

Sunday Morning Message

January 3, 2021

2 Peter 1:1 – 11 – Building Upon Your Faith

Series - Experiencing God's Grace in the Midst of Suffering

Text – 2 Peter 1:1 - 11

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 1:1 - 4

Introduction to the Series

The writer of this letter is identified as Peter. Peter was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was not only one of the twelve, but also a member of the inner circle of the Lord, which also include James and John. Peter knew a little something about growing in the Lord. Early on in his apostleship, Peter would often try to do things His way. He was a bit impulsive, and somewhat outspoken. Peter's famous failure in the flesh came when he denied knowing the Lord, and this immediately following his self-confident boasting that he would never do it.

Peter, however, didn't stay defeated. He got back up, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, was greatly used of the Lord. His message at Pentecost yielded the fruit of 3000 souls trusting the Lord Jesus. Peter was also used of the Lord to lead Cornelius, a Gentile man, to faith in Christ.

Here in this second general epistle or letter from Peter, he is writing near the end of his life. We estimate that the date of this writing was around 66 AD. He will be martyred at the hands of Nero shortly after this epistle was written, probably around 67 AD. It was most likely written from Rome. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified upside-down, having requested this form of crucifixion because he felt unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as the Lord.

The theme of this letter is much the same as Peter's first epistle. He is encouraging believers to remain faithful to the Lord even under incredibly difficult circumstances. Additional emphasis in 2 Peter is given to the exposure of false teachers as well as to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another significant difference that should be pointed out is that the scope of this letter seems to have been intended for a much broader audience than 1 Peter. That first epistle was written to a specific region in Asia Minor (present day Turkey) and is referred to in this letter as being previously written to these same recipients, but this letter is addressed to all believers, presumably beyond the geographical boundaries of the first letter. Of course, the Holy Spirit intended that both letters be included within the Canon of Scripture and would thus be written for the benefit of all believers.

Introduction to the Message

Our messages for the next few weeks will focus on the seven attributes listed in vs. 5 – 7 that should be added to our faith. (Read vs. 5 – 7)

This morning, we will introduce this sub-series from 2 Peter by considering the benefits that will be received because of our diligence in adding these seven disciplines to our faith. We will also see what will happen if we refuse to add “these seven things”. IN this new year, we will definitely need all of the spiritual strength that we can get in order to deal with what may be coming our way.

Before we get into the “nuts and bolts” of today’s message, let us consider for a moment the context found in vs. 1 – 4:

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"

(v. 1)

servant - Notice that Peter refers to himself as a servant. He apparently learned well the instructions of the Lord regarding serving.

"But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45)

Peter was not only voluntarily a slave (servant - doulos) to the Lord, he was also a servant to his fellow man.

Notice that this letter is written to those *“that have obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

In Peter’s day, the term “like precious faith” would mean anyone who was a believer. Christianity was not as divided in Peter’s day as it is today. (Explain) A believer was (and is) simply someone who repented of their unbelief and their sin, and placed their faith or dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work on the Cross of Calvary. In short, these people placed their faith in the gospel – the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord - as payment for their sins.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord," (v. 2)

"through the knowledge of God" – The word "know" or "knowledge" is used 13 times in this short epistle. Peter is concerned that his readers would increase in their knowledge of the Lord. The Apostle Paul also wrote about this:

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3:8-10 KJV)

Notice also the mention of "grace and peace", combined with the phrase "righteousness of God" from v. 1. Warren Wiersbe stated: "Our Lord Jesus Christ has three "spiritual commodities" that can be secured from nobody else: righteousness, grace, and peace."¹

Notice also that grace and peace are multiplied through our knowledge of God. Our knowledge of God is in direct proportion to our familiarity with His Word.

Question – How are you doing in your Bible reading?

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (v. 3)

Notice in v. 3 – [He] hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"

The Apostle Paul said:

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (Colossians 2:9-10 KJV)

The Lord supplies everything that you need for salvation. He also supplies everything you need to serve Him.

Notice again the word "knowledge". Peter is really stressing knowledge, isn't he?

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (v. 4)

Through Christ, we are given access to many "exceeding great and precious promises". As we believe the promises of God, and thereby have enough faith to obey the

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (2 Pe 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

principles, then we become partakers of the divine nature. In other words, as we grow in our faith and knowledge, we become more like Christ. When we become more like Christ, we will be less attracted (lust) to the world.

