

July 30, 2017

Practicing Our Readiness Drills for Christ's Return - Seeking God's Guidance from 1st and 2nd Peter

Sermon Topic: 2 Peter 1:5-7 How to Supplement Our Faith with Divine Virtues

- **2 Peter 1:5-7** For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (ESV)
- Theme of 2nd Peter: Defend yourselves with biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity against the deceptions of false teachers.

Introduction

Is there really a hell? Here's what Jesus says. . .

- *Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (ESV)*
- *Mark 9:43-49 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' For everyone will be salted with fire. (ESV)*

Flow of 2 Peter . . .

Peter is doing everything he can to keep us out of hell.

Satan is doing everything he can to keep us out of heaven. One successful way he does that is through his false teachers and Peter knows that so . . .

- Critical point #2 The more we grow in Christ the greater our defense against deception.

Peter is thinking along the lines of his congregation and they are asking "Why should we want to grow in Christ?"

Here's why . . .

- We want to grow in Christ out of enormous gratitude for what He has done for us.

For this very reason, which is His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness

If it was fear of hell and the wrath of God that brought you to Christ, it is our gratitude that motivates us to grow in Christ.

➤ Reasons to be grateful:

1. We will escape the fires of hell. (At some point we perceived our sins were sending us there. Now we are removed from that fear we don't think about it as much. . .but what if you visited hell? What if you could look into it? What if you were somehow able to hear the screams of unimaginable torment and torture and anguish? Would your life change a little? Would you be far more grateful that you aren't going there?)
2. We have escaped a pathetic life of self-destruction on earth. **having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.** What has Christ saved you from alcoholism? Have you seen what happens to alcoholics when they hit bottom? Or drugs, or sexual addictions. Have you seen pictures of Detroit's ghettos? This is what sin does to a community and it is a symbol of what it does to a life as well.
3. We have inherited the joys of heaven and heaven's host. The older you get the more you realize this world, city, neighborhood is bringing you less and less joy and your heart is lifted by looking ahead to what is next. Can you imagine a world where there is no injustice, no hurt, no abuse, no starvation, and no slavery? And not just the absence of those things but the opposite. All outstanding justice has been served. All pain, emotional and physical have been healed. All intentions toward one another are pure. All people are free and fed and loved and accepted and esteemed. All because of Jesus providing a way and all because the Father initiating and the Spirit bringing it about in our hearts. Never ending celebration of life and joy increasing each and every day for eternity.

The second question Peter expects is this: "How can we grow in Christ?"

- We grow in Christ by strenuously adding several virtues to our faith and to our character. **make every effort to supplement** We are instructed to add 7 more virtues to our faith we have received from God.

But, what does it mean to make every effort? Well, coasting in the Christian life is not the answer because like the currents in the ocean, if you decide to float along with them you will be taken out to sea. So it is the opposite of coasting. It is intentional. It is goal setting. It is evaluating. It is studying. It is asking for spiritual guidance. Intentional – you must make a decision that you are not going to remain in the same spiritual condition you are now in. It is goal setting – i.e. you must set goals for yourself in terms of prayer, study, witnessing, loving. Evaluating – i.e. do a spiritual inventory of your life. What needs to change right now, what is the most glaring area of my life that is in need of improving.

Let's examine each one. They are not sequential. The last one is love and it is false to assume you don't have to be loving until you have mastered the first six.

- Virtue. Conforming to biblical standards of morality. See attached list.
- Knowledge. An understanding of biblical and theological truth that is able to be recalled by memory.

- Self-control. The ability to deny my fleshly appetites including (but not limited to) food, finances, time, and hobbies.
- Steadfastness. The ability to not give up when the pressure is great to do so.
- Godliness. A devout love for and passion for God and the things God desires in us.
- Brotherly Love. Genuine concern and care for the members of the family of God.
- Love. Agape love extending to hard to live with non-believers and even enemies.

καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν,

Conclusion

Drifting is so easy. It's like floating down the Long Prairie River in Carlos. Just read you Daily Bread, send off a quick prayer and you good to go for another 24 hours. Peter is saying this lazy way will never cut it when the deceptions come with increasing threats for the greatest false teacher will be the anti-Christ. John Piper told the story of Glenda and Robert Lennon. His determination to swim against the tide for six hours until he could reach the boat. . . .

I'm not asking you to give that kind of effort to your faith. However, when you were in college, did you not study long and hard to get good grades, pull all-nighters, met with study groups to memorize the material because you knew good jobs required good grades. Do you not think the Christian walk is just as worthy a cause.