

Foundation for Confidence

2 Peter 1:12-21

How can we have financial security for the future? How should we provide for retirement? Should we put our savings into shares? What happens if there is another Global financial crisis? Our money would be gone. Should I put my trust in fund managers to look after money? Should I put it all in bricks and mortar? Should I buy Property? What happens if the property bubble bursts?

Should I just put my money under my mattress? There was a man who did that. He wanted to take it all with him when he died. He made his wife promise she would put all his savings in the coffin with him. When he died his wife gathered up all the money, put it in the bank and wrote a cheque for the full amount. She put the cheque in the coffin with him.

People look for security, confidence for future. How do we find eternal security? It is not by taking our savings with us.

Last week began looking at 2 Peter 1:11 says: ¹¹*you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

How can we have this confidence? It sounds good but how can we be sure; sure that Jesus will welcome you into his eternal kingdom? What is the foundation for this confidence?

Some people will look to **experience**. When they have some experience of God: answered prayer, a vision, a healing, or the gift of tongues.... These can be very encouraging but there are times when prayers seem unanswered. We pray and see no change. Our experience seems to tell us God doesn't care. There are times when we feel God is not there; times of injustice, or tragedy, or loss.

If confidence in experience is easily shattered. Experience in life can be confusing and contradictory. We need a much firmer foundation for our confidence.

Others will put their confidence in human **reason**. If something seems to make sense to us we say it is true. If we can reason it out by our own thinking. But our reasoning is based on presuppositions, assumptions. These are corrupted by sin or simply lack of knowledge. Human reason doesn't give us the facts about God or heaven.

The third thing people often rely on is **tradition**, what they were brought up to believe. It might be a fear of evil spirits it might be some religious practices that are supposed to guarantee blessing. It might be trust in a lucky charm or prayers to Mary. Some traditions might be true but many aren't. So how can we be sure of the truth?

We need a reliable foundation for our faith. Peter shows us that God has given this in the Bible, in the Old and New Testaments of Scripture.

He talks about it as ... *a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.* (1:19) We live in a dark, a fallen world that has drifted away from God. It is a world of confused ideas about God, justice, truth, and morals. We need to take this seriously. It is a world that is off track. We need light from outside this world to show us the truth.

The word of God gives us a solid foundation for our confidence. It shows us the truth so won't be led astray. So Peter says he will remind them of this as long as he lives. ¹²*So I will always remind you of these things ...* ¹³*I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body.*

We have to ask, what is the source of the things we believe? If you follow Waitara Creek down behind Hornsby you come to Fishponds Waterholes at Berowra Creek. These are beautiful water holes that look great for swimming in. Don't do it! The source of the water is the Hornsby Sewage Treatment works. There are signs warning you not to swim or drink the water. The source is polluted. Of course you can drink water from a pure mountain spring.

You have to check the source of the water. It is the same with teaching about God. Does it come from human ideas or from God himself?

Security and truth are not in new ideas. The false teachers in Peter's church brought new ideas. Sometimes old ideas are said to be out of date. There can be excitement about new ideas, fresh revelation. You might be told, "The Spirit is revealing this to us today."

Peter takes them back to what God has revealed in his word. The only reliable source of truth is God himself. Here is the solid foundation for truth.

1. The Apostles teaching.

Peter says, ¹⁶*We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.* The apostles did not make their teaching up. It is not just human ideas about God. It was revealed to them by God.

He tells us about false teachers, ³*In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up.* (2:3) Their message does not come from God but themselves. Their our minds are the source of their teaching.

A message may sound exciting. It may be spoken with great power and sound convincing. But ask where does the message come from? What is the source?

The apostles had seen God's revelation of himself in Jesus. They were eye witnesses. They had heard a voice from God himself. ¹⁷*Jesus 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."* ¹⁸*We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

It is interesting that he points to the transfiguration not resurrection! This was the time when Jesus was transformed on a mountain and meets with Moses and Elijah. They saw there on the mountain Jesus ultimate glory. This was not seen in his resurrection body on earth. It is like a window is opened into the glory of heaven itself. God revealed his glory in Jesus and then commissioned Apostles to convey that message to world.

The word “apostle” mean one sent, an authorized messenger, one who brings a message from someone else not his own. The apostles preached God’s message, then wrote it down in the New Testament of the Bible. The New Testament is not human ideas but God’s word written for us.

In 3:2 Peter says, *I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.*

We have Jesus’ word through the apostles placed alongside the OT prophets. It is all God’s word to us.

In 3:16 he says, *Paul writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures.*

Peter recognises Paul’s writing as Scripture, as God’s message written for us. The word “scripture mean “written”, scripted.

So we can have confidence, the teaching of Apostles is from God himself. He is the source.

2. The Prophets’ Word

¹⁹ *We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, 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. (1:19)*

Peter says the message of the Old Testament is completely reliable also. It is true light because the source is God not humans. It is like a pure mountain spring. We have often camped on a river near Barrington Tops. The water is pure. It comes from the unpolluted mountains. We know it comes from a pure source and so we drink this water.

Peter says, ²⁰ *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (1:20-21)*

He knows that what was written in the OT was written by men but the origin of the message is God himself. Twice he denies that the ideas came from the prophets themselves. ... *no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will ...* The source was not human but God. God’s Holy Spirit guided their writing so it was the truth. It is the foundation for great confidence.

The truth of the OT is confirmed by the fact that Jesus always treated it as God's word, and also the fact that he has fulfilled many of its prophecies, showing its reliability. We can see that God is a God who keeps his word. It is true. We can be sure that God will keep all his promises to us in the future. We can have absolute confidence in God's word. It is a reliable foundation.

It may seem that God is 1000 miles away. But Scripture promises he is with you always. He promises to hear our prayer as a Father caring for children. His promises of forgiveness, and eternal life are sure.

Jesus uses the illustration of a foundation. He says, *Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matt 7:24)* A house built on sand will collapse but a life built on the foundation of God's word is secure.

In fact God's word is the only secure foundation we have for this life or for the next.