

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.

Last week we finished vs. 5, but it was a struggle. I confess that looking back I wasn't pleased with the study. Too much Jim, too little scripture.

The part about church history and how the church transitioned from fundamentalism to evangelicalism and how Billy Graham had an enormous role in that was interesting.

I'm a student of church history and church current. A little of that is OK. The couple of word studies were OK. But the rest was rubbish. I'm sorry.

Fasten your seat belts because I'm re-invigorated to simply consider the text, break down the important words, and make the sense of it together.

Peter is giving us a recipe for what real Christians look like. The Herbert Hoover thing. Look at what's real until it's coming out of your pores. And then the phony will be obvious.

Chapter 2 we get to Peter's description of the false. This morning we're taking time to look at what's true. And these qualities are true of every Christian that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Peter says we are partakers of the divine nature.

That's the test. Real believers are indwelt by Christ, and the Spirit of

God that dwells in us causes us to little by little look more and more like Christ. This list of attributes is a definition of Jesus personality. If you're a christian, that personality dwells with you and is in you. We have become partakers of the divine nature.

So this chapter becomes a source of assurance of salvation. Peter says;
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 That's assurance. No I'm not perfect. But I'm not the Jim I was 47 years ago when I first set out on this journey.

So then, let's pick it up in verse 6. We'll read vs. 5 for context, but we'll look at the words in vs. 6 and following.

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.

*And in your knowledge, **self control**.* The old school word for those of us who love the beauty of the "authorized" version is temperance.

We don't use that word much any more, partly because like many good words, it got over-used. In the 1920's, temperance was the movement to ban alcoholic beverages. It lost it's wider meaning, and largely, fell out of use, once we got over prohibition.

Temperance just brought up pictures of angry ladies that wanted to stamp out alcohol consumption. When you say fundamentalist or puritan, the same picture comes to mind. Sad because those were both excellent words too that we've lost. Sometimes I think this is Satan's strategy.

The greek word here is en-kra-teia from the root word kratos which means strength. Holding back power. Power under control. The idea behind the word is that God gave us many different good gifts, but they are only good, when they are under control.

We can think of many examples of good gifts, blessings, which if not controlled become problems for us and everybody else. The idea is containment.

That control, knowing how far to go and when to stop, is strength. Self discipline is strength. Fire is a good thing, but it has to stay in the fire place or it burns my house down. Water is a good thing, but it has to stay in the pipes, in the hot water tank, until I call for it, and then it has to stay in the drain pipe.

Those are simple examples. Gasoline is a good thing. We control it, we shoot a mixture of gasoline and air into the motor's cylinders and we have a controlled explosion that urges the car forward. All of these good things are only good when they are contained by something strong enough to keep them under control.

Likewise, many of God's good gifts given to humans, now fallen humans, are only good when they are under control. Restraint. We could say that good gifts, used with proper restraint, brings maximum flourishing.

Will you indulge me for a moment? I learned this week that I'm a big old liberal. The latin word liber means freedom. Libs are people who love freedom. I'm all in. The least amount of restrictions stopping me from what I decide I want to do.

But I also learned that there's classic liberalism and progressive liberalism. I'm a classic liberal. Because I understand that flourishing comes from restraint. The only way to keep our freedom we've enjoyed more in this nation than anywhere else on earth, is to recognize this biblical principle of self control. Restraint.

Because when that goes away, the flourishing departs. The fire is out of the fire place. The water is out of the pipe. The gasoline will explode.

I love my freedom, and I want to keep it as long as possible. But this principal, right here in 2 Peter 1 vs. 6 is necessary, or everything comes

apart.

Moral excellence. Knowledge. Self control. These three principles are necessary for people to flourish. Look around you. That's all I'll say. I'm determined not to go down rabbit trails, but, this Biblical principle is mandatory, it is necessary for people to flourish.

God isn't trying to spoil our fun. God is telling us how to maximize it. This book is precious. Valuable.

And then Peter says; *and in your self-control, **perseverance**,*

Perseverance. This is the word; hu-po-mon-e and it has been translated patience, endurance, steadfastness, perseverance.

And it isn't talking about momentary patience. In the original form the hearer understood, this is long term patience.

This is the idea that life is going to have difficulty. I remember as a new christian going to evangelism classes and courses and invariably we were told to tell people how good their life can be if they're a christian.

Everything will be better. Sunny days will never end. It's a spiritual high that's better than any earthly high. And those things are true. There are moments we wouldn't trade for anything this world can offer, right?

Forgiveness of sin. Fellowship with God who created everything and loves us. A personal relationship with God. Precious and magnificent promises. Eventually, heaven when we leave this world. All of that is true.

But then the arthritis comes. Long term pain. Cancer. Incredible challenges that God allows his beloved children to go through.

It'd be easy to be a christian if it was all mountain top exhilaration. But God allows trouble to temper us. Paul had a messenger from Satan that followed him throughout his life. Let's let Paul tell us the story and the

purpose.

2Cor. 12:7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

God allowed that difficulty. Long term difficulty. Most of his life. All of his ministry. Many scholars believe it was an eye disease that caused not only loss of vision, it made him sort of pussy and hideous.

God allowed that, for His purposes and Paul's benefit. And Paul's benefit resulted in our Bible. But it wasn't fun. It describes our word. Endurance. Patience in long term difficulty. Perseverance. Whatever the problem was, it made Paul miserable, but it didn't stop him. He soldiered on. He endured. We're here today because Paul endured.

Christians endure. Trouble comes and sometimes we get the answer to the prayer we want, and sometimes we don't. Sometimes it's *My grace is sufficient for thee . . .* and then, if you're a christian, you endure it.

Billy Graham was an example for all of us. Lonely. His beloved Ruth gone for 11 years. Weak and old and sick. In all of his final interviews he said the same thing. I'm looking forward to heaven. I just want to see Jesus, and be with Ruth.

Why did God keep him here until he was almost 100. I don't have the answer. But what I do know is that endurance in trouble, in hardness and sorrow and pain, that enduring brings glory to Christ.

No one before or since endured what Job endured. What did Job say? *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.* That quality, that endurance,

glorifies our God. It's the mark of a christian.

I've been reading Fox's Book of Martyrs. Unimaginable things the world heaps on christians. Tie their limbs to wild animals and frighten the animals so they are literally pulled into pieces. And the theme on every page is that God supplies other worldly grace, and the christians endure to the end for the glory of God.

*and in your perseverance, **godliness**,*

Godliness. With a little g. God like ness. Eu-se-bei-a.

Paul inadvertently gives us the meaning in his encouragement to Timothy;

*1Tim. 6:2b Teach and preach these principles. 3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the **doctrine conforming to godliness**,⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing*

Sound doctrine, sound teaching conforms us to godliness. God like. We have the mind of Christ, Paul says to the Corinthians. ...¹⁵ *The spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is not subject to anyone's judgment. 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct Him?" **But we have the mind of Christ.***

It's what Peter just said 2 verses back. ⁴ *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.*

We are partakers of the divine nature . . . we have the mind of Christ. When the Holy Spirit walks in us and we in Him, we are godly. We are, by the Spirit, conformed to Christ.

And that quality comes to the christian in tiny doses as we peer into this book, this mirror of God, we are transformed, the doctrine conforms us to god-like-ness. godliness comes from time spent, in the Spirit, looking

into this book. The doctrine, the book, conforms us, shapes us to godliness.

*7 and in your godliness, **brotherly kindness**, philadelphian*

The word means love of the brothers. That single word is translated *love of the brethren* in 1 Peter 1:22 and *brotherly kindness* in this instance.

Our word here, our use has two words joined. adelphos, and phileo. philadelphian.

Phileo means love. The kind a family has for it's own members. Unconditional acceptance. Not sexual love, that's eros, but family love. Affection for each other.

Adelphos, the second word in our compound word, was used by the greeks exactly how we use the word brother today. Those who have common parents are brothers. Sisters. And out of that family bond, the word is expanded to mean others who are joined together in common cause.

Men in a Union hall are called brothers. We expand that idea of a family unit pulling together, something that's gotten lost on our current generation, for the common cause of security and sustenance and life, the dependence on one another that the family unit brought. Common good. We expand that to others that we are in common cause with. Families became tribes. Tribes become cities. Cities become nations.

God designed that into His church. In it's purest theoretical state, when we become christians, we are taken out of this world, and our citizenship is in heaven. We are seperated from our tribe, and transferred into a new tribe. The church universal.

A family, a brotherhood of believers who have in common that their ties to this world, if necessary, are broken, and they have become members individually and corporately to a new family. God's family.

Jesus said some shocking things in Luke 14. Scandalous truths. Truths evangelicals are uncomfortable with. He said;

26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple.

We American evangelicals tend to look at that and say, that's a hard saying and I'm going to leave that for another day. He must have meant something, but I can't imagine what it is.

But what if you're a 15 year old girl in Iran, and a little band of gypsy like people are passing near your town and you go to them and they share that a man, a jew, came to this world from His home in heaven and He died in your place so that He could take away your sin and impute His perfect righteousness to your account, and if you will receive Him, He will dwell with you and in you, and your citizenship will be transferred out of this cursed world into heaven for eternity.

Your heart is on fire and you want with all your being, what these folks obviously have. But there's a tremendous cost involved. Your father will try to kill you. Your mother will dis-own you. Your brothers and sisters will spit on you and turn their backs to you. You'll be unfamilied, un tribed, cast out, banished, spat on, hated, and every where you go from that moment on, your life will be in jeopardy.

You will for all practical purposes leave life and social order as you know it, behind. No marriage, no acceptance, no future, no . . . life . . . in this world.

But your heart is on fire already with belief, and all of that cost must be bourn to have this new life . . . no matter the cost. Are you then an orphan?

No, you leave this world behind, but you have a new family, the church, the brothers and sisters who have also left everything, in order to have Christ. All of a sudden, God's people, His family become the only

family you've got, and they are precious to you.

In America we have almost no perception of this truth. We've got everything. We don't need anything. Society isn't punishing us, casting us out. Not this week anyway. We can be autonomous christians.

We hug each other for 10 minutes in the middle of the service, and that's real, it's not phony, but at 12:15 when Jim finally quits blabbering and the final song is over, most of us won't see each other again until next Sunday, if it's convenient for us to come that week.

In Matthew 12 Jesus says something else confusing. His mother and brothers thought he'd gone mad. Thought he needed a family intervention to save him from His own madness.

Mt. 12:46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. 47 Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." 48 But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! 50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

We need to be ready for a day when we are dependent on each other. That would be totally new to us. We can't even really imagine it. But when Jesus says we are to have philadelphia for one another, he's talking about a tribal love, a brother love, a family love that pulls together for each other, for our very existence in this world, if need be.

And finally, in our list of characteristics that define a christian; *and in your brotherly kindness, love.*

And here the word is agape. This is the love that just loves because the mind is made up to love. Nothing expected in return. We were enemies of God, and He loved us.

It's the love of choice. The love that chooses it's object and prefers that person solely because of choice. God chose us while we were dead in sin. Filthy, foul death. There was nothing lovable, nothing attractive, nothing to gain, but He decided to love the unlovable.

That's our example. It's easy to love our brothers, our family. I mean, look at how lovable I am. I'm just a puff ball of lovableness. But ultimately, God says, we need to love the un lovable. Like He loved us.

And that love is what drives missions. We are commanded to supply in our faith, love for those who do not love back. Those who are striking us. Those who hate us. Those who persecute us. Those who would take our autonomy, our freedoms away. Those who will punish us for our beliefs.

Those folks are the mission field. The mark of a christian is that he loves those folks. Like God loved him and died for him. That is agape love.

These then are the marks of real christians.

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

False christians, false teachers, don't care about these attributes. Neither do they exert any effort, any work to increase in these things. We noted over and over, this is the personality of God, who lives in you, who helps you supply these things.

False teachers, pretend christians, do not have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, giving them the mind of Christ, the divine nature. They do not possess the vine and they have no source to produce good fruit. These

attributes are that good fruit.

Vs. 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.

I think that's what I just said. Right?

This verse has sort of a double entendre. Because on the one hand, if God lives in you, if the Holy Spirit lives in you, these attributes, or qualities are in effect, the fruits of the Spirit.

But the second part is, if all these things are present in your life, additional fruitfulness for the Kingdom of God will happen. Supplying effort in these areas renders us useful for the Master's service.

I'd draw you to one hopeful word in that verse. Increasing. *pleonadzo* where the idea of the word is to fill something up so generously you have to shake the container to make room to get it all in.

When we're new Christians we read this list of virtues and we say, OK, that's pretty clear, I'll get right on that. And then on the way home from the Bible study someone cuts us off in traffic and all of those good intentions vanish. Poof.

These things take time and effort, over and over. This walk with Jesus is constantly challenged by sin, by our old nature, and we constantly are asking for cleansing.

In your faith, supply. Keep supplying until these gifts abound. Then we are useful slaves for the Master's purposes.

9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

This verse describes a person who is like the first three of the four soils in Matthew 13. Hard pan soil where the birds come and eat the seed is like the person here who is blind. Rocky and weedy soil is where the

person is myopic. Short sighted.

He hears about purification from sin but nothing takes root and grows. No fruit. Or like the rocky soil or the weedy soil, he hears about purification of sin in Jesus Christ and he seems to buy in at first, but these other factors kick in and the cares of this world, or the difficulties, something causes them to fade away and we don't see them any more. No fruit.

Fruitfulness is always the telltale of real salvation. In vs. 8 you have two choices. Fruitful is one, and *useless nor unfruitful* is the other possibility.

This passage becomes an assurance tool. We can't look inside someone else's heart and see if salvation is real or not. Even Paul says, *the Lord knows those who are His*. If fruit is increasing, the Kingdom is advanced, and these elements are obvious in your life, it's pretty easy to say, that person is a true christian.

But if these things are absent, not just temporarily, but over the long haul, and there's no fruit, it's fair to ask the question. Is that person's salvation real? Valid?

And ultimately if that's the case, no fruit, but the person is coming to you with some doctrine that doesn't align with the doctrines of this book, this is helpful. Those folks are false teachers. We'll see them very soon.

And finally, very quickly, these last 2 verses affirm for us what we've just said.

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.

Peter says here what Paul said in 2 Cor. 13:5. *5 Test yourselves to see if*

you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

Peter likewise says *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you*

This is the self test button. Do you look like this list? Are these things increasingly present and abounding. Is there spiritual fruit present in your life? Are you useful and being used by the Master.

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.

When this list of virtues is present and fruit is evident, assurance is ours. Not because we're working our way to heaven by supplying all these things as best we can in our own power, but because we have become ***partakers of the divine nature*** or as Paul said, Christ in you, the hope of glory.