

Sunday Morning Message

December 10, 2017 (Text preached also on July 21, 2013)

Add to Your Faith – Virtue

Text for Today's Message – 2 Peter 1:1 - 15

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 1:5 - 8

Introduction

In our last sub-series of messages, we examined the subject of faith. We determined that if our faith increases, our fruit would also increase. The greater our level of faith is, the more we will abound in the work of the Lord.

In this new series of messages, we will examine 2 Peter 1:1 – 11, which explains to us that there are seven things that can be added to, or really, expanded and fully developed in our faith, which will make us fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first lesson, we explained that these things have to be added “with all diligence”, meaning that you and I are going to have to give this 110% effort – we are going to have to be committed.

Illustration – Fellowship of the Committed

Note – this statement was found attached to the wall of a missionary's house upon his death.

I am a part of the fellowship of the committed to doing whatever it takes. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I've stepped over the line. I'm out of the comfort zone. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His. I won't back up, let up, slow down or back away. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless streams, mundane talking, chintzy giving and dwarfed goals. I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, top, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now live by present, learn by faith, love by patience, live by prayer and labor by power. My face is set. My gait is fast. My goal is heaven. My road is narrow. My way is rough. My companions are few, my Guide reliable and my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, let up or burn up until I've preached up, prayed up, paid up, stored up, stayed up for the cause of Christ. I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go until He comes, give until I drop, preach until all know and work until He stops. And when He comes to get His own, He'll have no problem recognizing me because I've dedicated my life to being part of the fellowship of the committed, doing whatever it takes.

My prayer this morning is that you and I will join “the fellowship of the committed”, and be willing to do whatever it takes to add “these seven things” to our faith.

Read the text – 2 Peter 1:1 – 11

Introduction

Last week, we looked at the first of the seven things that God says that we should add to our faith, which is virtue:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue;" (2 Peter 1:5a)

In that message, we looked at an explanation of virtue through the use of the word in the context of the New Testament. We discovered that the word “virtue” means a moral excellence or purity. We said that a person who has virtue knows what is right and will do it. He fulfills his purpose as a Christian in glorifying the Lord.

Last week, we also examined some examples of virtue from the Bible, particularly in the life of Joseph. Finally, we talked about the exhibition of virtue in our lives.

Today, we will look at the next character trait, or attribute, which is knowledge:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith ... knowledge;" (2 Peter 1:5)

Knowledge Defined

There are actually several different Greek words that have been translated into our English word, knowledge, and each of them carry a slightly different meaning. In our passage today, we are confronted with two of these words for knowledge. One has to do with just knowing Him through a relationship. The other has to do with knowing more about Him through deepening that relationship:

1 **ἐπίγνωσις (epignosis) – from root epignosko – I recognize, or I acknowledge)**

*"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the **knowledge** of God, and of Jesus our Lord,"*
(2 Peter 1:2)

*"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:"* (2 Peter 1:3)

*"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."* (2 Peter 1:8)

In all of the verses listed above the Greek word translated knowledge is ἐπίγνωσις (epignosis), which means precise, exact, or full knowledge.

2 **γνώσις (gnosis) – from root ginosko – to come to know**

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;" (2 Peter 1:5)

"And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;" (2 Peter 1:6)

This word has the idea of gaining or increasing knowledge, investigating; knowing things, facts.

Illustrate – If I were to say "I know Brother Stahl", I would use the first word, epignosis. I am stating that I recognize him, or that I have a relationship with him.

However, if I were to say, "I want to get to know Brother Stahl better", I would use the word ginosko, because my knowledge of him is incomplete, and I want to increase it.

Now let's go back to the passage:

In vs. 2, 3, and 8 *knowledge* is used as expressing a complete package. I have knowledge of Christ – I know Him – I have a relationship with Him.

In vs. 5 & 6 the word *knowledge* is used to represent an increasing, or growing awareness of the principles surrounding my relationship with Him.

