

Certainty in a Sufficient Salvation

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[0 : 00] Let this blessed assurance. Are you assured?

Are you certain? Are you without any doubt? About your eternal destiny, you might be sitting there thinking.

I don't know that I am. Well, I pray to God and I have been praying this week. That what we talk about this morning will put you in a position of blessed assurance.

Or put you in a position of wanting that blessed assurance. Either way, we'll tell you where to go to have it, to find it, to keep it and to live in it.

The assurance that we're talking about is the assurance that you have. That your sins have been forgiven by Almighty God. And that he has guaranteed you and sealed you for an eternity with him in heaven.

[1 : 00] That's what we want. That's what we're looking for. The title of my message as we continue in the book of 2 Peter is Certainty in a Sufficient Salvation.

Certainty in a Sufficient Salvation. Now, I've got a rather lengthy introduction. The people who are members here just chuckled inside themselves. Because all my introductions are long.

But, this one particularly so. I have a number of statements that I want to make. A number of things that I want to say on the record. That will walk us into the subject matter for what Peter deals with.

Now, this is huge on my heart. That's what I want to talk about. So, a certainty in a sufficient salvation. And, just buckle up and bear with me.

Let me start this way. If we scanned you. If we put you in some kind of... Maybe they have a machine like this. I don't know. But, if we... Just for the purposes of conversation. If I scanned you in front of some machine internally.

[2 : 03] Scanned you internally. In such a way that we could see all that functions within you. Would we be able to see your heart beating? Your lungs expanding and contracting?

Your other organs? Your skeletal structure? Your muscles and the like? The answer is yes. If we could have a machine that would do that. You would see that old thing beating.

And, you'd see everything moving and all that. You'd see organs and bones and stuff, right? Yes. You can see that on x-rays. I've never seen an MRI thing or a CT scan thing.

But, that's probably there. Well, if I used that same scan and technology. That showed you all that internal working inside of you. Would we be able to see your soul?

What about your mind? Your thoughts? Your emotions? Your will? The attitudes of your heart? Your desires?

[3 : 07] Or, this one. The sin that wages war inside of you. Well, if we can't see all of that. Then, how do we know it's there?

Because, the Bible tells us that all that's there. Did you hear me? Long before Freud. And, the ego. And, the id. And, the Oedipus complex.

The Bible was telling us. That all of that is within us. The secular world.

Also knows. That there is something tangible. But, unseen. And, a bit mysterious. About humans. As embodied souls.

We are told that our bodies are the temple of? The Holy Spirit. Right? The Lord lives within us. We are embodied souls. Many deny that we have souls.

[4 : 08] But, nearly all realize there are operations within us that are hard to quantify. Such as the mind. And, the issues surrounding our, quote unquote, mental health.

We can't see our mental health. Or, the processes of our minds as they happen within us. And, this begs all kinds of questions about where all this mental activity in your life takes place.

Is it within, for instance, is it within the organ of the brain itself? Is that where you do your thinking? So, that we can blame our mental health ills on the brain.

Are chemical imbalances in my brain real? Lots of people have been told for decades now, you have a chemical imbalance.

And, give you all kinds of drugs to help you with that imbalance. Is that real? If yes, are those imbalances related to my troubles and struggles? If yes, how?

[5 : 18] If yes, what do I do about it? This pill fixes me. Is that true? Is that real? Well, I'm not dissing on medicine.

I'm not dissing on medical science. Doctors. I saw a doctor last week. Had a procedure done. Let your doctors help you. Go see your doctors. Get a physical.

Get a checkup. That's part of responsibly living as embodied souls, isn't it? Your body affects your soul. And, your soul affects your body. If you have arthritis, see your doctor.

Take some medication that he might prescribe that would help you. Talk to other people about what's helping them. There's all kinds of treatments that you can explore. Aren't you glad that if you have heart disease, you can get help?

If you have a clogged artery, aren't you glad you can go to the doctor and have a procedure? If you have a thyroid issue, if you have an appendicitis, medicine's fine, folks.

[6 : 20] Biblical counselors have this reputation that's been spread around that we're ungracious people who diss on medical science and you're going to come to us and we're going to tell you stop taking your meds and stop going to see doctors and just trust Jesus.

We're not going to do that. It's irresponsible to do that. I thank God for medical science. What I'm going to be talking about this morning ain't medical science.

And I'll say it in a hundred different ways before we're done. Psychology is not science. Psychology is the care of souls. And that's the domain of Jesus.

And he doesn't need any help from science. And I'll be on record about all of this. What is personality?

Does it refer to who I am? Are our beliefs, desires, attitudes, and motivations in life tied to our personalities?

[7 : 24] Personality is a big deal in psychological methodology. When I was studying in my early years for moving into counseling, I studied secular psychology for eight years.

I learned their modalities, their terminologies, and the ins and outs of what makes it tick. Personality theory was at the core of everything that I studied in secular psychology.

All counseling models, both secular and religious, advanced theories of cognitive and motivational processes influencing behavior.

