

## The Gratitude for the Saints

2 Peter 1: 12-15

As we continue to examine this first chapter of Peter's second epistle, I am convicted and encouraged by the heart of this man of God. His love and concern for the church cannot be missed or overlooked. He is now a seasoned apostle and his focus is fixed on eternal matters. Clearly Peter is not seeking personal gain or recognition; his heartbeat is for the church and her longevity. He wants to do all he can in the time remaining to strengthen the church and prepare her for the work of ministry.

This particular passage is so refreshing, particularly in today's spiritual climate in America. Most pastors and evangelists are focused on the longevity and success of their personal ministries, often at the expense of the local church. I am well aware that the Lord's church existed long before my call into ministry, and she will remain until He returns for her. This is not about me; it is all about exalting the Lord, reaching those apart from Christ, and strengthening the church. Every pastor and evangelist need the same gratitude and devotion Peter shared for the church.

I want to examine the [assertions](#) of Peter within the text as we consider: [Gratitude for the Saints](#).

**I. The Devotion of Peter** (12) – [Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know \*them\*, and be established in the present truth.](#) Here Peter revealed his committed devotion for the church. Consider:

**A. His Intercession** (12a) – [Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things.](#) Peter had already spoken of his desire for the continued growth in the faith and their knowledge of the Lord, striving to guide them into a more fulfilling and productive walk with the Lord. He then declared that he would never be negligent in praying for their pursuit and remembrance of these principles. He taught them in the ways of God and then sought the Lord to aid them in their pursuit of spiritual maturity. Peter was not content just to share biblical truth – he prayed they would remember it and put truth into practice! (Do we pray for the blessing and strength of the body of Christ as we should? I fear we are good at telling others how they should live and yet fail to pray that the Lord would enable them to continue in the faith.)

**B. His Admonition** (12b) – [though ye know \*them\*, and be established in the present truth.](#) Peter desired the church to remain in the faith. He wanted them to remember these eternal truths and put them into practice, literally establishing their lives upon the truth. He urged the church to

realize faith that is not put into practice is a lacking faith. Biblical knowledge was great, but unless they lived according to the precepts of truth, they would never attain spiritual maturity. His desire for them was much more than knowledge of Scripture; he desired transformed lives through their understanding of the Scripture. (We cannot be satisfied with merely teaching and sharing the Word of God. We must seek to instruct and encourage adherence to the Word. Knowing the principles of the Word are great, but we must also live according to those principles!)

**II. The Compassion of Peter (13)** – *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.* Peter also revealed his heart-felt compassion for the church. Bear in mind, he is not writing to a particular congregation; he is writing to the church at large. Peter was concerned for the entire body of Christ, having compassion for her. Notice:

**A. His Expectation (13a)** – *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.* Don't be confused by the wording in the text. Peter did not refer to a church building. The tabernacle he speaks of is his physical body. Peter expected to serve the Lord and His church as long as he lived. He could not imagine a time in his future when he would no longer have a burden for the church. His calling and commitment to the Gospel had no expiration date. He was determined to serve the Lord as long as he lived. (My how we need those with the same commitment and desire. I know as we age, we reach a place when our stamina and health is not what it used to be, but we cannot quit on the Lord. The Lord was faithful unto the end, willing to lay down His life for us. We must be willing to serve Him as long as we live!)

**B. His Exhortation (13b)** – *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.* Regarding the church, Peter had one goal in mind for the remainder of his life – stirring them up through prayer. Again, don't be confused with the text. Peter does not refer to stirring up a conflict or causing division. In fact, he desired just the opposite. He was going to pray that the Lord would stir up their faith within them, bringing to their remembrance the truth they had received, desiring continued growth and faithfulness. Peter wanted to build up the church, seeing continued growth and maturity. (Clearly, we are lacking those with the gift of exhortation. Many today are self-centered when it comes to the church and her work. They are committed to the causes that interest or benefit them. We need those, like Peter, who will pray for the church to be strengthened in every area, becoming a powerful force in our communities!)

