God's All-Sufficient Sanctification

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Date: 19 March 2023

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[0:00] Amen. If you'll turn in the Bible to 2 Peter with me, if you're not already there. It was a glorious time for us in recent months to work our way through the book of 1 Peter.

And I hope you're finding it just as glorious in this second letter of the Apostle. As he encourages people scattered throughout modern Turkey, what we would consider modern Turkey, to stay faithful in their walk with God under great persecution, a persecution that's ramping up across the Roman Empire.
Title of my message for this morning, God's All-Sufficient Sanctification. God's All-Sufficient Sanctification will be in 2 Peter 1, 5 through 8.
Let's read from verse 1 and gather up the context of what we've been talking about in the last couple of sermons. Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ.
To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
[1:26] Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust or evil desires.
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. In your self-control, perseverance. And in your perseverance, godliness.
In your godliness, brotherly kindness. And in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
[2:47] Now in the past two messages, friends, we have studied Peter's instruction about God's all-sufficient Savior and God's all-sufficient Scripture.

God has revealed to Peter that he is about to be executed for his faith. He's going to be martyred. The Lord's made that clear to him. And so now his pastoral heart reaches out to his readers.
He wants to express his concerns for their continuing growth in becoming like Christ. He doesn't want anything to arrest that growth or to distract them from that growth.
But Peter knows. Peter is well aware of the many distractions, deceptions, and dangers which can hinder that kind of growth in the Lord.
And what he does later in the letter is he begins to identify the ploys of pretenders who will introduce destructive heresies in place of sound doctrine.
[3:53] These men will enter into the church and from within, from in their midst, they will begin to introduce these heretical ideas that distract them away from what they actually need to grow in Christ's likeness as a body of believers scattered throughout the area we mentioned earlier.

Now, in order to combat these pretenders and their false doctrine, Peter follows on a sufficient Savior in a sufficient Scripture with God's all-sufficient sanctification.
That's what we're talking about this morning. Now, let me put this up here for you to see so that we make sure we're defining these terms biblically right at the outset.
Look at what we're dealing with. Our sanctification is about our progressive holiness. That is our progressive growth in Christ's likeness.
It's about how we spiritually mature. Or as Peter says at the conclusion of his letter, how we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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[5:06] So whenever you hear us talking about sanctification in the context of us being encouraged in Scripture to grow in Christ's likeness, we are talking about the way that we mature in the Lord.

How we grow up in the Lord. There is the aspect of our sanctification that is positional in the sense that when you were born again, the moment that you were saved, you were positioned in Jesus Christ.
and no one can ever snatch you from the Father's hand. You have the assurance of being forever held in the position of being in Christ. That is, you were made holy.
But as a spiritual infant made holy in Christ, we all need to grow up into Him who is the head. Right? From Ephesians chapter 4.
That's what we're talking about here. That's what Peter refers to here. How do we grow in Christ's likeness? Now, we have a problem. It's a serious one.
[6:05] We have a problem, at least one. I'll identify this one. Confronting us in this growth process, in this process of maturing as Christians.

It can be summed up in several passages throughout Scripture, but here is one that I've chosen from Proverbs just to give you kind of a summation of what we're dealing with.
Look at this up on the screen here. Cease listening, my son, to discipline and you will stray from the words of knowledge.
Now, we've been making a big deal in the first couple of messages about the true knowledge. And through that true knowledge of God come to us all of the precious promises of God, the grace of God, the peace of God, etc.
I want to show you this. This is a quote from Dr. Street. He was one of my professors at the Masters University. There is a natural drift to the human heart, a natural drift, and it is a sinful drift away from the truth.
[7:12] That is something that we go on battling in our Christian lives even after we become Christians, even after we come to know the Lord and are made holy in the Lord. As we try to grow in Christ's likeness, there is this natural bent for us to drift away from the truth.

We're fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil in that regard. Let me take you to a scripture real quickly outside of Peter. Let's go to Hebrews as we continue to just set the table here a little bit for us.
Hebrews chapter 2, and let's look at verse 1. For this reason, the author of Hebrews says, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard.
Now, what he's referring to here is the truth, what we have heard in the way of truth, the gospel, so that we do not drift away from it.
That is an ongoing issue for us. That's Hebrews chapter 2, verse 1. Now, if you'll return to the idea from Proverbs 19, 27.
[8:27] Cease listening, my son, to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge. Let me put this up here for you to just take this a little bit further. Listening here in this context means not just to hear.

It's not just, yeah, yeah, yeah, I heard you. Listening here means to hear and respond in conformity to. So, it means to hear, heed, and obey.
To respond in conformity to what you are hearing. Discipline is the Hebrew word, musar. And it is used as a warning, a correction.
It's used sometimes for instruction, reproof, discipline. That's why the New American Standard that I'm preaching from uses the word discipline. The sense behind it in this context is to train you to improve your strength or your self-control.
Now, how important is that in living a sanctified life, a holy life? He's going to talk about self-control in our context. Friends, we cannot, I'm going to say this in several ways, we cannot grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus if we stop listening to or if we neglect listening to God's instruction to us in Scripture.
[9:55] We can't. You cannot grow in your Christian life apart from being a student of Scripture. You can't. It won't happen. There will be, at best, marginal growth.

