

2 Peter 1:16-21

When We Abandon Scripture

The other day I saw a picture of one of the most memorable moments in my life. That one moment has launched a thousand moments and I think it is safe to say that without that one moment I probably wouldn't be here today. Some of you saw the picture that I posted on Facebook – that picture was from my ordination. That picture brought up a point that I want us to consider this morning. Who we are right now is determined by the decisions of the past and the hopes of the future, but we know these things now.

Right now, all of are building our lives. Who we are is not who we will be nor is it who we were, though all of these factors come together. You only have one life, you don't get another shot at this, how are you living it? How are you determining that you are living it the way that it was intended to be lived? But therein lies the issue, can we determine there is a right way and a wrong way to live? Sure, in the same way that we can determine circles from squares, night from day, healthy from sick.

Today we mark begin a new series on the Reformation. Some of you say what on earth is the reformation. If I were to describe the entire protestant reformation in a single phrase it would be back to the Bible, or as the Reformers themselves said it, *ad fontes*, back to the source. Through the centuries the Church had seen an erosion of the Bible as the final authority. The Reformation sought to make this right.

Let's think for a moment about what is at stake in the question of authority. If you are lost on a dangerous road and you come to a fork. One way leads to the destination you desire, the other just keeps looping on the dangerous road. There has to be some way for you to make this important decision, you don't know, the stakes are too great for you to get it wrong. You don't want to consult an authority, one amongst many, you want *the* authority.

The issue of authority is not something new to us, nor was it new to the reformers, the issue of authority is as old as the Garden of Eden. The first question raised in the Bible is a question of doubting God's absolute authority. The Serpent said to the Woman, "Did God say? God didn't mean what he said, don't trust him." And the earth has felt the consequences ever since.

This is the world that Jesus stepped into, a world questing truth, questioning God's Word and God's way and Jesus has come as the sum total of all of them – The Word of the Father, the way, the truth, and the life.

I want us to see the importance of Authority and to do so let's read 2 Peter 1.

READ TEXT

What happens when we abandon Scripture? 2 Things

1. We Lose Our Firm Foundation

When enter the world of Scripture we enter a way to view the world. The worldview of Scripture is a beautiful worldview, a true world view. Think with me, are you wanting purpose, you'll find it here; do you want hope, you'll find it here; do you need forgiveness, it is freely available; do you need joy, happiness, it's all here. What about love, it is not only spoken of, it is demonstrated immeasurably.

Let's begin reading at verse 1, I want to show you how we get to verse 16.

- All of these truths are ours because of Christ

Peter is an apostle who is concerned about his fellow followers of Christ. His concern is elevated because he knows he will soon die. As he is facing death, he works to ensure the progress of the gospel. This is a man who is consumed with Christ. Christ always has this kind of effect. Christ is someone so great he is worth a thousand lifetimes. And if I had a thousand lifetimes I would give them all to Jesus.

Peter writes to ensure the progress of the gospel. Death is coming for Peter, but the truth of God must go on. There is a succession that must be carried along – the message of the Prophets and Apostles. We need this message to continue today. We need to carry along the ministry of Christ - the gospel.

Look closer at verses 12-15. There is a reason Peter is writing so affectionately, can't you hear it? He is not distantly concerned, his concern for the church is deeply personal. See the word in verse 12, *firmly established*? This is an interesting word choice for Peter the Rock. In the Gospels Peter is anything but a rock. He had his moments where he shone and others where he just blew it, Jesus even called him Satan one time. Perhaps Peter's greatest failure was around a campfire while Jesus was on trial and facing crucifixion. Peter denied Jesus not once but three-times! Jesus told him he was going to deny him but Jesus also assured him by telling Peter that he prayed for him. What did Jesus pray? Luke 22:32, *But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again strengthen your brothers.* The word strengthen that Jesus uses here is the same one that Peter uses in verse 12 and is translated *firmly established*.

Peter knew what it was like to waver, knew what it was like to blow it, and so he writes to strengthen us. It means so much coming from Peter. Peter is saying, I blew it guys with him right in front of me. I have felt the shame, regret, but I have also felt the joy of his forgiveness. Which emotion do you think he remembered the most? I think it was forgiveness. This is why he could say one of my favorite verses in Scripture, *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.* (1 Peter 1:8-9). I think he remembered grace the most. This ministry of strengthening, is the reason Peter writes. He uses this word again in 1 Peter 5:10:

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and (here it is) establish you.

And he uses a similar word at the end of 2 Peter. 2 Peter 3:17:

You therefore, beloved, knowing thus beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lost your own stability (there it is).

