

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
www.lutheranlccf.org
Septuagesima Sunday, February 1, 2015

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 285,292:4, 290, 296, 291.

Lessons: Exodus 3:1-12, 1 Corinthians 2:1-16, Mark 9:2-10.

Sermon Text: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Peter is one of the three of Jesus' disciples who were with him on the Mount of Transfiguration. The purpose of the Transfiguration was to strengthen Jesus for the life and death struggle with Satan as he suffered and died to redeem all mankind.

He writes this second letter, by the inspiration of God, to strengthen all Christians. So these words are for us, too. He writes, all by inspiration of God, *"So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have."* (2 Peter 1:12 NIV) And *"I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things."* (2 Peter 1:15 NIV)

In order for Peter to accomplish all these things, God the Holy Spirit causes him to write this letter. He writes *"we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."*

Peter assures us *"We did not follow cleverly invented stories."* He also makes reference now, after Jesus has been glorified and ascended into heaven, to what happened when Jesus was transfigured.

He writes, speaking of "we" as himself, James, and John, *"We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."*

But he has something more sure and certain than eyewitness testimony. He – and we – have

THE SURE PROPHETIC WORD OF GOD

1. It is not myths and fables.
2. It is God speaking to us.
3. It comes only from God, not from someone's *"own interpretation"* or from *"the will of man"*.

(Pick up my cell phone)

"Oh dear, I left my cell phone in my pocket and forgot to turn it off. Hello? My phone says this phone call came from God! Who are you? ... What do you mean "this is God speaking to you"? God doesn't talk to men this way anymore. Everything, every single word God wants us to know is written in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. God himself wrote in Second Timothy 3: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (2 Timothy 3:15-17 KJV) There's nothing more than the Bible that we need to know for our eternal salvation. And the very Word of God we are studying today says *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

And God says in the very next verses of Second Peter chapter 2: *"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 sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers*

will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping." (2 Peter 2:1-3 NIV)

So God speaks to men today through his Holy, written Word, the Bible.

He does not speak to men today as you, whoever you are and whoever you are pretending to be, are trying to do today.

Please don't ever bother me again in any way, for if you are not Satan himself, you are certainly one of his evil spirits, damned to eternal destruction. Goodbye."

Wow! What would you say or think or do if anyone or anything or any such idea came upon you?

You must quote our sermon text: ***"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."***

Right there is another good reason to memorize Bible passages, in order to refute Satan and his allies, whoever they may be. Perhaps you have actually met someone who told you "God spoke to me and told me" Perhaps you have met someone who has told you of some dream or some vision that supposedly came directly from God.

The human mind, of course, has many strange quirks, many strange nooks and crannies, and can play some terrible, freaky tricks on us. You may even have experienced some bizarre night-time dreams yourself.

You must be assured – from God's Word, not just from what a preacher says – that Peter and God's true representatives would and must tell you ***"We did not follow cleverly invented stories."*** Peter, of course, could say he was an eyewitness of the majesty of Jesus Christ. ***"For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."***

God's Word comes from God, and only from God. We who repeat it are merely his servants and messengers. ***"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation."***

At the time Peter's letter was written, there was as yet no complete, written New Testament. When Peter speaks of prophetic writings, he is probably thinking first of the Bible he knew, that is, the books of the Old Testament. But what he writes about the origin and dependability of the prophetic writings apply equally well to his two letters and to the letters of Paul, John, James, and Jude, to the four gospels and Acts, to Hebrews, and to Revelation. In a few generations, these writings would be gathered together as the New Testament.

If we were to gather some "great books" that were written by humans, as some humans have done, they would surely not be 100% consistent in their message. Don't you, too, take great glee in reading a novel or even non-fiction and finding something that is not correct, or that is not consistent with what the writer said in a previous chapter or page? But God's Word, the books from Genesis to Revelation are consistent, and reliable and accurate.

Remember what Paul wrote to Timothy: ***"from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*** (2 Timothy 3:15-17 KJV)

"Above all," says Peter. Above all! Every person on earth who wishes to know something about his Creator must look for a source of information: what did God say and do, and how can I know that for sure? The false teachers who were infiltrating the Christian congregations in Peter's time were exploiting the people ***"with stories they have made up"*** (2 Peter 2:3). Motivated by greed, power, control, pride, or whatever, false teachers want to replace God's Word with their word, his authority with theirs. Why is it that today leaders and "scholars" in the churches tell people that certain parts of the Bible don't apply to us today any longer? Isn't it also because we are living in a time ***"when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."***

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV) Not only do men make secular laws to fit their own opinions, they seek to make God say what they want to hear by twisting his Word!

Man-made laws and teachings have caused tremendous damage to people's faith and lives over the years. Human imagination is endlessly rich with self-invented notions to foist on the gullible and immature. Here are just a few examples: Joseph Smith dreamed up a weird mythology in New York in the early 19th century, and the multi-million member rapidly-growing Mormon organization of today is the result. Man-made notions such as purgatory and prayer to the "saints" in heaven only lead people away from Christ.

Peter wanted his readers to know that the testimony of the eyewitnesses was made even more solid by the solid foundation of written Scripture. None of the writers of Scripture had to come up with their own material. The Lord God supplied and controlled the content, using the prophet's own unique vocabulary, style, and life situation. True prophecy never had its origin or interpretation in the will of man. So where did the prophets receive their information? ***"Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."***

This process is called verbal inspiration; that is, the third person of the Holy Trinity made it his task to bring information from God to a chosen human being – the prophet or the evangelist – moving the person to write and supervising the content so that the finished product is the very words of God himself. Paul wrote to Timothy: ***"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*** (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV), God's breath, as though he were speaking out loud to us, comes from each page of Scripture. We can depend on it for our lives! We must pay attention to it! God speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures. They are God speaking to us. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is taught throughout scripture.

The last words of King David speak of inspiration: ***"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue."*** (2 Samuel 23:2 NIV)

Jesus promised that ***"the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*** (John 14:26 NIV)

And Paul wrote to the Corinthians: ***"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.***" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NIV)

We dare not forget the power of the Word of God ***"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."*** (Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV)

We read in the New Testament book to the Hebrew Christians: ***"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."*** (Hebrews 1:1-2 NIV)

Remember that Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, came to earth to redeem us from all our sins. That is the message of Scripture, the inspired Word of God, and must be the message we receive from what God tells us in his written Word! After all, ***"the Scripture cannot be broken!"*** (John 10:35 NIV) Amen.

(This sermon can be viewed as a video sermon on the home page at www.lutheranlccf.org)