

Let me reread a portion of the first chapter of II Peter. I like to preach on this portion of scripture every two or three years. I have said that if I had only one opportunity to preach to God’s people, this would be my text. I would preach from another text if I were preaching to unbelievers, but I think this would be the one for believers.

I do not recycle sermons, but I do repeat ideas, for this aids learning. This is a new outline, and these things should be useful for the church. A sermon I preached years ago was put into tract form and is found in the foyer rack, but this is not the same as that.

“3 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:

4 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.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

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.

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.

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

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

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.” (2Pe 1:3-12 AV)

Words mean something, and Peter was not just stringing words together in order to fill up space. There is a world of content in this passage, content that is worthwhile to consider. This letter was written to them that have obtained like precious faith, and is for the people of God in all ages. There are three things today: I. The fullness of the Gift of Grace; II. The Appropriation of the Gift of Grace; III. The Abundance of the Gift of Grace. Peter is speaking in this passage about faith and the abundance that He has for us in Jesus Christ.

- I. The fullness of the Gift of Grace; vs. 3,4 Wow! What an amazing promise.
 - A. We have received in Jesus Christ all things that pertain to life and godliness. This is new life that consists in godliness, the image of God renewed in us.
 - B. These things are through the knowledge of Christ. God deposit all these things in Christ and are to be found nowhere else.
 - C. Who called us to glory and virtue. Consonant with His own nature; not ours, for we were shameful and wicked.
 - D. These are conveyed to us in terms of promises: most appropriate for faith. There can be no faith without promises; and faith feeds on the promises.

- E. It is by these that we are restored to the image of God. This is not God’s essence, but His image that is restored. Salvation is not deification.
 - F. From corruption through wicked desire to godliness through the promises.
 - G. All things are provided for us in Jesus Christ. Amen and Amen.
- II. The Appropriation of the Gift of Grace; vs. 5-7 This is a most amazing passage. Your version may contain synonyms for what I have here, but the meaning is the same.
- A. We must remember that the world is actively evil, and Satan walks around as a roaring lion. But everything has been given to us and we are called to appropriate them through faith.
 - B. The promises of God are not dead abstractions, but living wisdom and urge us on to greater heights and attainments in our knowledge of God.
 - C. Here is the *practica* vs. 5-7. A list of [in King James] eight things: Virtue, Knowledge; Temperance; Patience; Godliness; Brotherly Kindness; Charity. Each one that comes after is supposed to be “added” to the one just before it on the list. Virtue to Faith; Knowledge to Virtue, etc. This is not philosophy, this is practical and life directing—much of this gives legs to what is written in the book of Proverbs. The Lord Jesus Christ is the focus and example of the meaning of this passage. This is New Testament Wisdom Literature.
 - D. It is important to note the following:
 - 1. This is not a ladder; for faith includes all of these, and they are developed together and perfected together; but this passage does show the relationship between the aspects of faith, and shows how each of them is perfected.
 - 2. The “adding” is not mathematic as adding one apple to another and getting two; or architectural, as adding a room to your house; or composition, like adding sugar to coffee. It is like a child growing; or a tree growing; organic, not mechanical: a tree grows by expanding in every part adding branches and leaves and roots and bark, etc.
 - 3. In the same way, each of these gifts of faith are foundational for the one that comes after. You cannot start with the best gifts at the end of the list, but must strengthen your soul so that these can develop, built upon the former things. But let us look at the passage. Faith is the foundation of all that comes after: Verses 1; but Grace and Peace are multiplied through knowledge.
 - 4. Adding to Faith:
 - a. Add virtue to faith. "virtue" = "force, excellence" a life rightly and honestly formed. vs. 3. Manly righteousness; obedience to God. "Manly" is generic: the species. Be what you are created to be. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We are under his rule and law; works make faith perfect; and good works are impossible without faith.
 - b. Add knowledge to virtue. Knowledge=practical wisdom. Good sense. We are not blind moralists, who close our eyes, grit our teeth, and stick to principles we know not from whence!! Lies and vain works and empty lives must be cured with truth.

--Virtue is the foundation of knowledge. You cannot know until you do. "If ye continue in my word..."

