

And so those of us who attended the seminar spend Friday night and half of Saturday thinking about death. And the reason is that you can't think about making a will or planning your estate unless you think about death.

We think about the things that we own, the assets we possess, and what we would want to happen to them, who we would want to have them.

And it's quite a sobering thought, especially for those of us who have children. We tend to think about them. We tend to think about how are they fair in our absence?

How are they managed? And the concerns can vary from child to child, sometimes greater, sometimes less.

[5 : 57] For example, we are sometimes concerned that our children, or at least some of our children, may be very vulnerable and they may be taken advantage of while we are gone.

But the Apostle Peter, in this letter of 2 Peter, was in a similar situation. He was facing death.

He knew that he was soon going to die. But he didn't have a concern about the material welfare of those to whom he was writing. He had a concern for their spiritual welfare.

False teachers had arisen in the church. Peter knew that, and he also knew that more would arise. And so he was very concerned for the spiritual welfare of those who would be exposed to these false teachers.

And so Peter, very early on in his letter, he states the goal for writing the letter in verses 13 and 15. He writes, He has a concern for the people of God.

[7 : 33] He has a concern for the people of God.

And as we look at this letter of 2 Peter, one of his primary concerns is the issue of false teachers and their false teaching.

That's one of his primary concerns in this letter. False teachers and their false teaching. And one of his primary concerns is that wherever you find false teachers, you will find false believers.

You will find those who have fallen prey to what false teachers have said. False teachers always have an audience. False teachers and their false teachers. They will have those who will listen to what they have to say.

False teachers and their false teachers. And so from the very outside of this letter, what the Apostle Peter does is he addresses the issue of genuine conversion. And he tells us how it happens and what it looks like.

[8 : 44] And this was essential in Peter's day and brothers and sisters. This was essential in our day. The concern that Peter had did not go away.

That concern increased. False teachers have increased and false teachers will continue to increase until the day that the Lord returns.

Peter actually dedicates the entirety of chapter 2 dealing with false teachers and what they look like and the kinds of things that they actually do.

Sometimes when we address this issue of false teaching and false teachers, there are some who have reluctance. They're a bit reticent to talk about it because they feel, well, you're judging people. You're judging that person to say that person is a false teacher. What do you base that on? But we can't ignore this issue.

[9 : 49] We don't have the luxury of ignoring the issue of false teachers and false teaching because Scripture doesn't ignore it. Scripture addresses it. As Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount, he made three very sobering statements.

and he makes them in succession. Before we look further at 2 Peter, I want you to turn to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7, and I want us to consider briefly these three sobering statements that Jesus makes as he concludes the Sermon on the Mount.

The first one is in verses 13 and 14.

He says, Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Now the book of Revelation teaches us that there will be a great multitude of people who will be saved, so great that no one can number them. The prayer witness of Scripture, that the number of people who will be saved in the end is such an enormous number that we cannot humanly count them.

[11 : 39] Yet, the first sobering thing that Jesus says when he is concluding the Sermon on the Mount is that in comparison to those who will be lost, those who will be saved are few.

That's a startling, startling statement from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though many people will be saved, when you compare the number who are lost to those who are saved, those who are saved will be few. Recently, I saw a video clip from a false teacher.

I was looking at something, and I just came across this, this guy from Singapore by the name of Joseph Prince. And he actually was talking about this particular verse.

And he said, it doesn't mean what I just said. He said, this isn't talking about eternity, heaven, and hell. This is talking about life on this earth and wise people who go on the narrow road and get wisdom and get good counsel and those who go on the broad road, and they live foolishly and they have problems in life and they have difficulties.

[12 : 49] He minimized it. And I thought, how interesting, how interesting that he would say that. Leading many astray, and Jesus goes on right after this statement and he says something else.

Notice what he says in, starting in verse 15, the very next statement he makes is about false prophets. He says, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit and the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits. Again, it is no accident that after making that statement, Jesus goes on to talk about false prophets.

[14 : 06] And we should not narrow this down to say, well, false prophets refers to those who predict the future and they don't get it right. No. A prophet is someone who actually speaks or claims to speak on behalf of God.

So really, all ministers, all pastors, all preachers of the gospel are prophets in the sense that they claim to be speaking from God.

And notice that Jesus tells us that we will not be able to tell false prophets in an outward sense. He says, false prophets don't look like false prophets.

They look like harmless sheep. They look like someone you want to cuddle and hold close to you. He says, but inside they are ravenous wolves. Jesus tells us that the only way to recognize false prophets is by their fruits.

The visible and tangible things that you can see in their lives and in their ministry. And one of the most surprising things to me is the overwhelming number of professing Christians who either cannot or will not identify false teachers.

[15 : 24] I mean, Jesus says they are going to be among us. Peter tells us he says they are already among you. How is it then that so many people who would profess to be Christians can identify them or won't identify them?

And I have no doubt that some can't identify them for any number of different reasons but there are some who won't identify them because they have taken them as little cuddly sheep. And they like them because they are charming.

And that's part of the attraction. That's part of the pull. Many of them are entertaining. They are nice to listen to to the air and therein lies the danger.

