

II PETER 1:5-15
PURSUE THESE THINGS!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Peter chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of this letter that Peter wrote to those scattered for their faith.

Before Peter deals with the false teachers that were coming to rob them of their faith, Peter wants them to grow in the Lord, to mature in the Lord.

Remember what Peter wrote in his first letter back in I Peter 3:15-17, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“But in your hearts set Christ apart as holy [and acknowledge Him] as Lord. Always be ready to give a logical defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope that is in you, but do it courteously and respectfully. [Isa 8:12,13.] [And see to it that your conscience is entirely clear (unimpaired), so that, when you are falsely accused as evildoers, those who threaten you abusively and revile your right behavior in Christ may come to be ashamed [of slandering your good lives]. For [it is] better to suffer [unjustly] for doing right, if that should be God’s will, than to suffer [justly] for doing wrong.”**

Yes, it is a battle as we live for Christ, as we share our faith with others. And Peter does not want us to shy away from living for Christ and sharing our faith, but he wants us to do it with love, and to know what we believe so that we can share it with others.

And we saw in our first study of this letter that Peter wants us to grow in Christ, to mature in the faith that has been given to us. And to look at those precious promises of God and believe them, hold onto them and don’t let them go.

But for many Christians, they are not growing, they are stagnate in their growth in the Lord.

Let me explain it like this. We are told,

I met a young man not long ago who dives for exotic fish for aquariums. He said one of the most popular aquarium fish is the shark.

He explained that if you catch a small shark and confine it, it will stay a size proportionate to the aquarium. Sharks can be six inches long yet fully matured.

But if you turn them loose in the ocean, they grow to their normal length of eight feet.

That also happens to some Christians.

I've seen some of the cutest little six-inch Christians who swim around in a little puddle.

But if you put them into a larger arena - into the whole creation - only then can they become great.

- Charles Simpson

How true that is. We are not to confine ourselves to the church, but we are to live in this world. Now keep in mind that we are not to let the world live in us, we are to let Christ live in us and mature us.

But we are to live in this world and with all the things that happen, as Peter has shown us, that is where our faith will grow.

I have called our study this morning – ***PURSUE THESE THINGS!***

As you will see, Peter is going to show us what growing faith is involved in, what it needs to pursue to grow!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at into the following main points. They are,

GROWING IN FAITH – II PETER 1:5-7

PURSUE THESE THINGS – II PETER 1:8-9

BE DILIGENT – II PETER 1:10-11

REMEMBER – II PETER 1:12-15

Before we get to our text this morning, remember what Peter said in our last study, beginning in verse 2 of II Peter chapter 1 as it will lead us to our study this morning. We are told, **“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”**

With that said, let’s begin reading in II Peter chapter 1, beginning in verse 5 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***PURSUE THESE THINGS!***

II PETER 1

VERSES 5-7

I guess the question can be, ***“For what reason is Peter talking about?”***

Peter just talked about escaping the corruption that is in this world through lust and now he tells us that we need to grow, we mature in the faith.

You see, it does take effort, it does take diligence on our part and as the Holy Spirit controls our lives, as we surrender to Him, He will enable us to escape the corruption that is warring against our souls!

Let me ask you another question. *“What is the goal of the Christian life?”*

The goal of our Christian life is to make us more and more into the image of Christ!

Paul, in II Corinthians 3:18 wrote, **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”**

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse. It says, **“And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.”**

How does that happen?

For that to happen we must desire to receive it into our lives, and we must surrender to what the Holy Spirit is showing us through the Word of God.

As someone has said, *“Salvation is the miracle of a moment, sanctification is the work of a lifetime.”*

Remember that Peter has told us that we are partakers of the divine nature back in verse 4 of II Peter chapter 1.

Again, this is not God forcing us into His image. This is what we might call a *“joint partnership”* between us and God’s Holy Spirit working in us.

If God forced us to be like Him, then that the relationship between us and God is a forced relationship. It is not based on love. Here's the thing. We have our free will to obey God or not obey God!

Think of it like this. For our part it is ***SURRENDER – COMPLETE SURRENDER!***

On God's part, it is – ***HIS POWER*** that enables us to be conformed into His image!