An easier way to say that is this. What you think and what you believe determines how you behave. But they all define, they all prescribe and treat based on their respective views of self, identity, personality, and what constitutes truth.

So these models and methodologies for addressing your identity, for explaining human functioning, and for defining and treating the issues of life reveal various worldviews.

[8 : 42] In plain terms, they all deal with how they define people or personhood. How we function as meaning makers.

We're constantly living in life, making interpretations about what's coming at us. We're meaning makers. They have their own idea about what that is. They have their own views about how we break, and their own views about how to fix what is broken.

But they all posit theories about what the Bible calls our nature. And in Scripture, each human being is defined by one of two natures.

Either a sin nature or a sanctified nature. That's oil and water. Either an unredeemed nature or a redeemed nature.

Either a natural nature or a new nature. That's all spiritual. All of that is spiritual.

[9 : 51] And it's very clear in Scripture. Now, let me bring you to the issue all this points to. And why it's so important for us to understand and fully embrace, by faith, Peter's teaching.

The Bible's view of you is not imprecise. It is not unsophisticated. It is not confusing or contradictory.

God's view of you is not theory, but truth. God's Word doesn't speculate on multiple conflicting concepts about how you function, about what is most wrong with you, and about how to fix you.

Aren't you glad the Bible doesn't speculate about something that important? It tells us the truth about who we are. And when it tells us, when we first have our eyes open to that truth, it is arresting, alarming, terrifying.

But it's what God uses us to draw us to, a Savior, who is gracious, kind, gentle, forgiving, loving, patient.

[11 : 08] But we have to get there, don't we? By God's grace. All right, I want to say this to you very clearly, so I'm going to put some of these up here in running order so that you can see them.

The truth of God's Word points one, or posits one definitive absolute resolution that addresses the core of our human dilemma.

The Bible drives, in other words, right into the root of what's wrong with us and what we need. The Bible is the book that we turn to for soul care.

Soul care. Look at this. The Bible teaches us that at the core of your nature is your heart. Your heart is the real you.

Your heart is the center of what makes you you, and the most important reality about your heart is that it drives what God made you to be, a worshiper.

[12 : 10] And thus, what He made you to do, worship. The most important or critical aspect of who you are is that you are a worshiper.

And so all of life is about how you think and live in relation to the person who deserves your worship.

God. That's life. All of life is spiritual. Why? Because we all live in God's world.

It's His world. We live under His gaze, His authority. That's why. Now look at this. All people, all people are made in God's image, and all people live and move and have their being in God.

So that all that we say, think, and do comes from our hearts in relationship to God, either from redeemed hearts that worship Him or from unredeemed hearts that do not worship Him.

[13 : 17] Do you understand? So all people made in the image of God are worshipers because God created them to be worshipers. The issue then becomes, who or what are you worshipping?

Not are you worshipping? Where are you directing it? If you direct it to self, which is where we start, if you direct it to self, and you stay in that direction of worshipping yourself, and you are never rescued from that reality, you cannot expect an eternity with God in heaven.

You cannot expect a life on this earth that helps you to seek the treasure of Jesus instead of the baubles of this world. So, here's what we do.

We reveal what we want most by what we worship. By what we worship. Jesus said, where your treasure is, there you are. Amen. That's what He said.

We reveal what we want most by what we worship in any given moment. We're worshipping every moment of our lives. It's just, where are we directing it? What's the object of our worship?

[14 : 29] Or who, right? And, notice this, we act like what we worship in any given moment. If you give yourself in that moment to an idol, you'll act like your idol because that's what your idol demands.

You'll be like what you worship in that moment. The world, now check this, the world thinks about all of this very, very differently. So, they don't define or understand your struggles and problems as spiritual matters of your heart.

They don't. They miss the issue. What is the issue? Where are you directing your heart of worship? What does your life reveal about your heart's devotion?

I know the Lord. I prayed a prayer. I got baptized. I go to church. I read my Bible. I give money to the church.

I'm in. It doesn't matter that I live like Hades. It doesn't matter that I'm not growing in a love for Jesus, in a love for the Scripture, and in a love for God's people.

[15 : 42] I'm doing my duty. And that's a devil's lie. And you're living under false assurance.

If you're living in that kind of a reality, it matters where you direct your worship, and your life will reveal what you worship, what you treasure.

Now, Peter. Now, Peter. Peter is addressing our hearts as he speaks of how God saved us to be his worshipers.

That's faith in Christ. That's the righteousness of Christ imputed or credited to us. How God sustains us in relationship with him as his worshipers.

That's God ministering his grace, peace, and promises of Christ to us. And how God sanctifies us as his worshipers. That's the virtues of Jesus.

[16 : 42] How God leads us in a holy life, becoming increasingly like his son in the way we speak, think, live, do. God desires that we have the highest confidence as his people and take the deepest encouragement from knowing that our faithful God, our faithful God, has given us all we need to rightly worship him in living a God-glorifying, virtuous life as sharers and beneficiaries of God's holy nature.

Be holy as... Amen. What a statement. What a reality. Be holy as God is holy?

Well, you would imagine that if Jesus is living in you, something radical has happened to you. And it ought to come out. Amen. So God desires that we live a virtuous life, and that virtuous life is what Peter's been talking about.

Now, what we've been looking at since we started this book back in chapter 1, verse 1. Now, let me ask you, what more could or would God give us for living and navigating life as his children than what he has lavished on us in his saving son, Jesus Christ, and through his sanctifying, precious, and magnificent promises in Scripture?

What more could he give us to help us navigate the issues and matters of life? As Jesus worshipers, as Jesus worshipers, Peter instructs us in how to walk in that worship, how to live it out so that we become increasingly like the Lord Jesus who is worthy of our love and adoration.

[18 : 39] That's what we're looking at. Now, if you'll go with me to 2 Peter 1, and let me pick it up in a running context of what we'll deal with this morning.

We've already had several messages in chapter 1. Let me pick it up in verse 5. Here is where Peter lists these virtues of Christ-like living.

Now, for this very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith, supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

There's your list of virtues. Now, notice verse 8. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in what?

In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. What good is it to say you know Jesus if you're not living a life that shows Jesus? That's what Peter's concerned about for these people.

[19 : 58] The rest of the book is going to be taken up with the false teachers and their false teachings that are serving to come in and corrupt these people's understanding of the very precious truths that Peter's outlining for us here.

Look at verse 9. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 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. For in this way, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Jesus doesn't do anything in half measures, does he? So this is an abundant supply of eternal life to you. Now, here's what we can do as we move through this together.

This is so, so critically important. We can glean four ways, four ways, these biblical virtues that we just read, five down through what?

[21 : 08] Seven. How these virtues of discipleship promote certainty and confidence in our walk with God. And that's what we need. Why do we need this?

Because Peter understands something. It's why he wrote 1 Peter and the entire book covers this. We went through that months ago. Peter is concerned about the reality of how disconcerting it can be for us to go through the trials and challenges of life and it work on us in a way where we might begin to doubt our salvation.

We might begin to forget the riches of his grace in saving us. We might be pulled away from the joy and the peace that comes from walking with God through the suffering and trials.

Peter understands all this. And so now he's trying to help these people ground themselves in a certain salvation that will prove unshakable so that they will not stumble as they encounter these things.

If they do stumble, which the New Testament speaks to, then Peter understands what they're going to need in that stumbling to help them gain their footing again and put themselves on solid ground.

[22 : 21] His name is Jesus. It's not a plan. It's not a theory. It's not an idea. It's a person. And his name is Jesus. So he grounds them in Christ and says now, live out in your faith these virtues that Christ has purchased for you.

He's purchased this life, this virtuous life for you. Live it out. Live it. Don't let go and let God.

Hold on to God and live it. Hold on to Jesus and live it. Now, if you keep doing that, we'll be here all day. Quit throwing me bones.

All right. Let's look at this first one together and see what God says, because this is very, very important for us to be able to combat all of the stuff that's coming at the church right now.

And Greg and I may speak to this at the meeting a little bit more. The first thing we want to deal with is certainty in a useful and fruitful life. This is the first of these four ways. The certainty in a useful and fruitful life.

[23 : 33] What I've done in that point is kind of spin into a positive what he states in a negative way. You look again with me at verse eight. For if these qualities that he's just talked about in five, six and seven, if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, it's helpful to keep in mind what's at stake here. As you seek the Lord and apply these spiritual qualities to your life, your understanding of God and his ways increase.

The disciplines of a fruitful life lead to further understanding of God. That was a quote that I took. The disciplines of a faithful life, that's the virtues, the qualities that are in five through seven.

Those virtues lead to further understanding of God. Living in holiness helps you better understand the God who is holy. It starts there.

Spiritual transformation is the issue here. So Peter, Peter is telling these people what is vital to discipleship.

[24 : 54] What it's like for you to follow Jesus, to be a learner, a student of the Lord Jesus. To deny yourself, to take up your cross and to follow him.

Peter is talking about what that looks like for each of us. Regardless of where we come from, regardless of how old or young we are, rich or poor, whatever. If you're following Jesus, Peter is talking about the transformation that takes place in your life as you become more and more like Jesus.

How important is that? He's talking about being continually changed, transformed, and conformed to the image of God's Son.

So, he describes this process of growth as a useful and fruitful life in a positive way, as they own and increase in these virtuous qualities which express their faith in Christ.

Now, did you hear the way I said that? These virtuous qualities are not work salvation. I'll talk more about that in a minute. These virtuous qualities are expressions of salvation.

[26 : 02] All right? We'll say this more as we move, but this might be a helpful quote to you that I came across. Let me share it with you. I enjoyed it. In these short verses, he's talking about three through eight, Peter has summarized his ideas on Christian discipleship.

So, now, please note what this man says. This is how to keep from falling. How important is that to you? Yes.

