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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.
- Special welcome if you're new or visiting. We're glad that you're here and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.
- And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced there's no one so good they don't need God's grace and no one so bad they can't have it, which means that everyone needs to hear what God has to say in his word.
- We're continuing our study in the book of 2 Peter. I invite you to turn there with me now, either in your Bible or in your worship guide near the end, or you can turn on your phone. And remember that 2 Peter is a letter written by a man named Peter and he writes it to a church in the 60s AD somewhere in the Roman Empire.
- And he writes this letter with one hope, one goal. He wants these people to grow. And he wants them to grow in two ways. He wants them to grow in grace and he wants them to grow in knowledge.
- [1 : 0 9] That's how he begins and ends the letter. He begins it asking that they be multiplied in grace and peace through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And then he ends it in the very last verse with a command that they would grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- And so it's with that focus that we turn to it now. Now I've had a lot of questions about previous sermon on 2 Peter. There's been one burning thought, which is this. What happened to the mystery seeds that I told you about?
- I never told you what they grew up into. And the reason is this. I was 4 or 5 at the time and I don't remember. What I do remember was how excited I was to send my penny off in the mail and the anticipation that I had that one day a seed packet was going to show up.
- And so the answer is, you know, it was all sorts of plants. But of course, that brings us back to last week. Remember, our question was this. What's the relationship between our obedience and our salvation?
- And we saw the answer that the fruit of obedience is what confirms and verifies that we belong to God. It confirms and verifies that God is the gardener of our lives.
- [2 : 2 8] He has cultivated, is cultivating a rich harvest of obedience in our lives. And we're told in verse 10, right, from last time, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.
- So there's this working going on, this knowledge and this grace working together. This week, Peter is going to give us one of the tools that we need to be diligent.
- He's going to talk to us about the importance of remembering. He's going to talk to us about the importance of remembering. And so it's with that that we are going to turn together to read.

Remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold. And it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.

And so that's why we read now, starting at verse 12. Therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.

[3 : 30] 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. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you again that you are a good father who speaks to his children. And so we simply ask that you would do that this morning. You'd speak clearly through your word, that you'd give us your spirit to soften our hearts and to clear our minds, that we would be able to understand and receive and believe everything that you have told us in your word.

We are grateful to you that we don't have to earn these things or deserve them, but instead we ask them in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. When I was in college, I had, of course, many requirements that I had to meet to be able to graduate.

And one of them was a phys ed requirement. I had to get two phys ed credits to be able to graduate. And so I tried to stay on top of these sorts of things, and I wanted to get it done quickly.

[4 : 50] So my freshman year, I looked at what the options were, and I decided to take this swing dance class that met on Sunday evenings. And so I would go every Sunday evening.

I think it was seven or eight weeks. We'd have this wonderful class in the athletic building on campus, by the way, the same athletic building that Stephen Curry was using at the time. It's my claim to fame.

And in this class, these teachers were wonderful. It was this husband and wife who would come and instruct us. And at least in that class, I felt like I'd learned everything they taught. I felt like I was good at this.

You know, it made sense to me. I was able to do everything they asked. And so I left wanting more. And they talked about maybe offering a sequel class of follow-up, which never happened. So I leave college with my appetite whetted, right, knowing at some point I would want to return to this.

So that was spring of 2008. And then I think I believe it was summer of 2012. I was living in Virginia, and there was a swing dance program going on over the summer. I was a teacher. I had summers off. And so I thought, what am I going to do to fill my time?

[5 : 52] What am I going to pursue this summer? Well, I'll take these swing dance classes. So I showed up. It was not as good of an experience. And I was not as good as I remembered.

Now, at the beginning of every class, we would have a review. The teacher would go over everything that she had taught us before, all the basics. So we'd do the basics through, and then we would start the class, which was helpful.

And I did okay. Didn't do great. However, there was one class. These were on Tuesday nights. I showed up. There was no review. She did not go over any of the basic moves.

She just told her to jump in and get started. I had forgotten everything. I could not remember a single move that I was supposed to do.

She was referencing all these things that I was supposed to know week after week, right? She'd been teaching us for multiple weeks. It had all gone out of my mind. Now, I was teaching at the time, and so this was a great lesson for me of what it was like to be a student.

[6 : 55] By the way, I did not keep doing swing dancing classes. Did not help that I got shamed by someone else in the class, too, but that's another story. However, that school year, so this is my second year teaching, I realized, oh, I show up only on Tuesday nights.

I don't think about swing dance between Tuesdays. This woman lives and breathes swing dance, so she forgets that I don't know everything that she knows. Oh, that's what happens with my students, too. That's why they don't remember the most basic things that I'm trying to tell them day after day.

So I started each class, each Latin class, my second year of teaching, with a basic review. Things like, what is a noun? What is a verb? What is this case?

What is that case? And I was amazed, right, that I had students weeks, months into the semester who still couldn't answer my questions. And I realized, right, what good teachers know, the importance of review.

You have to always be going back to the very basics. You, as a teacher, right, think about things all the time. Your students do not. The only time they think about it, perhaps, is when they show up to class or when they do their homework.

[8 : 09] And so I realized what it was like to be a teacher. Samuel Johnson, the 18th century English writer, says this, that people need to be instructed or need to be reminded much more often than they need to be instructed.

We're talking here in 2 Peter about this symbiotic relationship between grace and knowledge. That's something we've seen from the very beginning. And now we're going to head into how that knowledge is at work.

We've talked about it a little bit. Here, Peter's going to tell us that the knowledge is at work through a reminder. In fact, we see that in verse 12. I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.

Now, if you're tracking along, you probably think I've set you up for this. You know, we need to be reminded because we forget things. These people need to be reminded because they forget things, too.

Except that's not what was just stated in verse 12. It's actually different than me at the swing dance class. Different than my Latin students because we find this. You know them and are established in the truth that you have.

[9 : 18] Peter tells these people they need to be reminded of things they have not forgotten. Think about that. Peter tells these people they need to be reminded of things they have not forgotten.

This would be like me saying, I need a review at the beginning of class, even though I just practiced it before I showed up. Why? The reason these people need a reminder is because Christianity is less like graduating from school and it's much more like eating food.

Of course, many people think of their Christian lives in this school aspect, right? I'm going to learn these basic things. I'm going to take Christianity 101 and I'm going to master these things.

And then after Christianity 101, it's time for me to move on to Christianity 201 or 301. And so when I show up to a Bible study or to worship and we talk about things that are from 101, that's wonderful.

I'm glad all those other people are here to hear it. Wow. What a great review. Now, I'm looking forward to the Sunday when we're able to talk about some 201 stuff, you know, for us advanced students.

[10 : 46] That is a school mindset of thinking about Christianity, right? This is one of the saddest things in the church. When we believe, we believe the lie that somehow we've arrived.

We've heard all these things before. We know them. And so the only thing that's left for us is a review. We walk away, right, and say, well, yeah, that was a nice review. I mean, I already knew all that stuff about Jesus.

And I've heard that doctrine before. I wish we could just, I just wish we could learn something new. These are the kinds of people who are only comfortable in the church, right? Taking on the role of the teacher.

They don't think they have anything to learn or they need to listen. And so if that's your approach to Christianity, this statement at some level doesn't make sense. Why would we need to remind people of things they're established in and have?

The reason is this, because our Christianity is not like school. It is like food. You would not order a meat lover's pizza for your family and sit down and eat it together.

[11 : 51] And after you're finished, say, that was a good review. That kind of tasted like it did last. Do you guys think it tasted like it did last time? I mean, that, you know, the pepperoni and the meat, it tasted the same.

It's nothing new. Domino's never has anything new. But that was, you know, that was a good review. That was a decent meat lover's pizza. It's all right.

No, no one does that. People eat the same things over and over, right? You don't go to, your spouse doesn't come to you and say, hey, would you like a cup of coffee this morning?

