

# Stir up your minds to remember

by Anton Bosch

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*This sermon from 2 Peter chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of being mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets and the apostles, focusing on the certainty of God's promises despite scoffers questioning the promise of Jesus' return. It encourages believers to stir up their minds, be reminded of God's commandments, and remain vigilant for the imminent return of Jesus, contrasting the attitudes of mockers with the readiness expected of believers.*

**Scripture:** 2 Peter 3:2, 2 Peter 3:2, 2 Peter 3:9, 2 Peter 3:10, 2 Peter 3:11, 2 Peter 3:14, 2 Peter 3:17, 2 Peter 3:18, 1 Peter 1:13, 1 Peter 1:16

**Topics:** "God's Promises", "Vigilance in Faith"

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## Description

This sermon from 2 Peter chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of being mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets and the apostles, focusing on the certainty of God's promises despite scoffers questioning the promise of Jesus' return. It encourages believers to stir up their minds, be reminded of God's commandments, and remain vigilant for the imminent return of Jesus, contrasting the attitudes of mockers with the readiness expected of believers.

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## Transcript

2 Peter chapter 3, so we're in the third and last chapter of 2 Peter. I'm going to read verses 1 through 9. 2 Peter chapter 3 verses 1 through 9. Beloved, I now write to you the second epistle in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder, that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets and of the commandment of us, the Apostles of the Lord and Savior. Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

For this they willfully forget, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth, which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So last time, at the end of

chapter 2, he said, it happened to them, speaking about these false prophets, according to the true proverb, a dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow having washed to her wallowing in the mire. So he speaks about the false prophets, and chapter 2 is in parentheses, if you will.

So he has developed a theme in chapter 1, he then breaks away from that theme and deals with the false prophets in chapter 2, and obviously it's not like chapter 2 doesn't belong there, it belongs there, there's a logical flow from chapter 1 to chapter 2, but now he's going to go back in chapter 3 to the theme that he picked up in chapter 1. So it would be helpful if, in reading, you read chapter 1 and then chapter 3 for the next couple of weeks, because it will give you the flow which begins in chapter 1 and then flows to in chapter 3. But you'll see also that there's a continuation or a change now in chapter 3, and remember the chapters are inserted by people, and in this case the chapter numbers are more or less in the right place. Sometimes the chapter and the verse numbers are not in the right place, because somebody put a number in a place where it shouldn't have been. Remember, the chapter numbers and the verse numbers are not inspired.

The Word of God is inspired, but originally it was written without chapter numbers, without verse numbers, and without headings. It was just one text. That's what is inspired.

The rest is added by men, and they are helpful. Obviously we don't ignore them. They are helpful in terms of moving around and referring to a particular passage, but not inspired.

But you'll see the change between chapter 2 and chapter 3, because he ends chapter 2 speaking about a dog and a pig, a dog and a sow. But now in chapter 3 he begins and he says, Beloved. So he's dealt with the false prophets, and he says they are like dogs and pigs, but now he says Beloved.

You can see the change in language from a pig or a dog to the Beloved. The word here, and I don't always understand why modern translations or any translators translate the words that they do. Many of the modern translations say Dear Friends, but in fact Beloved is the best translation of the Greek word, because the Greek word is based on the root agape, love.

So those who are beloved. This is an excellent translation of that particular word. So they are dogs and pigs, but you are the Beloved.

And remember Paul says you were such, but now you are in the Beloved. And so you can see the connection between Peter and Paul, the same idea. You were there, but now you who are far off are brought near and brought into the Beloved.

So Beloved, I now write you this second epistle or second letter. Remember the word epistle just means letter. We attach, we make certain things like super spiritual.

So if I wrote you a letter, not that we write letters much anymore, but if I wrote you a letter you would call it a letter. But because of the Bible we call it an epistle, but in fact it's still just a letter. It's inspired.

Obviously it's different to any letter that I would write or any of us would write. It is inspired, but the word epistle simply means a letter, the second letter. So which is the first one? Well first Peter.

There are some, not many, but there are some modern commentators who say no, first Peter wasn't it, there was something else. I'm not going to get into that. It's good enough for me that first Peter, there's a continuation.

If you look carefully between first Peter and second Peter, between the two letters, and he says I'll write to you this second letter, referring to the first one as the first, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder. And there's the key to linking those two books. If you read first Peter and you read second Peter and you try and sum them up, they are summed up by these things, that he is stirring up your pure minds by way of reminder, the emphasis on purity, the emphasis on holiness.

