

Peace Of Remind

2 Peter 1:1-2 January 11, 2026

Final speeches are different than last words. Last words are often private or unexpected - given in whisper. But when a figure knows that this will be their parting message to their audience and the world, it's interesting to hear what they consider to be the most important thing to say.

In 399 BC, Socrates was put on trial. After being condemned to die, he gave a speech defending the truth of his teachings. His closing line was, "The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows."¹

Plato records that, in his final hours, Socrates had a talk with his friends and followers about the soul, the afterlife, and truth. Sadly, Socrates came to the conclusion that we cannot know true knowledge or truth in life.² And then he departed this world, drinking the poison hemlock.

This morning we begin a study of 2nd Peter. I bring up the story of Socrates because there are a few parallels but also important contrasts when it comes to *this* book. You see, *this* is the Apostle Peter's closing speech. He knows that he is soon to die. It wasn't paranoia - Jesus had told him it was about to happen. And so, Peter writes this closing speech, defending the truth of the Gospel message. But *unlike* Socrates, Peter's conclusion is *not* that we cannot lay hold of eternal truth and knowledge in this life. Rather, Peter encourages us to *grow here and now* in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And that *as we grow in that knowledge*, our lives will be dramatically impacted.

This wasn't a *new* message. Peter will say, "I'm writing this letter to *remind* you of things you already know." He reminds us that God's promises *can* be trusted. That God *knows* how to rescue us when we're in trouble. He reminds us that Christ Jesus *is* going to return one day and set all things right. He reminds us how to not be *useless* Christians, and how to never stumble! He reminds us of all we've received from God - *everything* we need for life and godliness.

But he also reminds us that we face opponents to the truth. Scoffers who mock God - those who laugh at the idea of Christ's return. Even more dangerous is the fact that false teachers will continually work to infiltrate the Church to corrupt your knowledge with destructive ideas.

But *unlike* the defeated surrender of Socrates closing words, Peter's final message gives us *hope*. It is a reminder that the Savior has revealed Himself so that we can have true, eternal knowledge of Him. And that knowledge brings power to life.

Now, 2 Peter has been called the "dark corner" of the New Testament.³ And I'm guessing that it's not a book that most of us are very familiar with. It doesn't usually make the same splash in our minds as does Romans or Ephesians or Philemon. And yet, despite only being about 1,500 words

¹ Plato *The Defense Of Socrates*, 37-42

² Plato *Phaedo*

³ D. Edmond Hiebert *Second Peter And Jude*

long, it contains some deeply memorable and incredibly important gems of Scripture. Like: "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance," and, "With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day," and, "God is not slack concerning His promises," and that we can, "hasten the coming of the day of the Lord."

This book is usually categorized as a "general" epistle, alongside books like Hebrews, James, and the letters of John, but it's very likely a *prison* epistle as well.⁴ Caesar Nero was violently, savagely persecuting Christians. He would soon order the execution of both Peter and then Paul.

Peter was likely in Rome awaiting crucifixion sometime around 65AD.⁵ His audience seems to be Gentile Christians living in Asia Minor.⁶ We know 1 Peter was written to Gentile believers in places like Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia.⁷ Peter will say that this is the second letter he wrote to his audience, but it's possible he's referring to a *different* letter we don't have.

Though short, this letter has some wonderful language things going on. We're not Greek scholars, but when you consult people who do read this letter in Greek, they will tell you that Peter is very purposeful and creative in his word choice. In fact, he uses 57 words that are not found anywhere else in the New Testament. He uses 32 that are not found in the Greek version of the Old Testament, and 13 that have so far not been found in *any* extant Greek literature.⁸

One scholar writes, "The list...includes enough extremely rare words to show that the author is widely read, and fond of rather literary and poetic, even obscure words."⁹ The burly fisherman. We so often imagine Peter as gruff and unrefined, yet this letter shows he had a love for language - that he was "*captivated* by a striking word."¹⁰

As always, there are those who want to convince you that Peter *did not* write this book. That it was written maybe a hundred years after his death by someone using Peter's name. The reason is because of certain issues in the writing style and because there aren't direct quotes from this letter in the 1st or 2nd century writings of the church fathers. And so, some modern scholars have decided that 2 Peter was what they call a "transparent fiction."¹¹ Meaning that it was a genre of literature that *everyone* knew wasn't *really* written by the person the book claims.

Did any of you see that recent video of Glenn Beck interviewing an AI George Washington on video? He's sitting there, asking George questions about society and politics. And, obviously, we all know that's not *really* George Washington. Some scholars say *that's* what 2 Peter is. A later person's idea of what Peter *would* say if he were still alive.

