

"4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." 2Pe 1:4-11.

This morning we need to begin with verse 4 to continue our message from last week and then move to 5-11 to pick up the next section of the letter.

Let's begin with a brief over view of what we have already understood.

First. The entire letter emphasizes over and over again how important it is that we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We discovered that here is an explicit reason for this as well which is stated in the letter and that is found in 1:16 and 2:1

"1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."  
"2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."

Second. Peter's letter certainly loses no appeal to a contemporary audience of Christians or those who claim to be Christians. We are bombarded with secularism and humanistic philosophy and false spiritualism and false prophets in Christian mantels everywhere we turn. The church has lowered its regard for Christ and has promoted a low view of God for many generations. By this I mean we have exalted God, primarily, for what he does to bless us rather than exalt Him, primarily, for who He is and this leads to doctrinal confusion and allows a greater opportunity for false prophets to gain a foot hold in the church. It allows for us to consider Christ through our subjective experience first rather than based on the objective truth we find in God's word.

Third. Peter made it clear that he shared in a common faith well all the brethren. We

saw his genuine humility as a slave of God first regardless of his official capacity in the body of Christ as an apostle and an elder.

Fourth. There was no doubt where genuine faith, in light of what false teachers may have been preaching in Peter's day, came from. It came by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without the righteousness of Christ there is no faith. Without faith in Christ there is no salvation. Without Christ there is no God.

Fifth. As a result of this common received faith we have been given grace and peace and both can be multiplied, as we know more of Christ.

Sixth. He gave us the whole package. There is nothing to earn and nothing to look for. It is all there as a result of being in Christ. Everything that will make us live as a new creature in Christ as a spiritual man in the Spirit Covenant has been given to us.

We ended last week with this truth - God grants all these things to us for His pleasure and for our benefit so that we can take pleasure in Him.

Now, let's move on to verse 4.

**"4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." 2Pe 1:4.**

The "for by these" refers back to verse 3. By his divine nature and his high moral quality-his moral excellence, He also grants us His precious and magnificent promises.

Verse four is qualifying verse three where it is talking about godly living. When we are living in a godly manner we are partakers of the divine nature. We are identified with Christ because we are able to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, unlike the false prophets that he will teach about.

These great and magnificent promises tell us that because of Christ we ultimately overcome sin and death and condemnation. Corruption is a gradual process. And even for believers their bodies may corrupt in the grave, but spiritually we are progressing toward glorification. We are new creatures in Christ and part of the everlasting New

Covenant and it is a Spirit Covenant that gives life because where the Spirit is there is life and liberty not only in living but also from sin and death. There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. All of these things prove to us that we are incurable lovers of Christ and move us to know Christ more and as we do we will be displaying more of the divine nature which in turn displays more of the glory and excellence of Christ.

Our escape from the corruptions in the world through lust is our knowledge and growing knowledge of Christ as we are partakers in the divine nature and live godly lives.

We seize hold of the promises of eternal life by God's grace and then we continue to seize hold of the promises of Christ as we partake in the divine nature that our salvation produces.

The false prophets have no hope to offer and no promises that are found in Christ.

The world holds out all kinds of false promises that only lead to corruption through lust, which is ungodliness. All kinds of false hopes are given in the promises of the world. It is tragic when that which says it is the church would rather cling to these promises than those of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**"5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge," 2Pe 1:5.**

Various translations use different words for moral excellence. It is called goodness and virtue. Perhaps saying live by the standard of Christ live by the ethic of Christ might be a better way of saying this.

Because we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust we are to pursue the qualities- the standards that show us to be Christ's sanctified people. It is not enough to say ' I am a Christian". There must be evidence of it by the way we live, by the way we reason, by the way we interact with the world around us.

I don't believe it a good explanation of the next two verses to say something like

“here we have 7 Steps To Proving and Improving Your Sanctification.” It makes for a nice seminar title and it makes something spiritual sound so very pragmatic.