So Peter says in both of which I stir up your pure minds. Paul says that we might stir up one another to love and do good works. When we stir something up, we turn it upside down.

When you stir the pot, you turn things around. Instead of the soup or whatever you're making just lying there, you're turning it. And we need to be turned, we need to be stirred up, we need to be woken up.

Sometimes we're just lying spiritually down, just tired, just doing nothing, and we need to get stirred up, we need to get fired up. And so he says I'm writing these things that I might stir up your minds, get your minds thinking again. As Christians it's easy to just, well not just as Christians, as people, it's easy to have our minds just go on cruise mode.

We don't think much about anything, we don't think about where we're at, we don't think about the Lord, we don't think about any of these things. We watch the news, we watch this amazing amount of rockets being fired across the sky, and many of them being shot out of the sky, and we look at all that, but we don't think. This may be the coming of the Lord, this may be the end of the world.

It may not be, but it may very well be. But we need to stir up our minds, and not allow our minds to get slothful or lazy, and we especially need to make sure that our minds are not captivated by just the stuff of the world, and just watching the destruction going on in Israel, and in the other side, in the Palestinian side, and get caught up in the politics without understanding that in fact these things are destined to be. This is part of God's plan at the end of the day.

And so we need to stir up our minds, and he says he does so by way of reminder. By way of reminder. To write the same things unto you is not tedious, but is necessary.

We need to remind one another. These days, after 18 years here, I'm not telling anybody anything new, but I'm hopefully reminding you of the things that we have said before. Reminding you of the things which God has said in his Word.

And we need to remind ourselves because we forget so easily. Our minds become slothful, our minds become lazy. They need to be stirred up, and they need to be reminded of the things that God has said.

There is nothing new, and that's the problem, is that so many Christians are chasing after some new idea, some new doctrine, some new philosophy, some new theology, but they're not even doing the things that God has already told them to do. They've forgotten those things already. You know, we can't afford to forget even the fundamentals.

Remember the book of Hebrews says that we need to lay again the foundation of repentance, of dead works, faith towards God, and so on. The problem is that we move on to other stuff, and we forget the basics. So we need to be reminded and be brought to the basics again.

It's so easy, and the church really has gone way off track in recent years. Not this church, but churches in general, because they're chasing after all sorts of things, and they forget the fundamentals. The basic

thing is that it's about Jesus.

It's not about church. It's not about worship. It's not about people.

It's about Jesus. That's what it's about. We need to be reminded to come back to those things.

It's not about books and theology and doctrine so much. It's about the Word of God. We need to be brought back to those things, and we need to be reminded of them.

We need to remind ourselves. And so God gives us his Word, and you can read through the Bible in not too long, if you put your mind to it, and you say, well, I've read it. But the thing is that you need to read it again, and again, and again, and again.

I don't know how many times I've read the Word. I don't know how many times I've read this passage that I'm looking at this evening. Dozens and dozens and dozens of times.

But we need to be reminded. And the wonderful thing is that you go back to a book you haven't read for a while, you read it again, and there it is—things that you you'd forgotten, things that you maybe hadn't even seen before. And the Spirit just reminds us again.

God institutes for Israel a series of reminders called the Twelve Feasts, and the purpose of every one of those Twelve Feasts was to remind them of what God had done, to remind them that God brought them out of Egypt, to remind them that they lived in booths or in shelters in the wilderness while they were moving to the Promised Land. And so we—and he says to them, when your children ask you, why do you do these things? You must tell them that these things remind us of what God has done in the past. Over and over in the history of Israel, you'll find that they raise up a monument—not in the sense of brass monuments like we have in cities, but just a pile of stones.

And every time you come past that pile of stones, the purpose is to remind you that here God gave us victory. Here God met with me. Here God spoke to me.

And so in the New Testament, he gives us the Communion, which is a reminder. Every time we come to the Lord's table, to remind us again, because we forget so easily. Remember, it was in 1 Peter that Paul speaks about those—sorry, 2 Peter, he says that you've forgotten that you were purged from your former sins.

So we need to even be reminded. It's good to hear testimonies tonight, being reminded from where God has brought us out, because otherwise we forget his grace and his goodness and his mercy. And so we need to be reminded.

Verse 2, that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before the holy prophets. This word, mindful, is very popular today, and it's not used in a biblical way. It's Eastern religion.