It's the crux of the Christian life as we follow Jesus. Look, we're saved. We can't get unsaved. But what we can do is fall and stumble and get our eyes off the ball and live for self in moment after moment and struggle with that and render ourselves unfruitful and ineffective because we've taken our eyes off of our Lord and put our eyes on earthly things.

Colossians 3, 1 through 4. We don't want to do that. So, Peter is calling us to a focused life. This is how to keep from falling and this is how to remain effective for Christ in this world as well as in the next.

We know this because he goes on to write, for if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he's blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

[27 : 31] What a terrible thing for any of us to experience that we would become short-sighted about being cleansed from sin. Happens. He goes on to say this, May we all apply these words to our heart and life.

This is the road map. Live out verses 3 through 8 and find your way home. That is beautiful, powerful, and true.

God's design roots us, roots us in fruitful growth. It roots us in the knowledge, the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that he's not saying about, oh, I know all about Jesus. No. This is knowledge of. This is a personal ownership knowledge. It's Jesus living in me and that knowledge is growing in me.

This has become personal to me. That's very important distinction. The root brings the fruit. These Christ-like virtues in 5, 6, and 7, these Christ-like virtues overflowing in your life offer you assurance of being rooted and grounded in a true knowledge of Jesus.

[28 : 54] knowing him is the difference in your salvation and sanctification. You understand? We're not seeking solutions. We're seeking the Savior.

And there's a big difference. Even as we struggle, it's wonderful to get answers to our problems. We want to help you with that. But we want to point you to the answer and then help you understand how the answer, Jesus, is going to help you navigate through those issues.

What we want is an answer that removes the issue, helps us get around it, go under it, go over it, somehow get past it. What Jesus, as the answer, will do with you is this.

He will take you through it. And he will provide a way of escape because he is faithful. 1 Corinthians 10, 13. He will do that.

That's his promise. What you're suffering is common to all human beings. It's not just you. And Jesus teaches us the way forward. Here's how Paul expressed what I'm talking about.

[30 : 01] All right? I'll spend most of my time on this one. So if you're thinking, man, this is only .104, don't worry. Trust me. Paul expressed it this way.

Look at what Paul says. I count all things to be lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death.

Do you notice what Paul doesn't say in that verse? Let me read it again. I count all things to be lost in view of the surpassing value of having my problems solved that I may get the answers that I want and need so that I can live the kind of life I want to live.

So on, so on. Now, what does this true knowledge of Christ lack that we would need to turn to human wisdom to provide?

That's my question. This is the question that I wrestled with for eight years in my studies. I got my undergraduate degree in psychology and Suzanne hears me tell this testimony and she kind of goes, hello, what he's about to say, it's going to tell you everything you need to know about where Jeff was at that time.

[31 : 26] I got a major in psychology and a minor in Bible. You see an issue there? Right. Thank God we all grow and learn and change.

Thank the Lord. And then I spent a number of more years getting a couple of master's degrees in this thing. And all the while the question that I was asking myself and that I never could answer is what does this true knowledge of Jesus in the Bible lack that what I'm studying helps provide?

And I was continually being told you're getting the best of both worlds. You're learning about Scripture but you're also learning about how to take the wisdom of man people like Freud and Adler and Jung and Skinner and I can't and pull them together and blend them with the Bible's teaching.

And so what we're going to give you when you get out of here is the best of all of it. And I remember graduating and saying I went to the prof the head guy and I said look you know I know I'm probably the densest one in the whole group here but I've just got to be straight up with you.

You guys are you gave me my diploma and I've spent all these years and I don't feel like I know what I'm doing. I don't know how to do what you guys have taught me. I don't know how to do it. I don't know how to blend all this stuff.

[32 : 50] I don't know which one of these guys to pick and use as I try to help people. And he said well that's the beauty of it Jeff you're making it too hard. The beauty of it is you don't have to given the need of the moment.

Maybe Adler's going to help this one. Maybe Rogerian's going to help this one. Maybe behaviorism's going to help that one. Just pick. Yeah amen.

So here's what I did. Suzanne and I we weren't helped in my marriage by picking any of them. I didn't realize this until I got out and started doing it. What's helped me and my wife and our married life and helped me to navigate all the issues of my sinful life is the truth of scripture.

I know but I didn't have that moment yet. It came later. The woohoo came later. I was still working on that thing. This is the question. What does the true knowledge of Christ lack that we would need to turn to human wisdom to provide?

And I found my answer nothing. Absolutely nothing. But I didn't have that confidence Dora. I didn't. But I do now.

[34 : 03] Hallelujah. Are we truly helped, benefited, and blessed by adding the wisdom of man to our knowledge of Jesus and his word? Man's wisdom and knowledge are carnal, not spiritual.

So listen now, psychological diagnoses, personality theories, treatment methodologies, modalities, and strategies add nothing to becoming more like Christ.

Zero. hero. That's what I had to come to. That's what I had to come to. The practice of creating and utilizing some kind of synchronized, stay with me and I'll explain that, some kind of synchronized soul care by integrating psychology with God's wisdom for our growth in Christ's likeness betrays a deep mistrust in God's salvation in Christ and a gross disregard for the sufficiency of scripture and our sanctification and I was guilty of both of those.

