

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”

Lesson #12 “The Apostolic Agency of Truth”

2 Peter 1:16-21

Scripture: 2 Peter 3:17-18 “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.”

Introduction:

Communication is so very important. That is the way we share information and the way we understand it. In some situations having the right information can save our lives or having the wrong information can get us killed.

Well, one of the first ways of communicating across great distances before the telephone was the telegraph. The way this worked was lines were put up on poles across the country generally down rail road right of ways and operators on each end would tap out Morris Code signals to send messages to each other.

Interestingly enough the bad guys who went around robbing banks, trains and the like, were always cutting the telegraph wires. Why would anybody shimmy up a pole and cut telegraph wires? Because they knew if you stop the accurate flow of information and leave it up to people’s wondering and speculation about what really is going on, the truth will lie dead in its tracks and they could get away with anything.

Today I would like all the kids to come down front for a little demonstration on this idea. I will whisper the following line to the first child’s ear:

“The cat was chasing the chicken through the yard and the chicken jumped over the fence, so we had to go catch the chicken, who had run half way across town and put it back in the yard before it got ate by a coyote .”

Then I asked the first child to whisper it to the next child on down the line till we got to the last child.

* A very different answer came back.....

Transitional Statement:

-Church, for us as New Testament Christians we should be concerned about the correct flow of information from God. Many people today claim to have different and conflicting truths from God. The fact is that God is not the author of confusion, He gave us a line of communication that cannot be cut or broken. You see, He gave us His very own words, written down and proclaimed through the Prophets and Apostles.

Lesson:

I. The Apostles didn't make up the story of Jesus

2 Peter 1:16a

"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

A. The "we" is in reference to the Apostles.

B. When we told you of Jesus' power and coming

1. This is what the Apostles were talking with the people about.

-The power of Jesus:

- To save them
- To heal them
- To grant them eternal life.

-And Jesus' second coming

- An encouragement to remain steadfast
- Warning not to fall away.

C. In telling you about Jesus we weren't being "clever"

1. "Cleverly" has to do with deceitful intentions

- Also translated "cunningly"
- The Apostles were not involved in any manipulation of the facts.

-The Story of Jesus is not for personal gain. (1 Tim. 6:5)

2. And it wasn't a fairy tale, or fictitious fable they were telling.

-It wasn't without the basis of fact

-Some thought it was a fable

3. Their motive was not for approval.

- The word "*cleverly*" also points to the need for approval.
- The Apostles didn't need approval from anyone except God

- They didn't need for everyone to agree with them
- They were given true knowledge by God and had a responsibility to pass it down...uncompromised.

-That is why words are found in the New Testament like "fight the good fight", "Keep the faith" and "be ye faithful unto death".

C. The Apostles were commissioned by God to deliver the inspired word of God.

A. Lead them into all knowledge by the Holy Spirit

-John 14:25-26 H.S. would teach the Apostles all things & help them to remember all that Jesus had said.

-John 16:13 H.S. would guide the Apostles in all truth.

-Ephesians 3:3-5 The truth of God was made known to the prophets and Apostles..

B. They were given power to confirm the word

-Acts 1:8

-Mark 16:20

C. We are to follow their pattern Phil 3:17

D. Because they are commissioned, ambassadors of Christ 2 Cor 5:20

II. The Apostles were in God's inner circle

2 Peter 1:16b

"... but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" — 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

A. Eyewitnesses

1. Primarily the context means that the Apostles message is first hand information

-Didn't hear it from someone else, etc

-They weren't taught it

-And they certainly didn't make it up

2. Then, eyewitness is "epoptes" in the Greek and it has to do with more than just seeing with the eye....it includes, very distinctly the idea of inspections.

-In other words, the Apostles didn't just see Jesus, they questioned Him, watched Him, observing His every move and even lived with Him....

-i.e. They knew Him closely !

