

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 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. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

This is now our third week in 2 Peter and it is rich affirming truth for us.

I think it was week one where I used the illustration of Hoover making his agents study real money so that the fake money becomes very obvious because the characteristics of the real thing is burned into memory.

2 Peter is a warning against false religion. False teachers, but he begins at the beginning. Like Herbert Hoover, we are studying the real, so that the false is patently obvious in comparison.

We have a lengthy list of imperatives to consider this morning, and I confess, sometimes I've read through these and thought; I'm hopeless. I obviously fall short in many ways. If this is a brick house and these are the courses of bricks going up, I'm still at the foundation.

So, what's the difference between me and the false teachers?

The difference is, when I read through this list, my heart aches to be this person. And the reason I want to be that person is because these traits, this list of things Peter lines out, transcend this world. They glorify Christ and what He has accomplished for us.

Unsaved people are unconcerned about a list of traits that if lived out

successfully, would bring glory to the creator. This list of traits defines what God created us to be, in fellowship and harmony with Him, before the fall.

Remember Peter's goal. Expose false teachers. This is a mirror for us. It defines who is true and who is false. False teachers and false religion don't give a fig about this list or for that matter, the glory of God.

This list is a mirror. It either affirms us in our faith, or, perhaps, if these things seem tedious and unrealistic, then, perhaps the mirror is telling you, you're not saved at all.

So, let's dig in. Peter begins by looking backwards to what he's just said; *Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence,*

What very reason, Peter. What is it that he's basing what he will say next on. So the first thing to do is back track and review a little bit, because this is a continuation of what he was already said. So, looking again at vss 1-4

*1Simon Peter, a bond-servant 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: 2Grace and peace
be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
3seeing 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. 4For 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.*

We could outline those verses with bullet points that are the "for this very reason's"

- A received like - precious - faith
- Imputed righteousness of Christ
- God's favor and inner peace.

- Intimate friendship with God.
- Given everything necessary for life and godliness by His divine power
- We are called and thus enjoy precious and magnificent promises
- We are partakers of the divine nature. Christ lives in us.
- We have escaped this worlds corruption and lust

Now for this very reason also,

Pick any one. All of them are interconnected. I think you could sum up the answer to our question, what *very reason* is Peter looking back on, and say, being a christian encompasses all of those things combined.

But mostly, I think Peter is looking back to the end result of all the magnificence and promises and power and blessing and favor and peace to the ultimate result. We've escaped this fallen world. We've been called out of this corrupted lustful vile world. We are seperated. We are distinctly set apart.

So Peter takes this moment after his introduction which is running over with all of the riches of our inheritance, and he says, for this very reason,
get to work!

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence,

"*Applying all diligence*" is the nice way of saying; Get busy. Get to work.

This may cause you some heartburn. We evangelicals have made such an issue, and rightly so, of defining salvation as Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone based in Scripture alone for the Glory of God - alone.

In swinging the pendulum back safely out of a works based salvation, we've swung it so far, that there was almost nothing left. We've

corrected some of the overswing. Easy believism. Only believe. Grace plus nothing, and heavy on the nothing. Jesus as Saviour *but* Lordship is optional.

35 years ago we were fighting those battles.

So then, why does Paul say; *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*. And why does Peter say; *apply all diligence in your faith*. Get to work on this list of stuff. And why does Jesus say over and over; *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*

Those all sound like a works salvation. What's the balance here? Because we don't want to be legalists. Pharisee's. Those guys who were working like mad for salvation were Jesus antagonists. Enemies.

Well, we're talking about apples and oranges, that's why. I'm going to throw out a couple of big words, which we're not supposed to do these days, and then I'm going to define them and you'll see how we're talking about different things.

Soteriology. Ooh. 6 syllables. Take that to the bank. So-te-ri-ol-o-gy is the study of salvation. The mechanics of salvation. How it is that the plan of God works to save us. How did all of those things in vss 1 - 4 happen. That's salvation. Soteriology.

God has known us from before the foundation of the world. Before He formed us in our mother's wombs, He knew us. He called us out of this world. We are chosen. We were dead in our sins and He quickened us from the dead. He made us alive together with Christ.

All of that preceded our salvation experience. We thought it was us, asking Him to come into our hearts that caused it. No, He caused it long before that event. We would have never asked for forgiveness of sins if He hadn't already made the dead spirit alive. He supplied the very faith that made me believe.

