

SERMON NOTES AVAILABLE

2 Peter 1

Greeting the Faithful

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the
righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of
God and of Jesus our Lord,

(NKJV VERSION)

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to
life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called
us by glory and virtue,

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and
precious promises, that through these you may be partakers
of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in
the world through lust (EPITHUMÍA).

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, *add* to
your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to
perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness
love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

11 for so (in that way) entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Christian life is **not something passive, religious**, external, static. It is dynamic, progressive, a continual process of development, active, involving all the faculties of the individual continuously.

The best image of what the Christian life should be you find in **Romans 12:1**. It calls us to live as a continual sacrifice a living sacrifice. It is the life of continuous effort and death. The shedding of all things, replacing them with new elements. **Hebrews 6:1** also calls us to proceed forward toward perfection.

With these sermons on consecration and Christian growth, I want to demolish the image of the Christian life as something that is passive, mediocre and comfortable, religious. God wants to form a Church of consecrated people, not merely ritualistic, Sunday-going Christians.

The difference between merely religious, ineffective Christians, and those who are full of the Holy Spirit, and effective in their service to God, resides in this idea of the believer as **actively involved in the process of their own sanctification**, cooperating actively with God in order to divest themselves of the old nature in order to assume the divine nature.

We are talking about a process of continual death, continual exercise, continual treatment on the part of God, continual learning and training, continual perfecting.

In this type of life there's no rest, no limits or barriers regarding what God wants and needs to accomplish in us.

We see **all of this clearly displayed** in this passage of **II Peter 1**.

“All things that pertain to life and godliness”.

God has given believers access to very high and sublime principles and truths. He has opened to us universe of exalted energies, the mysteries of the gospel.

See **1 Corinthians 2:6-10**. This is the zone that we inhabit as believers. See also **1 Peter 1:12** (even angels long to look) , and **1 Corinthians 4:1**. Peter was promoted from being a mere fisherman to becoming a fisher of men. **1 Corinthians 3:21-23** (all things are yours).

We Underestimate the sublime nature of the gospel at our peril. It is a real waste when we live **the Christian life as mere religiosity, instead of as a perilous, exciting adventure**.

“Have been given to us through his divine power”

God is the active agent, not us. By ourselves we can achieve nothing.

The perfecting of the believer takes place through **the work of the Holy Spirit in us**. We are recipients of the divine grace, heirs to a treasure **that has been given to us** by God. See **1 Corinthians 4:7**.

This should lead us to **humility and gratitude always**. Nothing comes from our own works, but by the grace of God working through our faith.

“Through the knowledge of him who called us by his glory and virtue”

This is referring to Jesus Christ or to the Father, but especially to Jesus. This is where everything begins, by knowing **Jesus, a person, not a religion a system or a theology**, which Paul refers to as mere, vain words in another passage.

The Christian life is a living thing, not mere religious adherence. It is **a process, not a passive state**.

It is about knowing and **being in a dynamic relationship** with Jesus, who imparts his personality into us and who deals with us directly.

See **1 Corinthians 2:2**, where Paul speaks about wanting to **know Jesus, and him crucified**.

“We have been given exceedingly great and precious promises”

Peter exalts the excellence of the promises that we have received. They are wonderful, marvelous. We cannot underestimate how sublime the things that we have received are.

We should never lose the wonder in all that we have received, and in what we are and need to become as followers of Jesus Christ. **This should encourage us toward greatness**, because God has made us great through Jesus Christ. That is his destiny for us.

“That through these you may be partakers of the divine nature”

This is the ultimate goal that we are being asked to pursue in this passage. That we may add to our personality and spiritual profile qualities that God has, and that if we acquire **will make us participants in his own divine beauty and holiness.**

God’s desire is to perfect us and to work in us in such away that we will **Reflect the goodness and holiness of Christ.** Like **Moses after being with God** in the mountain.

It is **not just about doing, being busy. It is about character formation.** All that he does and promises is oriented to that. **Forming Christian character in us.** Making us more spiritual, less carnal, More angelical in nature, if you will.

See the **difference between the carnal man and the spiritual man** that Paul establishes. **1 Corinthians 2:14, 15.**

To be a participant means ***to have communion with (koinonoi).***

In **Galatians 5:16 to 26** we see the difference between these two types of Christian, carnal and spiritual.

