

Completely Confirmed: Trusting in God's Sure Word

2 Peter

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Bible Text: 2 Peter 1:16-21

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What a joyous day it is. What a wonderful message we just heard. I almost feel like I don't even need to preach, the gospel was just preached about three or four times before I've even got up here. It was such an amazing testimony we've seen.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to 2 Peter 1. We will be in verses 16 through 21 today, and while you're turning there, I do want to express how grateful I am to this church, how grateful I am to the elders for letting me walk up on this stage, for Pastor Ty especially for being a mentor and spiritual father for me since I was a little kid, nearly decades now, 16 years of being at this church under his faithful teaching. I thank the elders as well and especially one elder in particular that gave life to me; my father has really instructed me in the word and is the reason that I'm able to come up here and present this to you because of his good leadership. And I do want to thank you all as well as a church. You all have disciplined me from a young age, and you all have instructed me in the word of God and have been faithful to me, and I hope to give that back to you in a small sense today through this sermon, but ultimately you have been pouring into my life and I am so grateful to God for that. But the reason we've all been able to do that, that you've been a blessing to me, that Pastor Ty has been a blessing to me is because of the word of God.

The word of God alone is the reason why I have been grown up in such a way in this church and I have been blessed so much by you, and the word of God is the focus of our message today. In the book of 2 Peter, we see that the word of God is completely confirmed. That's the title of this message is "Completely Confirmed," the subtitle is "Trusting in God's Sure Word." The word of God is completely confirmed in every way, meaning that you can trust the word of God with your whole life, with your whole being. You can trust it in every circumstance for all things because it is the only sure and steadfast hope that you have, and it is the only sure and steadfast hope because it contains the gospel of Jesus Christ. It shows you life and salvation and this passage today shows us we must trust the word of God. That's what I want you to take away from this, so if you fall asleep now, at least you've gotten the main thrust of the passage. Don't fall asleep, but if you do, remember that.

So let us read the word and think on this. Starting in verse 16, we'll read God's word to us which is fully reliable. Hear the words of the Lord from Peter the apostle.

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray now.

Father, thank you for your word. I thank you for the confirmation of your word, that it is true, and I pray now that you would bless all of us in this room that we would hear what you have to say in your word, that we would trust it, that we would live by it. Open our eyes, open our hearts, open our minds to receive the word from God and to live it out. I pray you would bless this message, let me be faithful to the text, and I pray you would bless everyone in here that regardless of what I say or how I say it, they would hear you, they would hear your word. I pray all of these things in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

So completely confirmed, trusting in God's sure word. This is written in 2 Peter. The letter is written by Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ; he identifies himself at the beginning as a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. And he's writing to fellow believers. It doesn't specify what churches he's writing to but he's writing to believers. Peter was one who was very close with Jesus. He saw him, he witnessed miracles, he was a friend of Christ. He saw him die, he saw him buried, he saw him raised again, and Peter is now writing to these churches trying to encourage them in the good and the right way.

The context of this message, Peter is close to death. He's nearing his death; he is about to be departed from this body, from this life. This was written likely around the early 60s AD, so about 30 years after Christ's ministry and Peter's goal is to persuade and remind the hearers about the truth that they already know. He's telling his hearers and his readers, "These are things you have been instructed in, this is what you are established in and I want you to know with certainty at all times what is true." Because these believers were plagued with false prophets and false teachers.

In the verses prior, in verses 12 through 15 right after Peter has just talked about the word and the power of God, and faith being supplemented with virtue and self-control and godliness, putting on all of these things, he says in verse 12,

12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

"For," and he moves into this argument, "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths but we were eyewitnesses and we have the prophetic word." The context is Peter is reminding his hearers of the truth and he's saying this is what you're established in, this is what you know, this is what is real, and because of that, now I'm going to expound on what your faith is in, what you must place your faith in. His main point is you can trust the word and I have two points for this sermon, so I guess maybe it's not really a Baptist sermon. It's close enough, I think anyway. Two out of three. I'll add one in maybe. There's really two main points and this is Peter's argument, he's saying the word is trustworthy because it has, first, a unique testimony; the second point will be it has a unique character.

But he begins by explaining that the word of God has a unique testimony. There is nothing else that has this kind of testimony from events, from people, from the voice of God himself. The word of God is trustworthy because of the testimony given to it. It first has an apostolic testimony. Peter himself is saying, "I have seen these things and therefore you can trust the word of God." He says, "I have witnessed the glory of God." He makes it clear three times, "we were with him." He says, "We were eyewitnesses," and he says, "we were with him on the mountain, we ourselves heard the very voice." He's making it clear, "We were there" so now this helps confirm his message. This gives his credentials, he's saying, "You can trust my message. I was there. I witnessed Christ. I've seen his glory." He's saying, "My message is authentic because it doesn't come from cleverly devised myths." That's the beginning, he says it's not from cleverly devised myths, it's not from some friend of a friend that he heard, it's not something they colluded together to come up with in order to gain more followers and start a cult and make money or whatever it was. He's saying this is nothing like that. This is no false prophecy or false teaching we are presenting to you.

That's how he begins this, he says, "This is not something made up," but what's his confirmation? "But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." The confirmation is we have seen these things, therefore you can trust these things. He's helping confirm his message by saying, "I was present with Christ." And he brings up a miracle of Christ, so it has an apostolic testimony but really the word of God, as we see again and again in the scriptures, is that it has a miraculous testimony. The word of God is confirmed through miracles. There are miracles that testify to the certainty and the validity of God's promises.

Peter brings up a specific event, this is the transfiguration, and the transfiguration of Christ is when Christ took three men up on a mountain, that was Peter, James and John, and he was transformed before them. They saw him in his full glory and they saw him as

he will be in the Second Coming. His face shone like a bright light and they saw and beheld the transformation of Christ on this mountain, they saw something great and grand. Truly this is one of the high points of Christ's ministry. It's the pinnacle. It's saying, "Look and see. My message is clear. I'm showing you my glory." And not only that but this is a glimpse of the Second Coming. Christ is showing them his coming glory, his future glory. It's a display of what is going to happen.

So on this transfiguration event, Peter is there and he witnesses this. He sees this miracle that Christ performs that attests to the certainty of his word. But he doesn't only see, he says, "we were eyewitnesses," but he also says, "we heard this very voice." What was the voice? The voice is that of God the Father. God the Father speaking from heaven and confirming that his Son is God, that this is the Son of God and in the transfiguration accounts in the gospels as recorded in Matthew and Mark and Luke, God the Father says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." So Peter hears this, they see this, they see the glory of God, they hear from the Father, "This is my Son, listen to him." These miracles, it's pointing towards the fact that Christ is surely the Word of God made flesh, that he is the Son of God and whatever he says is God's word.

This miracle just like Christ's other miracles, served a purpose to confirm that which God had said. That's the purpose of these miraculous testimonies is to confirm that which has already been declared true, that which already is true. And it's interesting the uniqueness of even the transfiguration because at the transfiguration Christ was there in his full glory and Moses and Elijah appeared and they were there talking with Christ, and as they were there, they were discussing with Christ his coming exodus and Peter doesn't record this in his book but he says, "Let's make a tent for the three of you," and that's when God the Father rebukes him and says, "No, this is my Son. Listen to him. He is the great one that you must listen to." I guess Peter was embarrassed or something, didn't want to include that in his own letter.

But the point is God is confirming Christ and it's interesting because the transfiguration account is in all three gospels. It follows immediately after Christ predicts his coming death and resurrection. Another time when Peter actually rebukes Christ, Christ says, "I am going to die and I will be raised again on the third day," and in each account it says then six days later after these things, after having proclaimed that Christ is going to suffer and die and rise again, this is the confirmation. This is God the Father saying, "The words of Christ, my Son, are mine. Listen to him. What Christ has told you is certainly true." This is the Son of God and the miracles he's performing are attesting to that truth, that he is the one and only Son of God.

There are really three main times in the history of the world and in scripture where there are an intense grouping of miracles. There's a cluster of miracles that are significant, that are profound, and in each instance they are attesting to the validity of the word. The word is preached and these miracles, they follow as a sign saying the word of God is true. These three events occur under Moses, under Elijah and Elisha, and under Christ. Moses performed great miracles and his word was, "These are from the Lord. These are my people. I will call my people to myself. I will redeem them from slavery and from their

sins and I will be their God." And the message of Elijah was, "I am the one and only God. There is no other. It is me alone that you will serve." And both of these men, they said, "Thus says the Lord," and they performed these great miracles to show this is the word of the Lord. This is what you must listen to.

Christ himself performed great miracles unlike any other and his miracles were to serve as the same thing to validate his message to say, "This is true. This is my word. You can trust it." But there's a difference between Moses and Elijah, they embodied the law and the prophets, they point to Christ, but there's a difference between their message and Christ's message. Their message is, "Thus says the Lord," and they follow with the words of the Lord that God gave them to speak. God told them, "Say this to the people, 'Thus says the Lord.'" But of Christ, God says, "This is my Son. Listen to him because he is the Lord." The first message is, "God has given me this message to you, these miracles confirm that it's from God." The message of Christ is, "I am the Lord. Listen to me." And God the Father says, "This is my Son. Listen to him." So we have a new confirmation in Christ Jesus that completely and most certainly confirms the word of God and it confirms the word that is made flesh, Jesus Christ himself.

Visible miracles, they were performed for a specific purpose. Visible signs and miracles were performed to confirm the word of God outwardly but they were pointing always to a deeper spiritual truth. Miracles are never meant to stand on their own. They're not meaningless but they're also not the end result. They're not on the same level as scripture. They're not something to place your faith in. Miracles serve one purpose and that is to confirm that which is already true, namely the word of God. That's our second point is Peter moves from this argument talking about how he has seen, he has beheld, he has witnessed the glory of God. He saw Christ receive honor and glory. He saw Christ in his majesty. These miracles are performed so that you can see and you can know and you can be certain this has happened, but after that he says in verse 19, "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed."

The second point is the unique character of scripture and Peter is demonstrating that what we have seen, that's not all there is. It confirms something else, something greater. There is something more than what we have seen. There is something more powerful and more life-giving than even seeing Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration and that is the word of God and that word is unique, it is unlike any other word. All these miracles, all these signs, all this vision, it only points to one thing and that is the word of God and it is the prophetic word. He says prophetic word and truly prophecy is very simply understood just the words of God. Prophecy is the words of God and prophets can be rightly defined as mouthpieces of the Lord. It's not just about telling the future. It's not just about seeing signs and predicting what's going to happen in 100 years. Prophets were those who spoke the words of the Lord. They spoke the word of God and they spoke the judgment of God, they spoke the blessing of God, they spoke whatever God would have them say, and truly the prophetic word is the entirety of scripture because all scripture is breathed out by God.

So when he says "we have the prophetic word," he's speaking of the whole of scripture and the whole of scripture originates from one source and that source is God. God is the source of truth. God's word is the source of truth. He then says it's more fully confirmed. It's more completely confirmed. It's made more certain and the idea here is not that their physical experiences proved, it's not that they made the word of God true, as though their experiences created truth, it's that their experience and what they witnessed points towards the validity of the word. It makes it more fully confirmed. It makes the word of God well-rounded. All the arguments are there. All the witnessing that is needed is there. It is completely defended by truth because it is truth and there is no attack that can be made on the word of God because it is fully confirmed. The word of God is certain and you have no excuse for not believing it. That's his argument here is if you are looking for ways to confirm the word, it's been confirmed in every single way. Every way that it is needed to be confirmed, it has been confirmed. It's been confirmed visibly. It's been confirmed through miracles, through the prophets, through the word of the Lord from heaven. It's been confirmed through Christ Jesus in his ministry on earth and its fulfillment of the Old Testament. It's been confirmed through the preservation of scripture through today and the life-giving nature of that word. It has been confirmed in every way.

And Peter says his eyewitness account is serving as more full, complete confirmation of this, that the word of God has been confirmed through the miracles performed and ultimately through Christ Jesus, the Son of God. This is full confirmation. If you're looking for other confirmation, you're missing Peter's point. He says it has been more fully confirmed because it is made more certain and more sure by all that God has done for it, but it's not just making it more sure, the word of God in itself is true and it is true for you and for me. It is completely true, without error. There is no other book like it.

He describes the word as a lamp shining in a dark place, so it's the prophetic word, it's more fully confirmed, and it's a lamp shining in a dark place, meaning that it is true sight. If you're in the dark, you can't see. If you have a lamp, you can see only by the light of that lamp. The word of God is the lamp unto our feet, the light unto our path, and it is true sight. That's how we know what is really real. The sight of them witnessing Christ in his glory on the mountain, that is not true sight according to Peter. He doesn't say, "We have the lamp that is what we saw." He doesn't say, "We have the lamp that is Christ making the five loaves of bread feed 5,000 people." He's saying the light is the word of God, the prophetic word.

So if you want to see and you want to really see God and see what reality is, look in the word of God because that is the only way you can see. That is the only lamp that you have. That is true light and true life. And he says pay attention to this because truly it is the only way you can see, and pay attention to this until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. He's saying pay attention to the word because it will last forever. The word of God is eternal. It will last until the Second Coming. And he's not saying it will last until the Second Coming when the light will go out. He's saying it lasts into the Second Coming when the day dawns, when the light becomes the only light and darkness is destroyed. The light of the word of God is eternal. It lasts forever. You and I can trust

the word because it is eternal. It will last to the end and it is true life. If you place your faith in this word, you will have true life and you will last to the end because the word lasts to the end. Nothing else does. You can't read any other book that will last to the end. You can't read any other book that will preserve and save your soul. It is scripture alone.

This lasts forever and Peter makes clear why it is. These last two verses, they say again twice, "This is not from man. This is from God." This is from God. That's the only reason it can last into eternity because it is from God. He says very clearly, "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation." There is no prophecy of scripture that comes from someone's own interpretation, meaning the authors of scripture, they did not interpret these prophecies however they wanted to. They interpreted these prophecies because God gave them guidance to interpret them. It's from God. No interpretation of prophecy comes from someone else, someone's own interpretation because "no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man." So the prophecy and the interpretation of the prophecy are both from God. It is from God alone, not from man, and it is from God alone who has confirmed his word because these "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." These men spoke from God because the Spirit of God was carrying them along. They weren't mindlessly writing these things down in a trance. They were writing with their own personalities, they were writing to different audiences, they were writing what needed to be written but they were writing the words of God because God carried them along.

So you can trust the word because it is from God. You can trust the word because it is prophetic, it is fully confirmed, it is a lamp, it is true sight, it is eternal, it is true life. It will last and it's from God. It's from God alone. The word is from God. It was written over 1,500 years by over 40 different authors. They were writing to different people at different times, in different settings, in different contexts, in different continents, but there is one unified message of scripture. There is no other book like that. There is no other book that comes anywhere close to that. This is one message that is presented in the whole of scripture because this is God's word for you.

And what is that message? The message is that God is good, God is Lord, and he has made a way to save a people for himself. The message of scripture is that God is Creator and sovereign over all things, that God is holy and just and loving and merciful, that he is completely good. The message of scripture is that you and I are sinful, we are fallen, we have no hope of our own. The message of scripture is that you and I have been separated from God since the fall, that we are born into Adam's race, meaning we are under condemnation. The message of scripture is that the people of God, though he pursues them continually, still turn their backs and flee from God as much as they can. And the message of scripture is that God has always been preparing a way to redeem his people for himself for his name's sake.

And the message of the word is that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost. Jesus Christ has come into this world to live a perfect life, truly the Son of God, God's beloved Son, with whom God is well pleased and his standing before God is perfect but he selflessly came to earth, emptied himself of his

glory. The glory seen at the transfiguration was his glory prior to and his coming glory that he would have but on earth he humbled himself to be fully man. And that man Jesus Christ suffered and bled and died but it was more than just the physical outward suffering and dying on a cross, it was the taking on the punishment for the sins of all who would believe in him, taking on the wrath of God for the sins of sinful men. You and I have transgressed against God and we are guilty of his punishment. We are guilty of breaking his law. We deserve his punishment and Christ took that on the cross. And the message of the word is that Jesus Christ did not stay there but he rose again on the third day, meaning that the debt was paid in full and more than that, Christ in his righteousness, he has imputed that to you. If you place your faith in Christ, God looks at you and says, "This is my beloved Son." The standing that Christ has before the Father is the standing you have before the Father if you place your faith in Christ. This is the message of the word. Jesus Christ died, was buried and raised again on the third day giving new life and a new exodus, calling people to himself and he is now seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come again in glory. This is the unified message of the word. From Genesis to Revelation it all points towards Christ. Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets, all they ever did was point forward to Christ. The miracles of scripture, the confirmation of the word, all of it was pointing towards the word made flesh. The word of God is certain and steadfast and sure. You and I can trust the word.

Now what does this mean for us? It means we can trust the word but why do I have to tell you that we need to trust the word? It's because we so easily trust in ourselves. Our natural tendency is not to trust the word and not to trust the promises of God but instead to trust ourselves and what we have done and what we have seen and what we have experienced. And we long to see, we are made to see, we were made to touch, and we want to see this confirmation for ourselves and God has at times blessed people with visible confirmation of his word.

When I was a little kid, I was probably nine or so, maybe we'll say younger, it's embarrassing, I wanted confirmation from God. I wanted to see something that would confirm to me and help validate my faith in Christ and I remember I was outside of my house just in the side yard and I saw a bird, there was a bird on the ground just standing there being a bird, and I looked at it and I thought, "I really want that bird to sing a worship song," because if the bird sings a worship song, you know, it sings "God of wonders" or whatever we were learning in Mr. Kim's class at the time, if it sings this song, well, then, okay, then I heard it and it's praising God and that confirms for me, like, I've seen this. I've seen a miracle and now I believe God. And doesn't all creation sing, so if the bird sings that would be great. And this is a completely true story, all of it is true. And I looked at this bird and I prayed to God that he would allow this bird to sing for me a worship song. I wanted this confirmation. I was praying to God and this is completely true, I looked at this bird and the bird was there and the bird flew away and it didn't sing a worship song. Completely true, I promise this happened. It is completely true. I didn't make it up. The bird did not sing a worship song for me. It didn't confirm that for me. It didn't say, "Oh yeah, actually do you know what? God's real. So there you go, Scott, awesome, now you know." It didn't do that for me. I know it might be hard to believe but it didn't do that.

But I wanted that confirmation. I wanted to see something physical because to me as a child it was like how can I know what God wants from me? How can I know he's real? I've never heard his voice. I've never seen a miracle. I want this confirmation. I want to have something I can hold onto and touch and grasp and cling to. And you and I often, we want to hear directly from God so we can have something confirmed in our lives, so we know for sure what is true, what we must do, what is real, how we can grow in Christ, and we want to see for ourselves sometimes it's so that we can come to faith, sometimes it's so we can live in faith. But our sight means nothing of its own. It means nothing by itself unless it points towards the word of God.

Think back with me to the exodus. Focus on Egypt. Egypt in the exodus enslaved the people of God. The people of God were in bondage for hundreds of years to the Egyptians. They were in this foreign land and they were oppressed and God sent Moses to free the people, to lead them out, because God was going to call his people out of bondage into the Promised Land. And he sent forth Moses who went before Pharaoh and said, "This is the word of the Lord. Let my people go." And he performed miracles. So Pharaoh saw the miracles and he heard the word of the Lord but he did not trust the word of the Lord and he said, "I will not let your people go." And so then came a plague and another plague and another plague, and at a certain point you'd think that Pharaoh would see this truly is the one and only God. Each plague was designed by God to target one of the Egyptian gods so he was really claiming his Lordship over all the Egyptian gods, and if Pharaoh was thinking rightly, if he was seeing these signs as pointing towards a deeper reality, he would have placed his faith in God. But he did not and the plagues came until the final one, the death of the firstborn and Pharaoh lets the people go. And God preserves his people, he carries them into the wilderness and they're at the Red Sea when Pharaoh, even though he's seen that God is powerful, that God has done all these great things, he still hardens his heart and pursues the people of Israel and God performs the miracle of parting the Red Sea. The people of God walk through and if Pharaoh were looking at that rightly, he would have said, "I'm not going in there. This is a bad idea. This God is powerful beyond all else. I am going to serve this God." But he did not and all of Israel made it to the other side safely walking across on dry ground, and as soon as the last one made it, the sea closed in on the whole of the Egyptian army and they were wiped out.

Pharaoh and the Egyptians saw God, they saw physically miracles unlike anything we can imagine and they did not believe. Do you think you're better than Pharaoh? Do you think you would be better in that situation than the Egyptians? Do you think you would trust God if you saw? Tragically, the example does not end there because there was another group of witnesses of the glory of God and that was Israel. Israel who all these plagues had been performed against Egypt but they were preserved by God. They were God's people. His hand protected them, guided them out of slavery. They had nothing to do with that. It was all God's doing and God said to them, "I will free you. I will call you out of Egypt and I will give you the Promised Land." And what did Israel do? They grumbled. They complained. They said, "If only we were back in Egypt in slavery. We, at least, had better food to eat there than this free bread from heaven." They grumbled

and they complained against God and even in the midst of the exodus, they continued to show they didn't have faith in God but in the sights and in the wonders that they saw. And though the land was called the Promised Land, they did not believe the promise of God and they said, "There's no way we can take this. These people are too big. There's no way we can go in. We're going to be killed. Our children are going to be killed. If only you hadn't brought us out here to die, Moses. We're going to die out here."

They did not believe the promises of God and they did not believe the word of God. They did not trust what God had said and so they are now known as the unfaithful generation in Israel, and they all were exiled into the wilderness for 40 years and they all died in the wilderness. They did not believe the promises of God. Do you think you are better than Israel? They saw. They saw everything they needed to see to know that the word of God was sure and yet they did not believe. Do you think you have more strength than the people of God? If you were to see some miracle, do you think then you would have faith when these who saw these great miracles did not? The word of God has been confirmed. That is what you must trust. If you have sight but it doesn't bring you back to the word of God, it is meaningless. Why would you pray for a miracle when the word of God is fully confirmed? A miracle is not going to do anything but further condemn you and your trust in your sight is a trust in yourself. If you trust in your experience and what you feel and how you feel the Spirit moving in you, then your faith is in you, meaning it is as shallow as the grave you will be buried in. It is meaningless. It is a vapor in the wind. You will die if you trust in yourself.

The word of God alone is what you must trust in. This is where you find life. Jesus speaks of this. Jesus in Luke 16 tells a parable, he tells a parable of a rich man and a man called Lazarus who is a poor and abused man. The rich man and Lazarus, they both die. Lazarus goes to be with the Lord and it says with Abraham. Jesus' words are from Abraham. And the rich man is burning in hell and through this parable he's able to see Lazarus and Abraham and speak with him. There's this, in the parable he is able to reach out and he says, "Please have mercy on me. Let Lazarus just dip his finger in water and touch my tongue so that there is some help, some respite from this suffering that I have." And Abraham says, "There's no way to span this gap. This is the judgment, this is what has happened." And this is what the rich man says, in verse 27 he says, "Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house--for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment." So he's saying send Lazarus. I have five brothers. I don't want them to suffer like I am suffering. Send Lazarus from the dead to tell them. And these are Jesus' words through Abraham, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." And he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead."

There is nothing that can convince you of the truth if you do not believe God's word is true. There is nothing that will persuade you to believe that God is God, that Christ is Lord, unless you believe the word of God. If you don't believe that, nothing will convince you of the truth. You must have faith in the promises of God and in that alone. That alone is able to save your soul. That alone is what brings you life. And Christ himself says, "If

someone came to you from the dead, a miracle of miracles, if you were at a funeral and the person came out of the casket and said, 'Believe the word of God,' that is not enough to save your soul. That is not enough to convince you of the truth. What you need is a changed and renewed heart which only God can provide and you need to believe the gospel that is contained in the word of God and the promises of God you can trust are certain." The word of God has been completely confirmed in every way and what you and I must do is trust in that word.

My final example from scripture is the story of Abraham and Isaac, and I didn't run this by Olga beforehand but it's the same story. It's very neat how the Lord works these things together. Abraham was promised by God that he would be the father of a great nation, and he was promised this when he was very old and he thought, "How can this happen? I don't have a son. I'm very old. My wife is old, there's no way we can be the father of a great nation. I can't do that." But he believed the promises of God and God told him, "I will make a great nation out of you and through your son Isaac I will bless the nations." The promise of God is that through Isaac the nations will be blessed and Abraham will be the father of a great nation. And God provides Abraham this son. He provides Abraham the son. Through faith Abraham believed God and God proved that he is reliable, that his word is true.

