

December 22

2 Peter 1-3

Welcome to today's Project 4:4 Accelerator for December 22nd. Today's we are examining 2 Peter. My name is Elvin Torres, Pastor of the Bellevue location of the Christ Community Church.

2 Peter is one of those books/letters that is easily overlooked. Its short, only 3 chapters; and it does not have a very clear pattern or flow to it that makes it easy to study. But 2 Peter is incredibly valuable and makes a great contribution to the New Testament and as 2 Timothy 3:16, it is "profitable in teaching, correcting...and equipping" the believer for a life of faithfulness and fruitfulness.

Peter, Jesus' friend and disciple, wrote this letter near the end of his life (1:14) and likely used a secretary or scribe. Not too long after this letter was penned, Peter was killed for the very faith he encourages us to keep in this letter. Faith in Jesus.

A major topic in 2 Peter is the corruption being promulgated by false teachers who are not only teaching distorted theology but also twisting morality as well. (2:1-3; 17-22). The results of their teaching is destructive to those who hear, accept and follow them. This reality is not an isolated event limited to the pages of the NT. This continues to happen today. We have false teachers all around us that would lead us away from the truth of the gospel of Jesus. The truth that we have "been cleansed from...past sins." (1:9).

Peter, in the first 15 verses gives the reader exactly what we need to know to combat false teaching around us:

First, he reminds us that our faith is a gift from God and it is precious. This faith is as precious as Peter's faith. This is remarkable. Peter, one of the original followers of Jesus says that your faith and mine is as precious as *his* faith. This eliminates the idea that there are some Christians who are on better speaking terms with God than others. No. Your faith in Jesus is precious. How precious? As precious as that of one of Jesus' closest friends. Do you believe this? Your faith is precious.

Secondly, God has "given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." (1:2-4) Peter says, as a Christian, you have you what you need to remain faithful to Jesus and not fall away toward the corruption of false teachers. He adds an imperative or command as a result of the indicative or reality, he just stated. Because of *this*...Do *this*. Because you your faith in Jesus has given you all that you need to combat unfaithfulness, add to your faith these things:

- a) goodness;
- b) knowledge;
- c) self-control;
- d) perseverance;
- e) godliness;
- f) brotherly kindness;

g) love. (1:5-9).

Now, this list of virtues Peter gives us are meant to increase our religiosity or to give us a moral code that will gain us favor. NO, it is meant to increase our faith and take us from simple knowledge to love. Because love trumps knowledge (see 1 Cor 13) and though there is great value in knowledge, (after all, how can you truly, rightly love God if you do not truly, rightly, KNOW Him?) knowledge without love is ineffective and unfruitful in the life of the believer or of any good to those around us. Peter says these qualities should be increasing in measure so as to keep us from being ineffective and unproductive.

How is it that failure to grow in these virtues is equated with having faith knowledge that is ineffective and unproductive? He tells us in verse 9. "If anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, having FORGOTTEN that he has been cleansed from his past sins."

This is a key verse in 2 Peter because for Peter it's all about Jesus saving work on the cross in our place for our sins. We are prone to forget. These virtues help us to be reminded of Jesus who loved us with brotherly affection. Jesus, who was holy and persevered and maintained self-control in his perfect, sinless life. Jesus who knows God and is good. Jesus, who applied all of his virtues to our account when he died in our place for *our* sins. When we practice and grow in these virtues, we are reminded of all that Jesus did in our place.

Peter says "if you do these things, you will never fall..." He does not mean you will never sin, but you will remain faithful and not fall away toward false teachers who would corrupt the gospel and lead you toward a life of ungodliness. For this reason he wants to "remind you of these things...I think it right to refresh your memory as long as I live..."

I like the way the ESV translates verse 1:13-14 it says "I think it right as long as I am in this body to **stir you up by way of reminder**...so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things." Wow, what a great word from a loving pastor to his flock. But again, it's all about Jesus. Who he is and what he's done.

Today, how can you grow in:

- a) goodness;
- b) knowledge;
- c) self-control;
- d) perseverance;
- e) godliness;
- f) brotherly kindness;
- g) love?

Write out some ways that you can be reminded of Jesus' work *for* you today? Now, go do it! And be reminded of Jesus and go be fruitful and effective in your faith.

That's it for now folks. God Bless.