--Knowledge perfects virtue: (H.C. #91) Illus. Christmas Trees. Zeal toward God without knowledge can be damaging.

- c. Add temperance to knowledge. "power within" self-control Without self-control, knowledge is destructive. "knowledge puffs up." Temperance helps us to see what is important, and what is not important. It brings things into proportion: it helps us to see the difference between gnats and camels. Self-control: controlling the passions. To the Greek in meant mind over emotions; it means more than that here: regulated by God's word: even the reason and the moral sense.

--True knowledge is the foundation of self-control; Self-control grows out of knowledge, which grows out of good works, which grow out of faith.

--Self-control regulates and perfects knowledge. Balance: not choosing extremes.

- d. Add patience to self-control. "Endurance" means not giving up when the going gets tough. "Staying under" is the Greek, here. Not stoicism, but laying hold on the promise of God. experiencing Christ's power.

--Patience grows out of self-control, and is the result of tribulation.

--Patience perfects self-control, for self-control is no good without endurance.

Self-controlled for one day?

- e. Add godliness to patience. "Good reverence." Good religion. "Godward attitude" Patience without godliness is stubbornness and obstinacy. There must be a godly purpose for our enduring, and that cannot be self-will and pride. Illus. staying to the bitter end

--through patience, we learn to direct our lives in terms of the will of God? Do you think that it is a simple matter to know the will of God? The testimony of all the saints refutes that idea. Neither does the will of God come to you in a flash of intuition: "Ask, and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find..."

"search as for hid treasures." Is knowing God a light and frivolous matter?

--w/o godliness, patience is just toughing it out; it becomes and end in itself; self-affirmation and pride.

- f. Add brotherly kindness to godliness. "Philadelphia" = love of the brethren. Communion of the saints. Mutual affection. BE decent to each other. Godliness must never be separated from brotherly kindness: bearing one another's burdens; guarding against wickedness. How many injuries have been done to the people of God in the name of godliness: lying, slander, evil-speaking, betrayal, etc.

--Brotherly love depends upon godliness; w/o godliness and faith it becomes sentimental, and may do more harm than good.

--w/o brotherly love to perfect it, godliness is perverted--narrow and judgmental.

We betray one another in the name of God. It may even cast the righteous into prison in the name of God.

- g. Add Charity to Brotherly love. Three words for love: eros: sexual love; philadelphia: brotherly love; agape: divine love. The first two see something desirable in the object of love, and pursues that object. Agape love is unconditional love; w/o merit. Origin of this love is in the one who loves; not the object who is loved. Love for the unworthy. This is what Christ's love is for us. This love is not natural, but flows from faith that communes with Christ.
 - Charity rests upon brotherly love--communion of the saints. Communion and covenant is the foundation of this love, for you cannot discover this love by yourself.
 - w/o charity, brotherly love becomes cliquish, sectarian--more and more restricted, as we associate more and more with our friends, and think only of the people we like. Charity for all men perfects my love for the saints.
- 5. Notice: verse 5: give all diligence. It won't happen if you do not make it happen. If you don't make it happen you will be "barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. The Abundance of the Gift of Grace. Vs. 8-11.

- A. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." There was life under Moses and Israel was head and shoulders above all the nations of the world when they obeyed God; but Moses saw only a limited vision of God; the fullness is in the face of Jesus Christ.
- B. Unfruitful in knowledge. Barren.
- C. Shortsighted. Myopia is the word here.
- D. The first love is lost and there is no rejoicing over deliverance from sin and bondage.
- E. These things cannot make you elect, but they can assure you of election, not to God, but to yourselves.
- F. These things will keep you from falling; from making a fool of yourselves; instead you will bring glory to God. It is a journey to realized godliness.
- G. These things will bring you an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom.
- H. Here is distinguished sanctification and glorification. You and I are not yet in the heavenly kingdom.

Application

- A. There is nothing here about building a ministry and becoming powerful and influential. This is the architecture of godliness: the inner man.
- B. The reward is in heaven, through the promises. But we bring glory to God now.
- C. Peter said he would be negligent if he did not remind them over and over as long as he was alive.
- D. Present truth: What we are to be busy about NOW. Not really anything new, for they are all included in faith itself. You have the seed and root of all this; now get to work and be established in this. God bless you.