But I didn't realize it. I love the Lord and I thought I love the word and I thought I love God's people. That's why I went into that degree program was to get out and provide counseling in the church.

I never thought of being a preacher. I just wanted to get into the trenches and be with God's people and help them navigate their troubles. That was my heart. But I didn't realize the disservice that I was doing them because I felt like I needed to pull from man's wisdom and add it to the Bible because the Bible wasn't sufficient.

[35 : 42] But if you'd come to me and challenged me with that at that time in my life I would have looked at you like you had four heads. I wouldn't have even had a framework to talk to you about that. So when this finally did hit me which is a whole other story God's grace was marvelous.

And listen I won't tell you the story today. It literally put me prostrate on the ground weeping and hollering to God it's one book it's one book it's one book.

He did. But he gave me hope. He gave me hope that it's one book. It's one God one Savior one Lord. All right.

So I want to be really really clear about this. In the prayerful hope that you will come to rest your confidence completely in God's love for you in Christ and in his will for your spiritual growth given to you in scripture.

So I'm even going to put it up here for you to read along with me as I say it. All right. Look at this. Absolutely nothing in the entirety of the wisdom arsenal of man contributes a single needful thing to God's wisdom arsenal in our fight against sin and death nor does it contribute to our certainty about and conformity to Christ.

[37 : 10] people might ask me at that point. Well Jeff does any thing in man's wisdom offer anything helpful? Possibly.

You know I've I've read and and those of you who studied and read the books and in the circles we run in will say you know they provide helpful observations at times and things like that and okay that that maybe that's true.

I'm just saying that the scriptures are complete and sufficient for us to go to the Lord and help the Lord walk us through the troubles of life the issues and matters of life that concern marriage and parenting and working your jobs and dealing with sin in your life and in the lives of others sinning against you.

God hasn't left anything out for that. Nothing. So we can trust him. All right. Let me hasten to point two and just say a few things here. There's a certainty we can receive here in our assurance of salvation in contrast with your former life.

Look at verse nine. I'm kind of extrapolating this. All right. Verse nine. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

[38 : 31] Let me go back up into verse eight and move into it. For if these qualities that Peter's just described are yours to be yours means they're discernible. They can be seen in your life.

There's no question that they're there. They exist in your life. If these qualities exist in your life and are increasing or abounding, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted sins because you've forgotten the purification of your sins. You've forgotten what God's done for you in Christ.

So certainty in contrast with your former life. What's being described in this verse is happening to a professing believer. Peter's not talking to unbelievers here, non-Christians.

He's talking to Christians. So listen now. An absence of these virtues, in 5-7, that was last week's sermon, an absence of these virtues creates a kind of temporary but powerful spiritual blindness.

[39 : 38] Another way to say this, you don't see what you should see as a Christian. God's opened your eyes and you should be able to discern, but you're not seeing what you should see and what Jesus purchased for you to see.

You've become short-sighted to the point of almost being blind to those things again, which echo your former life, your old man of spiritual blindness. But you've been brought into the light.

So how do we then understand Peter's warning, his admonition here for us, that we not become people who become spiritually short-sighted? You know, I experienced that with you.

If I took these off and popped these contact lens out, I wouldn't be able to see your faces. That's how bad my mind is. That kind of short-sightedness can happen on a spiritual level to you.

This is Peter's warning. Now, we need to understand how all this comes together and mixes together. Someone might ask me at this point, Jeff, contextually, is it legitimate for us to be talking about psychology and the issues of psychiatry and psychology and the way the world provides soul care, given the fact that that wasn't even around during Peter's time?

[40 : 52] Well, not in the form that we call it. I'm going to give you another form in a minute. But the application that I'm making here is legitimate to what Peter is going to say throughout the rest of the book about false doctrine and false teachers blending.

They're trying to come into the church and blend man's wisdom with God's. And so I'm giving you illustrations of how that is happening to us today in the church. And here's what I don't want for the people that Greg and I shepherd.

I don't want you to feel like you have to turn to the world to help you navigate the issues of life because you don't realize that you're betraying a mistrust in the sufficiency of Jesus and his word.

That was me. And I don't want you to make that mistake because it's deadly. It really is. What do you think is going to happen if you drink poison?

It's at least going to make you sick. And there's no need for that. So as good shepherds, I hope, good in the sense of we love the Lord. We want to warn you away from those kinds of things and help you have a courage and conviction in the goodness of Jesus, providing for you all that you need to minister to each other.

[42 : 06] Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus has given you everything you need to reach across the aisle to your brothers and sisters and minister the gospel to them in ways that help them work through the issues of life?

Or did Jesus shortchange us and we've got to scamper out here and listen to people like Freud who hated God? Have you ever read Freud?

I have extensively. And it's sick. You finish it and go, you need therapy, dude. Whatever happened between him and his mama, I don't want to know.