I believe every time we hear God's word we need to be attentive and we need to listen. I want to say to us as we go through this letter of 2 Peter I have no doubt in my heart that God has providentially caused us to be hearing these sermons in 2 Peter at this time.

It is interesting that the current issue of Table Talk for the month of April is on false teachers. I had no idea that that would be this sermon was planned back in this series was planned back in December had no idea what the April issue of Table Talk would be.

[16 : 54] Let us take heed of it. This is our very life spiritually. I encourage you to read Table Talk if you're not reading those articles in particular if you're saying I don't know any false teachers I can't see any false teachers I encourage you to read Table Talk because it will help you greatly in thinking through this issue.

Now the third statement that Jesus makes is probably the most sobering. It is the most sobering because it comes to us personally and it deals with eternity.

Starting in verse 21 Jesus says not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven for the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven on that day many will say to me Lord, Lord did you not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name and then I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness.

these are very sobering words from the lips of Jesus and they should cause every one of us who professes to know Christ to ask ourselves whether our own conversion is genuine or whether it is false.

Jesus tells us that on the day of judgment that there will be people who are so convinced that they belong to him that they are believers they will be calling him Lord, Lord which is a terminology or a way of addressing someone that you are intimate with.

[19:00] So they feel they have this intimacy with the Lord Jesus where they say Lord, Lord and he says I never knew you never knew you and it's not I used to know you and then I don't know you anymore as some people would think.

No, he says I never knew you because if the Lord ever knows us in a saving way he will always know us in a saving way. I never ever knew you.

Those are painful words to hear because those are eternal words. they seal one's destiny. And so this issue of genuine conversion, this issue of false teachers and how they can trip people up with false teachings and get them to be false believers becomes very very important for us.

Every one of us needs to ask ourselves the question, am I truly safe? Every one of us, myself included. because what scripture teaches is we can be deceived and what Jesus said is that there will be people on the day of judgment who are absolutely deceived, so deceived that they will challenge, seek to challenge the reality of his judgment.

Let's go back to 2 Peter. We need to ask this question, am I truly saved?

[20:40] And connected to that question, we should ask another one, can I be assured that I'm saved? And another question, if so, if I can be assured that I'm saved, how can I be assured?

Am I saved? Can I be assured that I'm saved? And if I can be assured, how? The good news this morning is that we can be assured that we are saved.

And this passage from 2 Peter that we have just read, helps us to see how. In this passage, the Apostle Peter tells us that genuine conversion results in our lives being transformed and our salvation being secured.

That's what he tells us in these verses that we just read. If we are genuinely converted, it will result in our lives being transformed and it will result in our salvation being secured.

When God saves us, he transforms us. And that salvation that he gives us is secured for all eternity.

[22:00] And that's good news this morning. That is good news. That is good news that God saves, God transforms, God secures. The Apostle Peter helps us to see this truth in this passage by pointing us to and teaching us about three important aspects of genuine conversion.

Three important aspects of genuine conversion. Number one, how genuine conversion begins. Number two, how genuine conversion continues. And number three, how genuine conversion ends. So I want us to consider these three aspects of genuine conversion in our remaining time. First, let's consider how genuine conversion begins.

Peter tells us that genuine conversion begins with God. It doesn't begin with us. Look at what he says in verses 3 and 4. Now, in these two verses, Peter says a whole lot.

And every commentator I looked at on these verses said these are difficult verses because Peter says so much. So let's read them and then I'll try to summarize what Peter says.

[23:19] He writes, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who has called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

That's a long sentence. It's a very long sentence. And here's what Peter says. Peter says, those of us who are saved are saved because God called us to the glory of salvation.

In other words, he summoned us or he saved us when we heard the gospel. And when we came to know him in saving faith, he caused the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and we have been granted the

power, divine power, and given very great promises through the gospel to be able to live a godly life.

And the result is that we are delivered from corruption in this world. In a nutshell, that is what Peter said. And what he's saying is that our conversion begins with God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me just say that again. Here's what Peter is saying in these two verses. those of us who are saved, we are saved because God called us to the glory of salvation.

[25 : 09] Not because one day we decided to be wise and morally good and we decided to change our lives and turn over a new league. No, not because of that. It's because God called us to the glory of salvation.

He summoned us when we heard the gospel. He summoned us to be saved. And when we came to know him in saving faith, he caused the Holy Spirit to dwell within us.

And we were granted divine power and great promises through the gospel so that we can live a godly life in a fallen world.

God. And the result is that we are separated and delivered from this world and all of the corruption that is related to it.

That is how genuine conversion begins. Again, not by turning over a new leaf, not by doing some morally good things.

[26 : 14] It begins by divine activity. It does a divine work in our lives. A true converting, transforming world. Now let me clarify two things that, two terms that Peter uses in these two verses.

The first is partakers of the divine nature. Peter is not saying that when we came to Christ that we became divine or godlike or we partook of some of God and his attributes and his qualities.

There are people who teach that. There are those who teach that we are little gods and we can do all sorts of amazing things.

