

2 Peter

Lesson 1 Chapter 1:1-11

Leader Guide

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Lesson 1

2 Peter 1:1-11

Making your Calling and Election Sure

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 2 Peter 1:5-7

Prayers

Introduction

The Apostle Peter wrote his second letter to the churches in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, shortly before his death, referring to his impending death in verses 1:14-15. Church tradition holds that the Roman Emperor Nero crucified Peter following the fire in Rome in 64AD. The closing of Peter's first letter placed him in Rome (Babylon, 1 Peter 5:13). Peter gives his eyewitness account of Christ's transfiguration (verses 1:16-18). The first-century church expected to see Christ return in glory at any moment. As Christ's eyewitness, the purpose of Peter's second letter is the same as the first, to encourage believers in their faith in Christ and to encourage holy living. In the first letter, Peter encouraged believers not to turn back on their faith during suffering and trials. The second letter focused on how false teachers would try to lead them astray by returning them to the sensual lifestyle they knew before Christ. Peter closes his second letter with the reminder they are living in the end times and that everything in this world is bound for destruction, but the heavens and earth will be made anew as an eternal home of the righteous. Therefore, believers should live focused on their everlasting home, living holy lives set apart for God's purposes.

Read 2 Peter 1:11

^{2Pe 1:1} Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

^{2Pe 1:2} Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Making One's Calling and Election Sure

^{2Pe 1:3} His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

^{2Pe 1:4} Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

^{2Pe 1:5} For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

^{2Pe 1:6} and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;

^{2Pe 1:7} and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

^{2Pe 1:8} For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

^{2Pe 1:9} But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

^{2Pe 1:10} Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall,

^{2Pe 1:11} and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. God has given believers everything we need for life and godliness. Life in verse three refers to our physical life. What things are Peter referring to for life and godliness?

Physical Life

We spend so much time worrying about our physical needs – how much we earn, our mortgage, our jobs, and the list goes on and on. Jesus told us not to worry about any of that but to seek his kingdom first and trust in God to meet our needs. I’ve had various jobs: janitor, laborer, salesman, teacher, and geologist. I can’t say one made me happier than the other, but God was faithful, supplying my daily needs through each. As we look around, we see war, famine, poverty, disease, and people whose needs can only be met through charity. I pray their need moves me to generosity rather than condescending judgment.

Godliness

God has given us a new life as his children through faith in Christ and spiritual rebirth through his Holy Spirit. God does not leave anything undone for his children. Through our unity in Christ, we share in his righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). He has given us his Spirit to transform our minds (Romans 12:2) so that we no longer desire to be controlled by our sinful nature but be continually transformed into the image of Christ (Colossians 3:10).

2. I have a little book written by Bruce Wilkerson called “The Jesus Person Pocket Promise Book” that includes 800 of God’s promises. In verse 4, Peter refers to the very great and precious promises God has given us so that we can escape the corruption of our evil desires. Refer to the following scriptures and discuss what some of these promises are. Are there some others that come to mind?

Answers will vary depending on the challenges participants are experiencing at the time. For generations, Christians have found hope and assurance in the following promises.

God Promises to lead and guide

^{Ps 23:1} The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

^{Ps 23:2} He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

^{Ps 23:3} he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

^{Ps 23:4} Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

^{Ps 23:5} You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

^{Ps 23:6} Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Promise that God will always be with us.

^{Dt 31:6} Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Saved by Christ for eternal life

^{Jn 3:16} “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ^{Jn 3:17} For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Promise that Christ is our holiness and redemption.

^{1Co 1:30} It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Christ promises the Holy Spirit

^{Jn 14:16} And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

Born again

^{1Pe 1:23} For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Chosen by God to be fruitful

^{Jn 15:16} You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

God chose us to be with him before the world’s creation

^{Eph 1:4} For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

3. In verses 6-8, Peter describes the characteristics of a godly character. Paul calls them the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Just as James said faith without works is dead, Peter says we will be ineffective and unproductive without a godly character. Some of these qualities are similar or complementary. Discuss why they are a requisite for our walk with Christ.

