

Sunday, April 30, 2023

## MAKING YOUR CALL AND ELECTION SURE

### 2 Peter 1:10-11

2 Peter 1:5-11 is a passage I appeal to from time to time. We discuss the steps that strengthen our faith. But of equal interest and importance are the results that Peter mentions. Vs. 8 notes that if these qualities are *"yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"*. Then in vs. 10, Peter notes, *"if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* The ultimate reward here described is heaven itself.

What I have found interesting with this passage is the promise that developing these qualities, "You will never stumble". That word "stumble" is a word that means, to err, stumble or sin (LN 88.291); To trip, make a blunder or mistake (EDNT). The word is used 5 times in the NT – including James 2:10 & 3:2 where he speaks of stumbling in 1 point and stumbling in word. I am convinced that Peter is telling these brethren that the characteristics he mentioned can keep us from even stumbling, or a any particular sin. BUT, the reality is that we all do stumble and/or sin from time to time. So how can Peter say this? I believe the answer is that we have not perfected the qualities mentioned. I contend that every sin we commit, whether it be weakness, omission or commission, is because we have failed in one or more of the qualities described.

In the midst of this, we have a statement, *"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble."* It is this statement I want to focus on today. The idea of making your call and election sure (verified, proven) is to take measures to ensure you will not fall away, or even stumble. What are some things we can do to help ensure our salvation? Here are 5 things we ought to consider.

#### I. Put on the armor of God

- a. We must never forget that we are at war with Satan. He is our enemy and he is trying to defeat us.
- b. That is why the New Testament gives several passages that describe our warfare. Foremost in this list is Ephesians 6:10-18.
  - i. Paul begins with the admonition, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." That is descriptive of one making his call and election sure.
  - ii. Vs. 11 calls for us to put on the WHOLE armor of God. We need to be fully equipped if we are to defend ourselves against the attacks of Satan and his army.
  - iii. Vs. 12 describes the nature of our spiritual war – it is a war against sin and wickedness. A war against giving in to temptations.
  - iv. Vs. 13, NOTE: Paul REPEATS: "take up the WHOLE armor of God!" There is something to be said about this if we are to give ourselves the best chance against our spiritual enemy.
  - v. Vs. 14-17 describes our "armor" in terms of qualities we need (much like our primary text) – truth, righteousness (godly living), the gospel of peace, faith, hope and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" – our only OFFENSIVE weapon described. With that consider Hebrews 4:12.
- c. Understand that as Paul wrote this, the Roman army was prevalent throughout the empire. They were a powerful and disciplined army when they conquered and dominated the world. BUT, history records that they became lax and let down their guard, lightened their armor, and failed to keep exercising and maintaining firm discipline. Most historians attribute it as a factor to the decline and fall of Rome.
- d. As Christians, we can definitely learn from that. If we are to keep our "call and election sure", when need to STAY armed and NEVER let down our guard. When we see "skirmishes", we need to face

them before they overcome us. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Jude 3 calls for us to “contend earnestly for the faith...”

## II. Love your neighbor as yourself

- a. Matthew 22:37-39. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is (on at least 2 occasions), #1 was to love God with your all, and #2 was to “love your neighbor as yourself.” On these 2 laws hang all the commandments. We have emphasized the importance of love. It is at the heart of our Christian lives. The depth of our love will determine how serious we are about our salvation. It will determine how we feel about and respond to God, as well as how we react to others. Love impacts EVERY relationship we are in as Christians.
- b. If we are to make our call and election sure, it will NOT be by hiding out in a spiritual bunker. The very essence of the Christian life is caring about others. Jesus taught that in Luke 10:25-27 where a lawyer was testing Him. His answer yielded the parable of the good Samaritan. His conclusion, your neighbor is whomever you have opportunity to help.
- c. We ought to think about that spiritually as well.
  - i. Mark 16:15 – we take the gospel into all the world. Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:16, “woe is me if I do not preach the gospel...” 2 Corinthians 5:11, “Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men...”
  - ii. Matthew 7:12 we live by “the golden rule”. How would we want others to treat us? NOT the “silver rule” which states, “Do NOT do unto others what you would not have them do to you” (in essence, “Do no harm”). But consider, the priest and Levite both applied this – were they acceptable to God according to that parable?
  - iii. Romans 12:18 – as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.
  - iv. 1 Peter 1:22 – having been purified, with sincere love of the brethren, we love one another fervently with a pure heart.
- d. Let us be reminded that God IS watching to see how we treat others. Matthew 25:31-46 presents the judgment scene based in part on this fact.
- e. Your care for others can help you make your call and election sure, as God sees how you treat others (cf. Matthew 7:1-2 - judging, 6:14-15 – forgiveness, 5:7 – the merciful obtain mercy.).