I prefer to see this as a finished picture with all of these qualities of character, according to verse 8, being pursued with diligence because this is who we are in Christ.

Did Christ exhibit moral excellence or goodness or virtue, (standard of righteousness) discernment of what this was, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love? Of course He did.

So, do I pursue these as individual qualities of who I am in Christ or is it a package? Do I say, “Joe today you are lacking in moral excellence, work harder at it.” Well I might be fall short of the standard today in some area but that is not the point. Why?

Because if I fall short at the moment, I certainly am not exhibiting a present godliness, I will be self centered and not showing brotherly kindness and so on.

However, if I am pursuing a greater knowledge of Christ, if I am growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ my Lord then I am improving in all of these qualities.

Think about this for a moment. How do I supply or as the NIV puts it “make every effort and add” or the NKJV “applying all diligence, add “ these qualities to faith?

These are all God given qualities as a result of His divine calling and His divine power giving me everything I need to live godly in the present age. They are a part of my being, my reality but the qualities can be improved upon, I can mature, while I am still housed in this wretched flesh with its connection to Adam.

And they will improve as I progress in living for the glory of God.

They are meant to improve and increase as qualities according to verse 8.

**"8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Pe 1:8.**

Now I want you to think about these qualities for a moment.

Each one of qualities of character or are specifically mentioned in a Christian context in many ways throughout the New Testament Scriptures.

Each one of these is in some way a part of the radical call to discipleship given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. This is what a disciple looks like as he lives in the world. Paul gives instruction in his letters about each of these qualities when he gives instructions to Timothy or gives warnings to weak or possibly false believers.

Each of these qualities increase as we grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ and each of these is a result of obedience to Christ. As we love Christ more our obedience increases as we hate our sin more and more. His commands are not burdensome but they are life saving and life giving because they are rooted in His grace.

Each of these qualities makes us who we are in Christ and have a drastic affect on how we view a fallen world and how we live in a fallen world.

So, if these qualities are indeed yours and increasing there is a direct result as you progress or grow in your sanctification because you have been given the ability by Christ to do so. You cannot get more sanctified, your sanctification does not progress or grow, you do not become more holy but you do grow/mature as one who is sanctified. Here is a good place to understand the importance of the now/not yet principle of Scripture.

I am saved yet Scripture says I wait for a day of salvation. I am sanctified yet a perfect life without needing to progress still waits for me. I am saved and sanctified in Christ and by Christ and in Him I am already complete and whole and perfect in all things but in this life I live with the future state of being in mind. I believe in the promises of Christ that this is true and it motivates me to live as close to that as I am able to in this life because in Christ that is who I am already, but I now have some limitations but no lack of motivation to do so.

You see there is a true knowledge of Him and a false knowledge of Him. In this Peter is laying the foundation for addressing the false teachers later in the letter. No matter what a genuinely false teacher teaches about Scripture, in the end, the teaching is something that is false about Christ because in the end all of scripture's priority is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He called us by His own glory and excellence, in other words His divine character and high moral quality that impacts all true believers in Christ. His high moral quality may be well spoken of by unbelievers but they cannot speak of His divine nature.

**"8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Pe 1:8.**

As these qualities increase you are fruitful in the true knowledge you have of Christ.

As these qualities increase it is proving your understanding of the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is being understood and applied in your life as you cling to Him and His promises and pursue godliness for His glory.

**"9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins." 2Pe 1:9.**

It must be remembered that Peter is writing to believers. Those who lack these qualities have a loss of perspective of the true knowledge of Jesus Christ and particularly the greatness of our redemption and the ongoing work of grace.

Notice the phrase blind or short-sighted. The NIV says blind and shortsighted and a person cannot be both. The NKJV says shortsighted leading to blindness. The NASB says blind or short-sighted. So which is it? Well it is not so much which is it but what is the point. The point is that it is a temporary loss, it is a losing perspective or not having the correct perspective of the true knowledge of Christ pertaining to these qualities.