Now listen, let's get back to the point here. You don't see what you should see. Listen, if by laziness, here's Peter's point, if by laziness, distraction, apathy, or just simply sinful neglect, you cease listening to God, you cease being in his word and listening to him.

Listen, so that you lack an enthusiastic, energetic effort. That's last week's sermon. at applying these qualities to your life, you will experience a short-sightedness, a spiritual short-sightedness about God's purifying you by his grace.

[43 : 26] That's going to happen. Some of you may be sitting here now feeling like, I think I might be experiencing that. Brother and sister, run to Jesus. Say, Jeff, that's the Sunday school answer.

Everybody says, gee, well, he really is. But let us help you with that. Don't try to do that on your own. Come talk to Greg and I.

Seek out some of these people in our church here and just tell them, would you please come alongside of me and just help me walk through this? There's not a person in this room that will tell you no.

They'll enthusiastically say, absolutely. Can we pray now? Let's trade our contact. I promise you, we've been structuring this ministry and this group of people for four and a half years for this very thing.

And God is now beginning to open doors of opportunity that we'll share with all of you next week who care to show up at five o'clock. It's really amazing. And we thank the Lord for it. If you're in that position right now, spiritual short sightedness, we can help you with that.

[44 : 32] Dr. MacArthur calls what Peter's talking about here. Spiritual forgetfulness. Spiritual forgetfulness. It leads to now. Now, please check this out because this is the danger part that I mentioned a moment ago.

What does this spiritual short sightedness look like if I begin to cease listening to God and I start listening to man? I get apathetic and I and I have a lack of energy and focus and enthusiasm about my walk with the Lord.

What's going to start happening to me as I get more and more spiritually short sighted? Here's here's Peter's warning. This is what's going to happen. It leads to ingratitude. It leads to discontentment.

And a guilty conscience towards God. And a critical spirit, legalism and avoidance towards God's people.

People who start, Christians who start living like this start to drift to the periphery. Now see, Greg and I, our responsibility is to notice that happening and go get them.

[45 : 43] Not do this. Well, we tried. Go get the one. Right. But we're not the only ones with that responsibility.

Who else shares that with us? That's right. This is a body life thing. Hence, Peter's not writing to the leaders of the church here.

He's writing to the church. He's writing to God's people. If these qualities are yours, if they exist in your life and they are abounding, these qualities render you neither useless nor unfruitful.

Mark that down, friend. That's you in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. You are not useless. You are not unfruitful. You are necessary and essential to this body.

For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short sighted because you've forgotten the purification of your former sins. You've somehow turned your gaze away from the Lord Jesus and you're forgetting the things that are most important and you're majoring on the minors.

[46 : 48] And this is drawing you away. It's putting you in a dangerous position of ingratitude, incompetence, discontentment. And you're going to increasingly become critical about the body.

You're going to start finding ways to justify what you're doing and pick this apart. Have you seen this? I have.

For 30 years, I've seen this. All right. Let me go to the next one. Certainty. Certainty from God's calling and choice of you. Therefore, brethren, see the therefore.

Notice in verse eight what you have. Now, this is the way the New American Standard starts this verse eight. It starts for verse nine, for verse 10. Therefore, 11, four, 12.

Therefore, see what he's doing. This is a running connective idea. Moving through. And that's the that's the thread that we're following as we move through these verses together.

[47 : 49] So now in verse 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.

What? What a promise. We've got to do something with that. So here again, verse 10, here again, as in verse five, we are to apply an enthusiastic, dedicated energy to being certain about God's calling and choosing us for our salvation.

Very important words. our confident assurance in the Lord and reassurance in his blessings for us are tied to our diligent efforts at this.

They go together. I'm going to explain that. False assurance of salvation is real. Do you believe that false assurance of salvation is real?

And God forbid under our watch care that any of you would have a false assurance because here's what's at stake. Will you turn to Matthew seven? Many of you know exactly where I'm going. Matthew seven.

[49 : 02] Because it's just crystal clear in scripture that the reality of false assurance verse 21. Not everyone who says to me, this is Jesus speaking.

Now, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of my father who is in heaven will enter.

Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. That's terrifying. It's a terrifying reality. But it is there. So Peter uses now here this Peter uses calling.

To refer to God effectually or effectively drawing us to himself to show us the way of salvation in his son.

[50 : 07] All right. Now, let me show you that it's in John. You're in Matthew. Turn to John. You're in John chapter six, verse 44.

And let me say it again. Peter uses calling to refer to how God effectively or effectually decidedly draws us to himself so that we can be saved.

Not the potential to be saved, to be saved. And it's John 6, 44. No one, Jesus says, can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day.

No one comes to the father but through me. No one comes to the father or comes to me unless the father draws you to me. Nobody. That's the work of God.

Now, this becomes very important. Choosing. Choosing us refers to electing grace. This is God's divine decree.

[51 : 15] And I am so thankful for this. This is God's divine decree of marking us out for salvation. OK, when did he do that?