What is Peter's tactic to face his concerns? What is Peter doing to do about wavering? His tactic – point them to Scripture. Look at verse 15. What effort is Peter going to do so that after he is gone we will be able to recall these things? He is going to write it down. Where? The Gospel of Mark. What does the Gospel of Mark do? The Gospel of Mark, written by Mark under Peter's instruction, presents not just the life and ministry of Jesus, but casts the historical Jesus in a certain light – as the fulfillment of Scripture, Jesus according to Scripture. Why did Peter write it down? He tells us, *to stir us up by way of reminder*.

There's another beautiful phrase. It is a term associated with sleeping, *stir up*. When Katie and I moved into our house one of the first things that we needed to do was WD-40 the doors. When we go in to check on the babies, we don't need a squeaky hinge to sabotage our sneaking. We don't want to stir the baby. You should have seen these new parents with Adalee. There was a spot on the floor that we didn't know about until we had our little baby in our room sleeping in her bed beside our bed. You should have seen us, like Olympic gymnasts trying to jump over that spot where the floor squeaked and cracked.

Peter is writing these things so that we will be stirred, so that our affections will be aroused and our hearts attuned to his grace. The only way we can be stirred in our affections for Christ is through Scripture. Without Scripture we don't know Christ, and if we don't know Christ then we don't know anything because he is the way, truth, and life.

Which brings us to our second point, when we abandon Scripture we abandon Jesus.

2. We Abandon Jesus

Don't miss the context of 16-21. The immediate context is 12-15. Peter wants to stir us up and how does he stir us up? By reminder. Reminding us how? Scripture. Why talk about Scripture? Because Scripture reveals Christ. Every page whispers his name.

Why do we need to tie our lives to Scripture? Because without Scripture we don't know Jesus. There are many *Jesus*' in the world, but only one *Jesus* of Scripture. Many mythological pictures of Jesus, but only one true Jesus who saves. How do we know the saving Jesus from any other Jesus? Scripture. Scripture is the authority. If your Jesus doesn't match Scripture then you have to abandon your Jesus, that is, if you want the way, the truth, and the life. There is salvation in no one else. For there is only one name given under heaven by which we must be saved.

Why does Peter seek to ground us in Scripture? He had first-hand experience that left to himself he would get it wrong. Let's think back to Peter's best moment. When Peter confessed Christ and got his new name at Caesarea-Philippi what happened? Peter says, *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*. But listen closely to what Jesus says. *Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven*. (Matthew 16:16-17) Peter didn't come to this conclusion on his own. Not even because Jesus was standing right in front of him. The Father revealed it, he heard it – seeing isn't believing, hearing is believing.

Just a few verses later, in verses 21-23, Jesus has to call Peter Satan! And then in the next chapter Peter is up with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration, which is what he is talking about in 2 Peter and he gets interrupted by the Father. Peter wants to build three tents, again confusing who the Son is, and the Father says, *Listen to him*.

You can't know Jesus apart from Scripture. CAN'T. This is why Peter says we are in a better position than he was. After the Cross and Resurrection, after the Spirit everything changed. Not that the message wasn't there before but we didn't know the message. We had echoes and clues but we didn't know what we were looking at. There's one passage in Scripture that, when first read has seems so mystical and mysterious. Luke 24. After the crucifixion, after the resurrection, Jesus appears to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. The text says, *their eyes were kept from recognizing him*. Why? So that he could point them to Scripture. Flesh and blood was right in front of them but Jesus wants them to see him, and you can't see him without Scripture. Jesus says to them *Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*. Later when he breaks bread with them their eyes are opened and they say, *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?* (Luke 24:26-27, 32)

This is why Peter says we are in a better place. We have Scripture, we have the key to Scripture to which we will do well to pay attention. Once you see Jesus, you can't not see Jesus. Look at verse 19. The word is more confirmed because the lamp has shone and the morning star is rising. That reference is from Numbers and talks about the day coming when Jesus comes and crushes his enemies, the hope of our future with God. This is why Scripture is not a matter of one's interpretation – it stands in authority over us, we don't stand in authority over it.

When you abandon Scripture, you forfeit hope. Listen, over the next few weeks there is one sentence that I am going to give you that we will be unpacking. This sentence rises from Scripture and is the sentence that forms the bedrock of the Reformation.

Salvation (our only hope in life and death), according to Scripture, is through Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, to God's glory alone.

So how are building your life? On solid ground or sinking sand? The Bible is the inerrant, infallible, authority. Don't abandon Scripture, build your life on the firm foundation of God's Word.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/awc/2016/11/d-a-carsons-subtle-ways-to-abandon-the-authority-of-scripture/>

See for Follow-up