

Letters From A Fisherman
Week 22
2 Peter 1:10-15
“Blessed Assurance”

Introduction

The one who believes in The Son of God has this testimony within himself. The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony God has given about His Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has The Son has life. The one who does not have The Son of God does not have life. I have written these things to you who believe in the Name of The Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:10-13

As I have already mentioned previously, the second epistle of Peter to the persecuted church in Rome is his final written message, his “swan song”, if you will, before he was martyred for the faith. He knew at the time of this writing that his race was nearly run. And rather than becoming focused upon his impending death, he chose to spend what little time he had left to pour encouragement into his fellow believers.

I personally find this second letter of Peter to be extremely practical in nature. It is a great reminder of the priorities that every believer should embrace. For in the end, Christ is all that truly matters. Peter reminds us all to be certain of what we believe in order to *know* Christ exceedingly, to *know* what is true and what is false, so that we will not be deceived, and to *know* that no matter what happens to us in this wicked world, Christ is coming back for those who are His.

Thirteen times in this short letter Peter uses various forms of the word “*know*” or “*Knowledge*”. For he knew that he would not be around to remind his brothers and sisters for very much longer. He wanted to make certain that those he left behind were standing on a solid foundation of faith. Much like a parent provides an inheritance for the children they love, Peter wanted to leave a lasting legacy of faith and hope. We would do well to follow his example.

Most *Bible* scholars believe that Peter was in his seventies when he wrote this final letter to the church. He, unlike many of the other followers of Christ, did not place his hope upon the rapture, for Jesus had explicitly told him that he would die a martyr's death. Peter would not try to escape the cup of suffering that was destined for him, but rather, he would embrace it. So much so, that it is said when they came to crucify him his only request was to be hung upside down on his cross for he was not worthy to die in the same manner as The Son of God.

Seeing the resurrection of Christ with his very own eyes changed Peter for the good. He was no longer Simon, the fearful disciple who fled into the darkness the night his Master was arrested. He was now Peter, the rock, who was well aware that although they may kill his body, he too would rise again! Death was no longer a thing to be feared, for Christ had conquered death. In fact, the word that Peter used to describe his own death is “*exodus*” (**vs. 15**), for he knew full well that upon his death he would truly enter the promised land!

As we saw last week, the old fisherman admonished the church to work diligently to add to its faith by knowing Christ and His Word, so that they could mature spiritually. It is the wise Believer who strains to grow in the knowledge of his LORD and Savior. And those who do not are, as Peter has described, “*nearsighted and blind*”, unable to see far enough ahead to realize that our priority is to be focused upon the life to come and not upon the here and now. *So are you dying for an onion here in the wilderness, or are you living for a land of milk and honey?*

As we continue to study the passage today, Peter continues this same line of thinking. For he knew that the more that we come to know Christ (“*epignosis*”, meaning superior intimate knowledge), the less doubt and fear we will have amidst the tribulations of this world. Hard times lay ahead for the people of faith in Peter's day. The same, I believe, is true for us in our time as well. So how can we forge ahead,

our souls purged of the doubts and fears that would assail our minds into uselessness? By knowing Christ as well as we can know Him! This was Peter's charge to the first century church, and it is God's charge to us as well today. So let us look together at this beautiful passage of Scripture that teaches us how we can have the calm assurance in Christ no matter what this evil world may do to discourage and destroy us. Peter lays out the formula for blessed assurance and leaving a legacy of faith. To be on a solid foundation not only for ourselves, but to those we must *Reassure, Remind, and Redeem The Time*. Please allow me to explain.

Reassure (vs. 10-11)

Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you. **Peter 1:10-11**

The key phrase in this passage is "Confirm your calling and election." Some have mistakenly interpreted this to mean that by your own good works you somehow manage to "keep yourself saved". But this is most definitely *not* what Peter is saying. Notice the two words "calling and election". These are more than adequate to describe how one is redeemed. God chooses us and calls us to Himself. The *Bible* is clear on this.

...as it is written: There is not one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.

Romans 3:10-12

Since there is no one who seeks after God, then it stands to reason that the only way that any of us are saved is because God came looking for us. He chose us (election), and He called us to Himself. And that is why Paul says that we have nothing to brag about when it comes to our salvation (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). We are saved because of God's grace and nothing else.

And not only are we saved by grace, we are also kept saved by grace. Listen to the words of Christ as He prayed before His crucifixion:

I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your Name that You have given Me, so that they may be one as We are one. While I was with them, I was protecting them by Your Name that You have given Me. I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled. **John 17:11-12**

So, if your salvation is a work of God and your eternal security is also in God's hands, then what is Peter referring to when he tells us to "confirm our calling and election"? He is talking about a surefire way to never doubt your salvation, a formula, if you will, to make your salvation a reality in your own heart and mind. In short, it means that you will know for certain, that which God has already established! So what is this formula exactly? To make every effort to add to your salvation the deeper knowledge of Christ and His Word. To continually draw upon the spiritual wealth that He has deposited into your account (**vs. 3-7**).

I have met many Believers over the years, who have experienced doubt as to their salvation. But you know what I've never met? A Christian who is continually maturing in the faith, who is coming to know Christ more and more, who has doubts about their salvation. Why is that? Because the more you come to know Jesus, the more you realize that He can be counted on. He is the friend that sticks closer than a brother. This whole world may let you down, but He will not! To know Him is to be secure in Him.