**III. The Submission of Peter (14)** – *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.* While seeking to encourage and strengthen the church, Peter

revealed his submission to Christ. Surely, this would challenge the church to live submitted as well. Consider:

**A. His Awareness** (14) – Peter did not deny or shy away from the fact that life was brief at best. He knew that he would soon come to the end of life. The Lord had revealed that unto him, and Peter had successfully embraced the inevitable.

- It is not my intention to create a mood of depression in the midst of such an encouraging passage, but Peter revealed a truth we all must embrace and understand. Life at best is brief. None are promised tomorrow. You have already enjoyed the last sunrise you are guaranteed to experience. As we ponder the brevity of our lives, we can react in one of two ways. Such thoughts can create a sense of dread and anxiety, or they can motivate us to press on for the Lord. Regardless of our reaction, this truth will not change. We only have a limited time to accomplish anything of lasting value for the Lord. The sooner we embrace our mortality, and determine to make the most of every opportunity, each day we live, the sooner we will enjoy spiritual victory and a sense of fulfillment in life.

**B. His Faithfulness** (14) – While Peter doesn't specifically say, I am convinced he implied his determination to remain committed unto the Lord for the remainder of his life. Peter didn't know when his day would come to meet the Lord, but he wanted to remain faithful until the end. As long as he lived, there would be work to accomplish for Christ. He had started well in the faith and he wanted to finish strong for the Lord. Peter was not interested in giving up or giving out; he wanted to endure for Christ. (I have prayed many times – Lord, let me be found faithful when you call for me. I want to be able to say as Paul: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*)

**IV. The Preparation of Peter** (15) – *Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.* Finally, we discover Peter's desire to enable the church to carry on after his departure. Consider:

**A. The Labor** (15) – Bear in mind that Peter knew he would soon be called to meet the Lord. The time he had left to minister to the church was uncertain. Rather than focusing on ensuring the church would be able to meet his needs, he focused on preparing the church to continue on in his absence. Peter understood that the work of the Lord was much greater than one man or ministry. The final years of his life were spent preparing the church to remain faithful to the Lord and the work of the Gospel.

- This simple statement really challenged me in the work I have been called unto. Far too many pastors and church leaders are focused on self-preservation. Many seem to lead the church in such a way that creates dependence upon them. Rather than seeking to ensure the health and longevity of the ministry of the church, they seek to preserve the longevity of their ministry at the church, regardless of the cost to the health and well-being of the church. The success of a pastor and his ministry at a local church will only be accurately measured after his departure. If he has equipped the church to carry on in his absence, then his ministry has been successful. If he created an atmosphere of dependence upon him, his ministry will have been lacking!

**B. The Legacy** (15) – [Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.](#) Peter had committed his life in service to the Lord and His church. He would continue to labor, as long as he lived, to leave a lasting legacy after his death. He wanted to lead the church in such a way that she would abide faithful, even in his absence. He wanted to instill biblical principles that would be lived out and passed on to successive generations. Peter did not want to depart feeling his work had been in vain. He wanted to ensure the health of the church beyond his lifetime.

- Should that not be the desire of every leader within the church today? We must remember that ministry is not about us and our reputation. We are placed in positions of leadership to train and equip the next generation of leaders to carry on in our absence. I am thankful for those who were committed to investing in me. It would be impossible to measure the benefit of their guidance and prayers. I want to leave something behind when the Lord calls for me. I want to leave a legacy of truth that will aid and equip future generations to continue in the faith. The church will remain until the Lord returns, but we will have an impact on the health and longevity of this particular congregation. I want to be faithful and leave a godly example!

**Conclusion:** This has been a beautiful passage to consider. Do we share the same commitment and passion for the church that Peter did? Are we committed to doing all we can to encourage and promote growth among the local church? Leaders, what are your goals and ambitions? Are you seeking to equip a future generation to lead? If the Lord has spoken, I urge you to come before Him and receive the help and wisdom you need. If you are yet unsaved, you are not part of the church and cannot possess a love for her. Come to Christ in repentance and faith unto salvation if He has spoken to you!