It's brought into schools. Now more and more children are taught to be—or taught mindfulness, taught to be mindful. And I'm not going to get into that whole thing, but that is Eastern mysticism, and it is something that Christians ought not to be involved in.

This is not the way he's using this word, but he is saying that we may be reminded that our minds—if I can just take liberty with that word—that our minds may be full, that our minds may be full of the words that God has spoken, that we may remember his words. Now here's the connection between chapter 1 and

chapter 3, words. And we're going to speak about words this evening, and we may continue next week, depends on how we go on the time.

But that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets. Now if we go back to chapter 1, if you have your Bible with me, verse 18, and we heard his voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed.

You see here on the screen on chapter 3, verse 2, the words spoken by the prophets. Chapter 1 says, we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in dark place, until the day dawns, morning star rises. Knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture, though in private interpretation, but prophecy came by—for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

So I'm not going to go over chapter 1 again, but he says that we have a word, a prophetic word, and that word is sure. And it was spoken not by men—well it was spoken by men, but it wasn't—it didn't originate with men, it came from God. And those men as they were moved along by the Holy Spirit.

So that's where he begins in chapter 1. Chapter 2, he says there are false prophets or false teachers who will teach a false message. Chapter 3, he's now going back to that idea of that prophetic word. Remember, the prophetic word here is particularly in the context of the coming of the Lord.

In chapter 2, he says the false teachers will say, he is not coming. And so they begin to use that Scripture in Luke chapter 12 to beat their fellow servants and eat and drink with the drunkards. And so that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets.

Who are the holy prophets that he is speaking about here? Old Testament prophets. There are New Testament prophets, Agabus is one of them, but these are Old Testament prophets. So we must be mindful of the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets.

Folks, there are many Christians who never opened the Old Testament. Now while we have taught through almost all of the New Testament, we've only taught through some of the Old Testament books, I don't have enough of a lifetime to be able to teach through the whole Bible. So I've chosen to teach through the New Testament and some of the Old Testament.

But I don't want you to get the impression that the reason we didn't preach or teach through every one of the Old Testament prophetic books is because they're not important. It's just that we don't have... we just don't have the time to get there. And if I lived long enough and finished the New Testament, I would get into the Old Testament.

But we did do some of the Old Testament books. But the problem is we say, no, well it's, you know, the Old Testament, that's for the Jews, it's not for us. No, it's for us.

And Peter is saying we need to be mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets, spoken by the prophets in the Old Testament. Now the only reason many Christians read the prophets is in order to understand eschatology. In other words, to understand prophecy about the second coming.

So people love the book of Daniel because it speaks about the second coming, and certain chapters in the other books that deal with a second coming. But that's not the only purpose of those books. And those books have become more relevant today to the church than ever before.

I'm not sure if I shared this with you before, but this is very, very important. Where the church is at today, I mean the church at large, the visible church, where the church is today is where Israel was under the prophets. Where was Israel under the prophets? They had forsaken God.

They had a form of religion. They kept the feasts and they went to the temple, and they did these various things, and they even paid tithes, and so on and so forth. But God was not in their hearts and minds.

They were worshiping other gods. They were chasing their own agendas, and they were not in the place where they should have been as God's people. And Jesus eventually comes, and there's a period of 400 years, 400 plus years, between the Old and the New Testament, when God says no word, and God is silent.

And there is a sense in which God has become silent today. I'm not saying that he is silent in our church, but those who want to hear his voice, hear his voice. But there are no international prophets.

There are no national prophets in America. There are no great names that are speaking for God. There are small time preachers here and there, and even those who make the semi big time are not at the level where they're impacting the church in a big way.

And it seems to me that God is silent. We're in the same place when Jesus came. Remember when we were in the beginning of Luke, when Jesus was born, that there was a handful of people.

John the Baptist's parents, Jesus' parents, Anna, the old woman in the temple, Simeon, the old man in the temple, the wise men, the shepherds. That was all. Those were the only people who were waiting for his return.

We're in the same place today. Yes, the evangelical church is talking about future things. They're talking about prophecy.

But that prophecy is not about the return of the Lord Jesus. That prophecy is—I think I touched on this on Sunday—is more about the Antichrist, and more about the role of America in the world, and more about all sorts of secular political stuff, and nothing about even so come Lord Jesus. But there were those two people, particularly, and every day they came into the temple longing to see the Messiah.