But on the whole, it won't happen. That's the way God's designed His truth to work in our lives. We'll see this as we go along. We forfeit then.

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Let's understand what happens. We forfeit becoming like Jesus as we allow ourselves to drift away from or to stray from the truth.
We cannot be holy. We cannot progress, that is, in holiness. We cannot be like Jesus Christ and we cannot grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior apart from hearing and heeding God's truth in Scripture.
Now, how you listen and to whom you listen matter. And it matters a lot. How you listen and who you listen to matters.
[11:07] I'll say it this way. Your failure to heed, to hear and to heed God's instruction will mean that you sacrifice God's wisdom for strengthening you.

You will stray from perceiving, knowing, and discerning God's wisdom for life. life. And this is why Peter is right at the beginning of his letter laying this out in the way of reminder for these precious saints.
Don't stray from what it is that God uses to make you more like your Savior and grow you in holiness together as a body. Don't move away from that.
That was the threat. the entire letter is built around that threat and keeping God's people sober minded about how we grow in grace.
Now a couple more things as we move down to dealing with each one of these and I'll deal with them briefly, these words that we'll encounter. Look at this. Keep in mind that Satan's design is to draw you away from God's truth.
[12:21] But not only to draw you away, friends, notice this next part, and then to replace it with something else. And we call those replacements idols.

Idols. He wants to deceive you with false helps and false hope and to keep you from listening to God.
It's this age-old idea, this picture of a person who you've seen people do this before. They'll put the plates on the thing and spin the plate and then they'll try to get as many of them going as they can and they're constantly having to run back and re-spin the next one and the next one and there's no end.
If you stop, they all fall and crash to the ground. This is the ploy and the scheme that Satan wants to foist on you as a believer. He just wants you spinning plates, just keeping you distracted, spinning plates, all the while hurrying and busying yourself with keeping up with that kind of thing in your life, missing the joy, the grace, the peace, the growth, the one another's, anything to pull you away from a simple and pure devotion to Jesus, 2 Corinthians 11, 3.
That's what's at stake. This is what Peter is addressing for us as he writes to these original hearers.
Now the question comes then, if listening to God is so critical, having this true knowledge is so critical, how do we listen to God?
[13:51] That's a big question. We'll only begin to hit it. You've heard us talk about this here from this pulpit many, many times. How do we listen to God? How do we hear God?

How are we guided by God? I was in a counseling appointment this past week and had a gentleman, not from our church, talking to me. And at one point in our conversation about God's will and he wanted to know, how do I hear from God?
How do I know when God's talking to me? And he was very earnest. There were some very, very important decisions that were before him and he wanted to get it right.
His heart wanted to honor the Lord in it. So as we began to talk, I pointed him to scripture and said, brother, God has spoken to us in Christ and we know Christ through his word.
He has spoken to us in these times through his word. Everything that's been written in the past has been written for our instruction. Romans 15. The problem was his next question was, yes, but when I read that, then how do I know what to do?
[15:04] And on, you see how it went on and on and on. What's most critical about what I'm saying to you right now is not so much that you get the solution that you want in that moment, but that you seek the Savior in it.

That's the critical element that we need to start with and found that seeking on not so much the solution as the Savior. Am I seeking Christ in this?
Am I seeking to honor Christ in this? Now, I can say that with confidence because the Bible teaches that as we seek and put our minds on the Lord, a solution will present itself.

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It will present itself in principle or in some way we will understand. God will work in our heart to do that. I am very, very confident of that. How are we then guided by God?
The answer to all those questions in brief is this, by hearing and heeding God's instruction in Scripture. Say, well, Jeff, God's instruction in Scripture doesn't tell me if I should buy this house or not, if I should go to this college or not.
[16:12] Well, just stay with me as we work down through this together and as we move through the second letter of Peter, I think we'll get more and more clarity on all of this for us.

But here's an important place for us to camp in terms of answering this question of how we hear and heed God's instruction in Scripture. Who we turn to, what we turn to, and what we listen to in times of trial, suffering, challenge, moving through the matters and issues of life.
Who do we turn to? Look at what Jesus said. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. Just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love, you are my friends if you do what I command you.
You see, friends, there's no getting away from the reality that we have been called as a people of the truth. And it is in the truth that we minister the love of God to each other.
It's how we care. We speak the truth in love to one another. So what I'm trying to say to you here is obeying the Lord in Scripture is not an either or kind of proposition when it comes to how we show love to each other.
[17:37] Have you ever heard anybody say this? Have you ever heard them say, no, we're not about doctrine at our church. We believe certain things, but we really don't emphasize doctrine. We never talk about sin.

That's divisive stuff. That's the kind of stuff that runs people away. People come to church because they want to be healed and balmed and made to feel better.
What I'm trying to say to you is, yes, okay, that's all great. But the path to all of that is through truth. We can't have unity apart from the truth.
That's false. What unifies us? What brings us together? God's truth. The Lord literally puts us on the same page of operating within the bounds of his will in truth, in a God glorifying, sacrificial toward one another way.
And he brings us together in that. It is through truth that we show and demonstrate each other the love of Jesus. I don't know that we would say, based on what Jesus just told us here, that one of the highest, if not the highest ways that we demonstrate love to each other is ministering God's truth to each other.
[18:55] I think it's a beautiful thing. It's a both and. Maybe I'll say it this way to you. Abiding in his love, as I put it up here, is the heart of our walk with him. Abide in me.

Without me, you can do nothing. So the relationship we enjoy between God's true knowledge, which is what Peter's been hammering in this first few verses, the relationship we enjoy between God's true knowledge and his love combining to work in our hearts is crucial to our sanctification.
Man, I want you to hold on to that with everything that you have because when it comes to people helping, when it comes to soul care, when it comes to the way that you and I approach each other to help each other navigate life, to do Galatians chapter six, one through four.
Some of you will remember we talked about that as you see one caught in a trespass, you come alongside of them. The word that talks about us coming alongside and walking with them is a word that has the picture of putting your shoulder under the burden that they're bearing and pushing up and holding it up with them.
As you and I do that with each other, as we minister to each other, there is a right way and a wrong way for us to approach being effective and honoring the Lord in that. The right way is through the truth.
[20:23] We minister to each other's souls through the truth. faith. We don't need to mix man's wisdom into that.

We either believe that God has given us everything that we need to encourage each other in a life of living, of joy, peace, grace, goodness in the Lord.
God's given us everything we need to bring honor and glory to Him. You know, if you read much in counseling literature in the circles that we run in, through the different organizations we belong to, the university that you guys know I attended and got the degree from, this is probably one of the most often quoted passages of scripture in that literature.

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It's 2 Peter, particularly chapter 1, verse 3. Because we do believe that by His divine power, He has granted to us everything we need to live a godly life, a God-honoring, God-pleasing, God-glorifying, life.
So I say again, the relationship we enjoy between God's true knowledge and His love, combining to work in our hearts, is critical, crucial, vital to our sanctification, our growing in grace, our growing in Christ-likeness.
[21:47] Let me show you a few more passages of scripture here as we walk into this. 1 Corinthians 13, 2. I'll get you busy with me here. 1 Corinthians 13.

Now, you Wednesday nighters, you heard some of this past Wednesday night. We turn to this. This is the chapter where Paul is dealing with issues of Christian love.
He's actually rebuking them in this love and encouraging, exhorting them to turn to this kind of love to each other. Corinth was really struggling. 1 Corinthians 13, verse 2.
If I have the gift of prophecy, and if I know, notice the word know, if I know all mysteries and all knowledge, there's all of our knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
What good is the knowledge? What good is knowing? What good is being able to quote verses back and forth all through the scripture? If I don't have love, what good is it to preach and to teach?
[23:08] If I don't have love, love for God, love for God's people, love for God's word, am I growing in that grace?

Let me give you another one. 1 Timothy 1, 5. 1 Timothy 1, verse 5.
In opposition to, in contrast to, people who want to wrangle about words and get in all of these disputes together and discussions together about things that really don't matter, Paul comes to verse 5 and he tells his protege Timothy, but the goal of our instruction, here is the supreme goal of all that we teach and preach.
Actually, the word literally here is translated commandment, but the goal of our commanding, our commandment from God is love.
Love from a pure heart. and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Friends, hear me carefully. Man's wisdom cannot touch that.
[24:26] Man's wisdom cannot give you these things, but the goal of God's wisdom, but the goal of God's commanding on us.

What did Jesus say? If you love me, you'll keep my commandments just as I kept the father's commandments. commandments. The goal of these commandments, this instruction, this wisdom from God is love.
Are you increasing in love? For God? For each other? For the truth? And he wants that from a pure heart and a good conscience.
That is exactly what the truth of God ministers to us, friends. The word of God ministers in your life in a way that helps you with a pure heart and a good conscience.
And a sincere faith, a genuineness. It helps you fight against hypocrisy. It helps you fight against the lies. Well, we don't want anybody to attend here on a regular basis and think that they're in the Lord when they're really not.
[25:37] God. Now, you've heard us say often, what are ways that we can begin to allow the scriptures to examine our heart to see if we're in the Lord to see?

First Corinthians or second Corinthians chapter 13, examine yourself, see if you're in the faith. What are ways that we can do that? Well, one of the one of the questions that we ask ourselves is this. Do I have a growing love? A growing love for what I know God loves? Do I have a growing love for God? Do I have a growing love for God's people?
Do I have a growing love for God's truth? Am I growing in those ways? Is God working a work of grace in my life that I'm growing to be more like his son, more in love with him, more loving toward other people?
And do I have a stronger growing commitment and love for his truth? Working in my life, am I seeking to minister that truth to other people? How precious is this local body to you?
[26:51] To what lengths would you go to serve this body, preserve this body, guard this body? These are the ways that we begin to ask our hearts about our commitment to Christ.

So let me give you a couple more. First John, chapter three. If you go all the way back to the back of the Bible, Revelation, and then put it in reverse.

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You'll eventually get to first John. And in chapter three, verse twenty three, this is his commandment. We just were talking about the goal of our commandment, the goal of all instruction in Christ, that we believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, and and love one another just as he commanded us.
And then if you'll jump over to chapter five. First John, chapter five, and look at verse twenty with me.
And we know. That the son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true and we are in him who is true in his son, Jesus Christ.
[28:26] This is the true God and eternal life. Now, isn't it interesting that following on that very verse, that very concept and idea.

He closes out his entire letter with this little children guard yourselves from what? Idols. That's the threat. Do you want to know what is what it is that threatens what you are instructed to do in verse twenty?
What you are in verse twenty? Idols. Idols. And idols are manufactured in our hearts by the wisdom of men.
Your own wisdom, your own selfishness. You go in your own way. You choosing to be your own God in any given moment. I know best for me in this moment, in this situation.
And an idol springs up in your heart. Growing in likeness to Jesus, friends, is a progressive journey.
[29:29] If you feel like, you know, Jeff, I'm listening to this and I just I certainly haven't arrived. Praise the Lord. You're tracking. You're in great company right now to include your pastor.

Growing in likeness to Jesus is a progressive journey of growing in the knowledge of him and his ways until we get to heaven. We are growing and learning.
And yes, sometimes it looks like a few steps forward and a couple back. It can feel like that and it can be like that. Just keep in mind we're not in heaven yet. Be warned.
Be warned, brothers and sisters. By Proverbs 19, 27. There are many, many ways to cease listening to God.
To cease listening to God. Listen to this. I'm in Hebrews chapter three, and I'm going to read at verse 12.
[30:40] Take care, brethren. Now, this is a sober warning. I hope you hear it. Heed it. Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
That is a real threat. Becoming hard by the deceitfulness of sin. You say, Jeff, what is this? Is this talking about losing our salvation?
No, this is talking about people who are in our midst who were never saved in the first place. And that falling away is a falling away from the truth and from God's people and from being around the very people and the very truth that can bring them to salvation.
And their heart begins to harden by the deceitfulness of sin and they move away from God. They drift away from God, seem like they were part of us.
[31:56] For we have become, verse 14, we have become. Look at the word partakers of Christ. That's exactly what Peter talked about. Partakers, partners of his divine nature.

If we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, everything Peter's talking about and what we're going to deal with today is about you being assured in your salvation and walking in that assurance, growing in it.
While it is said today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me. Then the question comes, well, who provoked him when they had heard?
Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses and with whom he was angry for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?
And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of.
[33:06] Are we talking about Christians or non-Christians here? None. None. We're not talking about Christians who lost their salvation. We're talking about people who thought they were Christians or at least went through the motions of Christianity, but they never were in the faith.

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It was all an issue of unbelief. All I want to suggest to you is this. Unbelief is a powerful, powerful foe.
Cease listening to God. And you're in a really, really dark place. We don't want to be there.
What we want to do is we want to reach out and minister to those who are there. We want to reach our mission field with hope. With truth.
With love and patience and kindness and gentleness. We want them to know the true love of Christ working in our hearts, transforming us. What do you think is the number one reason that Christians give for not sharing their faith?
[34:25] Rejection. You've heard people say. I don't. What if they ask something I don't know? All right, we'll let you off the hook right now. You can look them right in the eye and say.

I don't know. Let's find out together. We'll we'll sit down and look that up and see if we can come to. And if I can't find that answer for you, I've got people in my life I can go to that will help me find it. But we'll find it. We'll look into the scripture together. The number one reason that people don't share their faith across the board on the whole.
Is that people don't share in a confidence in the effectiveness of the word of God? We're too busy worrying about ourselves. To have a confident expectation that the ministry of the truth spoken in love will do its work.
We think we've got to come up with all these clever ideas and gimmicks and gadgets and programs and everything else, and we don't. We just need to concentrate on ministering the truth in love, whatever that looks like in whatever circumstance.
[35:40] Remember, friends, you will be in spheres of influence in the way you live your life, meeting people and dealing with. I may never see those people.

It's not up to your pastors to minister that grace and truth. It's up to you in your sphere of influence. We are equipping you for the work of ministry. And we share in that ministry with you.
Remember, Peter's already instructed us. That it is by this true knowledge of God in Christ that we are granted, granted. The blessings of saving faith.
Faith of righteousness. That's right standing before God of grace and peace of life and godliness of his promises in scripture of partnership in his divine nature.
We've covered all that in the first two messages or so. Now, as he begins his letter. As he really jumps into it, he lays out his primary concerns for their faithful walk with the Lord.
[36:51] And what's that faithful walk all about? Here it is. Through a true knowledge of Christ, we are blessed with these realities. A sufficient savior. That's verses one and two.

