

Session 2: 2 Peter 1:1-15,

There is Great Value in Christians Maturing in the Faith

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To note the value of growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ;
- 2) To understand what is involved in growing in the knowledge of Jesus;
- 3) To appreciate the importance of being reminded of things we already know;
- 4) To see that our faith relies on both eyewitness testimony and prophetic fulfillment.

1:1 SIMON PETER: Certain Greek texts and the RSV employ the name Symeon here rather than Simon. Symeon is Peter's Hebrew name and the one by which he was addressed by his associates (See Acts 15:14). Its use here would suggest Peter is thinking of his old unredeemed life (Symeon) and his new life in Christ under the name the Lord gave him, Peter.

Servant and Apostle.. .Note that this is not “Servant and now Apostle”, When we grow in Christ, we don’t progress or step up to another level. We realize that we are forever servants and we only step into another area of growth in honoring Christ.

1:1 LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH or FAITH BASED ON CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOT OURS:

Some suggest this phrase identifies them as Gentiles, sharing the same faith as Peter and the Jewish disciples.

The phrase could mean a faith of equal worth with that of the apostles. The point Peter is stressing is that they do not come behind anyone in the value of their faith. God is no respecter of persons.

Whoever has faith in Him has equal standing and equal access with any other believer.

1:2-3 GRACE AND PEACE:

- Common Christian greeting in many epistles, combining the Greek and Hebrew salutations.
- Peter sees these blessings as springing from the knowledge of God and of Jesus. Since that knowledge is a growing thing, **grace and peace** are said to be multiplied... .The more we grow in Jesus the more grace and peace we shall know.

Note: The Gentiles easily understands that it is grace that saves us. The Jewish believer understands the “Shalom” (Peace) that the Savior has brought them. We, as Gentile believers, need to ever be grateful for the “grace and mercy” God had for us...to be brothers with the chosen ones.

1:3 **DIVINE POWER:** This is another key word of the epistle. It ties to 1:16 where the two major themes of the letter appear:

- The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul identifies this as "the power of his resurrection" (Philippians. 3:10). It is a power which all true believers possess which enables them, if they choose to count on it, to do "all things through Christ who strengthens" (Philippians. 4:13). Thus any failure to live a godly life is due to our weakness or folly and not to God's lack of supply.
- As has been suggested, this power is meted to us as our knowledge of God and Jesus increases.

1:3 **BY GLORY AND VIRTUE (GOODNESS):**

These words suggest the means by which the divine call is exercised in our lives.

Referring to the qualities in Jesus which attracts believers to him.

- The glory (*doxa*) which John saw in Jesus (John 1:14) was his authority and power; that which Peter saw probably refers to the Transfiguration described in 16-18.
- Jesus' virtue (*arête*) (GOODNESS) is that moral excellence which so continually awed his disciples.

Question of the day: If they (the qualities) were so evident, why didn't his brothers and sisters see that in him? Is this the reason so many people don't acknowledge Jesus as Savior...or truly the Son of God?

1:4 **GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES:**

These promises are the offers of divine provision found in the scriptures. They offer the **glory** and **virtue** of Christ to us as the basis for a growing participation in the divine nature.

1. We have Him within us, as he promised, (John 14:23), to enable us to become increasingly Christ like (2 Corinthians. 3:18).
2. Because we have become new creatures in Christ we have already escaped, by new birth, the **corruption** (moral ruin) that is in the world through lust (perverted desire). There only remains that we shall make this escape evident to all by our changing behavior.
3. Participation in the divine nature is the starting point of Christian living, and not its goal.

This participation becomes more and more evident as we allow our thinking to be renewed (Romans. 12:2) by understanding and appropriating the **great and precious promises** found in the scriptures.

1:5 **ADD:** The verb *epichorego* has a colorful and fascinating history.

In Greek drama the plays were put on by the combined effort of:

1. A poet (who wrote the script);
2. The state (which provided the theater); and
3. A wealthy individual called a *choregos*, who paid the expenses. This called for a generous but sometimes costly effort on his part.

Note: In Peter's view:

1. God has written in the blood of Jesus the captivating script for a Christian life;

2. The world is the theater wherein it will be played out; but
3. The believer must cooperate by expending his diligent efforts to make the script come alive in vivid display.

