

The Final Word

Week 2 – 2 Peter 2:5-15

Peter penned his second epistle soon after his first letter and shortly before he was martyred, giving even more weight to his words. While Peter's first letter was an epistle of joyful hope in the face of suffering, his second letter could be described as faithful truth in the face of falsehood.

Peter knew “the laying aside of [his] earthly dwelling [was] imminent” (2 Peter 1:14) and feared false teachers would quickly arise and infiltrate the church. The danger of false teaching would press hard upon the church, threatening it from within, ever increasing as Satan diabolically attempted to damage and destroy the testimony of Christ. The believer's defense against false teaching is the Word of God. Our personal knowledge of the Word of God and ability to skillfully wield the sword of the Spirit in guerilla warfare with the wicked one will determine our successful outcome. The Book of 2 Peter is one of the finest shields that we have been given to defend the faith and deflect the fiery darts of the enemy.

I. A Godly Goal – 2 Peter 1:5-7

Peter lists Christian qualities, which should be present in all believers. He is not implying a “works-righteousness” since his admonition is grounded in God's work of salvation as it has been accomplished in Jesus Christ. Peter uses a literary form to create a logical progression that culminates in a crowning point. Like links on a golden chain of Christian virtue, Paul urges us to add diligence, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to complement and complete our saving faith. All these godly virtues of the Christian life find their source in faith. The crowning culmination of such faithful living is love. Like a fine craftsman who does not have to apologize for his workmanship, we are to be diligent to develop the ability to accurately handle the Word of God (see 2 Timothy 2:15), making the links of the chain of virtue longer and stronger in our walk with Him.

Because of all the “precious and magnificent promises” (v. 4) God has given believers and because they have received “everything pertaining to life and godliness” (v. 3), for this very reason they must respond with maximum effort toward living for Christ.

John MacArthur, *2 Peter and Jude*, p. 47

These verses reflect the desires and features of a transformed heart and characterize a life partaking of “the divine nature of Christ” (2 Peter 1:4). The exhortations to live a new life are grounded in the divine power and magnificent promises granted to us in

Christ. These virtues are the result of faith, the tangible evidence of the intangible transaction between a repentant sinner and the Lord.

In the Christian life, there is nothing to earn, but there is a lot to learn.

Dr. Adrian Rogers

Sermon “How to Build Stability in Your Life”, 2001

Salvation is not just about getting saved and having our sins forgiven; it encompasses a journey that should be marked by the passionate pursuit of personal holiness and practical righteousness. Every child of God is obligated to diligently grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Make no mistake, beloved. Diligence, discipline, and devotion are required!

II. A Short-Sighted Situation – 2 Peter 1:8-11

Fruitful Christians have an abundance of the qualities mentioned above. Good works are evidence of and give assurance of salvation, though they are never the basis for it. If God has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness and made us partakers of His divine nature, why do we continue to stumble and fall in our walk with Him? The answer is quite simple. We are temporarily blinded (Strong’s “darkened by smoke”) or short-sighted (Strong’s-“to shut the eyes, to blink, Outline of Biblical Usage-“to see dimly, see only what is near”), that is we deliberately blink or shut our eyes to God’s truth and forget we have “escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:4) and been set free from the bondage of sin, self, and Satan. This kind of spiritual misstep leads to repeating old sinful habit patterns and robs believers of the assurance of their salvation.

We are to diligently pursue the things of God making our lives useful and fruitful for the kingdom of God. We are urged to “practice these things.” Practice refers to the pattern of daily living. As long as we practice these virtues essential to holy living we give evidence of our genuine conversion to others and enjoy the assurance of our salvation through Jesus Christ. We will not stumble into doubt, despair or fear. Rather we will enjoy God’s grace and peace, which has been “multiplied to [us] in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:2) and “the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be multiplied of [us] (2 Peter 1:11).

As believers, we need to have the assurance of our salvation. Without it, we might use our poor actions or reactions as evidence we are not truly saved. This is the issue Peter was dealing with in this passage. We need to examine ourselves to make sure we are in

the faith and then we should diligently strive to live a holy life to the glory of God, the Father and the Lord Jesus.

III. A Reminder to Remember – 2 Peter 1:12-15

Peter pressed hard with the claims of Christ and urged his readers to diligently pursue knowledge of the truth and continue in the pattern of godly living. Peter feared his readers would forget to remember what they had already learned.

Peter had once been forgetful. Perhaps he was reminded of his colossal failure when he forgot to remember. A crowing of a rooster had jogged his memory. “So Peter remembered the word of the Lord” (Luke 22:61).

Any good teacher realizes the value of repetition. Research has shown that within an hour after hearing a spoken message, people forget up to ninety percent of it.

John MacArthur. *2 Peter and Jude*, p. 47

Peter wrote, “Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present in you” (2 Peter 1:12). I desire “to stir you up by way of reminder” (2 Peter 1:13). “I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure, you may be able to call these things to mind” (2 Peter 1:15). It is amazing how quickly we lose spiritual truth! It is not like memorizing your phone number, the multiplication table, or the words of a song. Spiritual truth is much more than an intellectual exercise. It involves the mind, soul, and the spirit. It is hard to retain and easy to lose. Failure to continually and intentionally be exposed to the truth of the Word of God will lead to carnal behavior because of the continual enticement of sin, self, and Satan. Therefore, Peter warned, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeing someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith” (1 Peter 5:8).

Beloved, be diligent to pursue “the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3) in order to stand firm in the last days!