

# Adding to your faith

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[0:00] As some post, imagine this, some post arrives on your doorstep and you discover there's an invitation to go to go to a home.

! To go and stay in someone's home and eat with them and just stay as long as you like. To stay in the home of someone who is your enemy.

Who you don't get on with anymore. Who are angry with the way in which you live. Who you've had no room in your life for anymore.

But this invitation says come. Come and stay with me. Come and eat with me.

We're found in that invitation that we're loved by our enemy. The Bible says to us that whilst we were still enemies of God.

[1:18] Whilst we were enemies of God. Christ died for us. We've all. Potentially all of us or most of us in this room have received this invitation.

To go and stay with the king of a wonderful kingdom. It's an invitation that is ours by grace. That is where we're heading for as believers.

Verse 11 says that. You will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Received an invitation to go and live with someone who was once our enemy. And that should change.

That invitation should change the way we seek to live now. Last week we heard that we have been utterly transformed by God's grace.

[2:28] And that we've been equipped by God's grace to grow in godliness. Verse 3 says his divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life.

He's equipped us through our knowledge, our saving knowledge of him, through the precious and great promises in the gospel. And we even share in the divine nature, Peter says, in that we have God living in us by his spirit.

We have all we need. We've been equipped to live godly lives by grace. Last week we spoke of things that are precious.

Because Peter says that we've received a faith that is precious. We spoke about precious items. And one of those precious items that I mentioned was my wedding ring.

And because it's precious, I want to look after it. And so when Becky and I bought them, we got insurance on them. And as some of you know, and probably are bored of hearing, it had a crack on it.

[3:45] They said in the shop that they've not seen anything like it before. But thankfully, because it's a precious item, we got insurance on it.

Insurance to cover things like that. But just because I had the insurance on it doesn't mean I can just sit around and do nothing and the problem will be sorted.

I've got to physically go to the shop and show them the problem to get the benefits of the insurance. I'm not going to lose the insurance by not going there.

But it's a bit of a waste if I don't go in and get the benefits of it. And so for our Christian lives, they are precious. We've been saved by grace.

And if we've been saved by God's grace, we'll forever be with Christ. But Peter says that we must make every effort to grow in godliness.

[4:58] Perhaps the most important words, I think, are in verse 5. The first few words of verse 5. For the very reason that we've been saved by grace and we've been equipped to live godly lives by grace.

For that very reason. Don't forget, Peter is saying in those words, that you've been saved by God's grace.

But that doesn't mean we should stop there and sit around and do nothing and live as we please.

No, Peter says make every effort to add to your faith.

It's going to involve hard work, living as a Christian. Make every effort to be like the Olympian who is working hard in training day by day.

Because they have their eyes on the prize of a gold medal. We as Christians, we must have our eyes on the prize of receiving that rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[6:13] And so live in the light of that. Make every effort. And what does Peter say we must make every effort to do?

Well, he says this in verse 5. 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 mutual affection. And to mutual affection. Love.

Make every effort to grow in these things. So first of all, make every effort to grow in goodness.

That is moral goodness. But before we became a Christian, maybe we would have said we live by another moral code.

[7:12] But now we know the living God. And we see that Jesus talks about in the Sermon on the Mount things like even thinking.

Lustful thoughts is sin. We need to seek to grow in goodness. We need to seek to grow in goodness. Grow in living the way that God makes clear in his word.

Seek to grow in goodness. In good behavior. And then knowledge. Knowledge. Which here means wisdom and discernment.

And where does wisdom come from? Well, the Bible says this. For the Lord gives wisdom. From his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

Where should we go for wisdom and discernment? Well, we look to the Lord. We know from Proverbs that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

[8:23] When we don't know what to do. When we don't know what is best. We pray and we ask for the Lord's wisdom. For his help in making decisions.

Committing our plans to him and trusting that he will help us. Grow in self-control.

Not be easily led into sin. Praying, Lord, lead me not into temptation. Help me not to give in.

I could imagine if I was an Olympic athlete. And I'd spent maybe a week or so of really hard, disciplined work. I'd have the temptation to think, well, I'll skip training today.

I've worked hard the last week. I'll sit on the sofa. I'll watch TV. I'll enjoy some snacks. And then tomorrow I'll get back to it. But actually that day was pretty good.

[9:25] No harm seems to be done. So I'll do that again today. And before I know it, that discipline training I was going through has completely gone.

In terms of sin, we shouldn't be giving in to temptation. Can't keep on giving in to temptation. I've often thought of sin and temptations as kind of, it can be like having a pot of Pringles.

You eat one and then you think, oh, another one. And then another one. And then before you know it, maybe the whole pot's gone. No self-control. So easy.

Once you pop. Once, yes, once you pop, you can't stop. Mark often says that at CY when we have Pringles out. It's so true. But in terms of self-control, when it comes to the temptations that we face, remember God's equipped us with everything we need for a godly life.

He will help us as we seek to grow in self-control. We're not going to reach perfection here, but we can grow. Perseverance is the next one.