This is God’s principal goal regarding us. See **Galatians 4:19, Christ being shaped and formed in us.**

God is not so interested in **what we do as we in what we are**. See **Martha and Mary**. His attitude is not merely utilitarian. This is why God takes so much time and effort to deal with us, to disciple us, to perfect and prune us. He wants to form the personality of Christ in us. This is his desire. It should be ours also.

See **Elijah and his trial in the desert, Peter, Paul**, etc.

“Having escaped (or fled from)” (pheuge)

This is a **strong word**, used in other places by Paul. See **1 Timothy 6:11**. Reminds me of **Joseph fleeing from the temptations offered by Potiphar’s wife**.

In order to become like Christ we have to **flee from many things**. **You do not achieve the profile of a true Christian** through a comfortable or indifferent attitude. It requires great effort and rejecting of many things.

This word, flee, also suggests **the power of these passions** that keep us from becoming like Christ, their intensity and danger. This is why Peter speaks about **being sober and vigilant**. These passions have an extraordinary power **to attract and entice**. So we must **flee from them** in order to defend ourselves from them.

We will **never be able to eliminate them completely**. We must learn to deal with them effectively.

“Having escaped the Corruption that is in the world through lust/evil desires”

This word, **lust (epithumía)**, refers to all of those passions and desires that keep us entangled in the world. It does not refer here **just to sexual temptation**.

There are **many things that we need to flee from** and divest ourselves of.

The world (*kosmos*) is anything that draws us away from God and from the godly nature that God wants us to clothe ourselves with. It is **that zone where the corrupt values of the fleshly, animal, biological nature have their way**. There, one only finds corruption and death.

Like **Lot and his wife** we are supposed to flee from **Sodom and Gomorrah and not look back**. This world is condemned to death and corruption

There **can only be enmity between the Christian and the world**. They are **antithetical to each other**. We must cultivate this sense of foreignness and conflict between ourselves and the world.

This is **an essential aspect of the Christian worldview**. Something that is very different from what we see today in many sectors of the church.

“But also for this very reason, *Giving all diligence, (you) add to your faith virtue*”

Giving all diligence refers to **an intense effort**. We must dedicate ourselves fully to this pursuit. We **must concentrate on this single-mindedly**. We must seek the sanctification and perfection of our lives.

A passive, conformist believer, merely religious and indifferent, has **no place or legitimacy in the kingdom of God**. The gospel requires believers who are diligent, **like Joshua, strong, committed and courageous**. See **2 Timothy 1:6**.

Tie this prelude of the passage, which in itself is important, with what follows regarding an invitation to acquire specific qualities of the Christian character and personality.

“*Add*”

This call to add various qualities to our Christian character does not mean that it is us who infuse these qualities into ourselves by mere effort or human initiative. It is the Holy Spirit that does this. See **Philippians 2:13**. Remember **verse three**, where it says that we have been given these things “*by his divine power*”.

Our part is to *make every effort*: to ask in prayer, to acknowledge our need, to confess, to try to change our character, to be honest with ourselves, to not justify our flaws, to practice the Christian life, to gather with other believers, to read and meditate on the word, to abstain from situations and relationships that could be harmful to our Christian journey and set us back.

Again, going back to **Romans 12:1**, we need to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. We need to not conform to culture and the world. We need to be pursuing a state of continual transformation and growth. This reminds us about the need to be diligent, to be aware, and to remain engaged in the Christian journey.

Philippians 2:12 speaks about “*working out our salvation*”, to remain engaged in this unending project of sanctification and Christian perfecting.

The first quality that Paul speaks about is:

Faith (*pistei*).

Faith can refer to both a system of beliefs or to an attitude of confidence in God and His Word that the Christian should attain.

Both are probably meant here.

Faith is belief, certainty, assurance about what God has promised and declared. See **Hebrews 11:1**: Faith is “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

It is listed first because it is the raw material of every other Christian endeavor. The Bible says that “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Faith comes from God, but it is also something that we exercise and that can increase through experience and prayer.

But we cannot remain just with having lots of faith. Some people actually pretend that can be the case. You cannot only preach faith.

You had to add other qualities to the moral and spiritual profile of the believer. Faith is only a point of departure. **See 1 Corinthians 13:2.**

“Goodness” in NIV. Virtue (arete). Compare dokimen (Romans 5:4).

Arete, or virtue, Refers to moral excellence, perfection, Christian character and solidity. There is a connotation of manliness (***vir***), which was an important tribute to the Greco-Roman world. It points to well formed character, a balanced personality. In sum, it refers to having excellence of character and a mature personality.