That is what Paul wrote in Philippians 2:12-13, **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”**

Please understand that it does not say that we are to work our way ***INTO*** heaven, but we are to ***WORK OUT*** our salvation or what God is doing in our life we need to live it. People need to see that our faith is real in what we do and what we say!

Do you see how there is this partnership with God, not for salvation because He alone saves, but after we are saved, God is working in our lives to conform us into His image!

Again, some feel that once we are saved, we are perfect, and we will never sin again!

That is just pride, and it is a sin!

Yes, in a positional sense we are perfect, there is no sin that God the Father sees in our lives because it has been paid in full by Jesus with the shedding of His blood on the cross of Calvary.

But practically speaking, on a day by day basis, we have a free will, and we do sin and that is what God is working on in our lives, this – ***SANCTIFICATION PROCESS!***

God does not make us holy against our will or without our involvement. We must have that desire to be more like Him, to surrender to His will!

Like an athlete, we must be diligent, determined, disciplined if we are going to grow, mature in our walk with Jesus!

This blew me away. Did you know that basketball star Steph Curry takes some 500 practice shots per day!

I looked at baseball and some of the routines that players had, and it was incredible.

In other words, they were diligent, determined, and disciplined because they wanted to excel in their sport.

As Christians, should we put less effort in our desire to be like our Lord?

Of course not!

Again, it has to start with faith, because, without faith, as Paul wrote, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”** Hebrews 11:6.

And that faith is called the new birth or being born again. But, as we have read, that faith needs to grow, and Peter gives to us seven characteristics or virtues that need to be added to our saving faith if we want to be all that God wants us to be!

Please understand that saving faith is where it begins, not where it ends. That is not the end of what we are to do.

You see, once we are made spiritual sons and daughters we are to grow, mature in the Christian life. And I am sorry to say this doesn't just happen to us, as I have said.

We are supposed to give all diligence to our walk with the Lord.

We are in a battle and make no mistake about it, we are living at a time when evil in our culture is so profound that even Christians are succumbing to the darkness and not living lives of moral excellence.

Thus, “**giving all diligence . . .**”

In other words, we must strive, move forward, because our faith is active and it will grow, it will mature if you care for it just as you need to do with a garden.

What happens when you don't take care of your garden?

Weeds will begin to grow, and they will choke out the life of your plants that are in your garden.

If you don't water your plants, they will die out!

The sad thing about that is when you don't water your plants the weeds will continue to grow! It is part of the curse!

Thus, keeping our heart, like keeping a garden, requires diligence.

Theologian and seminary professor Wayne Grudem says, “*Perhaps a great help in keeping your heart is just the old-fashioned disciplines of the Christian life: Bible reading, private and corporate prayer, worship, obedience to God's word, caring for the needs of others, sharing Christ with others, giving to the Lord's work, fellowship with God's people.*”

Absolutely!

Please understand that we are saved by faith alone, but faith needs to be propped up. It needs to be nourished and protected for it to grow.

Again, a garden illustration.

When you grow tomatoes, you tie the stalks to a stake to support and guide their growth. You don't want them dragging on the ground nor do you want them hid from the sun if you want them to grow and be healthy.

We need the Lord, the Holy Spirit to support us and guide us in our growth. And we need to stay in the Son of God if we want to bear fruit, much fruit in our lives.

That is what Jesus said in John 15:4-5, **“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”**

And here in II Peter we see that Peter lists seven stakes you might say, that will support the growth of our faith. These stakes that support us can also be seen as virtues or qualities that should flow from our lives because our faith is not dead!

Our faith should be living, it should be active. That is what the book of James is all about.

James is not speaking of works saving us but because of our faith in Jesus, because of our love for Him, these things will flow from our lives.

In James 2:14-18 he wrote, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

Again, this is not a salvation by works but a salvation that works because faith without works is just a dead faith!

Now we will get to these seven virtues or qualities that should support our lives, our faith, but before I do, let me say this and then we will look at these virtues.

We must be careful not to think of these characteristics as “*seven rungs on a ladder*” that allow us to “*climb*” higher in our relationship with Jesus, or “*seven stages of development*” that we pass through on our way to Christ-likeness.