Let me give you some other N. T. examples:

1 **ἐπίγνωσις (epignosis)**

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (epignosis)." (Romans 10:2)

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (epignosis) of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:13)

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge (epignosis) of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4)

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge (epignosis) of the truth." (2 Timothy 3:7)

2 **γνῶσις (gnosis)**

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge (gnosis) of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

"That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge (gnosis);" (1 Corinthians 1:5)

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge (gnosis). Knowledge (gnosis) puffeth up, but charity edifieth." (1 Corinthians 8:1)

"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge (gnosis), and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (2 Corinthians 8:7)

"That I may know (ginosko) him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3:10)

Paul already had a relationship with Him, but He wanted to get to know Him better. He wanted to increase what He knew about Him.

In our text today, God is saying to those of us who already know Him, that we need to get to know Him better. We need to increase our knowledge of Him. Again, if you are saved you already know Him because you have a relationship with Him through salvation, but now that you are saved, you need to grow in your knowledge of Him.

Transition

This morning I want to give you just three simple methods to add knowledge to your faith.

I Through Daily Devotion

I got to know my wife through spending time with her. I listened to her as she shared with me her life. I know more about her than perhaps any other human being on earth, because I have spent more time with her than anybody else.

The same should be true with your relationship with Christ. You must daily spend time devotionally, meaning that you daily devote time to be alone with your Saviour. You must carve out time to read His Word devotionally, and to communicate to Him through prayer. You must go through the day with Him. My wife and I don't always communicate verbally with each other, but we go through life together.

What time do you devote to adding knowledge to your faith through daily communicating with your God? Him to you through the devotional reading of His Word, and you to Him through prayer.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalms 119:105)

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

*"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."
(Psalms 55:17)*

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (Job 23:12)

II Through Diligent Investigation

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

A Study Corporately – Sunday School, Church services, Discipleship, Bible Institute.

B Study Topically – get to know what the Bible has to say about all of the subjects that pertain to you. (i.e. marriage, child-rearing, finances, etc.)

C Study Expositionally - go verse by verse through passages of Scripture.

D Study Hermeneutically – historical, grammatical approach; literal, and dispensational.

E Study Practically – consider how you will use the principles that you learn in your daily life.

F Study Diligently – so that you will be able to effectively teach what you learn to others.

III Through Dutiful Application

We read a verse earlier that said knowledge (gnosis) puffs up. We do not want to add knowledge to our faith just for the sake of increasing knowledge. We want to add knowledge to our faith so that we can get to know Him better, and so that we can put what we learn to good use in our lives, and in the lives of others.

We want to become more effective as ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to be *"meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work."* (2 Timothy 2:21)

We want to be better husbands to our wives, better fathers to our children, better employees to our employers, better citizens for our nation.

If we use the knowledge we are given, God will "add" more.

So – one of the keys to adding more knowledge is to effectively use the knowledge we are already given.

Conclusion

God would not command you to “add” knowledge to your faith unless it was entirely possible for you to do so. Every Christian can grow, every Christian can add to his faith.

The only thing that is stopping you is you. Distraction, misplaced priorities, and laziness are the things that are keeping you from obeying the Lord’s command.

Don’t be lazy – take the necessary steps to daily and devotionally know more about your Lord.

And then, diligently investigate the principles of the Word of God, with a determination to dutifully apply those principles to your life.

Is reading the Bible a necessary part of your day or does it have a low priority in your life?

George Mueller, after having read the Bible through one hundred times with increasing delight, made this statement: "I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God. Friends often say, 'I have so much to do, so many people to see, I cannot find time for Scripture study.' Perhaps there are not many who have more to do than I. For more than half a century I have never known one day when I had not more business than I could get through. For 4 years I have had annually about 30,000 letters, and most of these have passed through my own hands.

"Then, as pastor of a church with 1,200 believers, great has been my care. Besides, I have had charge of five immense orphanages; also, at my publishing depot, the printing and circulating of millions of tracts, books, and Bibles; but I have always made it a rule never to begin work until I have had a good season with God and His Word. The blessing I have received has been wonderful." (from SermonIllustrations.com)