A sufficient scripture in three and four. And now a sufficient sanctification in five through eleven. Now, as I say that you understand that all three of these realities are interwoven throughout Peter's second letter and indeed throughout the New Testament.
Right. We can turn to any of the different letters in the New Testament and see this reality. But Peter, Peter does this. He now turns to outline.
Spiritual qualities of a grace given progressive sanctification. What does it look like for you to grow in grace? Paul speaks about this throughout his letters.
Now, Peter is writing about it. So these spiritual qualities are useful, fruitful virtues for pursuing a holy life.
[37:56] And what I mean by that is for growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, becoming more like him. These are not all of the virtues of godly living, but they are the ones Peter wanted to highlight under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit.

And so now we'll just move through them very, very briefly in my in my terms. You know how painful it is for me sometime. I tell you, I got to cut so much out unless we really, really slow down.
And that's an option. I can go slower. And we would get through this book in a few years. But we're going to keep moving through this. So let's outline some of these godly virtues for you that Peter mentions here in these verses.
Let's look at this first one. Faith. Now, for this very reason, also applying all diligence in your faith. In your faith.
He says now for this very reason, also. So as a good student of Scripture, the first thing that you would do if you were studying this out, you would ask yourself what reason, right? That's a good question.

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[39:03] For this reason, also. What reason? That God has given us all we need to live a godly life. And in Christ, he has granted to us his precious and magnificent promises.

That reason. So Peter encourages us to apply maximum effort to living that life. For the reason of God's sufficient, loving provision for your life with him.
That's why. For this reason. For the fact that God has lovingly given you everything that you need to live a God-honoring life to him. In other words, he's not commanding you or asking you to do something he hasn't made provision for you to accomplish.
accomplish. So now it's like Peter is saying, get at it. Let's go. Let's get together. Let's join forces and let's move forward in this together.
It's wonderful. And whenever, when I read this and I think about it and I start studying it out, man, it's like I want to rock it out of my seat. This is a call to arms.
[40:17] Look at it this way with me. God's gift of faith is the root of all spiritual fruit. Now, did you hear that? There's a very important reason we want to file that away and understand that as we strive.

Look at what this quote is. Trusting God is the root from which all the other virtues spring. Those who rely on God and his promises begin to live a new way.
Peter's theology here is in accord with Paul's who said that faith expresses itself in love. Galatians 5, 6. All the godly virtues in the Christian life find their source in faith.
That is faith in Christ, in trusting God for everything. And the culmination and climax of such faith is love. That's commentator Tom Schreiner.
Now, the reason that I wanted to put this in here, and I'll say a few more things before we move to that, is this. This is not legalism. This is not preaching to you about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps or learning to gut this out in the Christian life.
[41:32] This is something very different. And we're going to work through this together to help you better understand what does it look like for me to do this. So stay with me in all of it.

Look at this next statement. The fruit of Christian works, what you do, blossoms by the roots of our faith in Jesus.
So where is our ability coming from to fulfill what Peter is instructing us now as he moves down through this list of virtues? Where do the virtues come from? From God.
They come as a gift from the Lord. And yet we are being encouraged to work them out. What is that all about? The fruit of Christian works blossoms by the roots of our faith in Jesus.
We are to give ourselves entirely and energetically to working out what God has worked in in Jesus.
[42:35] So just a quick flip over to Colossians because I want you to see again what's at stake. I'm going to keep you reminded what's at stake if we do not heed this.

Colossians 1 28 and 29. Many of you recognize these verses as what we have chosen to kind of put our church out there.
You go to our website and you'll see this passage on our website. This is what we chose to help define the heart of how we understand being the church here in grace.
We proclaim him. Period. There it is. We proclaim Jesus. Admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom.
God's wisdom. So that we may present every man complete, mature in Christ. For this purpose also, I labor, striving according to his power, which mightily works within me.
[43:41] Say, Jeff, he just said that he labors and he strives in this endeavor to see every man brought before the Lord, mature, maturing, growing, growing in Christ likeness.

So we teach, we admonish, we teach, we instruct, we warn, we come alongside. And Paul says, I'm striving in this. I'm giving everything that I have to this.
And it is all according, look, which by his power, which mightily works, I am trying to work out what God is working in. You're not an automaton, are you?
You're a living, breathing person with Jesus living inside of you. And all of that needs to be worked out in the way that you speak and in the way that you act, the priorities of your life, the way that you steward the resources of your life.
This all comes to bear on your love for Christ. Out of love for Christ, I am seeking to work out what God has worked in. That love that he's worked in, I'm seeking to let it work itself out.
[44:46] So I want to give myself to certain pursuits that help and aid and supply that working out to happen in my life. You see? But where does it all start?

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Who sustains it? Now, who's it? Y'all need to join with Alonza now. She's up here getting, help her out. Yes, the Lord.
The Lord. So we're not preaching works apart from faith. We're preaching works that come as a result of faith.
You're working out your faith. That's what's happening in this particular section. Let me say it this way. As partners in the divine nature of Jesus, with Jesus living in us, we are to supply these qualities.
Now, what does it look like for you to do that? What do you bring to the table of your spiritual growth? Your saving faith is expressed in your sanctifying follow-through.
[45:59] Saving faith in a sanctified follow-through. That captures some of the idea of supply and discipline. Now, I want to help you see this in an even more specific way.

So back in 2 Peter, now, verse 5, for this very reason that God has given us all that we need for life and godliness, to live a God-pleasing life, for the reason that He has caused us to be partakers and partners in His divine nature, apply to this diligence in your faith, in your faith, supply these things. Give yourself diligently, energetically to, enthusiastically to, and come alongside your faith to supply these things.
Now, look, the New American Standard uses the word supply. Other translations, like the ESV, the New King James, I think, they use add to or supplement.
Nevertheless, whatever word your Bible is using here in the Greek, it's an imperative. Now, you know from previous times an imperative is a command. So we're being commanded here.
[47:18] We get our words, the word that's being used here for supply or add to in your faith, we get our words choir and choreography. from that Greek word.

In ancient times, the state established a choir. But the choir master was the one who was required by the state to provide or furnish the choir with all they needed.
It's funny to me. I don't know that I want to be that guy. It's a very prestigious position. The state establishes the choir and then they pick somebody and they say, oh, by the way, you've got to fund the choir.
You've got to do all the training and the instruction. You've got to provide all the resources. Heavy responsibility that they expected of this person. God provides you salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
Now, now, now, look, because God has supplied you with all you need for life and godliness, you diligently supply your own commitment, your own support to, your own effort to put your faith in Jesus to work and how you live your life for his glory.
[48:38] You see that? This is, this is a critical, critical way of helping people, Christians, understand what it looks like for you to live out your faith. I'm going to say it again.

Friends, the world cannot help you with this. Why? Because this is a spiritual reality. These are spiritual truths, verities.
These are spiritual of the Holy Spirit realities. This is the Spirit's domain. Soul care is the domain of the Holy Spirit.
We have let the world hijack that away from the church. The best way for us to answer that hijacking is to be faithful to truth.
And that's what we're seeking to do. In the meeting that we're going to have with you guys on April 2nd, our intention is to let you know about the counseling ministry.
[49:46] You guys know that we're trying to establish a counseling center through our little church. That's getting off the ground as we speak. And we're swamped. It's amazing.

It's wonderful. Because people are being helped in the ways that we're talking about right now. And that's our commitment to do that. We want to tell you more about how that's developing and what we hope to see God do in the coming months in the way of our counseling center.
I mean, literally, it is ground level just trying to... And we have some challenges. That's some pretty significant ones, actually. So because God has supplied you with all you need for life and godliness, now you diligently supply, add to, come alongside of with your own commitment, support, and effort so that your faith in Christ is put to work and showcased in your life.
Now, you say, how? How do we begin to... Now that we know that this is about me working out what God has worked in and that I need to do this in a diligent, energetic, enthusiastic, full-life commitment to...

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That's everything in verse 5 before he says moral excellence. Now that I know that, what's the first thing that I look at here? Well, let me go ahead and tell you.
[51:10] Some commentators have said that the list that we're going to look at together in the remaining minutes, these build on each other. And maybe that's true. I end up landing more toward the idea that Peter is presenting these in a way that say these are all active in our Christian life.

We need to be giving attention to them. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you've got to start with number one, moral excellence. Work on that until you feel like you've got it down and then you can move on to number two.
Don't do that. This is us living our Christian life in any given season. You're working on any one of these. You're focused on any one of these as God works in your heart. OK.
It's about focus. That's that's what we're wanting to know here. So the first one that he says. Now, for this very reason, applying all diligence in your faith, supply moral excellence, moral excellence. The word, and I'm going to be kind of quick through these, the word used here meant performing, see, doing, virtuous acts of valor, heroism, bravery.
[52:23] It's a high concept. It speaks of excellent moral character for doing the highest good, especially in God's sight.

Another way to say it is this, living out goodness. That is God's goodness, living out what he's working in the way of his goodness. This is a person who is committed to high moral excellence. You're always seeking the highest road of highest good. You don't want anything corrupting the character that you're operating out of in terms of the character of Christ.
You're wanting to reflect that character in the highest means that you can and preserve that. You see? So you're holding precious. The wonderful moral excellence of Jesus worked into your life. How morally excellent was Jesus? Did perfect. Thank you. He never sinned. We sin. Nevertheless, Peter says, you need to strive.
[53:33] You need to be energetically and enthusiastically committed to pursuing and expressing moral high ground, moral excellence in your life. All right?

That's number one. Number two, knowledge. Knowledge. Now, this is something that is, let me tell you what it's not.
This is not intellectual prowess per se. This isn't how much you know. It is spiritual knowledge. This is the true knowledge Peter's been dealing with. It's knowledge by and of the Holy Spirit. It refers to the, here, practical discrimination of good and evil.
Intelligent appreciation of what is the will of God in each detail of practice. That's so good. So this is you from Ephesians 5 making the most of the time because the days are evil.
[54:39] Right? Living in the wisdom of God. Making the most of the time. Do you do that? These are very challenging. He goes on to say this, you apply diligence in your faith, you supply moral excellence, in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control.

Self-control in verse 6. What are we talking about? Here again, folks, this is a gift of the Holy Spirit which is mentioned in Galatians 5.
It's a fruit of the Spirit. So this is what we need to fight against, unfulfilled, selfish desires that war in our hearts.
James 4, 1 and 2. unfulfilled, selfish desires. We all have them, we all battle them, they war in our hearts, and James says, what creates quarrels and conflicts?
What creates wars and fights among you? Is it not that you have these unfulfilled, these passions, these unfulfilled, selfish desires making war in your hearts?
[55:48] That's what creates relational conflict. And then the lusts of deceit that are mentioned in Ephesians 4, 22.

Self-control helps us fight these things. In contrast, folks, what the world offers us in its wisdom for dealing with life's issues is of no value in our fight against sin.
I, maybe they're out there, but in all of my time studying, being in, in, in these circles in the company of secular psychologists, since you guys know I spent, let's see, five, and then three, and then another one, so about nine years studying secular psychology and reading all the books and learning all the methodologies and all that, I didn't mean to.
I thought I was learning what would help me serve the church, but it turns out it was an integrationist approach. It was taking man's wisdom, throwing some scripture verses to it and coming out. Let me tell you what I have found in my work and all of that, I don't know of a secular counselor out there

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that makes the issue of helping people in the secular methodologies they've learned in dealing with sin.
But isn't sin the issue? Aren't idols the issue? These are spiritual matters. This is what Peter's saying. Now later in the letter you're going to see the false teachers try to introduce destructive heresies that pull the people away from a confidence in this sufficiency.
[57:29] Do you have a sufficient savior and a sufficient salvation or not? Do you have a sufficient scripture or not? Do you have a sufficient sanctification or not? Do you need to turn to the world?

Did God leave something out when he gave you Jesus? Jesus? If you've got all kinds of questions running in your mind right now about medicine and medical practice and all this see sermon one and two where we try to clear that up and talk about that.
I don't want to go through all that right now. Again. All right? So a true knowledge of God helps us in terms of fostering this self-discipline this self-control.
The world will not answer these issues as issues of sin. I'm going to show you. Let me get you busy. Turn to Colossians real quick.
We're going to be in Colossians 2 20 through 23. Paul has been spending all the time up to this point speaking about the sufficiency of Jesus the supremacy of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in the church.
[58:47] Now he comes to this place in chapter 2 after talking about Jesus' supremacy and he says this if you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world why as if you were living in the world do you submit yourself to then human decrees like don't handle this don't taste that don't touch this see those are the rules of the world that want to tell you how to live your life how to deal with the issues.

They all refer verse 22 to things destined to perish with use. So now we understand that we're talking about something that isn't destined to perish with use maybe something eternal in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men.
You see that? They're destined to perish because they're of men. These are matters which have to be sure the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body but are of no value against fleshly indulgence and fleshly indulgence is what we're fighting when we're talking about Holy Spirit driven self-control.
What are you trying to control? What are you fighting against? The flesh. The things that set themselves up as ideologies and practices against the will of God.
So a true knowledge of God fosters self-discipline self-restraint. The reason this is critically tied to true knowledge is that we speak and behave from what our hearts desire most in any given moment.
[60:37] Jesus said it this way where your treasure is there your heart will be also and you will always live and speak out of your heart. whatever it is you're treasuring in that moment your heart your mouth and your body will follow true to what is in your heart.

If it's an idol then you're going to get idol. If it's God then you're going to get God. So what Peter is saying we need self-control to help us keep these parameters these spiritual parameters in place that keep us out of the ditches and keep us moving.
This is a good and God honoring thing in our life. All right. How about this next one perseverance. Perseverance. This is patient and steadfast endurance under life's difficulties.
Patient steadfast endurance. The word that's used here is hupomone. Now look what the guy says. Hupomone does not simply accept and endure. There's always a forward look in it. It is said of Jesus that for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross despising the shame.
[61:51] Hebrews 12 2. That is hupomone. Christian steadfastness. It is the courageous acceptance of everything that life can do to us and the transmuting of even the worst event into another step on the upward way.

it is learning to take the circumstances matters and issues of life and allow the Holy Spirit to help you transmute to transform to reframe biblically those the reality of those circumstances and situations into how God is working to help you persevere in faith.
Grow your faith. Strengthen you. Cease listening to the Lord and you will stray from. You will drift. So don't do that. Turn to the Lord.
There's really not a lot new here is there? The Bible just keeps saying the same things over and over again. You'd think it was trying to make a point. And it certainly is.

