

2 Peter 1:16-21 - How much power – importance – is there in listening?

Today our eyes are fastened on this event from Jesus' life when He shown like the sun. What truth – what truths – does God teach us through this event? And what does this mean for our lives? This week I asked that with the Builders for Christ volunteers during our Tuesday noon devotion.

There's of course *more than* one answer. The group discussed:

- Jesus is true God – God the Son – (and) He is perfect for me.
- (Here is) Evidence that Jesus is part of the Trinity. (And) God, the Father, was pleased with His life.
- Jesus is the God-man. (And) He is always in control. They did not take His life from Him (when He soon after this died). He laid it down.
- This is a window to the glory in which we will one day live - a sneak peek.
- We will be with Jesus in Heaven because He died and rose again.
- This means we will live after we die, as Moses and Elijah were alive again.

And then the person who gave that last comment, and I think it was the final reply I read as I looked through the surveys, added this application: "I am to still study Scripture."

Ahhh! There. We've arrived. This is the truth, among so many important ones, that we are going to focus on. And how fitting – right? - when you see: the last word left echoing from heaven at this event points us to this very truth.

Think through how we arrive at that point. Peter at the sight of Jesus and Moses and Elijah wants to do some building. A few people seated here today are probably saying, "Yeah! Building! A man after my own heart." But that wasn't in God's plan. This wasn't a time for Jesus to remain on this mountain longer. Jesus would go now to His suffering & death. But before that, God the Father doesn't allow this event to end without speaking from heaven. "Wow!", you are hopefully thinking. Wow, God spoke from heaven! And He states two facts to start: "This is my Son." "I love Him – I am well pleased with Him." That includes everything He came to do to save us. Then He wraps up by saying: "**Listen to Him.**" |

And then we are given what may be *the perfect visual to help us remember that instruction from heaven*. What happens next? The disciples - down on their faces, terrified - only open their eyes and raise their heads again *when?* When Jesus speaks. When they *listen to Him*. He says, "Don't be afraid." And they lift up their eyes and see Jesus. And then they listen some more as He references His upcoming resurrection from the dead - something they didn't understand on that day. But - ohhhh! - what meaning and assurance they received from these words of Jesus later after He did rise from the dead, *just as He said!* We also walk away with the certainty His Word brings to us.

Assurance is what our Bible lesson from 2 Peter is all about. These words were recorded years after Jesus stood in His glory, Moses and Elijah with Him. But Peter certainly had not forgotten the event or the words from heaven he had heard. And by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Peter takes us straight to the same conclusion: Listen to Jesus! The place, of course, you have His Word is right here: the Bible. From cover to cover, the Old and the New Testament, this is God's Word - every word His own. 100% trustworthy. 100% true.

As we apply our topic of *listening* then, I want to pose a question to you:

- How much power is there in listening? How much importance is there?

We like to see things with our own eyes. But what about for times – for things – we don't have the ability to see? What then? How important is listening then? | And how much power is there, in that instance, in listening to someone else to inform us? Think this through.

As we seek to answer that, to help get to the answer, let me tell you about a video I saw. In it...



As it begins you see a man sitting on a park bench, holding a long, white cane – the kind used by a blind person as a mobility aid. The camera is panned in close. After a few moments, another man enters the scene; you see him appear just as he is sitting down at the same bench; he kind of slides in the scene

from the side. He has sunglasses on. He seems kind of trendy. He is younger. The blind man leans over toward him and after exchanging a few pleasantries about how nice the day is, he says, "Can you describe it to me, please? Can you tell me, what do you see out there? Can you tell me - what you see? Please, please." The younger man's head turns toward the blind man, and then after a pause, he starts describing: "There's a young boy flying a kite with a big smile... He nearly stepped on a young couple having a picnic."

And the blind man listens, and smiles. "What else? What else?" "A couple of guys are playing soccer over there, taking it very seriously, one of them is shoving the other. | Kids are by the pond, throwing bread in, and the ducks are fighting to get a free meal." | As the younger man describes on, there are some chuckles from the blind man. And more smiles. You can see he is so enjoying listening to other man's description for him of what he can't see.