That's some, but not all, of soteriology. How salvation occurs. It's 100% Him and zero percent me. I was dead. He gets all of the credit.

All of the glory. It's all of Him and none of me. My self generated righteous works were garments soiled by sewage to Him. Worthless.

In that sense, Christ plus nothing makes sense. It squares up perfectly with this book. Sound doctrine.

But, Paul says work out your salvation. And Peter in our passage today says "get to work" on a whole list of righteousness, and Jesus says if you love me, the proof will be that you keep my commandments. What's up with all these demands for works. I thought He did it all, and nothing was required of me.

Second big word. Not quite as big. Only 5 syllables. Sanctification.

What is sanctification. Sanctification is the process where we separate ourselves from the corruptions of this world and over time, incrementally, really incrementally for some of us who are particularly hard headed, we are becoming more like Christ.

Salvation is the entry point. Sanctification is the road traveled after salvation until the day that we see His face. Sanctification and salvation are two different things. Sanctification is possible because of salvation. Sanctification requires effort from me. Salvation was all of Him. Apples / Oranges.

And the words are used interchangeably. So, when Paul says work out your salvation with fear and trembling, and Peter says get to work on this big long list of godly traits, and Jesus says if you're real, and you love me, you'll prove it by keeping my commandments, those things have nothing to do with initial salvation. God supplies that.

But once He has, then it's time to get serious about becoming a christian. The word meant a 'little christ'. It was used in derision about us by the world. Bunch of little christs. But we owned it. That's exactly what we are to do. Become little christs.

Now, this list of Peter's is a demarcation line. Because unsaved people can't accomplish any of these traits, nor do they have any concern or

desire to.

So Peter's accomplishing two things here. He's goading us on to get serious about the hard work of making real gains in all of these areas.

But he's also saying, these folks who are claiming to be christians and teachers and whatever else. False shepherds. Look at their lives. Do they exhibit any of these hard fought spiritual truths? Do they look like this list? Do they exhibit any concern about being different and seperated from the corruptions of this world? And if not, why not.

Real believers, born again, Holy Spirit indwelt christians are always somewhere on this journey of sanctification. The struggle with the world and it's corrupted systems, the struggle with our still fallen flesh, the struggle with Satan and demonic forces of evil; those battles never end, if you're a christian.

When I was very young, a new christian and I was trying to analyze all of this, I discovered in 1st Thessalonians that Paul breaks it down as body, soul, spirit. We could say our bodies are on an uninterrupted pathway to death.

I was looking for pictures of Goldfield for a friend and I came across a picture of me and Heather when she was Senior homecoming princess. We're standing on the football field up at the high school. Exactly 20 years ago.

I was slender. 180 -ish pounds. Not a gray hair, OK maybe a couple on my temples. Not a bad looking man. Nothing special, but ordinary enough. These last 20 years have not been kind. This body is dying and there's not much I can do about it. Or perhaps not willing to do about some of it.

Our bodies are dying. My spirit was the part of me that was dead. When Jesus saved me, He quickened my dead spirit and made it alive together with His. Once and forever, alive.

That leaves my soul, and that's the part of me that Peter and Paul and

Jesus tell me, I need to work on. Now those terms get interchanged in the Bible.

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 from the Lord, the Spirit. 2Cor. 3:18

Sanctification is a transformation that takes a lifetime. We look into this mirror, *beholding as in a mirror*, and incrementally we are transformed. For some of us, it's painfully slow.

All of these words Peter is going to give us are traits that are increasing during this long process of sanctification. That's normative for christians. What isn't normative is for someone to claim they're a christian, and they live 40 more years after that, and they have no interest in making any effort to be more christlike than when they started.

Are those folks christians? People who are happy to ignore all of these words that they just find tedious.

Remember, Peter's painting a portrait of the real, so that the false, by simple comparison to these things, is obvious. So, if you don't look like this portrait, you may in fact have good reason to worry.

There is affirmation here for those who are applying diligence in their faith to become more and more like these words. Of course we fail. We stumble often. But we get back up and dust ourselves off and get back to work on being the person described by these words. That person is Jesus.

We'll look at one more truth before we dive in and consider these words. Peter says very simply; *5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply*

In your faith **supply**; We aren't doing this by our bootstraps. We aren't reaching into our dead selves and finding these traits. Our old selves can't do these things consistently.