And just a few years later, Abraham was told by God to sacrifice his son. He was told by God to take his son up onto the mountain to sacrifice him before the Lord. And if Abraham was living according to his eyes, according to sight, according to what he heard, he would have said, "There is no way that this promise can come true because I'm about to kill my son. God promised through this son, so how can I obey God if it's not going to work out? This is my only son. This is how I will be the father of a great nation." But Abraham did not act based on his sight, he acted based on his faith in the word of God. He pointed to the promise of God that said, "Through Isaac I will make you a great nation." And he said, "This is true." So he held fast to the promise of God and he obeyed. He took his son up to sacrifice him believing that God could even raise him from the dead because he knew God promised this, "It will come to pass, therefore I can obey God no matter what it looks like, no matter what it feels like. I can obey the word of God and I can trust the word of God because it is true. Whatever means he's going to produce his will, he will do it, so what I must do is trust the word of God and obey."

And in that story, he takes his son up and God stays his hand because he was showing Abraham that he needed to have faith in him and he provided a substitute in the thicket, a ram. And Abraham was the father of a great nation. Isaac was his son through whom the nation came and through all of this came Christ, the Son, the only Son whom his Father loved who gave his life, who was not spared but was sacrificed on your behalf and on my behalf. And this is the word that was always being pointed towards in the Old Testament. This is the truth that has always been a reality in scripture. On every single page it points to Jesus Christ. And what you and I must do is have faith like Abraham, not a faith where we're basing it on our sight because if you do that when God blesses you you'll think he's good, and when God gives you a trial you'll think he is evil, you'll think he is a terrible father. But if you look at the word of God and you trust in what it says, you'll know God

is always good and all things he is working out for your good and for his glory. So whatever you receive from the hand of the Lord, you can thank him, you can bless him, and you can trust him because his word is sure.

You must have faith in the word of God. This is Peter's whole argument to these hearers. There are false prophets, there are false teachers, the context is these are people who are experiencing false doctrines, people saying different things about Christ, saying that he's not really Lord, saying he's not really God, and Peter says, "You can trust the word because we have seen. You can trust the word based on all the miracles that have always pointed to the validity of the word. You can trust the word because God the Father himself said, 'This is my Son. Listen to him.' And you can trust the word because it is unlike any other book. It is from God. It is all that you need for life and godliness. It is all that you need to live a holy life before God the Father." So you and I need to trust the word. That's the message in this passage, that's the message of the whole word is that God is reliable and you can trust him. He has proven himself faithful again and again and again and for you and I to doubt his faithfulness and to doubt his word is to say that there is some other thing that we need. We need more confirmation. We need something else. We need God to show us physically. We need to see. And that is faithlessness. You will not believe based on your own sight. You will only believe if you place your trust in the word of God. You will not be saved through your experiences, through whether you feel the Spirit or you have these emotions, or whatever it is. You will be saved only if you trust in the word of God.

Trust the promises of God. I told you that was the main point and I've said it so many times, it is trust the word of God. It has been completely confirmed in every way. There is nothing left for you to confirm. Listen to him. Listen to God. So what you can take away from this is that God is trustworthy, that God is always faithful, and that God's word is completely true. Trust in the word.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for this word that you've given to us. I thank you, God, for showing us that your word is true, everything about your word. I thank you for showing us Jesus Christ and him crucified, the message of scripture that you have made a way for sinners to be made right before a holy God. You have shown us that you are completely faithful and reliable and that no matter what we can and must trust you, that we must look to your word as a lamp shining in a dark place, that we must look to your word as the only thing that has been confirmed as you have confirmed it. God, I pray for each one of us that we would take on the word of God knowing that it is our life, our foundation, and the only way we can be made right before you. God, you have blessed us greatly through your word, you have blessed us through your Son. I pray for those in here that have not placed their faith in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, that they would do so knowing that nothing else is going to convince them of the truth. And I pray for those of us in here who are believers, that we would place our faith in you knowing that your will for us is in your word and that you are our good and trustworthy Father. Help us live lives based on

your word and help us to live out what you have called us to do. Magnify Christ in our lives this week. I pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.