You don't say, you know, honestly, I had a cup of coffee yesterday morning. So I'm good, but thanks for offering. But I know a lot of people in the world who need cups of coffee because they've never tasted it before.

Why don't we help those people get coffee? No, you have coffee if you're a coffee person every morning, right? You have the same blend because you need it.

[12 : 56] Because it sustains you. You do not graduate from coffee. There is no coffee 201. If you're like me, you need to be stirred up every morning by way of reminder.

That is what Peter is talking about here, right? No one says, you know, I've had all the types of food before, so I stopped eating. Now I just make food for other people because they need it.

I've been to all the restaurants in Colorado Springs, so we don't go out to eat anymore. We kind of been there, done that, you know. It's old. It's old hat for us, right?

I took out some of my pandemic stress when we were all quarantined on Chick-fil-A. And I was forced to learn how to use the app, right?

Because it's much easier if you're using the app. Social distancing works. If you have one of these apps, whether it's for Chick-fil-A or Panera or something else, you're going to have a section on it, right? It's going to say something like Matthew's favorites or recent orders.

[14 : 04] Why? Because you're going to order the same thing over and over. If you open up the Chick-fil-A app on my phone, you are going to find that I am firmly established in the truth of the Southwest chicken salad with avocado lime ranch dressing.

And sometimes I need to be stirred up by way of reminder. In fact, as I was reviewing my sermon notes last night, I was tempted. I thought, I really need to be stirred up by way of reminder.

I need to remember what the Southwest chicken salad tastes like. And I stood strong in the face of temptation. When we come to God and his word, it is the food that sustains us.

We do not graduate. It is meant day after day, week after week, to be what feeds us and sustains us.

The same truths that we need to hear over and over again. We're getting a meat lover's pizza tonight. Yes. Mom's making spaghetti again.

[15 : 16] Yes. Justification by faith alone through grace. That's what we're talking about today. Yes. Ah, that really hit the spot, right? I needed that reminder. Oh, we're talking about Psalm 23 again.

The Lord is my shepherd. Yes. Needed that. That really hit the spot. Oh, we're talking about tithing again. Yes. Okay, some of you feel that way.

We're in political season, right? If you go to a political rally, and there's a candidate there, they are not going to be saying new and novel things. They are saying the same thing they say at every stop.

And people are there waving signs and cheering. How much more for our great king.

Wow. God's grace. Amen. Say it again. Let's be stirred up by way of reminder.

[16 : 23] Peter is clarifying for us how knowledge works, not the way we want it to. If we approach the Bible as a review, it does not show us our knowledge and how advanced and smart we are.

If we approach the Bible as a review, it reveals to us how hard-hearted and cold-hearted we are. God has given us his word to stir us up over and over again.

And so we need the same thing that these people need, right? Peter is stirring them up with a reminder, even though they know the truth. Verse 13. Verse 14. He knows that his life is going to end soon.

And he wants to make sure he reminds them as much as possible. That's his passion, that they would know the truth. And so we're stirred up as well, right? We're reminded of things that we already know.

God is the creator of heaven and earth. Yes, we knew that. And we're stirred up. We're stirred up to care for this creation and his animals he's given us with respect because they belong to God.

[17 : 49] God is our loving father. We have favor because of Christ. Okay, yes, we knew that. And we're stirred up. If our favor is from God, our loving father, then we also are able to be loving fathers.

We don't need the favor that comes from our children's perfect obedience. And so we're able to have grace with them when they fail. We're stirred up. God is a generous God.

Not a hair can fall from our heads without him knowing. And so we're stirred up. If God cares for me in that way, maybe I don't have to hoard.

Maybe I can let some of my resources go to care for those who need it because God is the one who protects me. It's not enough to know the knowledge. It stirs up.

It moves us. God leaves the 99 to chase the one. Yes, I knew that. And I'm stirred up. If God interacts with me that way, then I also can pursue people in heart and challenging relationships.

[18 : 49] It is our review of the knowledge that we have that is meant to stir us up, to stir us up to obedience. And so we, as we come to this passage, we want to do the same things that Peter wants for these people in this church.