[10:43] I often, as some of you know, go running. I'm looking forward to doing a half marathon in a few weeks' time.

But on a run, you get to moments when you think, oh, I just want to stop. I can't keep going. It's mentally tough to keep going, but you have to push through that to keep going.

And that's the image I have when Peter says, perseverance. Grow in perseverance. So God would help us to persevere. Even when it just feels so tough in our Christian lives.

Even when we're going through dark trials, keep holding on to the Lord. Even when people keep mocking us for knowing him. Lord Jesus, help me to keep following you.

Help me not to be ashamed of you. Godliness. To grow in God's ways.

[11:51] To grow, to be holy like our God is holy. Mutual affection or maybe some of our translations say brotherly kindness.

That's the word I was looking for. It's about love for our fellow believers. Christian brothers and sisters. Peter says, actually, have a look at it just over the page.

1 Peter 3 verse 8. Peter writing there. Finally, all of you be like-minded.

Be sympathetic. Love one another. Be compassionate and humble. This is how we ought to live with one another.

As Christian brothers and sisters. Godly love is. And then the final thing is love. Paul said of these three, faith, hope and love.

[12:58] The greatest of these is love. Jonathan Edwards said this.

What kind of love is this? Godly love is patient and kind. Love keeps no record of wrongs.

Steadfast love never fails. Love never stops. Love is always advocating, always mediating, always sustaining.

God is love. God himself is love. God is love. So you grow in goodness and then you can add knowledge.

You grow in knowledge and then you can grow in self-control. I'm not really convinced by that. I think Peter makes it clear here. All of these things must be increasing, growing in increasing measure.

[14:33] Maybe for a moment, just let's pause here. And let's look at that list of things just quietly on your own in verses 5 to 7.

And think, where do you most need to be growing? Where do you feel most challenged this evening? Is it in your self-control?

Is it in your love for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? Just where is it you feel most challenged to be growing? And just respond quietly in your heart.

Help me, God. Help me to grow. Give us sort of a minute or so just to quietly think and respond to the Lord on our own.

And then we'll move on to four motivations. We prayed in that song that we just sung, oh, for a closer walk with you.

[15:42] And Lord Peter encourages us to make every effort to add to our faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, and love.

And Lord, we are weak and we are sinful. And we need to grow and increase in all of these things. Lord, would you teach us and train us and help us to be making every effort to add to our faith these things.

And help us now as we consider the next few verses. Would they help us and motivate us to be growing in these things?

We ask for your help and we thank you that we can ask for your help confidently. Because through your divine power, you've given us everything we need for a godly life.

[16:52] We thank you for your grace to us in that. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Four motivations to be making every effort to grow in these things.

Four motivations from this passage. The first is that we'll be productive and effective. That's what Peter says in verse 8.

Maybe you know how it is when someone asks you, how was your day?

And you say, oh, it was pretty unproductive actually. Didn't get much done. Didn't have much motivation. I'd never like it.

And I have to say that to someone. It never feels particularly good. We want to be productive and effective in our lives, don't we?

[18:02] And surely we want to be that as Christian people. To be growing. To be effective and productive as Christian people. Well, Peter says, if

you're growing in these things, if you're making every effort to be growing in these things, then you can be.

It will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive. And so I think the encouragement there is don't be lazy in these things.

Make every effort to grow, as Peter calls us to. Which can be a real battle. I despair at times how easily I will think of skipping my Bible reading in the mornings, thinking I need to wash up.

I need to go on Duolingo and learn some more French. I'm going to France tomorrow. I need to browse Facebook or Instagram. No, I need Jesus. I need to sit at his feet.

I need to meet with him and his word. I need to meet with his people to encourage me to keep going. And so don't be lazy.

[19:19] Make every effort in our Christian lives. Maybe by God's grace, we'll be kept from being ineffective and unproductive.

Make every effort to grow. Our faith is precious. Look after it. Secondly, second motivation, we're cleansed from our sin.

Don't forget, we're cleansed from our sin. We're people who've been made clean. We're people who've been transformed by God's grace. We are people standing in the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's who we are in Christ. We're cleansed. We're made new. We're forgiven. But we're forgetful, aren't we? That's why we need things like the Lord's Supper.

And this time next week, there's another opportunity to take it because it's a meal to do in remembrance of what the Lord Jesus has done. Because we so quickly forget.

[20:26] We so quickly forget we've been cleansed from our sin. Peter says this in verse 9, But whoever does not have them is short-sighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

If we've forgotten, then Peter says it's like we're nearsighted and blind. It would be foolish if at the end of this meeting I decided to close my eyes and walk out the door.

I would probably fall over our Sema at first. And then where am I going to get? What good is that? What good is that?

The lights are on. I have eyes to see. What good is that? Walking around like I'm blind. Choosing to walk around with our eyes shut is silly.

That's not who we are in Christ. By God's grace, our eyes have been opened to see the Lord Jesus as our Savior. To see that we sin.

