East 91st Street Christian Church | **Message Guide**

Refined	The Clarity of Scripture
November 15, 2026	Dave Faust
Week 6	2 Peter 1:1-21

Welcome to week 6 of our series of messages we are calling, *Refined*. We will be in 2 Peter chapter 1, and taking a serious look at answering this question—Can we trust the Bible? Is the Bible just a collection of man-made stories? Is it something we can twist it to fit our ideology and our social agenda?

1. What do you think when it comes to the trustworthiness of the Bible?

Two common lies about the Bible:

Lie # 1—Scripture is irrelevant and doesn't apply to my life.

Things seem irrelevant until you realize how much you need them. You may wonder how the Bible relates to your life—until you face a crisis or a tough decision. Peter writes, "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (2 Peter 1:3, NIV).The Bible doesn't teach you how to repair a transmission or operate your laptop. But it addresses the fundamental questions of life:

- Who am I? You're created by God and made in his image.
- What is my purpose? You were created to love, serve, and glorify God.
- How should I treat others? Jesus calls me to love my neighbors.
- What will happen to me when I die?

The truth is, the Bible is relevant if you want to grow and mature."... he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4, NIV)

Peter list 8 qualities that the Lord wants us to develop. The first one is faith, because it's foundational to all the others. Faith is the channel through which we receive the rest of God's blessings. "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love." (2 Peter 1:5-7, NIV)

2. **Do you want these qualities in your life—*goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love?* Which of these qualities are lacking from your faith?**

"For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins." (2 Peter 1:8-9, NIV)

Are you spiritually nearsighted sometimes—thinking only about yourself? It's nearsighted to plan for retirement but not prepare for where you'll go when you die. The truth is, the Bible is relevant if you want to be confident about the future. Our culture is filled with fear. We worry about money. We worry about our health and our jobs. We worry about our kids and grandkids. But Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself"

3. **When you have been full of worry or fear, how has the Bible helped you find confidence and eternal hope for your future?**

"Make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10-11, NIV). Have you ever experienced turbulence on a flight? The plane shakes and the passengers get nervous. You don't immediately assume the plane is going to crash. You trust the aircraft and the pilot.

We experience turbulence in life. But our salvation doesn't depend on how we feel. It depends on Jesus and his promises. Peter says, "So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have" (2 Peter 1:12, NIV). The truth is, the Bible is relevant, because you will die someday.

"I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me" (2 Peter 1:13-14, NIV). A tent is a temporary dwelling place. You live in it for a while, then you take it down, fold it up, and move on. That's what our bodies are like. We camp out on earth for a while, but this isn't our permanent dwelling-place.

4. **How does viewing your body as a tent (temporary dwelling) affect your perspective on life, death, and eternity?**

Jesus "made clear" to Peter he was going to die soon and that his death would be forcible and violent (John 21:18-19). But Peter was calm about it… "And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things" (2 Peter 1:15, NIV).

The Greek word for "departure" is *exodos*, which literally means ."the way out." "Exit." The OT book called Exodus tells how the Hebrews left Egypt and went to the Promised Land. Death doesn't mean extinction. It's not the end of your existence. It's your exit from earth. It means you leave this place and move into eternity, either in heaven or hell. Before Peter died, he wanted to make sure others remember God's truth.

Some say the Bible is irrelevant. But that's a lie. The Bible isn't irrelevant. We need it to help us grow, face the future, and prepare for death.

Lie # 2—Scripture is unreliable and it can't be trusted.

Second Peter was written against the backdrop of false teaching. Just like today, some people were saying you couldn't trust God's Word. But Peter insisted . . . "For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty " (2 Peter 1:16, NIV).

The truth is, the Bible is based on eyewitness testimony. Peter and the rest of the 12 apostles spent 3 years with Jesus. They watched what he did and wrote down what he said. And from those days with Jesus, Peter highlights an incident that stood out in his memory. It's called the Transfiguration (recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
"He 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.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain" (2 Peter 1:17-18, NIV).

Peter was an eyewitness of what happened on that mountain. And he was an EAR-witness because he heard what He says..."I heard his voice and saw his glory."

5. **Like in a court of law, eyewitness testimony plays an important role in establishing what really happened. What difference does it make to you when someone actually witnessed something rather than just hearing about it?**

The Bible is reliable....It's based on eyewitness testimony...and the truth is, the written Word points us to the living Word, Jesus Christ. The truth is, the Bible is reliable because the Holy Spirit guided its authors... "Aboveall, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 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" (2 Peter 1:20-21, NIV).

"Carried along" . . . a phrase used by sailors. Acts 27:15, 17 uses the same word to describe how a ship was "carried along" by the wind. Peter was a fisherman, so he was familiar with this. The Bible's authors were ordinary people who raised their sails to the wind of the Holy Spirit, who guided them. We need God's guidance! Opinions change. Feelings come and go. Friends encourage us to just follow our hearts. But God's truth remains constant, even if the world disagrees with it.

So, build your faith on what God has revealed, not just on what you feel. "All Scripture is God-breathed [RELIABLE] *and is useful* [RELEVANT] for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, NIV).

Scripture equips us for life. It's useful like. . .

- A compass or a GPS that guides your steps.
- A filter that helps you filter out foolish ideas and keep the good ones.
- A mirror that shows what's really happening in your life.
- A sword. God's Word is like a surgeon's scalpel that cuts away disease so we can be healed. "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, . . . it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12, NIV)
- A light. A lamp doesn't illuminate every mile of the road ahead. It gives enough light for the next step. God doesn't reveal everything that will happen in the next 20 years. But his Word gives us enough light to guide…"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105, NIV)

If you haven't been reading the Bible, start. If you *have* been reading it, keep it up. The Psalmist said, "How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103). But remember to not just read it, live it out! James said, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22, NIV).

6. **So what is your takeaway? What step will you take to trust the Bible—to trust God's Word…and to do what it says?**