## III. Choose who you associate with

- a. Building upon the previous point, we all need someone that we can depend on and that will be there for us and with us as we go through life. AND conversely, someone needs you! Proverbs 27:9, *Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.* Proverbs 17:17, *A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.*
- b. Often, who we associate with has a great bearing on the direction we will turn our lives. You can say that it has a bearing on “your call and election”.
- c. We are warned about associating with the wicked
  - i. Solomon gave advice to his son as recorded early in the proverbs. Consider Proverbs 1:8-19.
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns us, evil company corrupts good habits (morals).
  - iii. James 4:4 warns us that “friendship with the world is enmity with God...”
- d. We need friends who are not only good to us, but good FOR us.
  - i. 2 Timothy 1:3-5 – consider Paul and his relationship with Timothy
  - ii. A godly spouse is a blessing from God – Proverbs 18:22 notes that he who finds a good wife, finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.
  - iii. Proverbs 27:17 notes, *As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*
- e. Are your friends and associates helping you get to heaven or drawing you further away? Some things to consider in who you choose as your friends:

- i. Do they have good morals? Are they modest in their appearance? Do they drink alcohol or use other harmful substances? How do they talk? Are they honest and respectable in their dealings with others?
- ii. Are they spiritual? Will they help draw you closer to God or will they continually try to pull you away from Him? If they see you are in error, will they come to you about it? (cf. Proverbs 27:6 – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”)

**IV. Use your talents wisely**

- a. We all have abilities. And it is clear that God expects us to use our talents and resources wisely. That is emphasized in the parable of the talents – Matthew 25:14-30.
- b. Galatians 6:10 – as we have opportunity...
- c. In so doing, realize that your talents are different than that of others. Develop whatever abilities you have. Romans 12:3-9 emphasizes this well.
- d. One day, we are going to stand before God in judgment. The parable of the talents deals with BOTH the one who used his talents wisely AND the one who did not. Consider also James 4:17, *Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
- e. When we are using our talents wisely, we are keeping busy doing that which is good. We are following the example of Jesus (Acts 10:38 – who went about doing good). Not only are we being productive in doing right things, we have less time to do the wrong things – cf. Colossians 3:23 – do it heartily to the Lord, Ecclesiastes 3:10 - do it with all your might...

**V. Keep growing in Christ every day –**

- a. First, consider our opening context. We noted that the point of emphasis was achieved by building our faith.
  - i. Consider the various qualities Peter mentioned (2 Peter 1:5-7), with diligence we build upon our faith – with virtue (integrity, moral excellence), knowledge of God’s word, self-control – the discipline we need to do what we ought to be doing, patience – the stamina to keep going even in the face of troubles; godliness – a profound reverence for God, brotherly love – growing closer to our brethren, and finally – Christian love – agape – a care that will govern every relationship we are in.
  - ii. It is the development of these qualities that helps us to make our “call and election sure”. Our failings virtually always involve a weakness in one of these areas.
  - iii. 2 Peter 3:18 – grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
  - iv. Hebrews 5:12ff – they were rebuked because they were not growing as they ought to.
- b. As has been suggested in times past, IF we want to grow as Christians we need to practice “everyday religion”. That means that every day we ought to:
  - i. Say something to God (prayer)
  - ii. Listen to something from God (read and study your Bible)
  - iii. Say something about God (share your faith)
  - iv. Do something righteously – NOTE: While doing righteous things does not necessarily mean you are righteous (cf. 2 Timothy 3:5 – they have a form of godliness...; , IF you are righteous you WILL do righteous things.
  - v. Say something to encourage someone – Hebrews 3:13, Galatians 6:1
  - vi. Bear my cross – Luke 9:23, Matthew 10:38

This is a basic lesson reminding us of things we know we ought to be doing as Christians. Our focus in this lesson is to remind us that when you live a godly life, it will help you to “*make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” What are you doing to make your call and election sure? Think about it!