All right. Ephesians chapter one. Go there with me. Is that me, Josiah? Is that me clicking? It is. Well, I'm wound up.

I must be giving off electrical energy or something. Ephesians chapter one. Let me get there with you.

And we'll start reading in verse three. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with a few spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.

No, my Bible says blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Just as he chose us in Christ, when before the foundation of the world that we would be chosen to be holy and blameless before him in love.

[52 : 36] He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.

That is beautiful. But wait a minute. Peter's already alluded to this for us. He did. Yes. For those of you who were here, you remember that in first Peter, go back to first Peter.

And you'll see Peter mentioning this very thing in the opening verse of his first letter. He couldn't even get past the salutation and he's talking about it.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who are elect, chosen, elected, singled out, preferred.

It means all that. Even Peter using this terminology. Why are we going through this? Because that's what Peter said. Peter wants these people to realize the marvelous blessings of God's grace on their life and calling and choosing them for salvation.

[53 : 56] And so if they hold that dear and reflect on the gospel for what it really is and what God's really done, how then could they ever turn away from it and become short sighted?

It should be like this for the people on the tape. You'll just have to do. I'm doing an illustration. You can't see it. And I'm sorry. You should be here. Come and see it. It should be like this. The gospel is held out and everywhere the gospel goes, your eye goes.

You never you never outgrow the gospel, do you? You never outgrow the gospel. When we do counseling, we're helping people continue to think on and grow in the gospel.

What is the gospel? What do you mean? The good news of Jesus saves. Jesus saves. Jesus saved you, forgave you and positioned you in himself for all eternity.

And he goes on saving you, nurturing you, sustaining you, growing you life by life, moment by moment, trial by trial. And in the end, he promises to glorify you and bring all that to fruition and put you in heaven where there are treasures and riches beyond imagination.

[55 : 08] That's your inheritance. That's for you. That's for you. That's for me. That's for all who put their faith in Christ. Now, let me hasten ahead. We got to do this one.

Here we go. Certainty from your pursuit of holiness. Verse 11. For in this way, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be abundantly supplied to you.

So he wants us to be diligent about being certain that God has called us and chosen us, knowing that as long as we're practicing the things that he's been outlining, that are the outworkings of our salvation, we can have a fixed hope of eternity.

That's what he's telling us in verse 11. A fixed hope. So Peter, Peter and Paul tell believers everywhere, all of us, that back in the time when Peter was writing this, these particular brothers and sisters were being assaulted by false doctrines and malicious ideas raised up against the knowledge and goodness of God.

We tend to think of they were being attacked. Yes, but what is being attacked here by the world of flesh and the devil? What is coming at these people is an attack on the truth of God in them.

[56 : 36] That's the assault. If these people were of the world, there'd be no need for that. They're being persecuted by what they believe and own. They're being persecuted because of who they belong to, who they are in Jesus Christ.

That's what's going to happen to you. All those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. All of us. Second Timothy. That's just the way it is.

All right. Look, I want to give you a little background on this and then I'm done. Look. There was an entire movement threatening to blend, blend their brand of wisdom with the truth of God.

It was called Gnosticism. It's from the Greek word gnosis, meaning knowledge. It's the same word Peter is using to refer to the true knowledge, the epignosis of God.

Syncretism that I mentioned earlier in my message is the blending of differing views and beliefs. It can be religious or whatever. So the threat and potential damage of these false doctrines being blended with true knowledge in scripture is Peter's chief concern.

[57 : 49] We're going to see that through the remainder of the letter. It concerns our salvation and spiritual growth in likeness to Jesus. That's why Peter's so concerned.

It has everything to do with the way that we understand our salvation and our growth in Christian living. All right. Look at look at these with me. I'm going to put these up here like this so that you can follow along with me.

Our beliefs and practices for Christian living come through the true knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. That's first second Peter one verse three.

The epignosis. Right. Our theology. Notice our theology. That is what we can know, believe and understand of God and his ways from scripture matters.

This is Peter's idea for in this way. The entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

[58 : 53] We need to understand for in this way, don't we? In this way of knowing God personally, knowing Christ, keeping the gospel foremost in your life and then living out these virtues for Christian living to the honor and glory of almighty God in this way.

You can then know. The gates of heaven will be opened to you. Isn't it interesting that that long before Peter starts dealing with the problem in his letter, he's going over this and over this and over this in terms of the gospel and where they're grounded.

What's he trying to say? I wonder. Don't wonder. He's trying to say, make it about Jesus. And if we as a church will keep making it about Jesus, the gates of hell will not prevail over us.

Amen. Now we have to do that, folks. It's not just a rah-rah cry. It's we've got to live it. And Peter is saying, live it. It.

Jesus. The truth. Live it for God's glory. That's what we're dealing with. These were the kinds of things that he was most concerned about.

[60 : 13] Look at this with me. Peter's emphasis then on our calling and election reflects on God's work in our salvation.

Now hold on to that. His work, God's work in our salvation is monergistic. Getting some neat terms coming out here. These are our terms. Synergism, monergism.