Have you ever been confused as a believer about how to live for Christ because you did not properly understand the Scripture? It occurs to all of us at some time. Hopefully it is earlier in our life as Christians and not later.

Sometimes we labor and labor and get frustrated because it seems that it is not just working. That only means we are very ignorant of Scripture if we are true believers. We are not looking to the promises of Christ and growing in the grace and knowledge of Him. And it is to our own detriment. We suffer a lack of spiritual quality of life, in the

now when we lack these qualities. We are forgetting the forgiveness of our sins. We are living as if we are losing the battle instead of knowing it is already won on our behalf by Christ. We enter into a spiritual lethargy and if you are saved this cannot continue indefinitely because there must be progress. My progress is not measured by your progress but there must be progress.

Later in the letter there is also a statement concerning unbelievers who seem to have a start as believers and then prove to be false. So the warning here applies in that sense as well.

So even though these qualities are a whole package, we are to move forward and be improving in all of them as overlapping as they are. To consistently fail in one of these qualities is to fail in all of them. We need to be very intentional in seeing that these qualities are growing in our lives.

**"10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;" 2Pe 1:10.**

How do we make certain that we are God's elect?

Let me quote from John Piper here:

"Therefore Peter says, "Confirm your election! Make sure of it!" How? By standing in your faith and pressing on to virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. John said (in 1 John 3:14), "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (cf. 2:3). The confirmation of your election is your progress in sanctification. God predestined all the elect to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Therefore, the reassuring evidence of our election is Christ-likeness.

So verses 10 and 11 conclude: "If you do these things (referring back to vv. 5-7), you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly affection, love—these are not the wages that we pay to earn entrance into the eternal kingdom, but they are the necessary evidence that our trust

in God's promise is genuine, and in that way they are the confirmation of our call and election.”

So brethren if we are truly God's elect we have desire and motivations to pursue these qualities. At times can these be diminished? Yes. And the question is why? It is because we are not growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8 reminded us that if we do not progress in these qualities we are useless and unfruitful in the true knowledge of Christ. That is quite a warning and should get our attention. We are called to be fruitful and useful for the glory of God.

Remember the Sermon on the Mount. The radical call to discipleship, this is what my people will look like in action. This is the result of election and sanctification - a people that the world cannot understand. Peter was there, he heard it.

Let's recall 1 Peter 1:2-5

"2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:2-5.

By making our calling and election sure in verse 10 we will not stumble or fall to such a degree that we will prove to be false, in other words apostates. As long as we practice not forgetting what Christ has done for us and pursuing these qualities by growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ we will never ultimately stumble or fall away from the faith. We will stumble now and again but not in this final sense. The stumble here is like one running a race and when he stumbles he loses the race. If we are truly God's we will run the race and endure until the end.

It reminds me of the scene in Chariots of Fire when Eric Liddell stumbles because he is crowded off the track by another runner. He gets up and continues to run and wins the race even though it almost kills him. If you are Christ's you will get up and run and



run even harder because the goal and the prize are Christ Himself.

There comes a time in our lives as believers when our spiritual laziness should be loathsome, and disgusting. That is good. To wallow in it is not healthy. To push forward is what is right. There are times when we recognize our unworthiness. That is good. As my pastor/friend Murray McLlellan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan said yesterday during a bible study on line, " Recognizing your unworthiness -is part of what makes you "worthy". For example to participate in the Lords Table is only possible because we are worthy to partake in this celebration. We are not worthy in ourselves but when we recognize what we really are by God's grace, we are worthy to receive what Christ has for us and it is ours because of Him. We are only worthy because of Him. The Father sees us in the worthiness of His Son.

**"11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." 2Pe 1:11**

The guarantee of the entrance into the eternal kingdom is making our calling and our election sure by practicing the qualities that prove we are Christ's. Everything we need to be assured our place in the eternal kingdom will be abundantly supplied to us. Everything we need to live godly in this present world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His divine power will be granted unto us.