

Prayer

You have stored up for us great and wonderful things, Lord Jesus. Bring us into Your presence and show us the wonders of Your creative power, the glory of Your eternal plan and the abundance of Your love and compassion for all. May we always rejoice in the greatness of Your provision and remain confident in Your salvation, because our Saviour is our Friend. AMEN

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly theme: Those who struggle with faith

Whilst the church of God proclaims the glory of salvation, there are always those who attend worship and are troubled by their faith, unable to make those steps of commitment that will allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of renewal in their lives that is needed. This week we will pray for people who are like this for a variety of reasons; but begin by praying for any people like this who are known to you.

Meditation

Give other people your blessing, for this is how you do God's will:

Bless the sick; bless them with your prayers, your sympathy and your time:

.....

Bless the poor; bless them with your concern, your help, and your cash:

.....

Bless the children; bless them with your attention your love and your patience:

.....

Bless the elderly; bless them with your company, your care and your listening ear:

.....

Bless all these people, as the Lord commanded, but also bless your enemy;

Bless them with your prayers, your attention and your persistence in truth.

For if the enemy is defeated by the power of Almighty God working through you,

Then you will liberate and bless the sick, the poor, the children and the elderly.

And your work for the Lord will be fulfilled.

Bible Study - 2 Peter 1:16-18

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly invented myths when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the contrary, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

¹⁷ For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that unique voice spoke to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'¹⁸ We heard this voice come from heaven ourselves, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

Bible Study

The strength of Peter's writing in this part of his letter is remarkably direct. He stated his complete confidence in the power of the Gospel (1:3,4) and followed this up with a powerful explanation of the way in which a Christian grows through faith to reach the goal of living by the standards of the teaching of Jesus (1:5-7). In yesterday's reading, he insisted that the Gospel message had to be made available in a way that was not open to doubt or questioning (1:15), which he achieved by writing it down in the letter. Next, in the reading for today, he insisted that the Gospel message that he preached was original and authentic; he said 'we did not follow cleverly invented myths when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ...' (1:16). As if to offer further proof, he spoke of his being an eyewitness at the events of the transfiguration (Matt 17:1f. etc.) when Jesus was honoured by God with great glory so that 'he shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white ...' (Mat 17:2), and later, after Peter

had attempted to speak to Jesus, a voice came from a cloud; 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased. Listen to Him.' (Matt 17:5). The whole event had a deep impact upon Peter, and he recalled these words almost exactly as Matthew had done, here in his letter.

What greater claim could be made for Peter as an authentic witness to the glory of God through Jesus Christ! Yet over the years, some have claimed that the letter could only have been written long after the death of Peter, and they say that this claim was put in the letter to validate it in the eyes of others. They claim that it was common for people to associate their writing with the original disciples, and that the writer of this letter was definitely not Peter. It is true that people did use the names of the disciples in order to claim authenticity, and there are a number of writings which are not in the New Testament, like this; for example the peculiar 'Gospel of Thomas' which was obviously written by a heretical Christian sect. It is my opinion that those who were close to these events clearly discerned what was Godly and authentic and what was not, and it would be ridiculous for them to include in Scripture a letter which spoke against 'cleverly invented myths' (1:16) and then presented a detailed testimony of the transfiguration of Christ, unless they sincerely believed that the letter did indeed come from Peter; and even though his words may have been dictated, and perhaps even lost at the time of the mysterious death of Peter in Rome (1:13,14) at some time towards the end of the first century.

This whole issue brings us to the heart of what we believe about Scripture as the Word of God. Is it all 'cleverly invented myths' (1:16) or is it true because it tells us the authentic and accurate facts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus? Personally, I can only accept it as authentic, because it is ludicrous to believe that elaborate trickery could possibly create the whole history of Christianity from mere human origins. Peter says the same in this letter. Authentic testimony of the presence of the living Christ binds all Christians together, from Peter, to you and me. Peter spoke about his experience of the transfigured Jesus, but the same experience of the power and majesty of God is His gift to all who believe in Him, through our baptism in water and the spirit; 'truly, I tell you, no-one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5). The authentic Word of God may not be easy for us to understand, but that is because God is far bigger than us and His Word encompasses more than the human mind can comprehend. Peter gave testimony to the power and majesty of God (1:17,18), and we who follow Him as members of the Body of Christ, do the same.

Space for notes

Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. Does it matter to you, and your understanding of this Scripture, whether the letter of Peter was actually written by him or not?
2. What is your personal testimony to the power and glory of Jesus Christ?
3. Discuss what God meant by saying to Jesus 'this is my Son, with whom I am well pleased' (1:17)

Discipleship

What we believe about the Scriptures and how it conveys the Word of God has always been an important issue and one that needs to be discussed amongst Christians. It is surprising what different views people have about this even within a small church fellowship group, let alone a large church or a denomination. If the Lord leads you, then try to talk to people you know about their attitudes and beliefs about the Bible and the Word of God. You will find that this will give you considerable opportunities to discuss a number of important issues of faith.

Prayer

You are the one and true God, Almighty Father and Lord of all. By Creation, You mark the world with the signs of Your ownership, and You alone hold the secrets of how to overcome evil and its attempts to distort the good within the world. Praise be to You, our one and only true God. AMEN