

Spiritual Survival: Make Your Destination Sure

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Preacher: Simon O'Mahony

[0 : 00] It's on page 1223, if you're using one of the red-coloured Bibles.

2 Peter chapter 1, and the focus this morning will be from verses 5 through to 11, but we're going to read from verse 1 through to 11.

Thank you.

2 Peter chapter 1, from verses 1 through to 11. Let's hear God's word.

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 01] He has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But if anyone does not have them, well, they are short-sighted and blind, and have forgotten that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[3 : 21] So, Simon. Simon. Well, as Simon, go ahead.

Simon adjusts his, what is it? It's not a pulpit, is it? Pulpit. We'll call it a pulpit. Mobile pulpit.

For those of you who don't know, this is Simon O'Mahony, his wife, Megan, and Simon is working for Borgash, which I always find, but in the law area.

Yeah, in the legal department. Legal department. So, that's what Simon does. So, if you have any problems with your gas, you can complain to Simon, and he'll see what he can do for you. Simon preached last week, and we're looking forward to him speaking again today.

So, can I pray for you again? Please, sir. And then we'll let you speak. Let's pray. Father, thank you for Simon. Thank you for Megan. Thank you for their involvement and their life here in this church.

[4 : 30] And we thank you for the gift that you've given to Simon. And we pray that you would fill him with your spirit and fill us with your spirit too.

That we may hear your word, not just to understand it with our minds intellectually, but that we would experience it and know it in our hearts so that we are changed from the inside out to live for Christ and to follow him wholeheartedly.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thanks, Simon. Never, never will we stop until we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name, released ourselves from the load of guilt under which we at present labour, and extinguished every trace of this traffic.

These were the words of the great emancipator, William Wilberforce, as he condemned the slave trade before the House of Commons in 1791.

Wilberforce was so passionately opposed to the slave trade that he entered into politics and dedicated his life to campaigning against the wicked trade. It was shortly after his death that the British Parliament would enact the Slavery Abolition Act, which would abolish slavery in most of the British Empire.

[6 : 04] The physical and social chains that once bound the people would be thrown off and they would be welcomed as citizens to live out their new freedom. Peter too is an abolitionist of sorts.

In the verses we are going to look at this morning, we will see he tells us that we have been elected by God to salvation from slavery to sin and corruption.

He warns us of the dangers of passivity in the Christian life. However, we can have this assurance of salvation since fruit is evidence of having been set free from corruption.

Having this assurance then, we await the rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In verse 5, Peter begins an exhortation for us to be fruitful in Christlike virtues.

Let's look at verse 5 down to verse 7 together. Peter. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

[7 : 28] Peter said in verse 5, for this very reason make every effort. For what reason are we to make every effort to grow in Christlike virtues? It's important that we look at the foundation and grounds of his exhortation to us.

Peter exhorts Christians to live a fruitful life because we have been elected and called by God's glory and goodness to faith in Christ.

Our understanding of what Peter means when he speaks of election is important if we're to understand his exhortation to us, and also the warning which follows.

Though the doctrine of election is difficult for us to understand, for the Christian it's a great source of comfort in knowing that we've been saved perfectly by Christ's grace alone, completely outside of anything good we have done or good we can do.

In election we see God's great love, goodness, and glory. Election, we will see, is the reason for our faith. Election is God's unconditional calling of a sinner to salvation based only on God's own glory and goodness.

[8 : 47] Look with me back to verse 3. Peter writes in the second half of the verse that God called us by his own glory and goodness. God's calling of a sinner to salvation is not based on anything done by the sinner.

God did not call us because of anything good he saw in us, nor was it because he saw any potential good in us. The grounds of his saving call are his own glory and goodness.

Before our series on the Psalms, Johnny preached through Titus, and before Titus, he preached through Deuteronomy.

A recurring theme in Deuteronomy is God's favour and faithfulness to an unfaithful and unfavourable people.

I'll read a few verses from Deuteronomy, chapter 7, verses 6 to 8. If you want to keep a finger in 2 Peter, you can. You can find it in the Church Bible on page 186.

[9 : 49] Starting in verse 6. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

So we see in verse 6 that God chose these people out of all the people of the earth to be his treasured possession. God didn't choose these people based on their own prosperity as a people or on their faithfulness to God but chose them out of his own love and mercy.

God's choosing and electing of people today is on the very same grounds that he chooses and elects the people in Deuteronomy. Election is not conditional on anything we have done or will do.

[11 : 08] He elects us to salvation based solely on his own love and mercy. And it's when we come to correctly see how undeserving we are of this mercy that the doctrine of election brings so much comfort and joy.

So we are elected based on God's goodness and mercy and this is accomplished then by God's divine power. So if you look with me back to verse 3, Peter writes, His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

God has called us and God's calling of us here in verse 3 is what Peter is referring to in verse 10 and we look there when he says, Therefore my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

Election and calling mean the same thing. We see from verse 3 that in election God calls sinners to salvation and equips them for godly living by his divine power.

The source of our election is God's divine power. We're not saved based on a decision we made at some point in our lives. We did not decide to be saved and then we were elected but we were called from a state of corruption and saved to godliness.

[12 : 40] We were saved by God's divine power. And it's by this divine power he has given us the precious gift of faith which Peter writes in verse 1 comes through the righteousness of Christ.

This faith that we have been given is fixed on our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This gift of faith does not originate within us but is given to us by God.

So faith is a gift given to all who are called by God. Just as we read in Deuteronomy how the undeserving Israelites were chosen by God and freed from slavery to live freely as his holy people. So too we are chosen by God set free from the shackles of sin and called to live a life that's pleasing to him. In election God calls sinners from spiritual slavery and death to a new life marked by holiness.

Last week we looked at how Peter contrasted the corruption of the world with partaking of the divine nature. Let's look in verse 4 Peter writes Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

[14 : 05] We have escaped corruption and we are partakers of the divine nature. Participating in the divine nature means being made more like Christ.

Our old lives were marked by corruption and love of sin but we now live lives marked by Christ likeness and are being made more like Christ.

Our love for sin has been replaced with a love for Christ. We were once slaves but now we are set free. And Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5.17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has gone and the new has come.

Christians we are new creations no longer slaves to sin. We have been elected to salvation by the divine power of God which is based on his goodness and glory and it is to us as new creations that Peter charges us in verse 5 and following to strive for holiness.

Since we are new creations having been elected from corruption to salvation and holiness we bear fruit according to our new nature.

[15 : 22] The fruit of our new nature is Christ likeness. If we are elected and are new creations then our faith will be evidenced by fruit.

Fruit is the evidence of our faith. And it's on these grounds that Peter charges us in verse 5. For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge and to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness love.

The list that Peter gives us isn't a list which we are meant to tick the box as we master each one. It's not that we first master goodness and then we move on to knowledge and keep ticking the boxes but this is a list of Christ-like virtues.

Since we are new creations we are to bear the marks of Christ-likeness. We are to resemble the one whom we are being modeled after. The Christian life is a life marked by Christ-likeness.

Peter continues then his exhortation in verse 8. So if you possess these qualities in increasing measure they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[16 : 46] Having these Christ-like qualities Peter tells us keeps us from being unproductive in our knowledge of Christ. So as we practice these qualities and as these qualities are seen in our lives we are giving evidence that we know Christ in a life-transforming way.

For if we know Christ these fruits will come as a result of knowing him. Look with me now in verse 9 his exhortation changes to a warning but if anyone does not have them he is short-sighted and blind and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from past sins.

His warning here is not necessarily to the faithful and fruitful Christian. His warning is to the person who with his mouth professes to be a Christian but with his actions tell a very different story.

There were false teachers at this time teaching that since we are saved by grace the law doesn't matter anymore. Since Christ died for us and has forgiven us of our sins won't he keep forgiving us no matter how we live?

Why not just sin a little and then run back for a little bit more grace and keep doing that? We are under grace aren't we? Peter describes the person who thinks this way as being blind.

[18:09] You would have to be completely blind to the grace and goodness of God if you think this way. Grace is not a license to sin. It isn't a cheap kind of token that gets us out of trouble when we sin.

If a person thinks that because Christ died for them they can go on sinning unashamedly then they're blind. not only is he blind but in verse 9 we read he has forgotten he has been cleansed from past sins.

So not only are we forgiven of our sins but we are cleansed from them. If our understanding of salvation is that God merely wipes the slate clean and sends us off on our own way then we've forgotten what salvation is.

God saves us from slavery to sin to a new and precious life of godliness and Christ likeness. In salvation God does not only forgive us of our sins but he also gives us a new heart that loves to serve him and hates sin.

Peter continues then in verse 10 warning and exhorting us to be eager to make our election sure so that we do not fall. He writes therefore my brothers be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure for if you do these things you will never fall.

[19:32] What Peter says at the end of verse 10 for if you do these things you will never fall he's not saying that what keeps us from falling is our own obedience or our own fruit. Remember what we said about election.

Election is God's unconditional calling of a sinner to salvation based only on God's own goodness and glory. Our election is not conditional on our actions.

Our good works don't contribute to our salvation. What Peter is saying is that our outward fruit is evidence of what God has done internally.

Our fruit is evidence of our faith. Peter's warning again is primarily directed at the person who's not bearing fruit in his or her life.

What Peter is saying is that the person who's not bearing Christ-like fruit will fall because they're giving evidence that they are not saved. This tells us then that there is a true profession of faith and a false profession of faith.

[20:40] A true profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will be evidenced by a turning away from sin. True faith is not merely a verbal expression but is accompanied by living a new life of obedience to God.

But a false profession won't have that evidence. And this is why we are warned in verse 10 therefore my brothers be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

How then are we to be assured of our election? Well since fruit is the evidence of true faith we can look for that fruit in our lives. A Christian's fruit is evidence of salvation.

About twice a month I go to Dublin for work and it's sometimes awkward when the train changes either at Mallow or Limerick Junction I have to gather all my stuff and jump onto the next train and I sometimes am left wondering am I on the right train?

Am I going to miss my meeting if I end up in Limerick? That won't be good. They might cut my contract a little bit shorter. So when I'm sitting there reading my book or doing whatever I'm doing every so often I'll glance up out the window and look for maybe a sign or a landmark that I know yeah these are familiar I know these I know I'm on the right track I know I'm on my way to Dublin and these landmarks and signs that point the way to Dublin that are familiar yes this is the way to Dublin they serve as a comfort to me I say yes okay you know I'm on the right train here and these landmarks they serve as signs and evidence that I'm going the right way and in the same sense we can look to the fruit in our own lives because they serve as landmarks and signs they give evidence that we're saved our fruit is not what saves us in the same way the signs and the landmarks didn't get me to Dublin but the fruit serves as evidence and a signpost of a heart changed by God having been given a true faith let us be active then in Christ likeness

[23:10] Peter charges us in verse 10 be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure he's calling us to look for fruit as evidence and he's warning us of the dangers of not having that fruit this doesn't mean we're to wake up every morning questioning our salvation not at all nor does it mean we must be perfect in every way and anytime we sin we must question am I saved that's not what Peter's saying perfection is not what's expected of us for when we sin through Christ we have forgiveness of sins Peter wants us to strive forward to be eager to make every effort in pursuing

goodness self-control perseverance perseverance godliness brotherly kindness and love Peter's warning to us is not meant to turn us inward and leave us in a state of questioning our salvation every time we sin but it's an encouragement to pursue that Christ likeness in full confidence of our standing before God we're not to have a passive attitude of thinking we can let go and let God having been saved we are to be active in pursuing

Christ likeness Peter urges us to be all the more eager and make every effort in order to spur us on living a life pleasing to God is not passive but it's active in good works are we active in doing good and pursuing Christ likeness do we see these virtues being played out in our own lives let's take comfort let's look back to verse 3 his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness he's given us everything we need to live a godly life pleasing to him armed with this knowledge let's make every effort at bearing fruit what is at stake if we're not bearing fruit is not that we'll lose our salvation but we'll evidence the fact that we don't have a true faith in Christ as our Lord and Saviour let us be active and alert for if these virtues are active in our lives we have evidence and assurance of a true heart changed by God election is the reason for our faith fruit is the evidence of our faith and heaven is the destination of our faith the end destination of this Christian life is being with Christ forever in heaven we'll start again at verse 10 and read therefore my brothers be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure for if you do these things you will never fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ Peter motivates us towards godliness with the thought of being richly received into the eternal kingdom as Christians this is our final hope this is what we strive towards being welcomed by our God and Saviour we see in this passage that God who elected us is also the one who will bring our faith to completion Peter tells us in verse 1 that God has given us a precious faith in verse 2 he gives us grace and peace in verse 3 having called us he gives us everything we need for godly living in verse 4 he gives us his precious promises and in verse 11 he gives us a rich welcome into his eternal kingdom God is the giver of faith in verse 1 and the completer of faith in verse 11 it is God who sustains us and he receives all the glory the reason we receive this rich welcome is not because we've earned it but because Christ has earned it on our behalf he's taken our sin upon himself and clothed us in his own goodness and righteousness in 1820 a woman by the name of Fanny Crosby was born from infancy she was completely blind her whole life she devoted herself to helping the poor though very often herself she was unable to pay her own rent she penned about 3 or 4 hymns a day and it's believed she wrote over 8,000 hymns

Fanny Crosby is an example of a woman who lived a life bearing much fruit evidencing God's work in her heart her full assurance was in Christ which inspired her to pen the hymn blessed assurance having been blind her entire life she was once asked if she would like to be able to see she answered no the first face I want to gladden my face is that of my saviour may we like Miss Crosby be spurred on in our pursuit of Christ likeness as we ponder the thought of Christ gladdening our face as he richly welcomes us with open arms into his eternal kingdom let's pray dear heavenly father we thank you for this wonderful truth of election that you love us completely based on your own goodness and mercy and not because of anything we have done we thank you that because of the blood of Christ we are cleansed from past sins we are free from slavery to sin to live a new life of obedience to you thank you Lord for the promise that you will bring to completion the work which you started in us

I pray you would give us every grace necessary as we live the Christian life Lord we long for the day when we will see you and you will richly welcome us into your eternal kingdom Amen and you will acknowledge and allâ