



“How Not to Be Ineffective or Unfruitful”

2 Peter 1:8-15

Sermon Date: March 6th, 2016

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Prayer

As you begin your study this week, pray that the Lord would continue His work in you so that your life might reflect the image of Christ in greater and greater measure. Ask for growth in virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love, in order that you would be fruitful and effective in glorifying Jesus Christ in your life (1:5-8). As you pray, consider the following words of this prayer taken from At the Throne of Grace: A Book of Prayers by John MacArthur and make them your own before the Lord.

*“Lord of Glory,
Your Word teaches from cover to cover that salvation is not a reward for good works;
eternal life is granted to sinners like us by grace alone through faith alone.
We furthermore know and freely confess that the good works done by believers
are fruits of Your saving work, not the cause of it.
So our only claim to heaven is grounded in the promise that Christ is our righteousness;
His own perfection covers believers like a spotless garment...
Our hope therefore lies not in any merit or good works of our own.
We trust Christ alone for our salvation, and we humbly and fervently pray that
our lives might reflect His character, show forth the glory of His righteousness,
and be living examples of His goodness.
Clothe us not only in His righteousness, but also in His wisdom,
His virtue, His holiness, and His humility.
Conform us perfectly to His image, according to Your eternal purpose.
We ask these things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived and died
and rose again in order that we might have life. Amen.”*

Scripture

2 Peter 1:8–15 – (English Standard Version)

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Handling the Word

1. How would you summarize the theme of the passage we studied last week (2 Peter 1:3-7 in particular)? How does it relate to our text for study this week (1:8-15)?

2. Our passage begins in verse 8 with the words “For if these qualities are yours.” Look back at verses 5 through 7 and write out the qualities that are listed there. Briefly refresh your memory on what they each mean and keep these qualities in mind as you work your way through the study.

Understanding and Applying

1. In referring back to the qualities listed in verses 5 through 7, Peter makes it clear that these things should be true of believers in increasing measure throughout their lives (v.8). Why is it important to remember that, while these qualities will not be perfected in believers in this life, there should be evidence of continual growth in these areas? What are things that we must do if these qualities are going to be evident in increasing measure in our lives?

2. On the opposite side of the equation, we are told that those who lack these qualities provide evidence that they have been spiritually blinded and have lost sight of the gospel in their lives (v. 9). How does reflecting on the gospel and recalling what has been done for you in salvation help to both prevent this spiritual blindness from occurring, and to also cure the blindness if it does occur? Spend some time reading and reflecting upon Psalm 103 in order that you would recall what has been done for you and would “forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

3. What positive impact do these qualities have on our gospel witness to the world around us if they are true of us and are increasing? What negative impact does it have on our witness when we appear to lack these qualities?

4. In verse 10, Peter tells believers that in practicing these qualities, they are making their calling and election sure. This is not a reference to us somehow being able to secure our own salvation before God, as that is done only through the completed work of Jesus on our behalf. It is a reference to the assurance, or confirmation, that we as believers receive when we see the evidence of these things growing in our lives. Why does seeing these qualities grow provide a source of great assurance that you are truly one of His children (also refer to Romans 8:12-16)? Have you experienced this type of assurance in your life? Why or why not?

5. Peter tells us in verse 11, that if we practice the things listed in verses 5 through 7, we “will never fall.” As Max Anders explains, “This does not mean that you will never have a problem or that you will never sin again. The picture is that of a march, and the point here is that the true believer will never fall out of the march to heaven.” Why is this such an encouragement for believers? How does this truth serve to further encourage us to “make every effort to supplement [our] faith” with these qualities?

6. Even though the believers that Peter was writing to were familiar with, and established in, the truths he was writing (v. 12), Peter still felt it was important for them to be reminded of them again (v. 12-13). Similarly, why do believers today need to be continually reminded of the truths of God's Word (Mark 13:35-37, Romans 13:11-14)? How do repetitions and reminders serve to "stir you up" and avoid spiritual slumber?

7. What are some of the ways you regularly remind yourself of the truths of God's Word? What are some biblical truths you feel as though you need to be reminded of on a consistent basis?

8. Notice, in verses 12 through 15, that the imminence of Peter's death did not push him toward coasting toward the finish line of his life. Instead, the nearness of his death made him all the more diligent to be about the work of the Lord and making "every effort" to leave behind that which would be helpful to the body of Christ. As R.C. Sproul noted, Peter was showing Jesus' disciples "not only how to live but also how to die." How does Peter's mindset regarding the end of his life differ from the way many Christians envision how their final years will look? What are some things that have the potential of preventing us from sharing Peter's mindset?

9. If you knew you only had a short time remaining in your life, what would you spend your time doing? What would be your greatest priorities in your final days? Why?

10. What do you feel that the Lord has been teaching you through His Word this week? What in your life needs to be prayed for, confessed, or altered as a result of what you have learned?

"The business of the church and of preaching is not to present us with new and interesting ideas, it is rather to go on reminding us of certain fundamental and eternal truths...the business of the Christian church is constantly to remind men and women of certain things which they constantly tend to forget."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones