

Sunday Morning Message

February 7, 2021

2 Peter 1:1 – 11 – Add to Your Faith Godliness

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

Text – 2 Peter 1:1 - 11

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 1:1 - 6

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

The first of the seven things that God says that we should add to our faith 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.

Next, we learned that we need to add knowledge to our faith:

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

In that study, 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 in that message, 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.

Then we discussed adding to our faith temperance. We discovered that the word *temperance* means self-control. We live in an out of control society. People cannot contain their appetites and passions. God, however, wants His children to allow the Holy Spirit of God to control them.

We then examined what it means to add patience to our faith. We discovered that patience is more than just being able to wait without complaining. The biblical word *patience* involves perseverance or endurance. Jesus patiently endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him. Paul patiently endured the beatings because he knew he was doing God's will, and that the salvation of lost souls depended on his not giving up. Too many Christians day are quitting, giving up. We must determine what the will of God is for our life, and patiently fulfill it.

Transition

Today, we are going to consider the fifth character trait that God says that we are to fully develop in our lives – *godliness*:

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

Godliness has been accurately defined as a respect for God that affects the way we live. In order to fully understand the meaning of godliness, we will examine how the word is used elsewhere in the New Testament:

In Acts 3, we have the account of Peter healing the lame man at the temple.

*"And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or **holiness** we had made this man to walk?" (Acts 3:11-12)*

The word **holiness** is translated from the same word - **εὐσέβεια** (*eusebeia* [yü-se'-bā-ä]). There are two things that we can learn about the meaning of godliness from this passage:

- 1 godliness and holiness are synonyms, which means that they mean the same thing.
- 2 godliness is not something that we have of ourselves, it is a gift from God; but it is a gift that we must fully develop. In fact, Paul later said that godliness needs to be exercised or trained.

"But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

In 1 Timothy, we see a passage that sheds a lot of light on the meaning of the word:

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Timothy 3:14-16)

This passage, of course, is referring to Christ, but notice what it says:

- God was manifest in the flesh, meaning that God became flesh. Godliness is when the character of God comes into our earthly existence, and reveals itself in our lives.
- Notice also that it says, regarding Christ, that He was justified in the Spirit. This is very important to understand, because unless we are justified in the Spirit, we cannot be godly.

When we trust Christ as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit of God *quickens* us (Ephesians 2:1; 1 Peter 3:18), which means He gives us life. We needed life because spiritually we were dead in trespasses and sins. The Holy Spirit also justifies us, meaning He gives us a clean slate in the sight of God. All of our sins are cleansed away so that there are no sins recorded against us. He also indwells us – lives within our spirit. God, the Holy Spirit is living in me. He guides me, teaches me, protects me, and corrects me. But the important thing to remember here is that God is in me. Godliness can only be developed in our lives if God is in us.

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" (Colossians 1:27)

Turn to 1 Timothy 6:3 – 11

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (1 Timothy 6:3-11)

We see from this passage that the pursuit of godliness is something that should take priority over the acquisition of any material gain.

Turn to 1 Timothy 2:8 - 10

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (1 Timothy 2:8-10)

Notice here ladies that the Scripture says that you are to be more concerned about godliness, or holiness, than you are to be concerned about your appearance. Notice also that godliness is associated with good works.

Review

What did we learn about the meaning of godliness from its New Testament usage:

- 1 It is synonymous with holiness.
- 2 It cannot be produced from within ourselves. It can only come from God.
- 3 Godliness is God being revealed, or manifested, in our lives; which, again, can only happen if God is in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.
- 4 Pursuing, or developing godliness should be a great priority in our lives, taking precedence over the pursuit of material gain, or improving our physical appearance.

How much time do we spend developing holiness in our lives?

- 5 Godliness and good works are closely associated. You can do works that appear to be good without being godly, but you cannot be godly without producing good works in your life. Good works do not save you, but they are a big part of the life of a godly, saved person.

How can we develop holiness in our lives, so that others will see Christ in us?

I Salvation

Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives, we cannot be, nor would we want to be godly. Christ, God must first be in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

II Saturation

By this I mean that if the characteristics of God are going to be revealed in our lives, we are going to have to immerse ourselves in the things of God. Dr. Bob Gray used to say

all the time, "You are or you soon will be like who you hang around". He was, of course, referring to our friendships, but the principle applies to godliness as well. You will be like Christ – like God – if you hang around Him enough.

A The Word of God

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalms 119:11)

"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)

B The World of God (God's People)

Run with godly people. There is something to say about a positive peer pressure. We ought to live godly lives simply because God wants us to, but it is a whole lot easier to do so when we are surrounded by people who share our desire to be godly.

C The Work of God

Godliness is a prerequisite for effective Christian ministry. A minister that is carnal and worldly will not be effective at impacting his world for the Lord. If you care about the salvation of lost souls, you will want to develop godliness in your life. If you truly care about your lost friends and family members, you will be careful that your testimony reflects and represents God.

III Separation

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be

ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Godliness cannot be revealed in our lives as long as we are immersing ourselves in the sinful and unprofitable things of the world.

IV Submission (to the Spirit of God)

Turn to Galatians 5

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (v. 16)

Characteristics of Ungodliness

*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.
(vs. 17 – 21)*

Characteristics of Godliness

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." (vs. 22 - 26)

Closing Illustration

Miss Raney from Longview – she had God coming out of her all the time.

Never an “off-color” remark; never heard her gossip; never heard her talk about herself.