Peter goes on to say that if we make every effort to reach maturity in Christ, then our entrance into His kingdom will be "richly provided". The Greek here actually means "lavishly underwritten". It was

a term often used for a benevolent benefactor who provided everything that was needed for a feast or a theatrical performance. Peter actually uses the word two times in this passage. The first time he uses it to describe the way that we are to “*add to our faith*” (**vs. 5**). Now don’t miss the connection. If we lavishly provide for our spiritual maturity in Christ using the resources that He has provided for us, the we will be lavishly rewarded when we enter His kingdom!

Do you realize that not all who enter heaven will do so in grand fashion? Many Believers who have squandered their opportunity to be an effective ambassador for Christ will find themselves ashamed at His coming. I really began to understand this the longer I was in ministry and had a front row seat to hear the regrets of many a believer, who wished they had done more for Christ, but sadly it was too late, for their race was nearly run. Paul speaks of the embarrassment of those who do not lavishly add to their salvation in his letter to the church at Corinth.

...each one’s work will become obvious. For the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire: the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. If anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will experience loss, but he himself will be saved — but only as through fire.
1 Corinthians 3:13-15

So do you want to be secure in your faith; to be able to withstand everything the devil throws at you with the calm assurance that you are in Christ and He is in you? Then make every effort to lavishly spend what God has deposited into your spiritual account so that one day you will be lavishly rewarded in heaven! To know Him is to live in perpetual joy and the confident hope of His return. The mature believer is a secure Believer!

Remind (vs. 12-13)

Therefore I will always remind you about these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth you now have. I think it is right, as long as I am in this bodily tent, to wake you up with a reminder....
2 Peter 1:11-13

Peter knew full well that all the information regarding the faith was nothing new to the body of believers from Rome. He knew this because Paul himself had taught them, and he left very little to the imagination when it came to the teachings of doctrine. One need only to read his epistle to the Romans to know this all too well. But Peter knew something about doctrine that we all would do well to know: Repetition is essential.

Studies have shown that on average a congregation of people will forget around ninety percent of a sermon they have heard within a few hours. We need to hear the word over and over again, so that it will take up permanent residence in our hearts and minds. There will never come a time on earth for the believer to declare, “Well, I’ve finished The Word, and now I can move on to other things!” We need continued reinforcement of our faith, and this is why we teach The Scriptures over and over again every week, for we all need constant reminding.

Peter may have sounded like a broken record to the persecuted believers of the Roman church, but no matter, for he knew how much they needed to be often reminded of the truths of our faith. How many times have you found yourself in a situation of struggle only to be reminded by The Spirit of an old familiar verse that is exactly what you needed in the moment? You may have heard it a thousand times, but in that particular instance, it was not only fresh and new, but instantly in season. I cannot tell you how many times I have needed the same verse over and again. For the mercies of God are new every morning (**Lamentations 3:22-23**)!

So never stop feasting of The Word, my friends. It is the very source of life for us. As Peter says, **“make every effort to add to your faith goodness** (zeal for the truth) **and to your goodness knowledge...”** We need to hear The Word over and again. So study it daily and make sure to attend a church where The Word is taught faithfully... and repeatedly. For we need a constant reminder of these things in order to reach maturity in Christ. Remember:

...Man must not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. **Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 5:4**

Redeem The Time (vs. 14-15)

...since I know that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed made clear to me. And I will also make every effort so that you are able to recall these things at any time after my departure. **2 Peter 1:14-15**

Like I mentioned before, I have known many a Christian who expressed regret that they had not done more to serve Christ with the opportunity that was afforded them. Peter was not one, such as these. He was determined to make the most of every opportunity to do as Christ had commanded Him.

...“Feed My sheep.” Jesus said. “Truly I tell you, when you were younger, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don’t want to go.” He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. After saying this, He told him, “Follow Me.” **John 21:17b-19**

Peter was fully determined to obey The LORD’S command to the very end. With every possible opportunity that he was given, Peter would spend it *feeding the sheep*. He was more than willing to lay aside his tent (earthly body) whenever The LORD saw fit, but until that day, he would be a witness to the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!

Paul also speaks of our need to use the time that we have wisely. I love how he described this to the believers at Ephesus:

Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk — not as unwise people but as wise — making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So don’t be foolish, but understand what The LORD’S will is. **Ephesians 5:15-17**

The word that he used, translated “making the most” of the time is “*exagorazo*” in the Greek, and it means to “redeem” or “buy back”. We are commanded to redeem our time, or in other words, take possession of it, so it does not go to waste. So many people are simply marking time with their lives, not making any lasting difference. Peter wanted to use up every minute that he had to make a difference and to bear fruit... fruit that would endure.

If you were to examine your priorities this morning, how well are you doing at “*redeeming your time*”? I once heard a preacher say that he could spend five minutes looking at a person’s checkbook and tell them all about their priorities in life. Could the same be said by looking at our daily schedules? I find it interesting that God asks for one out of every ten of your dollars, and yet, one out of seven of your days. Could that mean that God wants our **time** more than our offerings? I believe so.

So, how are you growing this morning? Are you being ever *reassured* in your faith, because you are coming to know Christ in a deeper way with each passing day? And are you continually being *reminded* of the commands of Christ from God’s Word, so that you will not stumble? And how is your time being spent? Are you carefully *redeeming the time*? For you have only this life to bear fruit for the kingdom. And life as we all know... is short. I, for one, am desirous of a lavish entrance into His kingdom when our King returns.

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith... **Hebrews 12:1-2a**

TRUTH!!!