

"Growing Up"

Part 3

2 Peter 1:1-11

Introduction: As we return to 2 Peter tonight, I need to remind you again of why Peter wrote this letter. He was concerned about false teachers who he knew were coming and he knew that his readers needed to be prepared if they were going to keep from being swayed about with their doctrine. The false teachers were the Gnostics who taught what was known as "dualism." This was the belief that everything that was of the physical was bad. They also believed that they had a higher knowledge than others and in order to reach their level others would need to join up with their camp.

In chapter 1 Peter is calling on his readers to grow and mature in their spiritual walk. In the verses that we looked at last week we looked at four provisions that were given by the lord for the believers growth.

1. Power

Notice 2 Peter 1:3

This is DIVINE POWER. We have God's power working within us.

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*

2. Knowledge

Notice 2 Peter 1:3 again.

3. Promises

Notice 2 Peter 1:4

4. Divine nature.

Notice 2 Peter 1:4 again.

Peter knew that if his readers did not apply these provisions, they would not be able to resist the false teachers, and neither will we.

Notice 2 Peter 1:3 again.

God has given us ALL things that pertain unto life and godliness. These things are all found in His Word.

2 Timothy 3:15-17

¹⁵ *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.*

¹⁶ *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

¹⁷ *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

This helps us to see the need to know the Bible. It is through God's Word that we are equipped to live godly lives.

Ephesians 4:11, 14

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹⁴ *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

Before we move on, I want to draw your attention to one more thought here in 2 Peter 1:4.

Notice 2 Peter 1:4

The end of this verse tells us that the corruption that is in the world has come about through lust. Lust is the desire to have that which is forbidden. It could also be described as covetousness. Either way, it is the desire of the flesh to get that which God has said NO to. Lust is one of the strongest enticements of the flesh and it takes strength to overcome the lusts of the flesh. Not our strength for we have no strength to overcome the flesh. This is why we must understand that we have been crucified with Christ and our sin nature has been made powerless by the cross.

Romans 6:11-13

¹¹ *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

¹² *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

¹³ *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Now as we move on tonight, we shall see what spiritual growth looks like.

I. You Need to Grow
2 Peter 1:3-11
Part 3

The believer's growth is known as "progressive sanctification." There are some who teach that we contribute nothing to our sanctification, and it is something which God does in each believer. But the text we are coming to makes it very clear that we do have a part in our sanctification.

Notice 2 Peter 1:5

Here we see that we are to give all diligence in our growth. If we have nothing to do with our sanctification, then why are we told here to give all diligence? We need to know that we do have a part in our sanctification and if we do not do our part there will be no spiritual growth in our lives. Let us notice a group that were not growing as believers.

Hebrews 5:12-14

¹² *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again* which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹³ *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

¹⁴ *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

There are some that will say that these people in this text were unbelievers but when have you ever known God to call unbelievers to teach? These were believers who had not grown in their walk. Now let us get to our text to see what this spiritual growth looks like.

Notice 2 Peter 1:5 again.

Peter is going to walk us up a ladder in this text. He will take us up one step at a time.

a. Faith

Peter starts with faith in this list. Faith is the first rung on the ladder. This is not saving faith, but this is living faith.

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

*¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith.***

The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel in several ways. One of the ways is that it produces living faith in the believer which is a testimony to the world of His righteousness. It is expected that our faith is to increase from faith to faith. In other words we start out by trusting the Lord for our salvation and then as we grow, we trust Him in all the circumstances of life. It is this faith that is to block the fiery darts of the Devil.

Ephesians 6:16

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

It is the increase of our faith that keeps us from worry and panic in the midst of our ever-changing world. I cannot imagine facing our world today without faith in the sovereign control of God. The cost of everything is constantly rising and it would be so easy to fall into a state of worry and depression if we did not have faith that God will meet our every need.

Matthew 6:25, 32-34

²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

³³ *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

³⁴ *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

The disciples were to live their lives in line with Kingdom life and God promises to then meet all their needs. That is the faithfulness of our Lord.

b. Virtue

"Virtue" means "moral excellence." But there is more. It is often used to mean "courage." The idea here is that as our faith grows it should be a faith of great courage. We should not fear the response of people. We are called to live for Jesus Christ, and we should do so with great courage. There should be no one or no movement that ever causes us to back down.

Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴ *Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*

⁵ *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

⁶ *Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.*

⁷ *But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*

⁸ *Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

⁹ *Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

¹⁰ *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*

I cannot help but wonder what this world would be like if the church had the courage that God desires that we are to have.

c. Knowledge

This is the "knowledge" that is found in the Word of God. As we considered before this knowledge is meant to be relational. In other words the more we know the deeper the knowledge should take us in our relationship with our Lord. If we are growing as we should as believers, this knowledge should always be increasing. If you love the Lord, you will desire to know Him in a deeper relationship.

d. Temperance

Notice 2 Peter 1:6

"Temperance" is "self-control." As we mature in our walk, we should show forth self-control. In other words we should not get irritated over certain situations like we used to. We learn to accept difficult situations because we know they are part of the plan of God. We see them as opportunities to make Christ seen in our lives. Our patience with other people should increase more and more. We could add longsuffering to this also because the two go together. Much of what Peter is writing here is paralleled in Galatians.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

e. Patience

Patience means "perseverance." It has the idea of enduring under difficult circumstances. As we grow, we should see within ourselves the ability to better handle situations that are high pressure/difficult. This is the ability to deal with people who do things that upset us or things that just rub us the wrong way. Let me just say that this characteristic is another evidence of our need to gather with other believers. You cannot develop this characteristic in your life if you are not around difficult people. It is easy to be patient with people who are your close family. Even the mafia get along with their own. But we are to be sure to gather together with other believers because this is how perseverance is developed.

f. Godliness

This is Christlikeness. As we grow in our walk there should be more and more of Jesus which shows through in our lives.

g. Brotherly kindness.

This is the ability to get along with fellow believers. This too proves that we must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. You cannot develop this if you are not in fellowship with the body of Jesus Christ.

h. Charity.

This is agape love. We can clearly see how our faith is to develop in all of these as we climb the ladder. This last one is unconditional love. This is the love which God has shown to us.

Conclusion:

If these characteristics are not showing up in in your life, then you are stale in your walk. There is something that is hindering your growth. Let us pray the Words of the Psalmist.

Psalm 139:23-24

²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*

²⁴ *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*