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Our Plan for Remembering 2 Peter 1:12-15

We are in **2 Peter 1:12-15**. Peter writes, **"Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. (13) And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, (14) knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. (15) And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind."** Now there is a plan here to remember and remembering is important. This is why when there are events in our country of great magnitude there is a theme that comes out, don't forget, remember. The events of September 11, 2001 come to mind. Now you can think, well, who's going to forget that, but as time goes on we may forget, our memories fade and life moves on. Another event in history that is probably still with you to some degree, maybe not quite as sharply as just the one of a few years ago, is Pearl Harbor. You might be able to recount some of the events of that but there was the same thrust there, remember, don't forget.

But as we think back further in history we could probably come to certain attacks that you probably don't remember, like the Alamo. If I gave you a quiz this morning and said when was the Alamo, you might not know it was 1836 and you might not know why it was even attacked or the events surrounding it. This is what it looks like today. If you have happened to have visited it you might be a little more refreshed then if you hadn't. But we are tending to forget. That's just how it is.

We don't remember as time goes on. So we need to be reminded and Peter is coming to them reminding them again and again. If we just move from knowledge and instruction and then expect application we miss the middle part of actually remembering the knowledge that we have been imparted with and the significance of that. So we can apply more diligently. Now I can't really explain to you how all this happens. There is a lot of science that figures why we do remember. I've read that even at night there are certain events that are happening between this part of your brain and that part of your brain to get you to solidify your understanding. I do know one thing; some of us remember things better than others. And at different times in our lives we remember certain things better than others, and as your brain is functioning a certain way at a certain time, it helps you to capture and recall certain things of importance. I don't know if we can quite figure it out or even come up with certain techniques to make sure that you will never forget.

What's really necessary, it seems, is that we continue to come back to reminding ourselves. So, there's a plan that Peter has given to us. He is implementing the plan. He always is ready to remind them. And there's a reason for this. This is what the therefore is there for in **verse 12**. The reason that he is reminding them is back in the text earlier. Whenever there is a therefore, we look backward and we see the things he is reminding them about. And we look at the divine power that God has granted us to be able to do the godly acts and live a godly life that He has intended us to live. He has given us all the resources necessary to accomplish this. We are not lacking. We have the ability through Christ to live godly.

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Verse 4, "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises." Most notably He has given us the Scripture, **"in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."** So with these resources then he moves to what we should do about that. **Verse 5, "applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge."** And there is a progression that moves on toward love. It begins with faith, an ability to trust the Lord, and moves towards the final stage of loving your neighbor as yourself. This is what we are called to.

But what's the problem here? The problem here comes in **verse 9, "For he who lacks these qualities is blind or shortsighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins."** So we are reminded because some forget. Even though we have the resources, even though we have the direction, we have the knowledge of where we should be heading, and some are following that, others are forgetting, they are blind, they are shortsighted and they have forgotten their former purification from sins of the past. So, rather than forget we must make diligent to be certain about His calling in choosing us so that we will never stumble. That's what the therefore is looking back to, not forgetting. There is always the potential for some to forget and be blind or shortsighted. And at different times this may be you.

There are things that are spoken about when he says, "we shall always be ready to remind you." And the things that he is speaking about are the things that are paramount, of most importance. There are lots of things that we could remind each other about. Lots of Bible trivia. But the things that he has highlighted in the beginning of this book are the things that are most critical, that are most essential to living a life pleasing to God. So he has spent a certain amount of text focusing on that because of its importance, its value to us. So I trust that you are focusing on the important things in life, of what the Scripture highlights as important and not tempted to forget that.

There's this other part here. **"Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you."** This "already know" "this having been established" is in the perfect tense and it is rooted. But in spite of that he is not afraid to tell them these important things that they already know, that they have already applied, they've already been practicing. Now you may come to a service and go through and say I knew all that, I didn't really learn anything new this morning. But in spite of that, it's important to be reminded of what you already know. Just because you know, it doesn't mean that you have captured it as the important truth that it really is. And even if you have and it's established in you and you are firmly fixed upon it, you still need, like the readers that Peter was writing to, to be continually reminded of these things, because they are so important. When we are teaching we must not be afraid to tell people the important things they already know. That's the reason, because we are forgetful. We tend to be blind or shortsighted.

Now there is the result of being reminded. There is a result in **Verse 13. "And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder."** The purpose of the reminding here is stir up the reader, in other words, to wake up out of the sleep. That's what the text specifically means if it was literally translated; wake up out of the sleep. Some people are slumbering in a spiritual sense. They are not awake, they have dosed off. I don't know how you wake up, how people in your family wake up.

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Some people just bounce right out of bed. With other people, a bomb could go off and they could roll over and go back to sleep. So for those people who don't just bounce out of bed, you have to rouse them up. If it's a Saturday morning, you can sleep in. But if the bus is coming and they are going to be late for school, there's an urgency. You are willing to suffer the challenge of waking them up and having them flail their arms around and growl at you and turn over all the while you are saying, "wake up!" I kind of speak from personal experience here, "wake up, get up, it's time to go." This is the sense of what we are seeking to do in the reminding. Those who have spiritually dosed off we are reminding wake up. This is important; the time is coming.