Their whole lives were focused on one thing only, and that is to see Jesus. And folks, the church is there anymore. And so the prophets are important to us, because you read the prophets.

You read Malachi, you read Hosea, you read Amos, you read Jeremiah. And if you crossed out Israel and you inserted the church, they would be a hundred percent correct today. All of what those prophets said to Israel, they are saying to us today.

And so Peter, 2,000 years ago, already says that we need to be mindful of the words that were spoken by the prophets. We need to read Lamentations and see the state of the church. We need to read Malachi and see the state of Christians, and so that you may be mindful of the words which are spoken before by the holy prophets.

Why does he say holy prophets? Because he's just dealt with the false prophets. So we're not mindful of what the false prophets... There's another sector in Christianity today who can quote every one of the false prophets, and there are thousands of false prophets around in America and in the world today, all over.

And there are Christians who study the false prophets, and they can tell you what this one said, and what that one said, and what the other one said.

Now our job is not to study the false prophets. Yes, we need to be aware they're there. We need to be aware of the problem and the danger, but we need to be stirred up in our minds that we may be mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets.

And people who can quote all of these false prophets can't quote a single verse from the holy prophets. There's something wrong. And so, be mindful of the words which are spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.

When he speaks about the apostles there, he's meaning the Twelve. They were the apostles of the Lamb, the apostles of the Lord Jesus. Remember, an apostle is someone who is sent on a mission, and he is sent by someone.

Apostles after the Twelve were sent not by Jesus, but by the church. But the Twelve were sent by Jesus himself. And so, we can speak about the apostles of the church.

They're sent by the church. Today we call them missionaries. Send them out on a mission to go and preach the gospel and to plant churches.

That's the purpose of a missionary. That was the function of an apostle. But these apostles were different.

And so, be mindful of the words of the prophets, the Old Testament, and of the apostles, the New Testament. We are built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, not just on the foundation of the apostles, but also the prophets, the Old Testament prophets. We need to be reminded of the commandment.

If you go back to chapter 3, we're running short on time, so I'm not going to go there, but if you go back to the last few verses of chapter 3, you'll see that the false teachers ignored the commandment. So, he's coming back to this idea of the commandment, the commandment of us, the apostles and the Lord and Savior. I've been emphasizing this recently, that the Bible is not a bunch of suggestions or ideas.

They are commandments. Remember when we spoke about don't worry two weeks ago? We said this is a commandment. It's not a suggestion.

It's not a good idea. But when Jesus says, be anxious for nothing, it's a commandment, and it's just as important as you shall not kill. It's a command from God Himself.

And here, Peter is using exactly the same language, and he's not saying of the words of the apostles, but the commandment that came through the apostles, and obviously from the Lord Jesus. Now, he says, knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts. So, I want you to remember the word, words.

We're going to come back. We're not going to get through this section this evening, but let me push on and see if we can finish verse 3. Knowing this first. Now, when he says knowing this first, it doesn't mean that there's going to be a second and third.

He's simply saying, this is the most important thing you need to know. So, it's not first in the sense that there's now going to be other points. Knowing this first, this is the primary thing, that scoffers will come in

the last days, walking according to their own lusts.

Scoffers are mockers. And so, Peter is now looking forward. While this was going on at that time, this is something that he is also projecting into the future, and we're living in that time today.

And what will the scoffers say? Where is the promise of his coming? Where is the promise of his coming? And I think I said to you on Sunday morning, just this last week, the week before, someone wrote a comment on one of the YouTubes and said, where is his coming? We've been saying that he's coming, and he's coming, and he's coming, and he hasn't come. Where is the promise of his coming? Remember, this is the whole problem with chapter 2, with the false teachers. Why are they abusing people? Why are they using lasciviousness, license, immorality to deceive people? Because they don't believe that Jesus is coming.

They don't believe they're going to be called to give an account. And remember, I mentioned this, I think, on Sunday morning, the parallels between Luke chapter 12 and this passage. In Luke chapter 12, he says that the servant says, my master is delaying his coming.

And because he is delaying his coming, he begins to beat up his fellow servants and to eat and drink. So the same idea in chapter 2. Because they don't believe that he's coming, his coming is at the door. And Peter's going to speak about that.

We'll get to that next week, a little bit later. Because they don't believe that his coming is at the door, they begin to live loose lives, and they begin to live immoral lives. Now, what they're saying, and I really need to finish this verse then.