3. "Eyewitness" has another element that has to do with privilege
 - You see, the Apostles were included in God's inner circle
 - Specifically in this text, Peter, James and John were invited to the Mount of Transfiguration.
 - Where God put the stamp of approval on the whole scheme of redemption. He had His Law (Moses) His Prophets (Elijah), His Messiah (Jesus), and His Apostles (Peter, James and John) all together at one place and there pronounces Jesus to be His Son and tells the Apostles to listen to Him. Matt 17:1-8
 - God Himself included the Apostles in that meeting symbolizing the entire package of God's plan.
4. The "we" is emphatic...It means only the Apostles
 - Other would be claimants were excluded!
 - The folks that are playing the power of Jesus and His resurrection down are not in the God's circle.
 - And, in so much as, we are following Apostolic Truth we are in the inner circle as well.
5. So the Apostles were both eye and ear witnesses of God's confirmation of Jesus as His Son.

III. The Apostles and the Inspired writers message comes from God

2 Peter 1:19-21

19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

A. Apostles were given the prophetic word

- The Apostles were the end line of as far as Prophecy was concerning direction from God...
 - No moreyou have God's completed message through the Apostles. Heb. 2:3
 - We have no need for a modern day extension of God's word

B. And He directed them / us to pay attention to that prophetic word.

-Because it is like a light in a dark room

-It gives direction and hope

-Psalms 119:105

C. Now about God's word (Verse 20)

-It is Not matter of one's own interpretation

-It is Not made by an act of human will

*But, men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

-Scripture is the very words of God. (2 Timothy 3:16)

IV. Now there are at least five areas of Major Concern Today

A. First, today there seems to be an epidemic of people thinking that their feelings should guide them into all spiritual truth, instead of looking to Scripture for the answer.

One might say:

1. "I know that the Bible teaches xyz... but I cannot believe that God would do that or allow that to happen. Or God will somehow change His mind or will act differently than expressed in the Bible". What this person forgets is that God has chosen to reveal His mind and feelings in Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:10-13).
2. "Hey this was written by people 2000 years ago?"
But time does not matter to God (2 Peter 3:8-9), and what was written was the word of God. One could equally say that the Bible may well have been written "today" since both God and man remain exactly the same (Hebrews 13:8).
3. Others may exclaim, "Well this is just how I feel.", God tells us that if we let human feelings guide us death will be our end (Proverbs 16:25). If we could feel or guess our way to God then why did God even have the Bible written? The fact that the word of God was revealed in book form proves that man, on his own, with his own feelings, is blind and cannot direct his own path (Jeremiah 10:23).

B. Then, there is this idea of tradition.

1. This is what my grandmother and grandfather believed, my mom and dad believed this so it must be true.

C. Then, there is the follow the leader syndrome.

1. I'll let the elders or the preacher tell me what to believe as far as scripture is concerned.
2. That the bible can't be understood by ordinary folks it has to be explained by some spiritual leader.

D. Another common fallacy is the idea that God didn't give us everything we needed in the scripture so we need modern day prophets to keep giving us direction from God.

1. Somehow we didn't get the full message of God and modern day revelation needs to happen through some spiritual leader to guide us in our pursuit of God.

E. Then, there is this idea of modern day apostolic succession

We need to realize that the only *successors* to the apostles are their writings, and we need to continually thank God for preserving the New Testament so we can equally have the assurance of salvation, which is a perfect guide for life, so we can have the confidence that we are pleasing Him in all respects.

Conclusion:

Kids come back up front. Whisper in the first kids ear to take the bible and pass it down the line. The last kid gives me back the same message I gave to the first.

Brethren God gave us direction for our Christianity through the Apostles and as Peter says it is all we need pertaining to life and godliness.

So lesson #1 we have true knowledge and Lesson #2 it has been delivered to us through Apostles.

Today, let me ask you a question:

Is there something in your life getting in the way of God communicating with you?

- Maybe you've been struggling with attitude
- Maybe there is something you need to set straight
- Maybe there is a confession you need to make
- Maybe you simply haven't given God any time.
- Maybe you've been insisting on having things your own way.