Look, it's it's a monergistic work. What does that mean? It means your salvation is not not a combined effort between you and God. God elected you for salvation before the foundation of the world.

He brought that moment of reality into personal time. Fix time for you. The moment that you put your faith in Jesus. electing you guaranteed that that would happen to you one day.

Thank God. Why? Because if God left it up to me, I'd head for the hills and I would never embrace Jesus. Why? Because I'm blind. What do I know?

[61 : 14] I'm dead to God. What? That means I can't breathe God, know God, love God. Nothing. So God, God looks to us and elects us.

This is what he's saying. God's work is monergistic. It's not a combined effort. God acts on you and you are passive in your spiritual rebirth. Now, hear my words carefully.

You are passive in what God does to bring you new life, to regenerate you. This is what happens to a corpse. A corpse is this, right? You can.

Right. That's what you get. There's no lung, no heart, no nothing. I'm a spiritual corpse. Here's what happens at regeneration. God breathes life into you.

And as he animates you, he opens your eyes. And all this happens in just an instant. And you see you for who you are before a holy God. And you cry out, forgive me.

[62 : 19] Have mercy on me. Make me your child. Please forgive me. And he does. In Christ. And you get a new life. You get the righteousness of Jesus.

And you stay animated, spiritually animated for God for all this life. And then one day he brings you to heaven. And then one day you get a new body fit for heaven that marries to your soul.

And you live forever with Jesus in the riches of heaven. This is the promise of your God. This is the message of Peter. Ground yourselves in these spiritual truths and realities because falsehood is coming.

And when it hits you, it's going to be real. All right. Now let me give you the next one. Now look. This is what happens. This is what happens. And now, after you're saved, after God saves you, and you are truly born again, your relationship with God becomes synergistic.

These are terms theologians throw around. All right. They're 25 cent words, but they help. It is now a combined effort as you are filled with, as you surrender to and obey the Holy Spirit living in you.

[63 : 38] So now look. This is not work salvation, but salvation working. Difference. Salvation with works. That's something you couldn't do before.

Before you were born again, regenerated. Given the breath of life from Christ himself living in you. Before all of that happened, you could have worked and read your Bible and done all your religious penance and everything else, and none of that would have got you to heaven.

None of that would have gotten you forgiven for your sins. There's only one thing that you and I can turn to that God has provided that forgives our sins, and it's right here.

It's the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's it. That is God's work, and it's monergistic. He willingly went to the cross. He put himself on the cross.

He willingly gave his life that we might live to him. Now, having purchased us, he invites us to share in that life, and now it becomes a cooperative effort.

[64 : 40] Now it does, because it can be that. And glory to God, what a partnership. All right, look, this is God. This is God's work of sanctifying you in his word.

John 17, 17. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. In Ephesians 4, 18. Where you are working out what God is working in you.

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation. Work it out with fear and trembling.

That means reverence for God. For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Work out what God is working in you.

That's the call. Now, verse 11. In this way, by you practicing these things that help you fight against sin and help conform you to Christ so that you will not stumble.

[65 : 48] Verse 11. The entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. Why? Because only saved people can persevere in living these virtues over a lifetime.

That's why. Yes, you'll stumble. Yes, you'll fall. When he says you will not stumble, it means you will not overcome and apostatize. You will not be overcome by sin and turn away from God in a damning way.

We all stumble and fall. But as you live this kind of life and persevere in it together, you will never be overcome by sin so that you leave the faith.

It can't happen. You cannot lose what God has purchased for you and given to you in his son, Jesus Christ. Folks, this is what we minister to each other. Now, I'm going to ask you at the end of all of that.

After hearing that from God's word, why in the world would we turn away from that and turn to man's wisdom or why in the world would we think that any of that needs man's help in our life with Christ?

[66 : 56] That's what we believe here at Grace. Amen. And that's what we'll keep ministering. Will you pray with me? Father, your word is true. And we count your word true because you were a good and gracious king.

We thank you, almighty God, for the truth of your word. We thank you that you have given us Jesus to live that word. And we hope and pray, God, as in hope in Jesus and pray in Jesus that we will continue to strive with the power that you are working in us, as Paul said in Colossians chapter 1, verses 28 and 29, that we will seek to admonish every man and teach every man that we might present every man complete in Christ because of the wisdom of the word at work in our lives.

Help us to lean on you, to trust you, to look to you. And mighty father, if there's anyone in our congregation today who, after hearing this, is struggling with the doubt of their salvation, the doubt of their eternity, the doubt of have I really come to the place where I've gone to God and asked for him to forgive me so that I'm putting my faith in Jesus alone.

I don't know if I've done that. Father, please, please now convict and burden their heart to come and talk to us so that they won't leave here today in any doubt at all about your love for them and your desire to see them saved and born again in Christ.

Thank you, God, that that's the work that you do here through us as we minister to each other. Teach us to speak the truth in love with great joy and live to your glory in Christ's name.

[68 : 45] Amen.