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# Sermon Notes

January 14, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Eyewitnesses of His Majesty

2 Peter 1:1-2, 16, 1 John 1:1

### Eyewitness Testimony

- ❖ The value and importance of eyewitness testimony
  - news
  - courtroom
- ❖ The testimony of two eyewitnesses of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ
  - both Peter and John are Apostles, part of Jesus' inner circle, leaders in the early church
  - but Peter and John are two very different men with two distinctly different personalities
  - both Peter and John present truthful testimony from their own particular point of view
  - both Peter and John have the same goal in offering their testimony
    - strengthen believers
    - build Christ's kingdom
    - safeguard the church
      - ♦ from impurity
      - ♦ from false teaching

- ❖ Questions to ask ourselves as we endeavor to know Christ and make Him known
  - how can we best keep our lives pure and our love, service and devotion to Christ healthy and growing?
  - how can we best live faithful and fruitful Christ-filled, Christ-exalting lives?
  - how can we best prepare ourselves for future events that God's Word tells us are sure to come?

### Peter and John

- ❖ In 2 Peter 1:16, Peter identifies himself as an eyewitness of Jesus' majesty
- ❖ John begins his first epistle by assuring us that he is testifying about that *which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands*
- ❖ John
  - the "Son of Thunder" becomes the "Apostle of Love"
    - John's transformation testifies to Jesus' power to transform a life and change the very core of a person's identity
    - by the end of his life, John's preconceptions and misconceptions about Jesus' kingdom are radically reshaped
      - ♦ John winds up exiled and alone on the island of Patmos because of his *witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ*
      - ♦ despite this and (according to the historian, Tertullian) his previously having been boiled in oil, John remains a faithful witness

- ❖ Peter
  - known for being brash and impetuous
  - oftentimes is the first person to act, react or respond to Jesus
    - sometimes Peter “gets it right” at other times he is “way wrong”
    - in one moment Peter steps out in faith and walks on water, but in the next he finds himself sinking beneath the waves
    - in one moment Peter swears allegiance to Christ while only a short time later he crumbles when confronted by a servant girl
  - in all this, Jesus works to mold and remake Peter into His own image as He changes Peter’s identity from one who is impulsive and variable to one who is dependable, unwavering and rock solid
- ❖ How can the testimony of Peter and John change us?
  - the Word of God accomplishes the work of God
    - the Word works as it DOES something in us
    - the Word causes us to DO something in return
  - their words of these 2 witness are intended to enflame our passion and spur us on to love and good deeds
    - love for one another within the body of Christ
    - love and deep concern for those who live apart from Christ
- ❖ Peter is believed to have been crucified upside down at his request during the wave persecution initiated by the Roman Emperor, Nero between 64-68 AD

- ❖ John’s exile to Patmos occurs during a second wave of persecution under Domitian that lasted between 86-91 AD
  - the NT word for “witness” is *martus* from which we derive our English word, “martyr”
  - even though it costs them their lives, Peter and John follow through on Jesus’ command that they be witness of Him and for Him (Acts 5:32, 10:39-42)

<b>Peter’s Testimony</b>
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- ❖ Is offered in humility
  - despite apostolic authority and a commission by Jesus to preach the gospel, Peter identifies himself as a slave
  - Peter puts himself right “on par” with his readers
    - reminds us that all people stand in equal need of what Christ has to offer
    - among those who serve Christ, there is no hierarchy in the kingdom of God
- ❖ Has one essential goal for us to grab on to
  - ***May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord***
    - brewing, expanding, multiplying exponentially
    - responding to Jesus’ gracious gospel invitation to come after Him by denying yourself, taking up your cross and following Him
      - ♦ requires hearing/knowing the true, indisputable, historical facts that lie at the foundation of the Christian faith
      - ♦ requires responding in faith to those facts
  - cultivating a passion to ***grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ***