

2Peter 11-09-09a

This is Friday, the 9th of September, 2011. We continue our study in the book of 2 Peter. We are in chapter 1 and we resume at verse 12.

We'll take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, what a blessing it is for us to spend time together studying your Word, learning the truths that are contained within it, equipping ourselves through the ministry of your Spirit for faithful obedience and good works, which have been ordained that we should walk in them. We know that in this time on earth we are preparing ourselves for the eternal future to think and to function in accordance with your greater plan and purpose.

And we pray that as we look at this portion of your Word tonight that we will find in it fruitful meditation and meaningful application and that all of the things that were in view when the Lord Jesus died for us will be brought to pass as we grow in grace and knowledge through this study. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we have seen in this second letter that Peter is anxious to build on the foundation that he established in his first letter, talking to the scattered pilgrims and encouraging them that God had a plan and purpose for them right where they are, giving them some of the basic foundational viewpoint to function effectively away from their homeland and as sojourners in their relationships and in their perspective. Now in this second letter he is reminding them of the theological equipment, the epinosis wisdom that God has made available and through which they and we can lay hold of these exceeding great and precious promises that make us partakers of the divine nature and help us to build and continue to build on that foundation that he has described in his earlier letter and in the beginning of this one. So we have looked at this building process.

We saw those great verbs last time, epikoregeo, to chorus upon, to add elements to the features of our spiritual life. And it really is a good passage to come back to and reflect upon, looking at the various aspects represented by virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love that are built on the foundation of our faith. And it is a reminder, it is a reminder that there are aspects to our lives and all of them need analysis.

We might be doing really well and pat ourselves on the back in the area of virtue or in the area of brotherly kindness, but in some other area and in some other way, we might be falling down on self-control or we might be lacking in perseverance. And it is not enough to say, well, I've got one or two of these. They're a chorus.

I remember when I was a mere child, I was inadvertently and wrongly, I think, placed in the youth choir at the First Baptist Church of Oceanside, California. They just throw kids in there. They didn't care if you could sing or not.

And so this was, for many of us, the first experience of trying to sing as a chorus, as harmony.

And so we were working on this song and it was, play little David, play on your harp. Little David was a shepherd boy, killed Goliath, shouted for joy.

That's not the Bible, but they apparently thought he must have shouted for joy. And so that was the main melody line. You're probably familiar with that song.

And then there was another little part that the quote unquote altos were supposed to sing while that's going on. The others are supposed to sing this little, play little David, play on your harp thing. And so it was a two-part deal.

And so the poor beset chorus leader was trying to teach this to this gaggle of children who were mostly less than 10 years old. And some of them could sing very well. I had a couple of friends in that choir named Steve and John who lived next door to us and were the sons of the assistant pastor of our church.

Those guys could sing. Well, I couldn't sing. I was sitting next to a guy that really couldn't sing.

His name was Stevie Harper, and he had no concept of one note from another. And so we were trying to sing, and all of us were supposed to be singing this play little David part while everybody else is singing the melody. Well, the chorus leader just stopped the whole thing.

And she said, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop. And everything came to a crashing halt. The piano player quit.

And she said, somebody is out of tune. Well, it was the guy sitting next to me. And because of him, I think it was me as well.

I couldn't hear myself for him. And there's a room full of children. Stevie and probably I were off.

And so she stopped the whole thing because it only takes one or two bad voices to make the whole thing sound terrible. It doesn't matter that there are 25 or 30 other children all singing correctly. Those two bad voices just spoil the whole thing.

Something small can spoil something large. There are various sayings relative to that. So the same thing is true here.

We're supposed to have this chorus of virtues in our life. And these are areas, this is not a happenstance list. This is a list that bears listing.

People like to put verses and things out to meditate on. You could put this list out and say, let me just think about the different areas of my life. How am I doing? Not just, hey, am I okay spiritually? But how am I doing specifically in the area of diligence, specifically in the area of perseverance, specifically in the area of brotherly love, specifically in the area of self-control? And we might find that we've got four or five of the voices all singing on key.

And we've got one that's just a screeching, cacophonous non-contributor. And we need to call a halt to the whole chorus, find and fix that one bad voice. By the way, to finish the story, Stevie and I had to sing by ourselves to see if we knew what the tune was.

And it quickly became apparent where the problem was. And well, why don't you all sing so low? And then suddenly sounded much better. So we've seen this.

For he who lacks these things, verse nine is short sighted, not looking. These are things that have to be looked at. And if we lack them, it's because we're not looking even onto blindness.

And it's easy to be blind to something that you don't want to look at. There's none so blind as he who will not see. And we have to want to see.

We have to be willing to pray the prayer that David prays. Lord, show me my hidden sins, reveal my secret faults. We have to want to be better to be willing to look at these things.

But this is a useful classification listing. Different ways that we can analyze ourselves. And has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

How would this? I would not have thought that this would be the explanation. If someone lacks these things, blind and short sighted, has forgotten the cleansing of his sins. If we are not making progress in these areas.

One of the main contributing factors is likely to be. That we are not claiming one of our basic spiritual skills. Which is the cleansing of our sins.

And we're not going to go into all of the forensics and the details of the sin problem. The sin barrier and all of the different ways that sin can mess us up. But like the spiritual life that's got these many facets and these many components.

Sin has many facets and many components. People say, well, Jesus died for our sins, so sin's over with. No, it isn't.

Jesus died specifically to atone for sins. The eternal consequence of our sin has been taken care of. Nobody suffers the eternal consequences for sin.

Jesus paid for that on the cross. Not for us only, but for the entire world. God's justice when it comes to the eternal penalty for sin has been propitiated.

That sin has been atoned for. However, this is the equivalent. Let's take some petty crime.

Let's say you throw a rock through somebody's picture window. And somebody says, well, the police have been called, but we're not going to press charges. So you're not guilty of a crime in the eyes of the law.

The guilt has been removed because no charges are being filed or pressed. Okay, did that fix the window? No, the consequences of the sin are still there. Are you any less a property damager and rock thrower? No, you are still guilty of doing it even though you're not going to be held to account legally.

You are still a property damaging, rock throwing, non-neighbor loving person. And you still possess the problem that caused you to be angry enough or stupid enough or careless enough to throw the rock through the window in the first place. Your nature has not been changed.

You may not be repentant at all, even though you have not been charged and hauled off to jail or so on. So just as a crude example, you can see that there are many facets to sin. The cross is God's earnest to the world.

This one aspect, the first brick in the wall, the eternal consequence has been taken away. But the reason there is no such thing as universal salvation based on the cross is that all of these other consequences remain. Those are taken away, some at the point of salvation, others through progressive sanctification.

Our nature is not immediately changed at salvation. We don't become instantly spiritually mature. We don't gain all of the fruit of the spirit at the point of salvation, do we? We have to grow into that.

We have to do the adding diligently, the chorusing together diligently through increasing knowledge of the word of God, the transformation of our nature so that we become non-rock-throwing people. We become people who would rather repair the breach and build the walls instead of tear down and tear apart. But certain other things are fixed at the cross.

Our future destiny and so on. But in a nutshell, we realize that because sin is multifaceted, so is our life apart from sin. Our life in God, our life in Christ is multifaceted.

And you can't just look at one thing and say, well, I'm really doing well with that. This would be like somebody who has a major wreck on the highway and kills several people. They say, but I had my seatbelt buckled.

I mean, look, I, you know, click it or tick it. I saw the sign and I clicked my seatbelt and I'm good. You know, you can't point to one thing you're doing well and that excuses everything that's going wrong.

We've got to check ourselves and remember that we have been cleansed from our old sins. And one of the first things we need to do so that we have the sight to see and we're not blind is to go before the Lord, apply the word of God that we know as we review our actions and say, have I sinned? If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us. And the blood of Jesus Christ will keep on cleansing us as we walk in the light.

First John 1, 7 through 9. But if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. The truth is not in us. His word is not in us.

We lie and do not the truth. Therefore, brethren, verse 10, be even more diligent, even more. Spuday, this is your Spudadzo verb to complement the Spuday noun in verse five.

Diligent, diligent. It's it's a diligence envelope here. It's a diligence bracket.

Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure. And Peter tells us here that the call and election are not sure. There are some kinds of theology that really decide that, well, this is a function of God's sovereignty.

And if God calls and elects, it's a done deal. You're going to persevere, et cetera. Not so.

Why would Peter say you've got to be even more diligent to firm up and make certain your calling and your election? Because they are uncertain. They are not sure they depend on us. Many are called.

Few are chosen. Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. Well.

If all men are drawn, why don't all men arrive? Because there is this pesky element of free will and we can choose not to respond. We can choose not to be the called. Romans 8, 28 through 30.

All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose. And the calling and the justification, the glorification are subject to veto by our choice. People say, well, you're equating yourself with God.

God does something and you can undo it. You know, you're cooperating with God. No, I'm sorry, but this is just the way God designed his plan and it is optional.

Why is there a broad way and a wide gate through which so many go to destruction? Why is it narrow and straight to wind up at life? Why is it few there be that find it? Because few there are of us who remember that we've been cleansed from our old sins, who are diligent to add, to course together these components of our spiritual life. So this is a very powerful summary. Peter hasn't even written a dozen verses yet.

And he has given us plenty to chew on in terms of what this life is really about. He says, if we are diligent to make our call and election, sure, we will not stumble. If you do these things, you will never stumble.

Now, it doesn't mean that we're not going to wobble or that we're not going to have better and worse days, but stumbling so as to fall, to fall down and make no further progress. I've fallen and I can't get up will not happen as long as we are diligent. If you do these things, you will never

stumble.

For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Well, the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, reminds us that there is a lot of kingdom talk in the Bible. What happened? What did John the Baptist preach down by the Jordan River in anticipation of the Lord Jesus' first coming? Repent.

Why? The kingdom of God is at hand. Now, wait a minute. I thought Jesus was coming to present the millennial kingdom, the kingdom of the Old Testament promises.

Why isn't it the kingdom of the Son or the kingdom of Christ? Well, it's the kingdom of God, right? And that is sometimes the kingdom of heaven in Matthew. Many times it's called the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. Sometimes it's just called the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is come. We have a variety of references to this and certainly in the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels, you see it mentioned quite often. Matthew 5 is another one of those chapters we should sort of have memorized.

First Corinthians 13 and Hebrews 11 and so on. Well, Matthew 5, that's your sermon on the mount. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Well, do the poor in spirit get the millennial kingdom or do they get the eternal kingdom of the Father? Yes. Luke chapter 6, verse 20. Jesus lifted up his eyes toward his disciples and said, blessed are you poor for yours is the kingdom of God.

Matthew 5, 10, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Well, kingdom of heaven is an interesting choice of words because we know the millennial kingdom is not heaven at all. It's on the earth, in the land, lasts a thousand years.

It's time bound. It has death. It has temple worship.

It has blood sacrifice. It has tares growing amongst the wheat. It has the good and bad fish.

Jesus will send out his angels at the end of the age to collect out of his kingdom all things that offend. And yet the terms are often used in a general way or in a non-technical way. The kingdom of God certainly is fulfilled in the millennial kingdom, the kingdom of the Son.

But perhaps one of our more helpful passages in this regard is in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 20. We know that Paul is writing to the church here and he says the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. And we would imagine that we want to be interested in and headed for the kingdom of God.

Paul talks to Timothy in his second letter a couple of times about the coming kingdom. And he says, for example, in 2 Timothy 4.1, I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ

who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. That's the Lord Jesus.

Paul is talking to Timothy and he says, I charge you by the appearing of the Lord who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. He also mentions right at the end of that same letter that he is looking forward to the kingdom when he says in chapter 4, I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight.

I finished the race. I've kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give to me on that day and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved his appearing.

And then you skip down to verse 18. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. Now think about that.

The Lord Jesus, Paul says, will preserve me from every evil work for his heavenly kingdom. His, the Lord Jesus, heavenly kingdom. So it is possible to talk about the kingdom of Christ and not be talking about the millennial kingdom, right? This is my big point.

If you missed it, this is your verse. 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 18, his heavenly kingdom to him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

So when Peter says that an abundant entrance will be supplied to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, this isn't somehow referring to us entering the millennial kingdom. This is his heavenly kingdom. Another useful passage we have in this regard is over in 2 Corinthians 5, 24, I believe.

My memory serves. No, there aren't 24 verses in 2 Corinthians 5. I'll find it here shortly. Where we have a reference to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ being a heavenly kingdom as well.

And when all things have been put under his feet, then he will turn everything over to his father. That's the part I'm looking for. We do not yet see everything put under his feet, but when it is, then I think what I'm thinking of in 2 Corinthians 5 is the judgment seat in 9 through 11.

But later on in that book, he talks about the turning over of the kingdom and the kingdom of Christ comes to be the kingdom of the father. So if I happen to cross that in my notes here directly, I'll give it to you. Suffice it to say that we're not unduly troubled by the reference to the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as a reference ultimately to the kingdom of the father.

So he says in verse 12, and this is where we kind of pick up. For this reason, I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things. So if Peter feels that it is important to always remind us of these things, then it is incumbent on us to remind ourselves.

We have the apostolic ministry, the apostolic witness of Peter and John and Paul, witnesses that

the Lord Jesus left to us in our New Testament scriptures. And they have done their job. They have been diligent to point these things out.

But we've got to be diligent to remember them and to remind ourselves constantly of it. I think it is right, Peter says, as long as I am in this tent to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. And we know that Peter was aware of his impending departure and the kind of exit that he would have from this life.

So we have the internal evidence in this letter alone. If you look at it, the author of this letter says in the next couple of verses, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. When we saw the glory and the voice that came to him, this is my beloved son in verse 17.

So Peter says, I am the Simon Peter who was on the Mount of Transfiguration. He says, I am the Peter who wrote 1 Peter in 1.1. He says, I am writing you this second epistle in 2 Peter 3.1. He's going to claim that again. He says, I am an apostle of Jesus Christ in 1.1. He numbers himself with the 12.

He does that again in chapter 3, verse 2. That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior. Chapter 3, verse 2. He is acquainted with the apostle Paul as a dear brother in chapter 3, verse 15. He knew the manner of his death from John 21.18. Jesus said, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished.

But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish. By this, he signified the death that Peter would die. That's in John 21.

So, despite this, there are many, many people, and most of your non-conservative scholars today do not believe that Peter wrote this letter. Despite all of these claims internally. And this doubt cropped up very early on.

When you look at the *bona fides*, if you will, of a letter, that's how we say it in Texas, *bona fides*. The credentials, the credibility, the canonicity of a biblical book. You look at internal evidence and you look at external evidence.

I've just listed for you the internal evidence where the letter itself claims in multiple times and multiple ways to be from the apostle Peter. External evidence looks at, was it recognized for New Testament books? Was it recognized in the early church? Was it quoted by the early church fathers? Is there any attestation or any early witness of its authority? And this is where 2 Peter runs into some trouble. Because, for example, during the 4th century, Eusebius lists 2 Peter along with 2 and 3 John and James as *anti-legomena*.

Books whose canonicity was disputed. And this is 400 AD. And Eusebius points out that there is no church tradition that supports the acceptance of 2 Peter.

He can't find anybody who has really thought that it was part of the canon. Jerome included 2 Peter in his Vulgate, which the Catholics, you know, the Latin version of the New Testament. Jerome accepted 2 Peter, but he said many questioned its Petrine authorship because of the marked difference of style between 1 and 2 Peter.

And Jerome is working on the Vulgate early, early on. So, over the centuries, other scholars have chimed in on this. It has often been lumped in with the Apocalypse of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, and the Acts of Peter.

All of which are understood by pretty much everybody to be spurious and non-canonical books. There's a real strong similarity and overlap of content with 2 Peter and Jude. And that's another reason people have said, well, these aren't legitimate.

Others have looked at it on content grounds, saying that the dealing with the problem of false teachers, which is what's going to occupy much of the second half of this letter, and the mention of Paul's writings as scripture, suggest or imply or seem to reflect a time much later than Peter's lifetime, like maybe the 2nd century AD. And that no church fathers in the 1st or 2nd centuries after Christ quote 2 Peter. You've got quotes from many, many others of Paul's letters and from even the Gospels and so on, but you don't get any quotes from 2 Peter early on.

And so they say, well, this makes it seem kind of shaky. Why would he be talking about Paul as scripture when that seems kind of anachronistic? As I said, church literature of the 2nd century has no direct references to 2 Peter. Critics have stated that there is less external attestation for 2 Peter than for any other book in the New Testament.

It has less credibility than any other. The epistle is short, and this might account for that. It might also have not been widely circulated.

It might have been, you know, Peter sent this to the Diaspora, and it might have ended up in one or another of those churches and didn't get copied and spread around like 1 Peter did or like the other letters. There might have been early doubt related to its style, as Jerome points out, that the Greeks seemed so different and early people might have questioned and hesitated to distribute it on that basis. We just don't know.

We don't know why it didn't circulate more widely. I would offer from a spiritual point of view this thought. 2 Peter is a great advance over 1 Peter.

There are a lot more people who need to hear the content of 1 Peter to get their foundation laid and get their spiritual life underway. 2 Peter has more advanced teaching in it. It is for those who, kind of like in Hebrews, at such a time as you should be teachers, you have need that one teach you again.

The first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Most of you all need to go back and read 1 Peter. It

seems to be the idea before you really are going to be ready for what I'm talking about in 2 Peter.

So there may not have been as great a need for this letter to circulate from God's point of view. There weren't that many mature believers. They had their hands full undertaking what was offered in 1 Peter.

That's just my two cents. It has been suggested that its acceptance might have been slow because of suspicion in the early church for any letters that had apostle names on them. There were a lot of forgeries circulating in the first few centuries.

Paul, even in 2 Thessalonians, says, Beware if you get any word or letter that purports to be from us that says the day of the Lord has already come. Forgeries were circulating before Paul was even executed in 64 AD. So the early church was careful about things that said, Hey, this is from Peter or this is from Paul.

Well, why would we wrestle with this issue? Why would I even bring it up? Peter is going to make an issue out of authenticity and canonicity in the next few verses. We're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, we're going to see that somewhat ironically, this letter has more to say about how you recognize scripture.

And yet it is one of the least recognized of the scriptural books in terms of its authenticity. And yet it has the most to say about how you know a book is authentic. So we're going to see a little bit of that dichotomy when we come back from the break.