You see, the word translated “**add**” doesn’t mean to add “*one at a time*” or “*one on top of another and then another and another.*”

The Greek word really means “*to supply generously.*”

What’s my point?

My point is this. We are not to limit the growth of these virtues in our lives, but we are to continue drawing close to Jesus every day because as we do, these graces will grow and develop simultaneously and naturally as our walk with Jesus grows and matures.

I want you to understand that.

Now, these virtues or qualities begin with - **VIRTUE** – This speaks of moral excellence, good character, quality.

Next, Peter speaks of - **KNOWLEDGE** – This is not just information, but the Word of God opened up to our hearts by the power of God’s Spirit. It is not only knowledge by experience but by the Word of God!

From there Peter speaks of - **SELF-CONTROL** – This is speaking of controlling our passions, not letting our passions control us!

Next Peter speaks of - **PERSEVERANCE** – This is speaking of a steadfast endurance under adverse conditions, when the heat is turned up.

He goes on to speak of - **GODLINESS** – This speaks of holiness, of being set apart for God just as the utensils and implements used in the Temple were set apart for God, they were to be holy unto God.

Then he speaks of - **BROTHERLY KINDNESS** – This is speaking of a brotherly love, that we are to love the family of God.

And lastly, Peter speaks of - **LOVE** – This is **AGAPE** love or unconditional love, sacrificial love. This is a supernatural love not a humanistic or natural love. You see, we can love someone until they wrong us and then we can't love them, we are mad at them, we take vengeance out upon them!

But **AGAPE** love is a love from God that loves others in spite of what they have done to us!

Let me show you an example of **AGAPE** love.

T. E. McCully was the father of Ed McCully, who was one of the five young missionaries killed by the Auca Indians in Ecuador.

One-night T. E. McCully prayed, ***“Lord, let me live long enough to see those fellows saved who killed our boys, that I may throw my arms around them and tell them I love them because they love my Christ.”***

That is not a natural love, but a supernatural love that comes from God!

And here's the thing. We don't wake up one day manifesting these virtues or qualities, but we are called to give all diligence and walk with God, and we will see the fruitful growth of our faith!

We need to understand that our faith must be growing if God is going to use us. And too many times we are foolish in our thoughts. We become blind to what God wants to do in our lives, and we remain stagnant in our growth in the Lord.

“Lord, help us to mature in the faith, having your nature flow from our lives to touch those around us!”

As we read on Peter is going to admonish us to grow in these things or – *PURSUE THESE THINGS!*

VERSES 8-9

Peter’s point is this, and it is pretty simple.

If we as Christians pursue the virtues that he outlined in II Peter 1:5-7, then our lives will be increasingly productive, spiritually speaking.

If not, then Peter speaks of two things that will be manifested in our lives.

First, he says that we will be “**barren.**”

This word is translated from a Greek word that means, “*inactive*” or “*idle*” or “*ineffective.*”

Also, Peter says that we will be “**unfruitful.**”

This word is translated from a Greek word that means “*unproductive*” and is sometimes used in connection with unbelief or apostasy.

Think of it like this.

As Christians, how do people know that our faith is real, that we are mature in the faith?

We don’t carry signs saying we are mature in the faith.

If we did it would just show that we are not mature in the faith!

Then what do we do?

We grow in the knowledge of God, we allow God to pour Himself into our lives not to be a container to hold God, but a channel from which God can flow through and touch the lives of others.

Thus, if you abound in these things people will see the fruit that is born in your life.

But again, if you don't grow in the Lord, if you have eye trouble where your focus is on self rather than God, then you will be barren, those virtues will not flow from your life.

And by taking your eyes off of God, you lose sight of all He did for you, and you will not be diligent to grow, to walk with Him.

Once we understand what we are like, wretched sinners, and then who Jesus is, a holy and righteous God who died for us, that should cause us to have a walk that is worthy of the high calling by which we have been called!

Here is the problem that happens sometimes with Christians. They look back at the past, their life before Christ, and they begin to see them as glory days!

What I mean by that is we start to miss those things that we did and as we start to do that, we make them much better than they were. We don't remember the pain, the hurt, the things we went through and instead of a real picture, we now paint a picture of how wonderful that time was, all the good times that we had!

That is dangerous!

We might call it "*Nostalgia.*"

Think of it like this. "*Nostalgia is remembering the pleasures of sitting in front of the fire without remembering you had to cut the wood.*"

I think that is a perfect picture.

How can this happen?

Because we can become so use to the blessings that God has given to us in Christ that we forget what life was like without Him.

When I got saved, I was a pretty good person. My wife would say that I was more of a Christian not knowing Christ than many Christians she knew! That is not good.

But being pretty good doesn't cut it and the reality was, I was lost and there really was no direction to my life. I did what I wanted because I was the god of my life.

I lived my life according to the world's direction and make no mistake about it, I was influenced by them.

But when I came to Christ my life changed. I now had direction to my life. I knew what I should do, not because the world was telling me, but because the Lord was telling me through His Word opened up to me by His Spirit!

And if I begin to negate what Christ has done in my life and start to remember the past like it was some kind of glory days, I will be in trouble.

For me, I love rock and roll. And I know that if I start listening to that music, it will draw me back and I don't want to go there. I know the songs; I know the words to those songs, and it is amazing how I can just start to hear a song, and the words come flowing out of my lips. And many times, those song lyrics were not very nice!

So we need to be careful here because as we begin to look back the draw can grow and grow and take us away from the One who loves us and died for us.

What can we do about this?

I will give you two things that will help you have a correct perspective of things.

The first one is simple – ***WHO AM I IN CHRIST!***

And the second one is also simple – ***WHO AM I WITHOUT HIM!***

What do I mean by that?

Think about it. In Christ it is His nature that should be flowing from our lives. In other words, the fruit of the Spirit or as Paul put it, **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”** Galatians 5:22-25.

And let me be clear on this when we talk about the fruit of the Spirit. Some may look at these attributes and think that they can love people and have joy, peace, be longsuffering, be kind to others, be a good person, be faithful and gentle, have self-control. But – ***YOU CAN’T!***

Now some of you may be taken back by that and you don’t agree with me but hear me out.

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Some of you are thinking that it is all of these attributes that we just read, but that is not completely correct!

The fruit of the Spirit is – ***LOVE!***

And the word that Paul uses here is ***AGAPE*** love or that unconditional love that is something we can’t manufacture on our own. This is a supernatural love that can only come from God!

Paul, in Romans 5:5 tells us this very thing. He wrote, **“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”**

Paul is saying that God has poured His love into our hearts, this ***AGAPE*** love by the Holy Spirit.

What does that mean?

It means that this supernatural love of God, this love that is seen in the life of Jesus, has been given to us by God!

Then what is the problem?

The problem is we can cut off this love by not obeying the Lord, by hindering the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

And now, you do okay until someone rubs you the wrong way and then you let them have it and you justify your actions and your words. But that is not the fruit of the Spirit, that is demonstrating the works of the flesh!

Make no mistake about it, when you cut off the flow of His love you will not manifest the fruit of the Spirit, which is love and then those other attributes will not be seen because they flow from this *AGAPE LOVE!*

Then what will be seen in my life?

We don't have to guess because Paul tells us here in Galatians, "**Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**" Galatians 5:19-21.

You see, not fruit, but works and they are ugly, they are nasty, and God does not want those things manifested in our lives!

And yes, Paul is speaking of unbelievers here, but make no mistake about it, apart from our surrender to the Holy Spirit, that love of God will not be seen in our lives but what people will see is the works of the flesh!

What can we do about this?

Paul tells us in Galatians as he wrote, “**I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**”

Who are you surrendering to because the flesh wants to control your life! Don't let the flesh control your life, let the Spirit of God!

You see, the best motivation to add to your life is this and I think it will help us build a strong faith and it is what Paul is speaking about here in his letter to the Galatians.

What is that?

We need to recognize that a weak faith might lead to your falling away.

Thus, we need to avoid that at all costs!

In other words – ***PURSUE THESE THINGS!***

And that really leads us to our next point – ***BE DILIGENT!***

VERSES 10-11

Notice how Peter opens this up for us. He tells us that we need to “**be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure.**”

First of all, Peter is stressing the importance of being diligent to live godly lives as Christians!

In other words, pay attention and walk accordingly!

I run outside in good weather and bad weather because running in bad weather is fun for me.

But I do have to pay attention more when I run outside because there are cars, there are people, there are signs that I can run into and have run into because I was not paying attention, there is snow and ice, wind and rain!

In other words, I have to pay attention or be more diligent when I run outside!

As we are in this world, as this world tries to conform us into its image, we need to be diligent and pay attention to these things so that we are not swept away by them. We must allow the Lord to transform our lives.

And here's the thing. The Lord is not going to force us to grow, it is our responsibility to grow as Christians.

He gives us the tools. He allows things in our lives to happen. And these things are there to help us to grow, but we must walk according to that high calling by which we have been called so we can grow. We can fight back, we can avoid what God is doing, and, in the end, we won't grow.

When I was in school, as hard as this is to believe, my teachers gave me homework!

I know, crazy. Didn't they know I didn't have time for homework, there were things to do, places to go, games to play!

Why did they give me homework?

So I can learn the lesson, so I can grow and mature.

God does the same in our lives. He wants us to learn these lessons, He wants us to grow and mature in the faith, but it is our responsibility to grow as Christians.

And not only will we grow as Christians, but as we grow, we are glorifying God in our actions, and He will bless us.

Also, it will hinder the devil's ability to condemn us!

Peter is telling us that we can be sure that God has called us, that we are his elect!

But how?

By what Peter wrote in II Peter 1:5-7, **“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”**

In other words, as we see these things in our lives, not that we are perfect, but we are growing, we can know that our lives are becoming more like the nature of Jesus. We are being conformed into the image of His Son as Paul reminds us in Romans 8:29, **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”**

As we are **“giving all diligence”** to these things, we can keep ourselves from stumbling. And this should just make sense, that as we continue to grow in the faith it will keep us from stumbling!

And we see here that Peter wants us to be sure that our calling and election is sure, that we are not just pretending to be saved!

That is so important, because you will have an eternity to reflect on the non-decision you have made for Christ!

But here is a problem for some Christians. They lack the assurance of their salvation because they are not good enough to be saved.

In saying that, notice again what Peter is saying here. He is speaking of the assurance we can have in regard to our salvation!

Think about what assurance means.

The dictionary says this of the word “*assurance*.” It says, “*full confidence; freedom from doubt; certainty.*”

And the Bible tells us very clearly that we can have an assurance of our salvation. Jesus said in John 5:24, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.**”

In other words, we see Jesus telling us that we can have assurance of our salvation. And let me be clear on this. Satan can’t rob you of your salvation because God has saved us, and we are secure in Him.

Then what can Satan do?

Satan can rob us of our assurance regarding our salvation and that is a dangerous place to be because it robs us of our joy and growing in the Lord.

And I understand that some may feel that they are not good enough for God. I don’t want to hurt your fragile self-esteem, but you are not good enough for God!

That is just the reality. None of us are good enough for God! Do you think God died for good people?

No, He died for sinners, He died for you and me because He loves us that much and that should just cause us to shout – ***PRAISE THE LORD!***

And here’s the thing. If our salvation was based upon our goodness, we all would be in trouble.

Our salvation is based on the goodness of Jesus Christ, and it is a grace gift to us. And if it is grace, then it is not of works or it would not be grace, and God would owe us heaven!

Then how can we be sure that we are saved?

First of all, the Word of God gives us assurance of our salvation.

Remember what we read, these words of Jesus in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

And John tells us in I John 5:13, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

Not only do we have God’s Word, but we can also look at, examine our own lives to see if we are growing for Peter tells us **“if you do these things.”**

What things?

Again, what he just told us in II Peter 1:5-7, **“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”**

You see, we should be growing, maturing in the Lord, being conformed to His image as I have said.

May we walk accordingly and not take our salvation lightly, it cost Christ His life to save us! And may we believe what the Word of God says to us instead of the lies of the Devil!

May we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and may the fruit of the Spirit be manifested in our lives!