For since the fathers fell asleep. Now, the fathers here could be their fathers, but it could also be the fathers of the Old Testament. More likely the fathers of the Old Testament.

And when it speaks about fathers, it's simply meaning ancestors. So since the fathers fell asleep, died. All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

So that's their argument. The problem is that it's a good argument if you don't believe the Word of God. We spoke about the earthquake on Sunday morning.

And if we tell our children, even blue, about an earthquake, they say, oh no, I don't believe that. We know about 3.0s and 4s, but 7s and 8s, because we've been talking about it for decades. Remind me again, was it 94 the last one? North Ridge, 94.

So 26, 27 years. We've been saying, well the next one's coming. And it hasn't come.

And so if it hasn't come for 26 years, it's not going to come for the next 26 years. Right? You see, you can't think that way. It doesn't, it doesn't, it just doesn't work that way.

The fact that it hasn't come for 26 years, and statistically it's overdue, it simply means that the next one is closer than it was years ago. Isn't that true? Yeah. And so the fact that Jesus hasn't come for 2,000 years doesn't mean he's not going to come.

And Peter's going to give reasons for that. We'll deal with that next week. But he's going to deal with that argument.

But we need to be careful, as Christians, that we fall into the same trap. And we say, well, you know, he hasn't come. It was over 50 years ago when I became a Christian, in my last two years at school.

And those days, we had conscription. It meant that every young man had to go to the army when he turned 18, or when he left school, basically when you left school. I said, I can't go to the army, because Jesus is coming.

And if I spend a year in the army, what if Jesus comes and I haven't preached the gospel? Well, obviously I had it a little bit wrong, not about his coming, but about the priorities. In the end, the army caught up with me. That's a long story, but instead of serving one year, I had to serve, I don't know, four, five, six years.

But, folk, at that time, I believed that the Lord's coming was so close that there was no time to waste on other stuff. No, he hasn't come for 50 years. And I said, well, he hasn't come.

He's not coming. No, he's coming. And his coming is closer today than it was 50-odd years ago when I first became a Christian.

But it's so easy. I've spoken to so many pastors who used to preach about this coming of the Lord, and they say, well, we're tired of preaching about the coming of the Lord, because people don't believe us anymore, and I don't believe it myself anymore, because I've been saying that he's coming all these years, and he hasn't come. Folk, what we have done when we do that, and some of us won't admit to doing that, but we still do it in the back of our minds.

We live as though he's not coming, and what we have done is we've taken the plot of the scoffers. We've joined with mockers who say, where is he coming? It's been 2,000 years. He's promised he's coming.

The apostles believed that he was going to come in their lifetime, and Peter's now going to deal with that, and I wish we had the time to continue in that, but we'll pick it up on next week. But the bottom line is that God is not slack concerning his promise. God's word that he will come again is sure, and he's going to use three examples to the surety of God's word.

Remember, he used three, I think, examples in chapter 2 that God's judgment is sure on the false teachers. Now he's going to use three different, and there's some overlap, examples proving that God, when he says, I'm coming again, will come again. Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you, Lord, that it is a more sure word of prophecy. Lord, it's not the word of a false teacher. Lord, it's not words that men have thought up, but it is the words that you have inspired by your Holy Spirit, as the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament wrote these things for us.

Lord, we pray that you may help us to stir up our minds, that we may be reminded that we need to live in such a way that we are ready for Jesus' coming. Lord, we pray that you'd stir up the slothfulness and the slackness and the little bit of slumber and folding of the hands and the lukewarmness that so easily creeps in into the church and into our individual lives. But Lord, that we may live as those who are anticipating and expecting your return to be very soon.

Lord, I know that there's a resurgence of interest in the second coming, and people begin to watch and to pray at this time when things are happening in Israel as they are right at this moment. But Lord, I pray that you would help us to be ready, and even if the battle subsides and if the war doesn't go any further and is de-escalated, Lord, that we would not sigh a sigh of relief and say, oh well, that's it, he's not coming. But

Lord, that we may be ready in season and out of season, that we may be ready in the first and the second and the third watch, because you come at a time when we don't expect.

Help us, we pray, in Jesus' name. I pray that you'd go with us, keep us, protect us, bring us together safely on Sunday. We pray, Lord, for those who are traveling, for Jim and Christine and Jason and Angela.

We pray for your protection on them, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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