

Sermon: Prophecy Is Important

Text: [II Peter 1:12-21 ESV](#)

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Introduction: It might be well, from the beginning, to have a working definition of “prophecy.” “Prophecy is proclamation, or forth-telling the Word and will of God, coupled with a command to obey. Prophecy’s focus, then, is not primarily on predicting the future, but on obedience to God’s Word and will in the present.” - (Robert A Lowery, *Revelation’s Rhapsody: Listening to the Lyrics of the Lamb*, pp. 213-214)

There certainly is a point to where almost all the Old Testament generally may serve as prophecy. Many of its figures are considered types of Christ. Christ is seen as the second Adam, a type of Moses (Matthew’s Gospel), a type of Davidic king. Jesus Christ completely fulfills what was only seen in the O.T. as a “shadow of the good things to come.” Even the O.T. religious festivals and practices are clearly completed in Jesus.

[Colossians 2:16-17 ESV](#) ¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Jesus is considered a prophet of God - one who delivers prophecy.

[Acts 3:22-23 ESV](#) ²² Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’

So how important is prophecy and listening (obeying) to those who truly speak for God? It is critically important!

The Apostle Peter was a prophet in every sense of that word. I am a prophet, also, certainly not of the same caliber, but bringing the same words, under the same divine authority, and with the same responsibility: to deliver the Truth.

The Bible assures us that those who do not obey God’s Word will be “completely cut off from His people” - pretty important stuff, wouldn’t you say?

TV commercials on cable or on social media can very quickly create a buzz around a word or phrase designed to try and get you to buy or believe something. It is a multi-faceted approach that has as its goal to change you and your beliefs. I guarantee you that much of what you think is important will change in our culture in a relatively short time, certainly within a generation.

All words, even if they are the same words, are not of equal value. Politicians are not of equal value/importance either. Who do you believe? The value of words depends in large part, too, not on the skill of the speaker, but on the credibility of the speaker. A ten-year-old boy may say what he thinks is important in life, and also a 100-year-old man. Whose counsel is more likely to be wise?

God's Word brings life and is eternally true. In the context of the end of time all the Gospel writers remind us that Jesus said: **Matthew 24:35 ESV** ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

In our II Peter passage, today, we see an aged-apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ near the end of his life wanting to remind his listeners of important words about eternal life. They had heard them before, but Peter wanted to make sure they heard them again. Today, I stand in that same tradition, repeating myself, but wanting to say again what you need to hear.

Prophecy Is Important. Just like Peter, it calls us to:

I. Tell People of God's Desire for Them (vv. 12-15).

II Peter 1:12-15 ESV ¹² Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body,[a] to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴ since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort so that after my departure (ἐξόδου) you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Comment on: Footnotes: [a] **2 Peter 1:13** Greek *tent*; also **verse 14**

God wants everyone to be saved, but He never intended for us to remain as babies in our faith. He wants us to mature and grow up in His Word.

To do that, we need:

A. To Repeat the Truth of God's Word

Fred Craddock recalled: “Some years ago, some of us who were ministers, pastors and teachers in seminaries were asked to form a group, and before a large body of students and laypersons, to say who was the most influential person apart from our parents in the formation of our lives and our movement to ministry. We had two or three weeks notice, but it was a difficult matter for me. Finally, when my turn came, I stood up and gave them a name they had never heard of. I said, “Miss Emma Sloan.”

As children, we called all women “Miss.” Miss Emma Sloan was an elderly woman, single. She taught me in the primary department (It was Mrs. Brown for me), and since there was nobody to teach the juniors, she went right on with us, and taught us for years. She gave me a Bible. She wrote in the front: ‘May this be a light to your feet, a lamp for your path,’ Emma Sloan. She taught us to memorize the Bible; she never tried to interpret it. I don’t remember her ever explaining anything. She said, ‘Just put it in your heart, just put it in your heart.’

She used the alphabet, (like they do in the Hebrew Bible), and we’d go around the room saying verses, **A - a soft answer turns away wrath. **B** - Be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, as God also in Christ has forgiven you. **C** - Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. **D** - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. **E** - Every good and perfect gift... **F** - For God so loved the world... Don’t worry, I’m not going on, Fred said.**

I still remember all that. She didn’t explain it. We learned from the King James Bible all those verses. I had to say to those students and church folk that Sunday afternoon, “I can’t think of anything, anything in all my life that has made such a radical difference as those verses. The Spirit of God brings them to my mind appropriately, time and time and time again.” (*Craddock Stories*, pp. 33-34)

To Repeat the Truth of God’s Word is important:

- 1. for the present generation.**

Peter mentored John Mark who wrote possibly the earliest Gospel in the NT. You can’t pass on what you don’t have or know. And Peter was doing everything he could to share what he understood with his generation - just pouring in Scripture as it was being formed into Mark’s life.

A Roman Catholic Bishop (Untener) I knew while I was in Midland, MI had memorized all four of the Gospels.

There was an organization a few years ago offering a grand prize to teens of \$100,000 for who could memorize the most Scripture.

I personally love Bible reading and study, and because of the way my mind works I need constant reminders and repetition to keep things up there. Maybe you are like me. I need my memory refreshed. Even the Lord's Supper is practiced weekly so we will not forget Jesus' sacrifice for us until He comes again for His Church.

I want to encourage you, if you are not already, to get into a study group or attend Sunday School with us. We are going through Isaiah on Sundays. Get involved in His Word; it will change your life!

**If we don't fill our minds with God's Word now, what will be the spiritual outlook:
2. for the future generation(s).**

In the future, there will be more pressure on the Church by false teachers and those who are ignorant in Scripture to move away from the Truth of God's Word, and compromise Biblical principles. It is already happening in many circles.

Like any good building the future must have a solid foundation in the present.

Peter understood that it was God's will:

B. To Be Fruitful as Long as Possible.

Jesus had already informed Peter basically how he was to die ([John 21:18-19](#)) and quite frankly with Nero in power, it did not take a great prophet to predict what would happen to Peter and other Christians who were serious about their faith and speaking the truth.

Even in Peter's time there were followers that had fallen asleep spiritually, and time was short. He needed to rouse them before it was too late. As we age we realize that the idea of a tent to describe our bodies is accurate. The flesh is transitory - here today, gone tomorrow! And after all, Christ's Church is made up of people who are simply pilgrims destined for, and on their way to, a better place.

No one knows when God will call us home; but in the meantime, we need to share our faith and mentor those who are interested in a heavenly home. We need to invest in people, not earthly real estate.

Prophecy Is Important. Just like Peter, it calls us to help others:

II. Develop a Saving-Relationship with God (vv. 16-18).

II Peter 1:16-18 ESV 16 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. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

A. Credible Witnesses Saw Reasons to Believe.

What do witnesses do? They testify. Peter was doing exactly that by sharing what he had seen while with Jesus. He had seen Jesus heal the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, cast out demons, feed the hungry, and teach the multitudes. A common response was: **Luke 9:43a ESV** 43a And all were astonished at the majesty of God. - or the “greatness of God (NIV).

While trying to walk on water, Peter caught a glimpse of God.

Peter was one of the apostles who had seen the transfiguration of Jesus. It was during that experience that his faith grew, and he wanted to share that experience. Peter saw Jesus with the heroes of the O.T.

Matthew 17:1-3 ESV 1 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

Peter, James and John were eyewitnesses of his majesty. They saw Jesus for who He was: God!

B. Credible Witnesses Heard Reasons to Believe.

Peter had heard wonderful preaching, lessons and words from Jesus’ lips that had inspired, challenged, rebuked, encouraged, healed and even astonished. Jesus taught with authority and in God’s power just like Peter had at Pentecost under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

But what Peter heard on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured would change his perspective. And Peter understood the importance of passing this on. While on the mountain: **Matthew 17:4-9 ESV** ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. ⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”

The importance of these events and words came clear later. Now it was time to tell, and Peter was a first-hand witness. He and the other apostles were different from the false teachers who misinterpreted Jesus’ words and made up stories that were no more than fables and myths with no connection to the Truth.

II Timothy 3:1-5 ESV ¹ But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Peter understands that prophecy is a lamp to the people’s feet and will direct them in the way they should go (the path of righteousness).

Prophecy Is Very Important, and just like Peter, it calls us to:
III. Be Selective in What We Believe (vv. 19-21).

II Peter 1:19-21 ESV ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹ 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.

Jesus’ coming did not do away with the significance of the O.T., but validates its credibility and accuracy.

Be Selective in What We Believe

A. Until We Understand God's Word

The O.T. told of a coming king like David, a law-giver like Moses and a prophet like Elijah. It was Jesus who would fulfill these hopes and dreams AND MORE! A couple of weeks ago, we talked of being on a journey - hopefully to heaven. Michael Green in his commentary comments (p., 100): "We are on a pilgrimage throughout our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance and encouragement, we shall walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed by darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the Word of God."

Green is saying that without knowing and obeying God's Word, heaven is out of the question. The best kind of instruction for us is:

B. Prophecy Whose Source Is God (Holy Spirit)

A lot of people have claimed, and even today claim, they speak for God. Yet, not everyone does! There is much confusion in the Church today on a variety of highly charged issues like abortion, human sexuality, and appropriate use of our time and money. Really, though, the only correct place to go for instruction is the Bible. You should never follow or listen to anyone who calls into question the accuracy or inspired nature of the Bible or its writers. Those individuals do not belong to God's people!

"Scripture is neither given (v. 21) nor interpreted by man (v. 20); the Spirit does both tasks." - Green, pp. 100-101

Q. What does it mean to be holy?

A. On one level, it simply means to be used by God.

Conclusion: "I remember when they brought the famous list to Atlanta. The workers set it up in the public place -- block after block to form a long wall of names, Vietnam (soldiers') names. Some of us looked at it like it was a list of names; others went over closer. Some walked slowly down the columns. There was a woman who went up and put her finger on a name, and she held a child up and put the child's hand on the name. There was a woman there who kissed the wall at a name. There were flowers lying beneath the wall. Don't call it a list. It's not a list." - *Craddock Stories*, p. 151

Prophecy is not mere words, and the Bible is no ordinary book.

How do you feel about God's Word? I hope you believe it, and that prophecy is important. It is important to remember the cost of our salvation. It is critical to our success as Christians that we are reminded of our godly responsibility to lead God-honoring lives.

Finally, it is important we know the difference between God's Truth and heresy that is offered up as truth.

In [verses 12-15](#), Peter talked about his relationship with God. He uses the pronoun "I."

In [verses 16-18](#), it seems the "we" used is referring to Peter and the other Apostles.

In [verses 19-21](#), Peter offers an invitation for others to be or continue to be "we," the Church, and not be fooled by the smooth and deceptive words of the false teachers.

That same caution and invitation to believe the truth of God's Word, and all its promises, is yours today!