As William MacDonald reminds us, *“Not only is there safety in constant spiritual progress, there is also the promise of a richly-provided entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Peter refers here not to the fact of our entry but to the manner of it. The only basis of admission to the heavenly kingdom is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - but some will have a more abundant entrance than others. There will be degrees of reward. And the rewards are here said to depend on the degree of one’s conformity to the Savior.”*

But we have to step out in faith if we want to grow and it is not always easy! In fact, it is never easy, but the Lord is with us leading the way.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

My daughter taught swimming lessons in our pool. She always left the line up separating the deep from the shallow until her students were familiar with the pool.

After a week of lessons and the children were swimming, she knew they were ready for the deeper level.

To acclimate them to this, she would take down the line separating the two levels.

Usually, this would make the students very nervous.

This was shown by one boy in particular when he remarked, *“Miss Tahnee, please put the line back up . . . the deep water is getting into the shallow water!”*

We laugh at this, but are we no different?

Our Father may challenge us to a newer level of growth by urging us out of our comfort zone.

And we cry, *“But Father, the deep water is getting into the shallow water!”*

- Source Unknown

How true that is.

Thus, we must – ***BE DILIGENT!***

But it is hard!

Yes, it is hard but – ***REMEMBER!***

Remember what?

That is what we will be looking at next.

VERSES 12-15

I find these verses interesting because there have been those who think they have gotten all they need from the Bible and basically, there really is nothing for them to gain from another Bible study.

One person said, *“I have been through the teaching on that book already, I don’t need to hear it again!”*

That is just pride and foolishness. Sorry, but true and Peter calls out anyone who feels that way on it!

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“So I intend always to remind you about these things, although indeed you know them and are firm in the truth that [you] now [hold].”**

Notice that Peter has told them about these things before, he has shared the Word of God with them, maybe they read Paul’s letters, and I think they did as II Peter 3:16 tells us.

Some of you have been with me for almost 30 years and we have been through the Bible twice and we are on our third time through, as well as doing these in-depth studies. Thus, you have heard it all!

I don't think I am telling you anything new, but I am reminding you of the things that you have already learned. You know these things!

For those that think they have heard it all already, well, I guess they knew better than Peter!

Peter is saying that he has taught them, and he will continue to teach them and remind them of these things.

Why is it that people need to be reminded?

Because we forget things!

When I read this statistic, this research, it was a little discouraging, but I think that is why I write down so much when I go to retreats or listen to a teaching, so I can remember them.

Research shows that within an hour after hearing a message, a teaching, people will forget up to 90% of what they heard!

Thus, repetition is important. That is what God was teaching the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**"

But Israel forget the truths of God, they forgot the work of God, their memory was poor and thus, in Isaiah 17:10-11 we are told, **“Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, Therefore you will plant pleasant plants And set out foreign seedlings; In the day you will make your plant to grow, And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; But the harvest will be a heap of ruins In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.”**

Why is it we can remember a song we heard 20 or 30 years ago and sing the words to them and yet when it comes to the Word of God, our memory of God, the works of God, we can't remember?

I think it has to do with the time we put into it, the effort we put into it.

We need to spend time in God's Word and make those pathways in our brain an easy access to this information and not some off the road deserted area.

As we have seen with athletes and the time they put into their sport, and yet our spiritual lives are more important, and we should be putting the time into knowing our Lord more and more. May we not neglect these things but be diligent to grow in our knowledge of God through His Word!

Why is it right for Peter to remind them of the things of God?

Peter knew his life was coming to an end as he sat in prison in Rome. In fact, his martyrdom could have been just weeks to months away and thus, he wanted to pass on to the people the things of God so that they can grow and mature in the faith!

Peter realized some of the believers became complacent in the faith, they were lethargic, so he says that he wanted **“to stir you up”** or *DIEGEIRO*, (dee-eg-i'-ro) in the Greek and the idea here is ***“to arouse completely”*** or ***“to thoroughly awaken.”***

Any pastor who loves his people would have a passion like this, to stir his people up, to be spiritually alert.

Remember what Peter said in I Peter 5:8-9, **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”**

And Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5:14-17, **“Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”**

Both Peter and Paul are admonishing them to wake up, be spiritually alert and what they warned them back then, we need to take heed today and be alert because the enemy is prowling and the way to resist Him is in the faith!

Also, Peter is telling them that he is going to put off this tent of flesh and enter into a mansion that God has prepared for his Spirit and soul to dwell in.

In John 14:1-3 we are told of these mansions or bodies the Lord is preparing for us, **“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”**

Also, Peter says that he is going to die just as the Lord showed him.

What does Peter mean that the Lord showed him how he was going to die?

In John 21:18-19, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, as Jesus restores Peter after Peter denied the Lord three times, we are told, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”**

Peter was going to be crucified, and tradition tells us that he refused to be crucified like His Lord, he was not worthy, and thus, they crucified Peter upside down!

So Peter knew the time of his departure was soon, but that was not going to distract him from reminding these believers the things of God because he knew to be absent from this body was to be present with the Lord!

And listen to how Peter finishes up this section on his departure. He said in II Peter 1:15, **“Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”**

Peter did not leave behind money, a few camels, some jewelry or even his fishing business.

Peter left behind the truths of God written down so that others can learn and be reminded.

What are you leaving behind?

You see, we make out wills to leave behind our physical wealth to those we like, but what are you leaving behind in a spiritual sense because that is what will last?

What have you left for your children, your friends, even your enemies so they will not forget the Word and works of God?

The legacy of seeing your family walk with God, your friends, even your enemies, watching them grow in the Lord is more valuable than anything else we can leave behind!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this. He wrote,

Peter knew that he was going to die, so he wanted to leave behind something that would never die - the written Word of God.

His two epistles became a part of the inspired Scriptures, and they have been ministering to the saints for centuries.

Men die, but the Word of God lives on!

It is possible that Peter was also alluding to the Gospel of Mark. Most Bible scholars believe that the Spirit used Peter to give John Mark some of the data for his book (see 1 Peter 5:13).

One of the church fathers, Papias, said that Mark was “*Peter’s disciple and interpreter.*”

The church of Jesus Christ is always one generation away from extinction. If there were no dependable written revelation, we would have to depend on word-of-mouth tradition.

If you have ever played the party game “*Gossip,*” you know how a simple sentence can be radically changed when passed from one person to another!

We do not depend on the traditions of dead men; we depend on the truth of the living Word. Men die, but the Word lives forever.

If we did not have a dependable written revelation, the church would be at the mercy of men’s memories.

People who pride themselves on having good memories should sit on the witness stand in a courtroom! It is amazing that three perfectly honest witnesses can, with good conscience, give three different accounts of an automobile accident! Our memories are defective and selective. We usually remember what we want to remember, and often we distort even that.

Fortunately, we can depend on the written Word of God. ***“It is written”*** and it stands written forever. We can be saved through this living Word (1 Peter 1:23-25), nurtured by it (1 Peter 2:2), and guided and protected as we trust and obey.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 934

And as Peter continues on in this letter, he is going to show us the importance of God’s Word, if any of you are struggling with that and for those who believe it, understand that truth, then this will be an encouragement to you!

Let me close with this. We are told,

Roselyn Aranson has a wonderful piece she’s entitled, ***“Oh, Mr. Tentmaker.”***

Here’s a portion, ***“It was nice living in this tent when it was strong and secure. But, Mr. Tentmaker, it’s scary now. My tent is acting like it’s not going to hold together. The poles seem weak, and the canvas has a rip. It’s scary in here, Mr. Tentmaker, why did you give me such a flimsy tent?”***

The Tentmaker replies, *“As the Creator and Provider of tents, I know all about you and your tent, and I love you. I made a tent for myself once. It too was vulnerable, and attackers ripped it to pieces while I was still in it - but you’ll be glad to know they couldn't hurt me. The experience now prepares Me to live in your tent with you if you invite me. You’ll learn, as we dwell together, that real security comes from me being in your tent with you. When storms come, I’ll hold you. Someday your tent will collapse (it’s only for temporary use). And when it does, you and I will live together.”*

Our bodies are but a tent. We await the heavenly model.

- Sandy Adams, II Peter 1

And as we do wait, may we – ***GROW IN THE FAITH!***

Not only grow in the faith but may we – ***PURSUE THESE THINGS OF GOD!***

And in doing that, we need to – ***BE DILIGENT!***

And may we not forget all that God has done, is doing and will do in our lives and may we live accordingly as we – ***REMEMBER!***