The growth that separates us from the corruptions of this fallen world, and increases us in these traits Peter will describe has a source. And that source isn't in our old self. The supply for these godly, christlike traits is our faith.

OK, I'm going to apply effort to gain ground in my sanctification, and the source for any gains is going to come from a single source of supply. Faith. That sounds ambiguous. What is faith. Faith in what? How do we increase in faith. Where does faith come from? The word alone is too nebulous.

I'll remind you a thousand times I hope before I'm gone; *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Words in a book. Inspired God breathed words are the source for faith. The words of this book. Read them. Memorize them. Meditate on them. Study them. Pray them back to God.

Faith is the supply for all of these godly traits, and the supply for faith is this book. Any real gain in godliness, godly traits is going to have a faith connection to this book. There is no other substitute for time spent in this book.

Non-christians, people who do not have the resident truth teacher, the Holy Spirit indwelling them have no source to make any of the words in Peter's list real in a way that is acceptable to God.

These truths, these words of Peters, these goals are supplied by a faith that is connected to this book via the indwelling Holy Spirit. The supply to grow in these things is only available to real born again believers. That's why these things Peter will describe also become a test for false teachers.

Jeremiah 13:23 says; 23 "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.*

That's a very clear statement. This becomes an axiomatic truth. Fallen

men, born into sin, have no capacity to do good that is acceptable to God.

The writer of Proverbs 27:22 says;

Though you pound a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, Yet his foolishness will not depart from him. You can't pound evil out and you can't pound all of these traits in.

James repeats this truth another way; *11 Can both fresh water and bitter water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree grow olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good conduct, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom....*

Jesus repeated this truth also in Matthew 7. The sermon on the mount. This is Peter's base line. You wonder why Peter begins a discussion about false teachers with a list of traits that define and can only define true christians; As usual, Peter is the echo in the room. Saying what Jesus already said;

Mt. 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

We need to know what a good tree looks like. What are the defining elements of what Jesus refers to in His analogy as *a good tree that bears good fruit.*

Can you assemble a picture for us Peter. What would a picture of a good tree include? What are the elements that combine to form a good tree. A fruitful tree. Peter's list of traits for christians to add to their salvation by faith is that picture.

We just have a little time left, and I want to look this morning at one last word in Peter's introduction because it adds a lot of color to what we're trying to explain. *Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith **supply***

Supply. Some of the translations say supplement. Others simply say add.

The greek word is most interesting. I'm not a greek student. All I can do is read what others have written to try to help me. The word is epichorégeó (ep-ee-khor-ayg-eh'-o) and it was used of the man who lavishly supplies all of the necessary elements to bring a choral production.

The pre word epi strengthens the idea. This isn't a podunk production, this is a lavish one.

We still use a form of this word today. Choreograph. We might say that the director of a movie choreographs all of the necessary elements to bring the final production.

He has to find the right actors and he needs musicians and cameramen and grips and then he combines all of those things to create a movie.

Or I might say I'm choreographing the restoration of a 1957 Thunderbird. I'm bringing all the elements together to create my vision. First I buy a battered car with good bones, as we say. Then I take it to someone who has more talent than I do.

We gather all the necessary things we'll need. New parts, body work, fresh chrome, Ditzler paint, a ton of labor, I sell other toys like mad trying to raise the capitol to fund all of this. All of this combined choreographing will hopefully produce a nearly perfect Thunderbird. Combining elements for a production.

Me and Pam took our very brief honeymoon in a 1956 Thunderbird. Perhaps with some luck and hard work and a lot of horse trading of

other toys we can take our 2nd honeymoon in a Coral Sand 1957. We'll see.

But that's our word. What would we gather and combine to make a picture of a christian? What are the elements of a christian that need to be supplied.

Peter gives us a recipe;
supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

Here then are the elements of a real believer. How do we tell the good tree from the bad one? Here's Peter's recipe.

- Moral excellence
- knowledge
- self-control
- perseverance
- godliness
- brotherly kindness
- love

Next week we'll take some time to look at all of those words. But for now, that's our picture. And because we have a well defined picture of the real thing, the false, the phony, the dangerous false teachers, the wolves in sheeps clothing will be easy to spot.

This picture is the type. The anti-type becomes obvious.