This brings us to our preliminary message today regarding the seven “things”, or character traits listed in vs. 5 – 7 that the Lord wants us to add to our faith. We will not today deal with these seven attributes individually. We will cover them in detail in future messages, but we will stress in an overview the importance of adding them.

I. The Requirement of Diligence (v. 5)

*"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;"
(v. 5)*

The word diligence (or diligent) is only found 25 times in the entire Bible. It appears twice in these first eleven verses in 2 Peter 1. The Greek word, “spoude” (spü-dā'), has been translated into the words: haste, business, and care or carefulness.

We can now define this word diligence from how it used in the Bible:

A. It means to do something quickly – meaning don't wait, don't put it off. Did you ever notice how that we tend to postpone things, avoid things, and to put things off? Did you also notice that when you procrastinate, things never get better on their own?

B. It means to do something carefully, or thoughtfully, giving careful consideration – to think it through.

C. It means to do something industriously – to work hard at it – to put forth a lot of effort.

Now add to the word “diligence” the word “all” – “all diligence”. This emphasizes it even more.

So, we are supposed to add these seven things to our faith, not with a careless, lackadaisical effort, but with “all diligence”.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

Spurgeon said: “For we cannot expect to go to heaven asleep. We are not taken there against our wills. It is not our will that accomplishes our salvation; but still, it is not accomplished without our will. “Giving diligence,” yes, but more than that, “giving all diligence,” ---It is not man's effort that saves him; but, on the other hand, grace saves no man to make him like a log of wood or a block of stone; grace makes man active. God has been diligently at work with you; now you must diligently work together with him.” (Spurgeon)

Get busy with this, don't wait, think it through carefully, and put forth some effort.

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

(Colossians 3:23-24)

II. The Rewards for Diligence (vs. 8; 10 – 11)

A. Fruitfulness (v. 8)

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 8)

Jesus said: *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."* (John 15:16)

Christians who diligently grow in their faith, and add to their faith the seven things listed in vs. 5 – 7 will be fruitful, meaning their lives will be used of the Lord to produce something.

When we speak of spiritual fruit, we are referring to:

1 The Fruit of the Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23 KJV)

2 The Fruit of the Soulwinner

B. Security (v. 10)

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" (v. 10)

Doing these seven things will not secure you, you were given security with your salvation;

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Philippians 1:6 KJV)

He said that He would never leave us, nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)

He said that He has us in His hand, and no man is able to pluck us out of His hand or the Father's hand. (John 10:27 – 30)

He said that the Holy Spirit seals us until the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)

No, doing these things does not make us secure, but it helps us to know we are secure, and will help us understand our security. Christians who do not grow in the Lord lack security. Growth is one of the greatest assurances that you have eternal life.

C. Eternal Rewards (v. 11)

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (v. 11)

Not only will we have life more abundantly here on the earth (John 10:10); but we will abundantly receive from the Lord, the reward for our efforts.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." (2 John 1:8)

All believers go to Heaven, but those who diligently add to their faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity receive abundant rewards when they enter Heaven.

II. The Refusal to Be Diligent (v. 9)

"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (v. 9)

A. They Cannot See – their spiritual understanding is very dim

B. They Cannot Remember – they forget who they are in Christ, and they resort back to what they were when they were lost.

Conclusion – “With All Diligence – Add” – don’t stop growing; don’t stop striving to move forward in your faith.

God does not need talent, but He does require diligence.

Illustration - Dr. Rick Martin has served on the mission field for twenty-nine years. He is the founder and pastor of Iloilo Baptist Church in Iloilo City, located on the Island of Panai in the Philippines. The church was started in the downstairs garage of an apartment building, but quickly began to grow due to God’s hand of blessing. Today, the church is still reaching souls with the Gospel through soulwinning and discipleship and by ministering to over 5,000 souls on a weekly basis. In accordance with the Great Commission, Iloilo Baptist Church has sent out fifty missionaries, and Iloilo Baptist College has become a sending station for pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and Christian schoolteachers. Over 600 churches and sixteen Bible colleges have been started by graduates of Iloilo Baptist College and members of Iloilo Baptist Church.