We put ourselves in places where we can be stirred up. We are stirred up together through worship. We are stirred up together with Scripture.

And we are stirred up together in relationship. We're stirred up through worship, with Scripture, in relationships. When you come this morning, as you're sitting now, this is not a place where there's supposed to be an information dump from me to you.

Right? No, we are here to be stirred up for Christ and His kingdom. We are not showing up here this morning just for another academic lecture.

No, we're coming to sing songs that we would remind our hearts of what's true and we'd be stirred up to lives of obedience. No athlete says, I don't need to go to practice today.

[20 : 01] I went last week. No, that would be ridiculous, right? Why do we sing the same songs year after year? Why don't we sing new songs every Sunday?

So we can be stirred up by way of reminder that we would put it in our hearts deep, that what would be true of us, what Peter wants, verse 15, he's making every effort. They would be able at any time to recall these things.

He wants these things on instant recall. He wants it in their working memory. And so we work for the same things. We're here in worship, right? Humble enough to realize that we need it.

If you meet someone, speaking of food, and they say, I never miss lunch. No matter what's happening during the day, always make sure I have lunch.

What do you think about that person? Wow, what a legalist. That person, he is so uptight. I bet his parents never let him have any fun.

[21 : 06] Because if his parents let him have fun, he would understand it's okay to miss lunch, right? He wouldn't be so uptight about it. No, that person doesn't have lunch every day because they're a legalist.

They have it because they need it. Because they know the nourishment and sustenance that their body requires. The same is true for us. We know that we need it, just as Peter knows for this people, we need to be stirred up.

We need reminder week after week, day after day of God and his grace. It is a physical principle and a spiritual principle, right? You all know this. If you don't use it, you lose it.

And it's even more true as we age, right? The less we use our bodies, the less we're able to. The less we're here with God in worship, the colder our hearts are going to be.

And so we come week after week knowing that we need it. Not only through worship, but of course this overlaps with worship, with scripture. We're reminding ourselves of the truth. That's what we talked about a few weeks ago with these precious and very great promises.

[22 : 09] We stir ourselves up with that. And then finally, in relationships, right? We are like Peter. Peter, verse 15, is making every effort for the sake of these people. We follow after Peter, making every effort as well to stir one another up by way of reminder.

Not with trite, insensitive words, but praying to God for wisdom that we would know what to speak and when to speak it. Reminding each other of God's goodness and his grace.

Reminding each other of God's provision for us in Christ and in our lives. We are looking to place ourselves where we can be reminded.

Not because we're legalists. Not because we're nerds. But because we're people who are hungry for grace and we know that we need it. Now this may sound a little bit like knowing better is doing better.

But of course, as Christians, we know that to know better is not to do better. What we have is not a problem of knowledge, but a problem of the heart. And so we see again that knowledge is merely an instrument.

[23 : 31] Remember, we looked a few weeks ago at the fact that knowledge is an instrument of God's power that he uses to play a song of obedience in our lives. It's an instrument. And so again, we look to the power behind it.

Of course, for us, it is God by his Holy Spirit using knowledge in our lives. He is the one who must be playing the knowledge if we expect any change.

And of course, this is what Jesus tells us in John chapter 14. When he's talking to his disciples, he tells them about the privilege of receiving the Holy Spirit. In fact, he considers it such a privilege that he tells them that it's better to have the Holy Spirit than to have Jesus with them.

Think about that for a second. Jesus considers him leaving this earth to be an upgrade because he's sending his spirit. He tells them in John chapter 16, it is to your advantage that I go away.

For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And then earlier in John 14, he tells them he's going to send them the Holy Spirit who will dwell with you and be in you.

[24 : 43] And then, of course, Peter is writing these things, remembering what Jesus has taught. Why? Because Jesus promised the Holy Spirit in John 14 would bring to their remembrance the things he had taught.

And so the Holy Spirit is reminding Peter of what Jesus taught. Peter is then stirring up these people by way of reminder.

In other words, he is not taking an academic exercise here. John 14 tells us the Holy Spirit will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

It's the Spirit, not the knowledge, that has the power. And so God is using that knowledge, using these reminders to stir us up.

He is sending his Spirit to bring his Word and his promises to our memory. It is one of the ways that he serves as the vine. Remember last time we talked about the fact that Jesus is the vine.

[25 : 47] We are the branches. How does he nourish us? One way is by his Spirit reminding us of his Word. Knowing better is not doing better.

Only knowledge, knowledge is only helpful when it is an instrument of God's Holy Spirit. And so we look to Jesus, right? Gardeners do the same thing over and over again.

If you're trying to take care of plants, you don't try to find a different water each morning. You're bringing the same water, right? Day after day, week after week.

Your plant doesn't talk back to you and say, could we try something new today? Maybe some Kool-Aid would be helpful. No, it's grateful for the water that you bring.

And so we also, we look to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He sends us his Spirit to stir us up, and he's able to send it because he has returned to the Father. He's able to send it because he's earned it for us by his death and his resurrection.

[26 : 51] And so this hope and confidence comes to those and only to those who have faith and hope in Jesus Christ, who have repented of their sins, acknowledging that they have no hope aside from Christ's death and his resurrection.

And so they are accepting him, right, as their vine. And so if you want to be reminded of what's true, if you want to be stirred up, if you want knowledge to actually lead to change, it must be knowledge that comes from the vine.

It must be knowledge that comes from Jesus Christ. He is the only option. And so that's why we pray every week, every Sunday, that God would send his Spirit because we know that we need it.

That's why I pray before every sermon that God would send his Spirit, not as some ritual or word spoken over and over, but as an acknowledgement that without God's Spirit, what we are doing here today is worthless.

We need him and his power to stir us up. We need him to stir us up with these reminders because, and only because, God is at work through them.

[28 : 09] We're going to end today our closing song. I'm going to invite you to take a look at it on page six. It's a song about being stirred up by way of reminder. The last line, so we'll go backwards, tells us this.

Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. In other words, author of this hymn doesn't have a knowledge problem.

He has a heart problem. He's being pulled away over and over. There's a power at work in his heart. His heart is wandering.

So what does he do? Second verse. Stirs himself up by way of reminder. He tells us that he raises an Ebenezer. Now, we don't talk about Ebenezers very often today.

It sounds somewhat obscure, but actually it comes from the Old Testament in 1 Samuel. Samuel, a prophet of God, sets up a stone. Ebenezer, by the way, means stone of help.

[29 : 13] He sets up this stone in 1 Samuel 7, verse 12, as a reminder of when God helped them against the Philistines. By the way, God had helped them against the Philistines despite their unfaithfulness and their cowardice.

And so Samuel sets up a reminder not of their faithfulness, but of God's faithfulness. And so this hymn writer is referring to that. Here I raise up my reminder, my Ebenezer. What is he reminding himself of?

He's reminding himself of basic truths. Hither by thy help I'm come, and I hope by thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God, he to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

He reminds himself that Jesus paid the price for his sins. Not Christianity 201, not Christianity 301, Christianity 101.

And he has that Ebenezer, that reminder, over and over. And then we see, finally, the first verse. What does he expect to happen? He says, come thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace.

[30 : 21] In other words, he knows that God will use knowledge as an instrument of his power to play a song of obedience in his life by way of reminder.

God is the one tuning our hearts. He is doing that. He is stirring us up by his spirit as a way of reminder so that we would be like this writer.

Our hearts would be tuned to sing his grace. That's what we're gonna do now. First, I invite you to pray with me. Our Father in heaven, we thank you again for your word. That nourishes us and sustains us.

We ask that you would do it now, not through our achievement or accomplishment in knowing, but through your spirit which uses it powerfully in our lives. That you would remind us of our weakness and because of it we would come back to you for food day after day, week after week, year after year, walking in faithfulness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And it's in his name that we pray. Amen.