Our faith has to be complemented by a personality that has been shaped and treated by God, which reflects God's excellent character. It is related to the very same virtues that God possesses, after all. The Bible calls us to be perfect as God is perfect.

Knowledge (gnosin)

This refers to the knowledge of truth, the truth of God, the truth of the word of God.

One has to study the word of God and to know the principles of the kingdom of God.

Jesus says "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

When we acquire biblical knowledge and balances all the other qualities. You have to study the doctrine of our Christian faith. A person might be virtuous and pious for example, but be ignorant of the mysteries and the subtleties of the Christian life.

See Colossians 1:9 and 10. ("To fill you with the knowledge of His will.")

In order to truly please God we have to know who he is and to know his will.

It is also important to know what our rights as believers are, and what the promises of God for us are. This all requires knowledge.

Self control (*egkrateian*)

This refers to control of our passions, appetites and personal defects.

Instead of living under the control of the flesh, our emotions, the Holy Spirit comes to control us. See **Romans chapter 7** (5 For when we were in the realm of the flesh,^[a] the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.)

Romans 1:24-27

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

The experience of the believer should be totally different. He or she has learned to submit these passions to the rule of the Spirit. As we continue to grow in the Spirit, the sinful nature in us decreases in its power and hold, the neuroses and the deformations of sin have less and less power over us.

This experience will be with us until we die, when we are finally freed from this struggle.

Perseverance (*hupomone*), endurance, persistence

Somebody has defined it as heroic perseverance in serving Christ in spite of opposition.

It also refers to the ability to stay in the fight despite setbacks in life, despite a disappointment and loss. Refers to the kind of resiliency that we have been speaking about in past Sermon's

Life is difficult and challenging. We are always confronting setbacks and challenges.

The mature believer persists and carries through trusting in God, believing that God uses all the struggles of life to make us stronger and more like Christ. There is no loss. All things work out for good to those that love the Lord.

Therefore we take all the challenges of life and accept them as part of the Christian experience, part of the work of God working out the character of Christ in us. Therefore we learn to glory even in the afflictions of life, because these afflictions perfect in us the character that God wants to instill in us.

Godliness (*eusebeia*) (piety, devoutness)

This probably refers to living a consecrated life. It is a life of complete dedication to God.

It is about being sold over to the interests of the kingdom of God. The mature believer no longer gives importance to the world. His additions and pleasures are now experienced in terms of what advances the kingdom of God, what pleases God.

Their personal identity is completely subsumed and immersed in the kingdom and the things of God. The more mature we become, the less the world matters to us and the more dedicated we are to the things of God's kingdom. This is true piety.

Brotherly love (*philadelphia*)

It literally means, "love for the brethren." Brotherly affection. This is one step below love, which is the culminating virtue.

It is a humbler more mundane form of love.

I would translate it as "brotherly affection". It points to the kind of quotidian love that we should demonstrate to each other as we live out the Christian life in community.

We are called to take care of each other, to have community with each other, to consider ourselves family, and to act as a family, to provide for each other's needs, to watch out for each other's well-being.

People have often referred to the "one anothers" in the Bible. This refers to the mutuality of the Christian life. Without brotherly affection, love is an empty concept. Love is worked out in daily life, in the small things. A church that does not exhibit brotherly affection is dead. It has no legitimacy.

We may say that we love each other, but if we are not willing to die for each other, if we are not attentive to the small things—forgiving each other, holding each other up when the other falls, calling out the best in each other and being patient with each other when we offend, then our spirituality is vain and empty.

Love (*agape*)

This is the culmination of all the other Christian qualities, the one that summarizes and includes them all. It is like the color white that includes all the other colors within itself. Paul always ends these lists of virtues with this supreme value of love. It is the love that has been manifested by God to us through Jesus Christ. Who is the love that leads to self sacrifice. The love that only God can manifest, and that when we obtain the Holy Spirit then we can express it, or it can express itself through us.

It is not an emotion but he principal lived out. It is love but for those that don't deserve love. It is a divine attribute that only those that have the Holy Spirit in them can express. Is the complete absence of selfishness, replaced by unconditional love for the other.

Paul finishes by saying that if these qualities are in us in abundance, then it is impossible for us to not be a fruit or not please God. The very fact that these qualities dwell in us will make us productive and fruitful for the kingdom of God. We will be in fact, like God and experience true joy and happiness.

The Christian life is not about producing fruit forgot, but rather becoming like God and then being creative like God, because of His very nature.

It is not about producing Works of righteousness, but rather about being righteous and producing fruit for God's glory.