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This is how we grow. Alright? Godliness. The text brings us to godliness next. In your knowledge self control and in your self control perseverance and in your perseverance godliness.
[63:07] Godliness. The best way to say this is this. God likeness. God likeness. This is living a life that is like God.

I didn't make that up. That was from Tom Schreiner. It is a God pleasing life. So people in Peter's time were concerned with godliness.
Can you believe that? Let me say it again. People. I'm talking about unbelievers. Pagans. Idol worshipers. They were very concerned with godliness. Can you believe that?
Wait a minute. Let me tell you what I'm talking about. Living like their gods. Little g. They were very concerned that they pleased the gods and keep the gods pleased because if I have a pleased God then I get what I want.
At least I hope it works out that way kind of thing. Peter borrows the word here for godliness for use with the Christian God.
[64:09] The God and his people. So here's what he's saying. What God has given us in Christ life and godliness. What do we do?

We pursue and express with joy and thankfulness in our hearts. What do you mean pursue? You pursue what he's given you. Life with him. You get in it and live it.
Live your life with Jesus. Why wouldn't you? That's normal. And it's good. And then express. Express the life of Jesus in you in this God likeness. It's beautiful. Brotherly kindness.
Brotherly kindness. What is this? The focus here. The focus is on the love between fellow believers on the family like devotion that should characterize the Christian community.
[65:17] So here Peter used a word that is distinctive of the Christian distinctive of the Christian community in the sense that all believers are brothers and sisters.

brothers. All believers are brothers and sisters. We're a family. A spiritual family in Jesus. Literally the word here is brotherly love.
My translation gives me brotherly kindness. It's literally brotherly love. It's where we get the word Philadelphia from. Philadelphia.
Brotherly love. Brotherly love. Let me give you a quick verse here. It's from Romans 12.
You don't have to turn there. Verse 10. I'm just going to read it to you real quickly. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Give preference to one another in honor.
[66:16] Wonderful. Romans 12. 10. That expresses it. Peter spoke of this same brotherly love in his first letter. I'll just give you the references. Chapter 1 of 1 Peter verses verse 22.

And chapter 3 of 1 Peter verse 8. 1. 22 and 3. 8. He spoke of this very thing. And now we'll end with this. Love.
How appropriate. This is the love of Jesus in coming to earth as a human being for us.
In living a sinless life for us. In going to the cross for us. And in being raised to new life for us.
That we might share in all of that. It is sacrificial and self-denying for the highest good of others and to the greater glory of God.
[67:18] That's Christian love. So love we can say. Love is the greatest commandment from Matthew 22. Love is the highest way.

From 1 Corinthians 13. Love is the goal of all Christian teaching and preaching and instruction.
That's 1 Timothy 1. 5. And God's love binds together all other virtues of Christian living.
Colossians 3. 18. And so you take these virtues, these qualities of the Christian life, you bring them together and you have verse 8. For if these qualities are yours.
See, are they? Are they yours? Are you in Christ? If you're in Christ, they are. And are increasing.
Are you growing in them? They render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
This is how we keep from wasting the true knowledge or forfeiting the true knowledge or neglecting the true knowledge. knowledge. We work these out in our lives.
[68:31] Folks, we must, must, must be careful to see these spiritual qualities as coming from our true salvation through faith in Christ.

So these qualities help us with our assurance of salvation. That we belong to God in Christ because these qualities give us the strongest and clearest proof that we are growing in him.
that we have the seal of the Holy Spirit on our life, the deposit of the Holy Spirit that is the guarantee of our eternal inheritance.

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They evidence the work of that of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we persevere and increase in these qualities of Christian maturity. Here's how I'll end.
All of this that we've been talking about this morning is Peter's way of saying the same thing Paul says. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
[69:33] And another place, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. It's a wonderful, wonderful testimony of God telling us I have put in you all that you need to serve me.

Now to your faith in me energetically and enthusiastically embrace and pursue these qualities and let these qualities work themselves out in your life in a beautiful display of Jesus love and grace. Amen. Aren't you privileged? You see, you don't have to do this. You get to do this. You get to live this life.
And you get to share this hope with others. Come to Christ. Know this hope. Know this growth. Know this new life. All right. It's time. I'm energized. I'm ready for sermon number two. You ready? Yeah, right. Well, God, God bless you.
[70:43] God bless his word. He is good. I would ask you to pray for your fellow pastor, my fellow pastor, Greg, and his wife and family as they travel and enjoy some time together and then pray for a number of our families.

You see these empty seats. A number of our families, I think, are also traveling. I think people are grabbing some vacation time as well. And so I pray for them as they come to mind.
And please, please remember that Wednesday night is postponed for now. But you can continue to pray for each other in that way as we deal with spiritual warfare. prayer. All right.
Well, we've given you good reason to sing. And we're going to sing the same song that we learned for the first time, at least for most of us, last Sunday. So let's stand together and we'll close with this newer song that we've been learning together.
Thank you.

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