

Sunday, October 8, 2023 pm

**STUDIES IN 2 PETER (5)**  
**Building on Your Faith (2)**  
**2 Peter 1:8-11**

Last month, as we continued our study through 2 Peter we noted, we began addressing his first challenge to help these brethren prepare to address false teaching. In that lesson, we noted our need to grow by building upon our faith. In that lesson, we noted the various qualities we add to our faith. We discussed how with diligence we need virtue (moral excellence or integrity), knowledge (of God's word), self-control (the discipline to do what we should and not do what we should not), perseverance (patience as we keep developing), godliness (proper reverence for God), brotherly kindness (love of brothers) and love (Christian love – agape). In this lesson we will focus on the results.

**I. If these things are yours and abound**

- a. They must be possessed by you – defining who you are. The term indicates these are qualities “at your disposal” to use. And you need to develop them. That is how your faith will increase.
- b. **Abounding** indicates increasing (ever increasing – present tense). We do not need to be doing just enough to “get by”. In all that we do, it ought to be with the best of our ability. 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Thessalonians 1:3 – Paul was thankful because of their exceedingly growing faith and abounding love toward one another; Colossians 2:6-7, 3:16 – let the word of Christ dwell in your richly,..., etc.

**II. You will be neither barren nor unfruitful**

- a. We are called upon to be productive as Christians. Recall John 15:1-2, Ephesians 5:15-17 – redeeming the time, etc. This statement expresses the antithesis of our developing life.
- b. The terms here used could be described as:
  - i. **Barren** – useless, or idle. Used by Jesus in Matthew 12:36 – “every idle word...”, Matthew 20:3,6 – parable of the laborers. Throughout the day they were standing idle. Titus 1:12, as Paul quotes a secular speaker noting that Cretans were “lazy gluttons” (Epimenedes the poet).
  - ii. **Unfruitful** – see the thorny ground – Matthew 13:22 – cares of this world choke out the word. Titus 3:14 – people charged to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they be not unfruitful. Ephesians 5:11 speaks of the “unfruitful works of darkness” that we are to have no fellowship with.
- c. **In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ** – it is God's word that will ground us. In our descriptive list, knowledge is fundamental, but it is developed and applied by all the other qualities. Philippians 3:10, Paul's sacrificial life was so that he would know Him and the power of His resurrection.

**III. He who lacks these things**

- a. **Is shortsighted** – this is a word for one who is nearsighted. We live in a time where such can be corrected with glasses, but back then, IF available, it would have been very limited. Spiritually this describes one who fails to see “the big picture”. When we struggle with our faith, it is often the result of failing to be everything God intends for us to be. This is the “stony ground” that has no root (Luke 8:13). He only sees what is immediately in front of him. He does not see
- b. **Even to blindness** – indicates one totally devoid of sight. Sadly, many professed believers are not merely “shortsighted”, but they are totally blind to their depraved conditions, OR they have a “blind spot” – an area in their life that is in error but they refuse to see it. They avoid it!
  - i. Jesus described the corrupt Jewish leaders as “blind guides” – Matthew 23:16, and “blind leaders of the blind” – Matthew 15:14.

- ii. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 Paul spoke of those who rejected the gospel as it being veiled (unable to see clearly) to the perishing, whose minds the “god of this age has blinded...”
  - iii. Matthew 6:22-23 notes that the lamp of the body is the eye, and if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.
  - iv. Similarly, the Laodiceans were “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked”. They were admonished to repent and take care of their sinful condition.
- c. **Has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins** – what motivates the true believer is a continued reminder of WHY he has hope beyond this life. He knows what Jesus did for him/her. When we forget that, we are in danger of drifting.
- i. Perhaps that is why we have been given a weekly reminder of His death in the Lord’s Supper (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, Acts 20:7).
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul noted, “By the grace of God, I am what I am...”. Cf. 1 Timothy 1:15 – Christ came to save sinners “of whom I am chief.”
  - iii. Romans 6:1-4 – we cannot continue in sin because we remember what He did for us and what we did through Him (obeying the gospel).
  - iv. 1 Corinthians 6:11 – and such were some of you, but you were washed...sanctified,... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus...”
- d. **WHEN we fail to develop the qualities Peter mentioned** – we are in danger of drifting away and developing into the negative qualities and attitudes just described. THAT is why we must keep growing! (2 Peter 3:18). Hebrews 2:1-3 emphasizes this as well.