⁴ Hiebert

⁵ Edwin Blum *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 12: Hebrews Through Revelation*

⁶ J.N.D. Kelly *The Epistles Of Peter And Of Jude*

⁷ 1 Peter 1:1

⁸ Richard Bauckham *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 50: Jude, 2 Peter*

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

One problem with that idea is that...no one knew it wasn't Peter. There was never *any* name other than his connected with this letter.¹² And the popular belief in the Church was that this letter was genuine in the late 100's, *and* the late 200's, *and* in the 300's.

Now, there *were* New Testament books that were debated. Here's why: During the early decades of the Church, there were *many* books and letters circulating around that *claimed* to be Apostolic. And the Church had to evaluate whether a book was *truly* written by an Apostle or an associate of an Apostle *and* whether it was inspired. You know, Paul wrote letters that aren't in the Bible. In First Corinthians, he talks about an earlier letter he had *already* written them - First **FIRST** Corinthians.¹³

But there were many false letters going around bearing Apostle's names. For example, the early Church also took a look at books called *The Apocalypse Of Peter*, *The Gospel Of Peter*, *The Acts Of Peter*, and *The Teaching Of Peter*. All of those were found to be inauthentic.¹⁴

The Church was *very* careful and *very* critical about what they acknowledged as inspired Scripture. *Seven* New Testament books really had to be evaluated, discussed, and ultimately recognized as canonical: Hebrews, James, Jude, 2nd Peter, 2nd and 3rd John, and Revelation. Pseudepigrapha was absolutely not accepted by Christians in the early Church.¹⁵

I take the time to say all that because there are scholars who *rush* to tell you the Bible wasn't written when it says it was and wasn't written by *who* it says it was, but that's ok, it doesn't matter.

But it *does* matter. As one source notes, "fakes [and fakers] lie at the heart of Peter's concern in this letter."¹⁶ With some of his last breaths, he wants us to remember to watch out for those who would come in and undermine the truth of the Gospel.

The writer of this letter says he's Peter, says he's an eye-witness of the transfiguration, says Jesus has spoken directly to him. If it's *not* him, how could we accept theological content from a deceiver?

This is the last testament of the one who walked on the water with Jesus. The one who ran to the tomb on Easter morning. The one who preached at Pentecost. The one who brought the Gospel to the Gentiles. The fisherman who became a fisher of men. He begins his last message in verse 1:

2 Peter 1:1 - ¹Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

He starts by identifying himself as a *servant* and an *apostle*. The apostles were a special position established by Jesus for the Church in the first century. There are some who claim that title today, but we would say that the office has ceased. The *apostles* were a set of men, appointed by God, to

¹² Hiebert

¹³ 1 Corinthians 5:9

¹⁴ Blum

¹⁵ Douglas Moo *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude, EBC*

¹⁶ Dick Lucas & Christopher Green *The Message Of 2 Peter & Jude*

be the foundation of the Church.¹⁷ It was through these men that the Lord delivered the doctrines on which the Church is built. In the book of Acts, we see the Christians in Jerusalem devoting themselves daily to prayer, to fellowship, to breaking bread, and to the apostles' teaching.¹⁸

This is important because *when* Judaizers came along with a new teaching, *when* Gnostics came along with their teaching, *when* Joseph Smith comes along and says, "I've got a *new* revelation," we can know that it is *not* from God. Because, as Jude explains, the Christian faith - meaning the body of truth taught by the apostles - has been delivered once for all.¹⁹

Peter also identifies himself as a *servant* of Jesus. The word means a slave. It stresses dependence on the Lord.²⁰ But here's what we need to understand, especially as people who love autonomy and independence: To be a servant of Jesus is a title of *honor*. There are wonderful times in the Old Testament where God looks down with pleasure on a person and says, "Look at My *servant* Job. My servant Moses. My Servant Jacob. My servant David."

We hear the word servant or slave and our minds are conditioned to recoil. To us, to be a servant means to be cordoned and shackled. A state to be avoided or liberated from. But understand, to be a servant of Jesus Christ *is to be truly free*.

Do you want to be free? All humans are slaves to some master. Boil it down and you are either a slave to sin or a slave to the Savior, Who bought you with His own blood. Here's what God says about those who serve Him:

1 Corinthians 7:22 - ²² For he who is called by the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave.

If you want to know true freedom in this life, true fulfillment, true purpose and satisfaction, serve Jesus. He is the only Master Who will set you free and make you *alive*.

Now Peter we have received a faith equal to his. This is a mind-blowing statement.

First, what does he mean by *faith*? Does he mean the body of teaching - the doctrines of Christianity which form our spiritual understanding and practice - or does he mean our act of believing and obeying *in* faith? The truth is, *both* aspects apply.

There is *one* faith for all Christians. Every believer, no matter where or when you live or what God has called you to, has the same revelation given to us. But also it's important for us to understand that the vitality of our faith does not have to be *lesser* than what we see in the New Testament.

