

TAKEAWAY

BELIEFS MATTER

2 Peter: Part One

INTRODUCTION

As a church, we're beginning a six week series called 'Beliefs Matter', unpacking the New Testament Letter of 2 Peter. Running through Peter's words to early Christians, is the constant emphasis on truth. It becomes clear throughout the letter that Peter is saying; what you believe really does matter because it shapes how you live and his letter gives us a glimpse of what the Christian life should look like.

SHARE

What is the best email, letter or text you have ever received and why?

What do you think it means to live a Godly life?

READ

2 Peter 1:1-4

DISCUSS

What do you already know about Peter, author of 2 Peter? How does what we know of him shape how we understand his letter?

We often skip over introductions like this one – but what, in your own words, does Peter's introductory line say?

Peter identifies himself as a servant and an apostle of Jesus. Would you describe yourself as a 'servant' of Jesus? Why or why not?

What does it mean when Peter says: God has given us everything we need to live a godly life, especially when applied to your life? Is that something you believe?

All of us have areas in our lives that don't reflect the truths found in these first few verses. What do you think would change if you began to live with a real understanding that God's divine power is aiding you to live for Christ in every area?

In these short verses, Peter is saying: the power to live a godly life comes not through our own abilities or goodness, but by knowing Him more closely and building our lives on His promises. What promises of God can you recall? Any favourites? Why are they so vital to the Christian life?

EXPLAIN

Peter grew up a Jewish man in the northern part of Israel, by the sea of Galilee, in the early part of the First Century. In all likelihood his expectation of life was that he would work as a fisherman from childhood to old age, living relatively peacefully in obscurity. However, Peter became one of the most well known people in history, entirely because he encountered Jesus, followed Jesus, and is one of the first people out of billions of Christians across history to realise that Jesus is not just a great teacher or miracle worker, but the promised Messiah – God come to earth.

Just before Jesus dies, Peter betrays him. After Jesus dies, Peter is broken. When he rises again Peter is bewildered. Soon after Jesus' resurrection he addresses a crowd of thousands, shares the good news with them, and very quickly becomes the first leader of the early church. As the years roll on he becomes a sort of 'elder statesman' figure, and in his later days he writes two letters that become part of the New Testament. These letters are known as 1 & 2 Peter are the words of someone who personally spent hours and hours and hours with Jesus. This is someone who knows what Jesus is like, what He is all about, and what the implications are for following him, and not only that but he's got lived experience of following Jesus for the long haul, through good and bad times, through controversy and confusion, through his own mistakes.

What are some of the ways we can build our beliefs about God and ourselves on what He says, not the confused claptrap of our culture? (*You may find it helpful to write these down and give them a go as part of 'Try Outs'.*)

PRAY

Pray together for God's help that we might build our lives on God's promises, trusting and relying on Christ and not our own abilities or goodness.

TRY OUT

- Spend some time writing out as many of God's promises you can remember or find in scripture. Try to learn one or two by heart.
- Reflect on practical ways you could become more familiar with the promises of God in the year ahead (perhaps some ideas came up in discussion)? Journal or share with another member of the group what effect you hope this would have and review it in a few weeks time.