A voice from somewhere not too distant calls, "Martin, we've been looking all over for you." And the young man says, "That's me. I've got to go." But as he starts to get up, the older man says: "Thank you. Thank you. I really appreciate that, Martin." "No, thank you," he replies, "Have a good day!" "Oh, I will. I most certainly will."

Oh, I mean, when I saw it, it was one of those chills – you know, maybe a few tears – moments.

And you maybe think you see my point by using the example. Does this make you think, does it have hit home: how important listening is when you can't see for yourself? *How important listening is when you can't see for yourself* is true. And it is part of the point. But there's more. Here's what our take away is today from 2 Peter ch.1. Please see it all: *How important listening to the right One is when you can't see for yourself!*

There is one more part to the video, which I haven't told you about yet. It comes after the blind man is shown sitting smiling for a few moments. Then the camera turns the other direction, it pans out to show the park. And there is just an empty lawn. There are none of the people there that the younger man, Martin, had described. Just an empty lawn as far as the eye can see. And very quickly before one maybe has a chance to process the significance, Martin is shown walking away with a long/white cane in his hand, and he is probing back and forth in front of him as he heads down the sidewalk. He too is... blind.

Oh, what a twist that was to me. And a little bigger moment of the emotions welling up may have happened. | The video presents an uplifting scene.

But | here's the truth I want you to take to heart, which adds another dimension beyond the film maker's intent (as far as I can tell). But it is really THE important take away today. One of the video's comments touches on it:



If the person to whom you are listening is equally blind as you, but you don't know it... And if the person just makes up what he tells you, it might not cause any damage if it just paints a picture of something harmless to think of (a day in the park). But – and I'll let you weigh the implications of this – if what the kind of questions you are asking about, and if what he tells you about, is the topic of finding your way to a safe place, and he doesn't have any more knowledge than you, then what's the outcome going to be? You might smile for a moment at his words, feeling all is well now, as if you have information you couldn't see on your own. But if you are now about to follow a blind person's directions to safety, and he simply came up with his own idea of a way there... you're in trouble. Right?

When it comes to spiritual truth, and the way to a right standing with God, this is the most critical fact to get straight. Jesus highlighted the magnitude of this. He explained about the Pharisees of His day who were promoting work-righteousness as the way to God: "They are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

And so we come back to the question:

- *For good or for bad*, how much power is there in listening – listening to someone else to inform you when there is something you can't see?

Listening to **the right One** makes all the difference then.

- What we can't see, we'll have to depend on someone else to tell us – someone else's voice who can see to explain for us and direct us.
- But we'll be careful that the One we are listening to is One that truly has the answers, and isn't just making stuff up.

And so Peter lays out for us the straight-forward fact of what we are dealing with in this book, the Bible: "These are not cleverly invented stories."

The Word of the Old Testament prophets has all been shown true. It was shown true in Jesus, the Christ – whom eyewitnesses saw. They saw Him this day shining in His heavenly glory. Another day soon risen to life again, after His death for us – they saw Him. He is God, God the Son. You'll get to see Him, eventually, when the time for that comes. But for your time right here and now... **Jesus shines to you right here.** Everything you need to know for His identity and How well He completed His work and What that means for you - it is all right here. Hold on to this Word. Hold on to this Word!

We learn here truth, which God had to reveal to us, or we never would have known: namely, God's approval of you and me would have never happened, if Jesus had not come to provide it for us. "All of us have become like one who is unclean; all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." But Jesus, God the Son, lived in our place. And His perfect life ended with His payment for sin – He suffered for all of our offenses against God. "And the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame. Everyone who trusts in Him will be saved."

Now ahead – in the days ahead – there is warning about just what kind of challenges, attacks, we'll face to hold on to this truth of Jesus. Right after the verses today, a warning follows: *"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves... with stories they have made up..." (2:1f)* So it shouldn't surprise us that Peter at the end of this Bible book, to close up what he writes, records: *"...be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. Instead, grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ."* 3:17-18

Your defense is this very Word. God through this Word works in you – strengthens you to keep holding to His truth. This truth which gives you and me the assurance of forgiveness, peace and eternal life – through faith in Jesus Christ. And so study it. Listen. Treasure. Guard. Share. Amen.