[21:38] And we need a Savior. We've been cleansed from our past sins. In that hymn that we sang just now, Cooper writes, Where is the blessing that I knew when first I saw the Lord?

How easily we forget. How easily we've moved on from those times when we first knew the Lord. And the excitement and the joy of that.

Remember that we've been cleansed from our sin. Let that fill you with joy. And let that motivate you to be living your life for the Lord.

To be making every effort to grow in the precious faith that we have received. Thirdly, confirm your calling and election.

Verse 10. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble.

[22:51] Tomorrow morning, Becky and I are getting on a plane very early, silly early. When you get a plane, you have to check in to your flight.

It's sort of confirming that you're coming. Of course we're coming. We've paid plenty of money to be on that flight. But we still have to make the effort to physically do something to confirm that we're coming.

Thank you. Verse 10. Peter encourages us to make every effort to confirm our calling and election. The works of being called and elected, chosen by God. It's God's work. It's entirely by his grace. Remember those words in verse 5.

For this very reason, it is by God's grace, because of God's grace. But Peter wants to say that we have a responsibility to be making every effort to be growing.

[24:00] As we grow in these things, it confirms. It assures us that, yes, we're the Lord, Lord's people. We're heading to that eternal home.

I guess at times, though, maybe we struggle with assurance of salvation. I know that's something I've struggled with at times in the past.

Maybe it's when we keep falling into those same sins. Maybe it's when we don't seem to see any answers to our prayers. Or we don't even seem to be able to pray.

Or we compare ourselves with other Christians in the church and see their service for the Lord. See their, they just seem to be so on fire for the Lord. And we find ourselves wondering, am I really saved?

Am I really a Christian? And asking that question is a good question for us to ask at times. And often it really means we are the Lord's.

[25:10] We have that desire to be growing, but it's just not happening right now. We're going through a season of life where we feel far away. We feel like we're stumbling around in the dark.

But by God's grace, he will lead those who are his back. But Peter does call us to be making efforts of our own.

Make every effort to confirm your calling and election. Make every effort to grow in these things that he's talked about in verses 5 to 7.

And make every effort confident in his divine power that has given us everything we need for a godly life.

Peter goes on to say in that verse 10, For if you do these things, you will never stumble. Stumbling is a danger. Wandering away from God.

[26:12] Either for a time or because we just never really knew him. It's a danger. There are false teachers that Peter will warn people about in chapter 2.

He would love to lead us astray from the Lord. Peter says, Make your calling and election sure. Make every effort to grow.

So by God's grace, we may never stumble. And verse 10, one more thing. Peter says, For if you do these things, if you have an ESV, I believe it will say, for if you practice these things, which seems to be a much better translation.

Practice these things. Practice growing in goodness and knowledge and self-control and perseverance and godliness. Practice.

I wonder if you know what it's like to practice something. Practice playing an instrument. Practice learning to drive.

[27:23] Practice all sorts of things. I know that it took me two and a half years to learn to drive. Practice and practiced.

Sometimes I was in tears learning, but I wanted to pass. Put in the effort and the money to do so. And sometimes I was filled with confidence thinking, Yeah, I can do this.

And other times it's so full of mistakes and took me ages to learn from them. But those years of learning have done me good and I'm still learning as maybe some of us feel the same about driving. Peter says, Practice these things. Some days are going to go really well. Some days you feel like you're making real progress as a Christian and other days we're going to make mistakes.

Other days we're going to fall into those temptations. May feel like we're taking one step forward and three steps back. You try, you pray, you put things into place to stop you from doing them, but it's going to take time.

[28:33] But keep going in these things. Keep practicing these things. Because the final motivation is absolutely glorious.

A rich welcome awaits us. A rich welcome awaits us. That's what verse 11 says. And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

By his grace, the king of an eternal heavenly kingdom has invited us to come in.

has invited us, even though we were enemies of God's. By his grace, we will receive that rich welcome into his eternal kingdom.

We'll get to stay with him, feast with him, praise him, be with his people. Reach perfection.

[29:56] Never sin again. We're going there. We're going there by his grace. But don't we want to go there knowing that we made efforts to honor him.

Made efforts to grow, to add to our faith these things. So more, for motivations to grow in godliness.

We'll be productive and effective in our Christian walk. We've been cleansed from our sin. Don't forget. Peter calls us, confirm your calling and election.

And finally, a rich welcome awaits us. Let's pray. Father God, we thank you so much that we have that wonderful hope in Christ by grace of receiving a rich welcome into your eternal kingdom.

Lord, we thank you for that. We thank you that that is where we're going if we know you. But Father, we need your help to be growing.

[31:26] We pray that you'd help us to make every effort to add to our faith those things. And Father, as we do so, we pray that you would use us in your kingdom to be in some way effective and productive.

We pray that you'd help us to remember that we have been cleansed from our sin. And we pray that you'd keep us from stumbling and help us to make every effort to confirm our calling and election until that time comes when we receive that rich welcome into your kingdom.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Let's...