

Sunday Morning Message

January 24, 2021

2 Peter 1:1 – 11 – *Add to Your Faith Temperance*

Series - *Experiencing God's Grace in the Midst of Suffering*

Text – 2 Peter 1:1 - 11

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 1:1 - 5

Introduction to the Series

The writer of this letter is identified as Peter. Peter was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was not only one of the twelve, but also a member of the inner circle of the Lord, which also include James and John. Peter knew a little something about growing in the Lord. Early on in his apostleship, Peter would often try to do things His way. He was a bit impulsive, and somewhat outspoken. Peter's famous failure in the flesh came when he denied knowing the Lord, and this immediately following his self-confident boasting that he would never do it.

Peter, however, didn't stay defeated. He got back up, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, was greatly used of the Lord. His message at Pentecost yielded the fruit of 3000 souls trusting the Lord Jesus. Peter was also used of the Lord to lead Cornelius, a Gentile man, to faith in Christ.

Here in this second general epistle or letter from Peter, he is writing near the end of his life. We estimate that the date of this writing was around 66 AD. He will be martyred at the hands of Nero shortly after this epistle was written, probably around 67 AD. It was most likely written from Rome. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified upside-down, having requested this form of crucifixion because he felt unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as the Lord.

The theme of this letter is much the same as Peter's first epistle. He is encouraging believers to remain faithful to the Lord even under incredibly difficult circumstances. Additional emphasis in 2 Peter is given to the exposure of false teachers as well as to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another significant difference that should be pointed out is that the scope of this letter seems to have been intended for a much broader audience than 1 Peter. That first epistle was written to a specific region in Asia Minor (present day Turkey) and is referred to in this letter as being previously written to these same recipients, but this letter is addressed to all believers, presumably beyond the geographical boundaries of the first letter. Of course, the Holy Spirit intended that both letters be included within the Canon of Scripture and would thus be written for the benefit of all believers.

Read the text – 2 Peter 1:1 – 11

Introduction

Two messages ago, 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 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. 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.

Patrick Henry stated: "Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom. No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles."(Patrick Henry)

Last week, we studied about adding knowledge to our faith:

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

In our study last week, we discovered that the word for knowledge here in 2 Peter is the word γνῶσις (gnosis), which has the idea of gaining or increasing knowledge. Paul said:

"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 KJV)

As we mentioned last week, Paul already knew the Lord, but he wanted to get to know him better. I want to get to know him better.

Peter was saying that we who are saved need to add to our faith an increasing knowledge of the Lord; and we can do that through daily devotion, diligent investigation, and then dutiful application.

Transition:

This morning, we will examine the third ingredient that we can add to our faith, which is temperance. Keep in mind that when we say "add", we really mean that we are to continually and fully develop these attributes or character traits in our spiritual lives. Temperance is something we already possess through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. Those that are saved have the Spirit of God living in them, and His fruit is available to all who He possesses:

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, **temperance**: against such there is no law." (Gal 5:22-23)*

Temperance Defined:

This word is used only four times in the Bible (two of them are in our text), and it is not a word that we use regularly today, so it would benefit us to get a better understanding of what God means by the word temperance.

We already said that temperance is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and is found among the list in Galatians 5. The only other time in the Bible this word is used is in Acts 24:25, where Paul is preaching the gospel to Governor Felix:

*"And as he reasoned of righteousness, **temperance**, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."*

The Greek word for temperance is ἐγκράτεια (en-krä'-tā-ä) It comes from a root word, ἐγκρατής (en-krä-tā's), which is only used three times in the Bible, and is translated into the word temperate:

*"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, **temperate**; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." (Titus 1:7-9)*

*"That the aged men be sober, grave, **temperate**, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." (Titus 2:2)*

Temperance is defined as self-control - the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites (Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

It has the idea of someone who possesses power over his own will. The person who possesses temperance can say "no" to his flesh. It also has the idea of strength in reserve.

Webster (1828) defines temperance this way:

1. Moderation; particularly, habitual moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions; restrained or moderate indulgence; as temperance in eating and drinking; temperance in the indulgence of joy or mirth. Temperance in eating and drinking is opposed to gluttony and drunkenness, and in other indulgences, to excess.

2. Patience; calmness; sedateness; moderation of passion.

"Temperance is simply a disposition of the mind which binds the passions." (Thomas Aquinas)

I. Biblical Models of Temperance

A. Jesus

There is no greater example of temperance in the Scripture than the Lord Jesus Himself. Remember when Satan tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus had fasted forty days, and He was hungry. Satan offered Him bread, but He controlled His appetite for food.

Remember in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said that He had the power to call down twelve legions of angels to wipe out those who would take Him to the cross, but He possessed temperance. He could have wiped out the entire human race; He had the power to do so, but He reserved, controlled the power that He possessed.

B. David

David was an example of someone who lacked temperance at times in his life, but also possessed it at other times.

Remember when David committed adultery with Bathsheba. He certainly lacked temperance there.

However, years later, when David was leaving the City of Jerusalem due to the rebellion of his son, Absalom, there was a man who was named Shimei who was throwing rocks at him, and cursing at him. David had his army with him, and could have easily killed this man. In fact, David's leaders begged him to allow them to kill Shimei, but David refrained from using that power.

David said: *"...let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him."* (2 Samuel 16:11)

C. Paul

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

II. Typical Mistakes in Temperance

A. Carnal Appetites

1. Overeating

During his term as President of the U.S., Lyndon Johnson was somewhat overweight. One day his wife challenged him with this blunt assertion: "You can't run the country if you can't run yourself." Respecting Mrs. Johnson's wise observation, the President lost 23 pounds.

2. Drinking
3. Sex
4. Sleep

B. Controlling Anger

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:18-21)

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Proverbs 16:32)

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." (Proverbs 25:28)

Also Controlling our Words

Turn to James 3:1 – 12

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." (James 3:1-12)

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:" (James 1:19)

III. A Practical Mandate That Helps Us To Be Temperate

Turn to Galatians 5:16 - 26

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

(Galatians 5:16-26)

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (Ephesians 5:18)

Practical Help

1. Acknowledge the Holy Spirit of God
2. Learn from the Holy Spirit of God
3. Yield to the Holy Spirit of God

Let the Holy Spirit of God control your mind and your body.

We basically do what we want to do. If we are yielded to God's Holy Spirit, He changes our "wanter." I want to yield to God. I want to resist the devil. I want to say no to my flesh. My flesh has a strong will, (*to will is present with me*), but if I acknowledge the Spirit, learn from the Spirit, and yield to the Spirit, He will change my will to His.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13)

Conclusion

British statesman Edmund Burke argued, "men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains on their own appetites. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there is without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

One of the reasons why we are losing our liberty here in America is because we lack temperance; we cannot govern ourselves. A person that is out of control will eventually need to be controlled by someone else.