¹⁷ Ephesians 2:20

¹⁸ Acts 2:42

¹⁹ Jude 3

²⁰ *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*

We naturally think, "Oh, the apostles...look at *their* faith. Look at their communion with Jesus." But Peter is saying that the Gentile Christians in Asia Minor and we Christians in Central California are not second-class spiritual citizens. *Every* Christian has equal access to God.²¹ Every Christian has equal standing before God.²²

God supplies our faith out of His *righteousness*. He is *just*. He is not a respecter of persons. God wants to do meaningful, supernatural work through your life. That doesn't necessarily mean He wants to work signs and wonders in your life - though He could - it means He wants to bear the same spiritual, supernatural fruit in your heart, your mind, your relationships and opportunities as He has done for believers in every other generation - including Peter's generation.

Here's why that's so good and so important: The era of the *apostles* was coming to an end. James was dead. Peter was about to be dead. Paul was soon to follow. If church history is correct, within the next few years almost *all* of them would be gone. What would happen to the Church? The Church would continue because the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Yes, they had a unique calling. Yes, they were the foundation, but the Lord Jesus would continue to build and invigorate and empower His church in life after life, era after era, up to and including *our* lives today.

Now here Peter already gives us a very important piece of theology: He identifies Jesus Christ as God. The Greek grammar is clear: Both titles - God and Savior - are referring to Jesus.²³

There are many out there who deny the Trinity. They claim it isn't taught in the Bible. It absolutely is. In type, in narrative, and in direct revelation as we see here. Jesus *is* God. He is the Second Person of the Trinity. Co-equal. Co-eternal. Identical in power, character, and nature with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. One God in three Persons.

2 Peter 1:2 - ² May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

As God sends the eternal truths of life and salvation - He says, "Tell them I want grace and peace to be *multiplied* to them." Not a one-time benefit. Not a single-use coupon. An ongoing, increasing *filling* of His grace and peace. *Even when* Nero is Caesar and Christians are systematically murdered. Even when we're being laughed at. Even when the circumstances of life are difficult.

In the Roman system, "grace" was measured out depending on how important you were. In a judicial context, you received favor in proportion to your social or economic power.²⁴ If you were wealthy and prominent, you got more grace.

But that's not how God does things. God's grace is for anyone who will receive it. Anyone thirsty who will come to Him for a drink of the water of life. He is the God Who gives grace to His enemies.

²¹ Blum

²² Thomas Schreiner *The New American Commentary, Volume 37: 1, 2 Peter, Jude*

²³ See Moo, Gene Green *Jude & 2 Peter*

²⁴ G. Green

Now, peace and grace make a big difference in the experience of our lives. In a turbulent world, we *need* it. So how do we get this gift from God? Peter explains we lay hold of it *through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord*.

As we grow in our knowledge of God and of Jesus, our lives become more and more filled by His grace and peace. As humans, we're prone to think we must get what we need from God some other way. By some mystical experience, or by doing certain things to merit special access to God. But Peter makes it plain: It is through *knowledge*. In these three short chapters, he's going to use the words know or knowledge 16 times!²⁵ Remember those old PSA commercials - *The More You Know?* Or the old adage, "It's all about who you know?" That really is true in the Christian life.

Now understand, growing in knowledge doesn't just mean memorizing facts about God. Christian knowledge comes through education *and* experience. Because Christian *knowledge* of Jesus is intellectual *and* personal *and* relational.²⁶ It is a devotion of head *and* heart *and* hands as we study, as we internalize, and as we practice what we know to be true.

But Peter, like Paul,²⁷ reveals that the secret to the Christian life is for us to grow in our knowledge of Jesus. Knowledge here refers to understanding something completely, through and through.²⁸ It's something we progress in better and better no matter what stage of life or faith we're in. *All* of us can grow and *must* grow if we want to receive the grace, the peace, the joy, the wisdom, the endurance, the strength we need for this life.

Now that doesn't mean all we do is study. In a few verses, Peter is going to say, "Ok, your Christian faith is growing in knowledge, but each of you needs to *supplement* that knowledge with *activity*. With the *exercise* of faith." Grace is a gift, but we must be sure we're not receiving that gift in vain.²⁹

So here starts the last testament of Simon Peter. He says the best thing he could do is remind us of what we already know: That there is a gracious, attentive, all-powerful God Who wants to be *known* by you. That if you're in trouble, He's able to rescue. That if you are confused about the future, His promises can be trusted. That no matter what happens, we can face it with confidence and hope because Jesus Christ cannot fail. And as we walk with Him through life, He will continue His supernatural work through us because He is a *Giver* of faith and power and fruit and effectiveness.

You and I have *everything we need* for life and for godliness. And because of Jesus our lives have the potential to hasten His return to make all things right. What a testament! Not the Socratic whimper of defeat and resignation - but the triumphant rallying cry of clear sight, sure hope, and shining glory cultivated in us and coming for us!

²⁵ Hiebert

²⁶ Schreiner

²⁷ Ephesians 1:17

²⁸ Hiebert

²⁹ 2 Corinthians 6:1