

Sunday Morning Message

February 14, 2021

2 Peter 1:1 – 11 – *Add to Your Faith Charity*

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

Text – 2 Peter 1:1 - 11

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 1:1 - 7

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.

Read the text – 2 Peter 1:1 – 11

Introduction

Review what we have learned so far in the series:

We start with a foundation of faith. This series and this message are not for the lost man, but for the man who is sure of his eternal destiny; one who has trusted Christ as his Saviour. Notice verse 1. This second letter of Peter was written *“to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:”* Notice the phrase *“through the righteousness of God”*. We know that none of us are righteous in ourselves; but we can have righteousness imputed to us (or placed on our account) through faith. Romans 3:22 states, *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:* So we begin from a position of faith. Are you in the faith. Have you been “born-again” as the Bible says through faith in Jesus Christ?

Now that we have faith we are to work diligently to add to that faith: *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;”* (verse 5).

Diligence means that we give this top priority; that we give this 110% effort. Diligence means that we will work very hard at it. Notice we are not working to get saved; but we work after we are saved. Salvation is a free gift, like a birthday present. The Bible declares in Ephesians 2:8 & 9, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* But once we are saved we must realize that we are “bought with a price”, and Christ expects us; commands us to put every ounce of energy possible into our relationship with Him; and into our service for Him.

Working diligently, we are commanded to add the following:

- 1 **Virtue** – strength, courage, and moral excellence; purity; “doing right when nobody is looking”.
- 2 **Knowledge** – a clear and certain understanding of that which exists; or of truth and fact.
- 3 **Temperance** – moderation; being able to control your passions; being able to say no.
- 4 **Patience** - Endurance; being able to put up with a lot of external pressure without losing your Christian testimony.
- 5 **Godliness** – piety; holiness; Christ-likeness.
- 6 **Brotherly Kindness** – fraternal affection; brotherly love; kindness; just being nice to each other.

Today we put the icing on the cake. Today we will add the final ingredient, which will enable us to produce fruit for the Lord, and will allow us to see things clearly from God's perspective. Notice vv. 8 & 9:

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

Today we will add charity.

Last week we learned about "phileo" love (brotherly kindness). This week we will examine agape love (charity – the love of the Cross).

Read with me 1 Corinthians 13

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Colossians 3:14)

What is charity?

Charity is love; but it is a far deeper love than just a kindness or affection. It is an unconditional love; a self-sacrificing love. It is the type of love that a mother has for the child when the child is sick and she stays up all night taking care of him. It is a love that is never selfish; but always looking to serve another.

We are commanded to diligently add this love (charity) to our faith:

1 We are to love God:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." (Matthew 22:37 & 38)

2 We are to love our neighbours:

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Galatians 5:14)

3 We are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ:

"And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4:21)

Illustration - No Burden

An American missionary who was walking down the streets of a Chinese city was greatly interested in the children, many of whom were carrying smaller children upon their backs and managing at the same time to play their games. "It is too bad," the American sympathetically said to one little fellow, "that you have to carry such a heavy burden!" "He is no burden," came the quick reply; "He is my brother." "Well, you are chivalrous to say so!" said the man, and he gave the boy some money. When the missionary returned home he said to his family, "A little

Chinese boy has taught me the fullest meaning of the words, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.' " He recounted his interview and added, "If a little Chinese boy can carry and care for his brother and refuse to consider him a burden, surely we ought not to think it a burden to carry our brother, the weak and the needy ones, who look to us for help. Let us rejoice as we carry one, and say, by our actions, 'He is no burden; he is my brother.'"

4 We are to love our enemies:

Turn to Matthew 5:43 – 48

We are perfected through this last ingredient of love.

Illustration - Love Your Enemies

An Armenian nurse had been held captive along with her brother by the Turks. Her brother was slain by a Turkish soldier before her eyes. Somehow she escaped and later became a nurse in a military hospital.

One day she was stunned to find that the same man who had killed her brother had been captured and brought wounded to the hospital where she worked. Something within her cried out "Vengeance." But a stronger voice called for her to love. She nursed the man back to health.

Finally, the recuperating soldier asked her, "Why didn't you let me die?" Her answer was, "I am a follower of Him who said, 'Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you'" (Luke 6:27).

Impressed with her answer, the young soldier replied, "I never heard such words before. Tell me more. I want this kind of religion

I. The Perfect Example of Charity is the Saviour.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

To think that Jesus left Paradise to come down to this miserable earth; to be born in a stable; to be on the run from Herod; to live as a poor carpenter's son; then to minister and preach to a bunch of self-righteous people who didn't know who they had with them; to eventually be spit upon, beaten, mocked, flogged with a "cat and nine tails", and finally crucified. He did that for you. That is charity. That is love.

