

The Christian's Rooting Reflex

Text : **II Peter 1: 1-15, 3: 14-18**

S#1.

S#2.

A. We place great significance to the last words of a dying man.

1. When one knows that death is approaching he will *"put his affairs in order."*
 - a. He will make sure his Last Will and Testament is updated, signed, and notarized.
 - b. He will write down how he wishes for his body to be laid to rest.
 - c. He will give his final counsel to those he holds dear.
2. We place great significance on a person's last words because :
 - a. We know that what they are saying is important to them.
 - b. We understand what they say is very reflective of their value system.
3. The Apostle Peter wrote two books admonishing Christians to stay faithful.

B. Those books, I & II Peter, are the Apostle's last words to us.

S#3.

1. No history, but vague references in non-biblical writings refer to Peter as having been crucified and that he was martyred about 68 A.D. during Nero's reign.
2. **I Peter** is believed to have been written about 64 A.D.
 - a. It was written to those Christians who were driven from Jerusalem by persecution.
 - b. They were scattered in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor.
 - c. He urged the recipients to stand fast while undergoing oppression in their exile.
3. The book of **II Peter** appears to have been written to the same people at a later date; most likely in 68 A.D..
 - a. **3: 1** ... Peter references his first book assuming they received it.
 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,

S#4.

- b. No bible book is accurately dated, but Peter references his death as imminent. S#5.
II Pet. 1: 13-14 Therefore, I will 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** 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 will be able to call these things to mind.
 - c. Thus, **II Peter** is his final words to those who were scattered from Jerusalem.

Since we place special value on last words, let's skim Peter's last letter. S#6.

I. In order to have assurance of Heaven Christians must mature spiritually. S#7.**A. This echoes the teaching of Jesus.**

1. **Matt. 28: 19-20** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;
2. No matter how it is expressed, the process is always the same :
 - a. Present the gospel so as to create a responsive faith within them.
 - b. Part of the faith process includes immersion into a covenant relationship.
 - c. Once added to the kingdom, they must be trained to be good citizens - disciplined.

B. God has given us complete instructions for every aspect of Christian living. S#9.

1. **II Pet 1:3** – seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. #10.
2. **I Pet. 1: 10-12** ... The prophets who revealed salvation didn't understand it.
3. Like spoiled rich kids we have it all but squander it and take it for granted.

C. We must use God's instructions to keep adding to our faith. S#11.

1. **II Peter 1:5-7** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith, supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. #12.
2. This is the logical progression of Christian faith centered life.
 - a. You start off with faith, but you have to work at it. (**diligence**)
 - b. Immorality is applied faith and knowledge conforms it to God's will.
 - c. Self-control enables morality to become a way of life for the long haul.
 - d. As faith grows it affects your relationships and the way you treat others.

S#13.**D. The result of growing in knowledge and applying it is assurance of salvation.**

1. **II Peter 1:8-11** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. #14.
2. Therefore, continued growth is essential to our relationship with Christ.

E. In order to maintain our pattern of growth we must change our life. S#15.

1. **I Pet. 2: 1-3** Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy **S#16.**
and envy and all slander, **2 like newborn babies**, long for the pure
milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,
3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.
2. We must eliminate all desire to do evil ... malice, deceit, etc.
3. We must rekindle our Christian "**root reflex.**"
 - a. When an infant is born its reflexes are checked to insure that it has normal brain and nerve activity.
 - 1) **Babinski reflex.** When the sole of the foot is firmly stroked, the big toe bends back toward the top of the foot and the other toes fan out.
 - 2) **Grasp reflex.** Stroking the palm of a baby's hand causes the baby to close his or her fingers in a grasp.
 - 3) **Root reflex.** This reflex begins when the cheek near the corner of the **S#17.**
baby's mouth is stroked or touched. The baby will turn his or her head and open his or her mouth to follow and "root" in the direction of the stroking.
 - b. As all normal babies are born with this reflex, all who are born again have it.
 - c. Babies lose their rooting reflex as they mature, but those who are born again are urged to keep it active.
4. It's a fitting metaphor.
 - a. No mother ever had to teach her child to desire milk.
 - b. No mother ever had to flavor her milk to get her child to drink it.
 - c. It should be just as natural for a Christian to want to feed his soul on the word.

II. You were conceived with truth (1: 16-20) but you must grow and mature so **S#18.
you will be able to resist being led astray by the false teachers who will come.****A. All of the Apostles warned that false teachers would come. S#19.**

1. **II Peter 2:1-3** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there **S#20.**
will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce
destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them,
bringing swift destruction upon themselves. **2** Many will follow their
sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;
3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their
judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

2. The Apostle Paul warned about false teachers coming. **S#21.**

Acts 20: 28-29 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. **29** "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

3. The Apostle John warned about false prophets. **S#22.**

I John 4: 1 – Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

4. Jesus Himself warned about false prophets. **S#23.**

Matt. 7: 15 – Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

S#24.

B. God's judgment will come on all false teachers. "their destruction is not asleep"

1. The angels who sinned were cast out.
2. When the ancient world became too sinful, it was destroyed by the flood.
3. Sodom was destroyed by fire.
4. Balaam yielded to pressure and was rebuked by a donkey.

S#25.

C. Those who are led back into sin by the false teachers are worse off than BC.

1. They are like a dog returning to his own vomit.
2. He's like a washed pig returning to its wallow.
3. They become just like they were before - lost w/ no hope because they rejected Jesus

S#26.

III. Don't think that judgment will not come just because it has not happened.

A. Don't listen to the mockers.

II Peter 3:3-4 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with **S#27.** their mocking, following after their own lusts, **4** and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

S#28.

B. God knows what the mockers are saying, but He is in control .. not reactionary.

1. God is preserving His world until He is finished with it.
2. It seems long to man, but God does not measure time like we do. (**1000 = 1**)
3. **3:9** His delay is to our benefit .. It gives more people an opportunity to repent.

C. In His own time God will destroy this world with fervent heat. S#29.

II Peter 3:10 – But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens #30.
will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with
intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

D. Knowing this destruction is coming, what should our response be ? S#31.

II Pet. 3: 11-13 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what S#32.
sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,
because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning,
and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according
to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth,
in which righteousness dwells.

1. Faithfulness – All the faithful will dwell in a new and better place with God.
2. Anticipation – we should pray for the better place to come.

IV. Knowing what will happen, what should the Christian's response be ? S#33.

A. We should live each day ready for it to be the last day. S#34.

1. II Pet. 3: 14 – Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent S#35.
to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard
the patience of our Lord as salvation;
2. We lead sanctified lives because we want to ... not because we're afraid not to.

B. We are to prepare ourselves for a sustained battle against evil. S#36.

1. II Pet. 3: 17 – You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your S#37.
guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled
men and fall from your own steadfastness,
2. I Pet. 5: 8 – Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil,
prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
3. Eph. 6: 10f ... Paul warns us that we are fighting an unseen enemy.

S#38.

C. Just like in his first letter Peter instructs us to keep on developing as Christians.

1. He commands us :

II Pet. 3: 17-18 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your S#39.
guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled
men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace
and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2. The best way to be vigilant against false teachers is to know the truth.
John 8: 32 – you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. (*be & stay*)
3. Peter ended his letter as he started it, *you need to keep learning and maturing*.

S#40.

D. The apostle Paul instructed us that we needed to keep growing to stay faithful.

1. **Eph. 4:13-15** ... until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge #41. of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

- a. Do you want to be mature ? You cannot become mature apart from knowledge.
- b. Do you want to become spiritually stable ? You must learn the teachings of Jesus.
- c. Do you want to be secure in you salvation ? **Keep expending great effort to add : knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love**

2. Paul even admonished his star apprentice to keep concentrating on sound doctrine.

I Tim. 4: 6 – In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. S#42.

3. We all start off with milk, but by nature we want to eat solid food.

I Cor. 3: 2 – I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, S#43.

- a. Crawl ... Just open and read scripture.
- b. Walk ... Systematic study
- c. Run ... Discuss and share the word with others

CONCLUSION :

S#44.

A. You can become skilled with the word ... all it takes is discipline and diligence.

B. In only 15 minutes each morning you can read the whole bible every year. S#45.

1. The average American spends 3 to 5 hrs daily watching TV. 21 to 33 hrs per week
2. It only take 75 hrs to read the bible all the way through. **3 wks of TV (1500 hrs=20x)**

S#46.

C. Challenge : Dedicate 30 min. per day to uninterrupted study.
If you do this I guarantee you will never fall.

INVITATION :

Fold a piece of paper in half.

S#47.

On one side write what characterizes your life on it.

On the other side write what characterizes the life of Jesus.

Jesus is offering to switch sides with you if you will surrender to Him.

(**Optional Communion Slide** S#48.)

Lesson Text :**II Peter 1: 1-15,**

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: **2** Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. **4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. **5** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, **7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

12 Therefore, I will 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 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 will be able to call these things to mind.

II Peter 3: 14-18

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, **15** and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, **16** as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. **17** You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, **18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.