The difference is that "Jesus paid a more than generous and costly payment for our salvation."

We, the believer, must expend his/her all to see that the truth of the drama of the story of Jesus is carried to the world (the theater in which this drama is played out).

This is life!

**Don't be content on the minimum qualifications for heaven's venture.
Reach the maximum goal...the highest virtue in living for Christ...that is "godliness."**

In the secular world, there is a high and virtuous calling as to striving for the best ...that is that one should do everything with a "spirit of excellence."

In the Christian's calling for living the good, holy, and godly life, there are some words that we use to mean one should strive to be the best for Christ's sake...that is the same call. ... "Do everything with a 'spirit of excellence' because you have the Excellent Spirit living within you."

***The Practice of Godliness* by Jerry Bridges is a sequel to his book, *The Pursuit of Holiness*. In Ephesians 4:20-24, Paul urges us to put off our old self and put on the new self. The Pursuit of Holiness dealt largely with putting off the old self--dealing with sin in our lives. The Practice of Godliness focuses on putting on the new self-growing in Christian character. Exactly what Peter is saying here, Note all the virtues mentioned...all this leads to a righteous, godly life.**

Here are some thoughts concerning living a godly life:

- In the Old Testament, Enoch was described as a man who "walked with God." Two times in 4 verses (Genesis 5:21-24) Moses described Enoch as one who "walked with God."

- **To walk with God, you have to be devoted to God.**

Devotion is not an activity; it is an attitude toward God.

This attitude is composed of three (3) essential elements:

1. **The fear of God.**...Isaiah says speaking of the coming Messiah in 11:3, "he will delight in the fear of the Lord." If Jesus in his humanity and humility would delight in the fear of the Lord...should we not do likewise?
2. **The love of God.** Only a person who fears a Holy and Righteous God can know and understand the love of God. How much we appreciate God's love is conditioned by how deeply we fear Him.
3. **The desire for God.** True godliness engages our affections and awakens within us a desire to enjoy God's presence and fellowship.

Christians should see that "happiness" depends both on God's gift and on our effort.

We do not earn salvation....but, at the same time, we have to "make every effort" (exhibit maximum energy) toward the Christian objective of a lovely life.

FAITH DOES NOT EXEMPT A MAN FROM WORKS; THE GENEROSITY OF GOD DOES NOT ABSOLVE A MAN FROM EFFORT.

LIFE IS AT ITS NOBLEST AND ITS BEST WHEN OUR EFFORT COOPERATES WITH GOD'S GRACE TO PRODUCE THE GODLY LIFE....THE LIFE OF LOVELINESS AND HAPPINESS!

2 Peter 1:8-11,

Possessing the qualities that are mentioned in verses 5-7 will help us maintain our effectiveness as a child of God who is maturing toward the mark of the high calling of God.

These qualities (faith plus the added virtues) will help us produce quality fruit and be a blessing to others along the way.

Do you realize that the more we know of any subject the more we are fit to know?

It is always true that "to him that hath it shall be given." Progress is the way to more progress.

A great Biblical scholar made this statement, "We learn Him as we live with Him and for Him." On the other hand...if we refuse to make the effort (strive for excellence and add to our faith the wonderful attributes mentioned), certain things will happen:

1. We grow blind; left without the guiding light that the knowledge of Jesus Christ brings. To walk without Christ is to walk in the dark and not be able to see (we stumble over life's challenges and fall).
2. We grow short-sighted (seeing things as they only appear for the moment and unable to see the long view of things). We see only what is in our periphery... not the things beyond.

2 Peter 1:12-15,

The Pastor's heart (Peter's Proclamation)...

First, there is a reminder....no rebuke, just a reminder of the things they have been taught and should already know. The pastor (Brother Peter) brings back to memory that truth which the convert has forgotten, or at which he refuses to look, or whose meaning he has not fully appreciated.

Peter begins with a compliment: truths in which you know and are firmly established.

He is wise enough to know that the first essential to make men listen is to show that we believe in them.

Peter lets the reader know that God is calling him home....to the Promised Land in which he is anxious to go. He will lay down what is this earthly tent and exchange it for a heavenly one.