- a. **Faith and Knowledge**

He [Jesus] replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. (Matthew 13:11)

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. (2 Corinthians 2:14)

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God. (Luke 1:76-78)

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. (Romans 5:14)

I worked with brilliant people in my career at Shell. Unfortunately, many were agnostics who thought faith in God was simply a crutch to fill the gaps of what science could not explain. How wrong they were. Knowledge and faith are not exclusive. There is no faith without knowledge. God revealed his plan to us for the redemption and salvation of all people through Jesus Christ. Knowledge of Christ through the Holy Spirit's revelation is the basis of our faith. In his inexplicable wisdom and condescending grace, he has called us to be his witnesses of the love of Christ to our neighbors and in the world.

b. Self-control

Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control. (Proverbs 25:8)

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— (2 Timothy 3:1-4)

We open ourselves to all manner of sin without self-control. Self-control begins with a love for God and a desire to be like Christ. Self-control is evidence of a transformed mind, making good decisions to avoid temptations, flee from evil, honor our bodies, respect others, pursue holiness, and love God.

c. Goodness, godliness, kindness, and love

Whoever does not love, does not know God, because **God is love.** (1Jn 4:8)

Jesus replied: “**‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.**

And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40)

God calls us to love our neighbor and to worship Him because he is love. Without love, we cannot be God's children. Goodness and kindness are expressions of the love we have for others.

d. Perseverance

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:3-5)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:2)

The gospel writers share common themes of suffering, trials, and facing hardships for Christ. They often refer to their Christian lives as a race run with perseverance, straining to finish. Today, many Christians are blessed to live with Christian freedom rather than persecution, but many still face extreme persecution in 55 countries around the globe. Regardless of our government and freedoms, we all need perseverance to face suffering due to loss, disease, trials, and circumstances that test our faith. The scriptures tell us that we should expect our faith to be tested because testing strengthens our faith and builds maturity.

4. How do we come by these transforming qualities of our character in increasing measure?

Peter's list of character qualities (goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, love) is very similar to Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Peter was familiar with Paul's letters and may have even borrowed the topic from Paul.

Spiritual transformation of our mind and spirit is the work of the Holy Spirit. Just as we do not come to faith without God's revelation through the Spirit, neither can we transform our spirit without the work of the Spirit. We should not think we are passive in spiritual transformation; we actively expose our minds to what is good. These renewing actions are sometimes referred to as spiritual disciplines. They include scripture reading and meditation, prayer, service and charity, and living with joy and gratitude for our moments of life.

5. Sometimes we encounter passages in scripture that challenge our theology. Peter's statement in 1:10 is one of them. Fundamental to our faith is that our salvation is found in Christ alone (Acts 4:12), not through our works (Ephesians 2:9). Yet, Peter's statement of being eager to make our calling and election sure, might sound like our salvation is conditional on our works. Verse 10 begins with "Therefore" so it is more easily understood in the context of what came before it in verse 9 and in the purpose of Peter's letter.

^{2Pe 1:9} But if anyone does not have them [adding to their faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, knowledge, kindness, and love], he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

^{2Pe 1:10} Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, ^{2Pe 1:11} and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- a. What is the purpose of Peter's letter?

Peter was an eyewitness of Christ and wanted to assure believers their faith is not misplaced on human philosophy but in the Son of God. He is concerned for their faith in the face of suffering and false teachers.

- b. What was Peter's hope and fear in verse 9?

Peter hoped that believers would desire the gifts of the Spirit to be added to their faith. He feared they would turn away from their faith in the face of persecution or be led away by false teachers. Peter wanted their faith to grow and thrive, not just survive.

c. How does Peter's fear in verse 9 relate to verse 10?

As an eyewitness of Christ in the face of wavering faith, Peter wanted the believers to be assured of their faith, salvation, and security in Christ. He wanted them to become mature Christians; a theme also mentioned in 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 2:20, 2:14, and 3:18). Another aspect of maturity is taking apostolic action - taking action in Christ's name. God has called us to advance his kingdom, not be passive observers. What good does it benefit us if we study the scriptures but do not tell anyone about its truth or show God's love to others.

Jesus made the same point in his parables of salt and light.

Mt 5:13 **"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?"**

Mt 5:14 **"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.**

d. What makes your calling and election sure?

Faith in Christ.

Closing Prayer