Illustration - No Greater Love

From the days before ready access to vaccines comes this story:

The doctor looked down at the little girl in the hospital bed. He knew that her only hope was to receive blood from someone who had recovered from the same disease.

Quickly the doctor found the anxious family, and knelt beside a small boy. "Johnny," he said, "your sister needs your kind of blood to make her well. Would you be willing to give your blood so that she can live?"

Johnny's eyes grew big. The doctor watched them well with fear, but the little boy hesitated only long enough to swallow the lump in his throat.

"Sure, Doctor, I will do it," he replied.

After the needed amount of blood was taken from Johnny's small arm, he remained quiet for a few minutes, as he had been instructed. Then he stood up, and asked softly: "Well, Doctor, when do I die?"

Only then did the doctor realize the extent of the child's sacrifice. Johnny had offered his life to save his sister; Jesus declared that there is no greater love.

"Greater love than this no man has, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

II. The Perfect Expression of Charity is Self-sacrifice.

- 1 Sacrificing your will for the will of God.
- 2 Sacrificing your preference for the preferences of others.
- 3 Sacrificing your comfort to go out and win people to Christ.

Illustration - Lesson in Love

As a group of college students toured the slums of a city, one of the girls, seeing a little girl playing in the dirt, asked a guide, "Why doesn't her mother clean her up?"

"Madam," he replied, "that girl's mother probably loves her, but she doesn't hate dirt. You hate dirt, but you don't love her enough to go down there and clean her up. Until hate for dirt and love for that child are in the same person, that little girl is likely to remain as she is."

Until hate for sin and love for the sinner gets in a person, he will do little about the plight of the lost.

4 Sacrificing your time for service of Christ, and service to others.

Illustration - Orders to Go

When someone asked a missionary if he liked his work in a third-world country, he replied: "Do I like this work? No, my wife and I do not like dirt. We have reasonably refined sensibilities. We do not like crawling into huts through goats' refuse. We do not like association with ignorant, filthy, brutish people. *But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like?* If not,

then God pity him. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to 'go' and we go. Love constrains us"

5 Sacrificing your talents to benefit those who don't have those abilities.

6 Sacrificing your treasure for the cause of Christ:

To send a bus out to Atlantic City; to send a missionary down to El Salvador or Baghdad, or some other area starving for the gospel.

"I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." (2Corinthians 8:8)

"Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf." (2Corinthians 8:24)

7 Sacrificing your life for the lives of others; thus fulfilling Christ's perfect example

Illustration - Love That Sacrifices

During World War II, an enemy submarine approached a fleet of ships in the North Atlantic. The captain of one vessel spotted the white mark of a torpedo coming directly at his ship. His transport was loaded with literally hundreds and hundreds of young soldiers on the way to the European front. He realized they would not have time to maneuver to avoid the torpedo. He grabbed the loudspeaker and cried out, "Boys, this is it!"

Nearby, though, a little escorting destroyer also observed the torpedo. The captain ordered, "Full speed ahead." His ship steamed into the path of the torpedo. The destroyer was blown up; it sank very quickly. Every man on it was lost. The captain of the troop transport ship sadly commented, "The skipper of that destroyer was my best friend." Now one verse in the Bible has an even deeper meaning for that captain:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend" (John 15:13).

III. The Perfect Enabling for Charity Comes Through the Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"
(Galatians 5:22)

Acknowledge the Spirit's presence.

Yield to the Spirit's Pre-eminence. Allow him to guide you and direct you. He's in you. He wants you to give him control of your life.

Love is exemplified by Christ.

Love is expressed in self-sacrifice.

Love is enabled by the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

Illustration - A Good Teacher and a Great Teacher

A number of years ago a Johns Hopkins University professor asked his graduate students to locate 200 boys, ages 12-16 and research their family backgrounds. The assignment was then to predict their future. The students were sent to the slum area of the city to find the boys. The conclusion reached by the graduate students was that 90 percent of those researched would spend time in jail. The final chapter of this study would not be completed until 25 years later.

When the 200 original students were sought after, some 25 years later, John Hopkins sent the researchers into the slum area again. Some of the group still remained in the slums, others had moved away, a few had died. In all they were able to locate 180 of the original 200. What they found amazed them. Only four had ever been to jail (remember the prediction had been 90 percent of 200)!

What caused this figure to be so low when all indications pointed to a larger number? When the researchers began to ask this question they found that they were getting the same answer, "Well, there was this teacher..." Pressed further, the researchers found that the teacher in all cases was one and the same. The boys had all been influenced by the same teacher.

The graduate students traced down the teacher, now living in a retirement home, and inquired about her remarkable influence over a group of boys who were headed for a life of crime. She really could not think of any reason why she would have this kind of influence. She did mention that "I truly loved my students."