Now you might say well I bounce out of bed. Spiritually speaking, I am awake, I'm alert, I'm ready to go, I'm focused and that may be true. And let's say that is you. You're not the person that slumbers. Well you're in one of two categories. Either you need to be reminded right now or you need to be reminding right now. Either you are slumbering and this message is stirring you up by way of reminding or you are awake, engaged. But are you busy about reminding others of what is important in life and that God has called us to godliness and why this is so important? Stirring up people to godliness is the right thing to do. "I consider it right," Peter writes. It is the right thing to do because it is important for people to engage their mind and their heart.

Sometimes this is difficult and I will grant you that some people don't particularly want to be aroused from their sleep and they flail around and they growl at you and they grab the covers and they go back to sleep and you say wake up and then they are really annoyed. Well in spite of that, it is right to continue to pursue arousing those who are slumbering, who have forgotten their purification from former sins. This phrase "as long as I am in this earthly dwelling," specifically means "tent." "As long as I am in this tent" is what the word means which actually harkens back to **2 Corinthians 5:1-4**. Paul wrote about our body being a tent, also. He used the same imagery.

In fact, it is so instructive that I'm going to read it for you. Paul writes, **"For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; (3) inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. (4) For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life."** Our physical bodies are like a tent and they are temporary. Our opportunity to stir people up in this life is temporary. It's passing away and so it's important that we spend the time now to stir people up while we have the chance, while our tent is still up and working.

Now there are different tents. Some people's tents are very colorful. They spend lots of time making it dressed up and looking good. Other people's tents are not so colorful. There are various sizes, some large some small. But one thing about whatever your tent is like, it is aging, it is getting older, and it is going to be passing away. My tent in my garage doesn't get used very much, but it's decaying. I don't give it any attention it's rotting in the garage. I can't even tell you if all the poles are still there. I've loaned it out. I'm not sure if it has come back all in one piece. I just stick it in the garage. It's certainly not getting any attention. Some people give their physical tent, their body, a lot of attention to keep it going. Other people are sort of letting their tent rot.

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Well no matter how much attention you are giving it, it's passing, it's fading away, it's temporary; and as we pass away, we ought to use the opportunity for as long as we can keep our tent going to do the things that are most important in life.

And just before Paul wrote about the tent in **2 Corinthians 5**, our physical bodies, he wrote these words in the end of **chapter 4**. **"Therefore we do not lose heart [we are not giving up in ministry], but though our outer man is decaying [our body is falling apart], Yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (17) For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, (18) 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."** And if we are focusing on the things that are more important, the things that are eternal, then as things that are temporary fade away, it will not be quite as big of a deal to us because we will be spending our time on what's eternal and more important. That will be our focus. So we should be reminding if we are awake, and if we are not awake, if we are slumbering, we should be reminded, we should be stirred up.

And there is an urgency to this, **verse 14** Peter writes, **"Knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me."** There's a sense of urgency to this task of reminding. This is important to move forward with immediately because we are fading away. Peter knew about his departure, that his departure was near because Jesus told him about his death. If you recall in **John 21**, Peter was told this by Jesus, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."**

In Peter's earlier days he had attacks on him, he was imprisoned, his life was threatened. But now as he has grown older he knows that, as Jesus taught him, his time was coming and that his days were numbered and he would not die of old age by natural causes but it would come by crucifixion and we do indeed know through tradition that that was the case. So he knew his departure was near. The timing of our departure is not certain. We don't know when that is, but one thing that is certain is that it's a fact. It will occur. The fact of our departure is certain. **Hebrews 9:27** says, **"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."** We will not endure forever in this physical body.

Now **verse 15** speaks of a future plan that Peter had for their remembering. He had a present plan and now here's his future plan. **Verse 15**, **"And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind."** He wanted them to remember even after he was gone and so he did certain things. One thing he did was he reminded them while he was with them, present reminding brings future recollection, so he was busy reminding them so they would be in a better place in the future to remember what he has spoken to them and they undoubtedly were. But as time goes on they continued to need to be reminded and then another generation comes and another generation comes and then who's going to remember.

Apart from God's Word we would be at the mercy of our memory and it would be so bad that we would have to remember from what the previous generation had told us and passed on down and we would be very much in the dark.

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Fortunately, Peter had a plan beyond just the generation he was writing to. He spent enough time and had enough thought to write down what he was saying. He could have just left it said but he spent time to write it down and it has now come to us in the Scripture as the Holy Spirit inspired his writing. There's even good reason to believe that he helped with Mark's Gospel in reminding us of the life of Jesus and what that was about. So he was diligent that even after he departed, his readers would call these things to mind, and even beyond them we too would call these things to mind. Our plan for remembering, because these things are so important, must include certain things and I will list them out for what your plan for remembering must include.

One is simply the Scripture. It starts with this; we must know what God says. **Romans 15:15** explains what Paul's reason for writing to the Romans was. And he said this, "**But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God.**" Paul's writing to remind them. Peter wrote a little later for the same reason. He says in **2 Peter 3:1-2**, "**This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, (2) that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.**"

Peter's reminding them that the Word of God is what we must be remembering, what God says to us, and because this is so important we should be engaging it regularly, daily, even filling our mind with what is important. It is indeed essential that we are remembering the Scripture and there is no better way to remember the Scripture than to open your Bible and read it over and over again.

But the Lord has given us more than just the text, fortunately. If it was just the text it would be easier to forget especially since we are like sheep. We've gone astray and we are so forgetful and even things that were once important to us we can't remember what those are now. Well we tend to forget so the Lord has given us the Scripture and His Spirit working in us to help us to recall. Jesus said this of the Spirit and He said this of the Spirit specifically to the apostles so this had specific application to them when He said to them in **John 14:26**, "**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**"

And indeed He did, and indeed they did remember, and they did write, based on this promise, what He said accurately. But the Holy Spirit is the helper and does help us to remember. And the words that were written for us He helps us to also remember what has been written. The Spirit is able to guide us and illuminate our minds and our hearts so that we can now understand what is being written and see the application of it, the importance of it. So the Lord has given us the Scripture, the Lord has given us the Spirit. What else has the Lord given us? He has given us one another, the servants. We need one another.

1 Corinthians 4:17 says this, "**For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord [and here's why], and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.**" So we should come and be reminded, be stirred up by one another. Now this happens to a small degree on Sunday mornings.

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But in certain ministries this can happen much more effectively, and probably no place more personally than in our small group ministry or growth groups. And I would suggest that this is the best chance of getting connected and motivated to be able to remind ourselves and not just forget and remind others. The Lord's servants have an important role in helping us to remember and not forget.

And finally, the Lord has given us the Lord's Supper. He has given us the Scripture, He has given us the Spirit, He has given us the servants to surround us to remind us and He's given us the Lord's Supper for remembrance. Do this in remembrance of me. This is an imagery that we can move us to remember and not forget, and we do this regularly so that we can be stirred up by way of reminder. And this is not a new approach. Through out history God has helped our memory and I'm going to show you certain things through out history that God has, in His grace, given to mankind so that they may remember.

The first one comes from Genesis. Remember the rainbow? The Lord said in **Genesis 9:9-11**, "**Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; (10) and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. (11) And I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.**" So this bow in the sky, this rainbow in verse 13, "**I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth,**" is a promise that the earth will never flood again and He gave us a rainbow to see that.

Now I know that you are not walking around quite concerned about a flood that will engulf the earth like the people might have been who were more near to that event. But as you see the rainbow I suggest that you be reminded this, God's judgment is looming. As Jesus put it in **Luke 17:26-28**, "**And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, ... they were buying, they were selling,**" and then came the judgment. God is not patient forever and there will be an end. God will judge the earth, not in the same way, in a flood, but judgment is coming. And so we look at the rainbow and are thankful that it won't flood again but recognize God is still able and will as you know fix things on earth.

The next thing is circumcision. This is in **Genesis 17:11** where the imagery of circumcision is another physical sign to show God's promise, "**And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you,**" so they would be able to remember God's covenant promises with them to bless them with descendents and land and blessings.

Then there's **Deuteronomy 5** and the sabbath. The sabbath was given for a purpose of remembering what God had done. **Deuteronomy 5:14-15**, "**But the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. (15) And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord**

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your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day." So the nation of Israel was commanded to observe the sabbath day for a purpose and the reason for that was so they would not forget His mighty deed in rescuing them from the land of Egypt. That He was faithful to them, they should be faithful to Him. The imagery of the sabbath was to remind them.

Next is **Numbers 15:37-41** where there's another memory aid that the Lord gave. **"The Lord also spoke to Moses, saying, (38) 'Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. (39) And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, (40) in order that you may remember to do all My commandments, and be holy to your God. (41) I am the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I a the Lord your God.'"**

So they had tassels on their garments to help them remember, as a memory aid. And you even see this in the New Testament. The fringe that people touched to be healed was literally a tassel and the Pharisees lengthened their tassels to show their spirituality to the people around them. So they actually did this. Now I don't know why people are not doing this today who believe the Old Testament law is mandated upon the Christian. I think the New Testament guides us, not the Old Testament law. But those who want to have us under the Old Testament law, where are their tassels? It's really not such a bad idea. If you are going to pick one, pick this one, it might remind you to actually do the things of God. But I don't see too many blue tassels around these days, but it was given by God so that the nation of Israel would remember the commandments of God.

There's another one. Remember when they crossed the Jordan River and the events of that were memorialized? Joshua called the twelve men he had appointed, one man for each tribe, they each had a stone that they brought and he said in **Joshua 4:5-7**, **"And Joshua said to them, 'Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribe of the sons of Israel. (6) Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, "What do these stones mean to you?" (7) then you shall say to them, "Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off," So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.'"**

Pretty handy reminder of what God had done. Our reminder in the New Testament, the covenant of the New Testament, is the Lord's Supper. Through the Lord's Supper we receive the opportunity to remember and we will get a chance to do that this morning as we celebrate the Lord's Supper together. We will remember the death of Christ for our sins so we can move forward in godliness.