because when the storms come we can see within ourselves spiritual perseverance. Instead of setting us back we can see that the storm has actually brought about spiritual strength in us.

**Conclusion:**

Peter started by reminding us of the need to grow and he ends the same way. Spiritual maturity is the best way to defend against false teachers.