#### IV. Therefore, make your call and election sure

- a. **Be even more diligent** – tying this to what he has already said, Peter AGAIN emphasizes the diligence with which we put forth effort (same word as vs. 5). This is effort both in DEVELOPING proper qualities AND ensuring that we do NOT become blinded and forget our faith.
- b. Our **“call” and “election”** –
  - i. Our **“call”** is a “divine invitation” extended to us to embrace salvation in His kingdom. Ephesians 4:1, we are called to walk worthy of our calling. Vs. 4, we are called with “one hope of your calling”; Philippians 3:14 describes it as “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” 2 Thessalonians 1:11 notes that Paul prayed the God would count them worthy of this calling...; 2 Timothy 1:8-9 notes that God has saved us and called us with a holy calling.” 1 Peter 1:15, “As He who called you is Holy, you also be holy”; 2:21, you were called to follow the steps of Jesus, etc. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 notes that He called us by the gospel...
  - ii. Our **“election”** is being part of that group that receives salvation. While misunderstood by many, the point is God has established a pattern that He invites ALL to accept. Those who “mold” themselves to His pattern will receive the eternal reward he promised. Or put another way, those who ACCEPT His calling are part of His “elect” or “chosen”.
- c. Make it **sure** – verified or certain. NOTICE how Peter in this phrase describes our part in this. This is a passage that implies our calling and election are not out of our control. We have been “called” and “elected” and it is up to us to ensure we remain in that state.

#### V. For if you do these things

- a. IF you do these things – notice the conditional phrase here. Again, that word clearly points to our responsibility. BUT, this text also gives us direction and hope to manage this life as believers. IF, we will fully develop the qualities described:
- b. *You will never stumble* –
  - i. Ultimately, the point is we will not fall away. But the word means to stumble. Some have advocated the word should be fall, as in “fall away”.
  - ii. But the word implies stumbling as we would think of that word – simply tripping up.
  - iii. It is found 4x in the NT. Romans 11:11, “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?” (Note that a distinction is made between stumbling and falling); James 2:10 - *For*

*whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.; James 3:2, For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.; and our text. In every other usage, it is about stumbling.*

- iv. So what is Peter saying? It is my belief that he is saying, if we FULLY develop the qualities of this text, not only will we not fall away, we will not even STUMBLE in our words and conduct. BUT one observes that we all stumble and that is ABSOLUTELY true. But why? Because we have NOT PERFECTED the qualities Peter challenges us to develop, and in this life we likely never will. So our “stumbling” is the result of weakness in these qualities. HOWEVER, as we mature in the faith, we grow more mature in these qualities, and thus we STUMBLE less often than before. We are growing closer to God and an eternal reward with Him.
- c. *For so an entrance will be supplied abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*
  - i. This will not be accidental or barely making it. This is the great rejoicing knowing that your labors were not in vain in the Lord. We should not be living, hoping to just get by.
  - ii. We need to be “pressing toward the goal” – Philippians 3:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:58 – we are steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.
  - iii. Every strong example of faith was one who devoted their life to serving God.
  - iv. Of course, the reward at the end will be worth the sacrifices. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 describes our time here as, “our light affliction” which is working a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Romans 8:18 notes, *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*
  - v. We need to continually remind ourselves that the life we live is with purpose – a real and ultimate purpose. That will be realized when we get to heaven. A place described as “paradise”, and filled with unimaginable beauty. Heaven is where the godly will be and the all the wickedness, sickness and disappointments of this life will not be there. Heaven is where God and our Savior will be. And, as David said in Psalm 23:6, *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.*

The Christian character may be challenging to develop, but it is not without its rewards, both in this life and in the life to come. That is why we must develop and manifest the qualities Peter has described, both to build ourselves up and to protect us from the enemy – whether he be a blatant worldly person or a false teacher in sheep’s clothing. What about you? How are you building your faith? Think about it!