That's heresy. That's unbiblical. Part of the wonder of the gospel is that we remain flesh. We remain human as we are. But the God of the universe puts his spirit within us and we are able to partake of the things of God.

We have an appetite for the things of God and in that sense we are participating in things that are above us and beyond us but we in and of ourselves don't become divine.

[27 : 36] We're able to share in the richness and the wonder and the majesty of God to partake of that through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

We become more Christ-like in our attitudes. We become more God-like in our conduct. The second term that Peter uses is having escaped the corruption that is in the world.

Here Peter is not saying to us that when we come to Christ we stop sinning and we begin to be perfect and if you sin well then that means you are not saved.

There are those who falsely teach perfection that you will become sanctified in this life and sin no longer attracts you, you no longer sin and it is error, it is heresy.

One of the groups of teeth that is on that BBN station with Paul Miller and those that you can grow and become perfect.

[28 : 47] Not so. That's not what Peter is talking about here when he talks about us having escaped corruption that is in the world.

Instead, what this speaks about is a definite break with the world that results at conversion. when we come to Christ, we're still in the world, but we're no longer of the world.

We're no longer a part of the world and it's corruption because of sinful desires. By the grace of God, after conversion, the world does not have the same pull on us.

It's not as attractive to us as it used to be. By the grace of God, our affections begin to be reshaped. that the grace of God, our hearts begin to be reordered towards the things of God and not the things of this world.

And this process is called sanctification. And it looks different for different people for all kinds of different reasons.

[29 : 53] things. And it's not to say that if there's something in the world that attracts you or you tend to be tempted by that you're not a believer.

It's not saying that at all. What I am saying though is that if those things, if the world is having the same attraction to you, if the world is having the same pull to you, now that you say that you're in Christ, as it did when you were not in Christ, well then you need to question whether you are in

Christ.

You have to question whether positionally you have changed, whether there's anything that's different in your life. But you know what? If you still find that the pull of the world, let me just change that turn on, if we find that any aspect of the world still pulls or tugs at our hearts to some degree, as long as that is not as strong as it used to be, we should be grateful that we are evidencing some growth in sanctification.

And that should be increasing over time. So I just want to clarify those two terms that Peter uses. I can't emphasize enough this first point, that genuine salvation, genuine conversion, starts with God and not with us.

And the reason this is important is that our assurance is rooted in this fact. Our assurance is rooted in the fact that genuine conversion starts with God and not with us.

[31 : 32] Because if it starts with us, then it's in our hands. If it starts with God, it's in God's hands, and what Scripture teaches is that God finishes whatever he starts.

Listen to what Paul writes in Philippians chapter 1 verses 3 through 6. He writes, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, for you all making, for you all, making my prayer with joy.

Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Listen to verse 6. And I am sure of this. that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

God always finishes what he's done. And that is why if genuine conversion begins with God, you can be absolutely sure that it will finish with God. He will finish it. And this is where our assurance is grounded.

Our assurance is grounded in the fact that God started a good work of salvation in us. God is going to settle that. We can hold on to the truth that you know what?

[32 : 48] God has started this. I'm going to finish. I'm not going to be lost. He's going to hold on to me to the very end because everything that he starts, he finishes.

Notice in verses 3 and 4, we see these words, has granted, two times. In verse 3, at the very beginning, it says, his divine power has granted.

And then in verse 4, by which he has granted. These are words of grace. These are not words of our own doing. These are not words of grace. These are words of grace.

God has granted these things and he has granted them at our conversion. We are recipients of the mercies of his.

We don't deserve them. He's granted them to us. And so this morning, if you profess to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, are you conscious of the fact and convinced of the fact that your conversion began with God?

[34 : 00] anything that you did was a response to God. It was a continuation of what God had begun. But oftentimes when we think of our salvation experience, we start with ourselves.

We start with our response to something. Not realizing that no, God was already at work and we're responding to his trial work.

again, this is a very important foundational issue for assurance of salvation.

Whatever God starts, he finishes. And that is why the salvation of believers is secure. In the hands of a God who is able to bring to pass whatever he starts.

not to cause us to rejoice. Again, if we started our own salvation, it's in our hands.

[35 : 05] And we can't even keep track of our keys sometimes, at least me, much less to hold on to our salvation and start to finish.

so that's how genuine salvation begins. Genuine conversion begins with God.

But that's not where it ends. It doesn't end it. Genuine conversion continues, if it is indeed genuine conversion, it continues, and this brings me to my second point, how genuine conversion continues. in verses 5-9, Peter moves from telling us what God did in initiating genuine conversion to what we are now called to do in the continuance of genuine conversion.

And it's important to see the transition. Peter's getting at something here. He's getting out of concern that there are people who are only mindful of what God has done and unmindful of what they're called to do.

[36 : 20] And herein is another part of assurance. If we do not continue with what God has done, if we don't continue this process of the working of God in our lives, we undermine assurance and we

become unstable in our faith.

So let's see how Peter establishes the second point. In verses five through nine, again, he says a whole lot.

So I want to do what I did with three and four. I want to read it and then I want to summarize what he actually says. He says, for this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

[37 : 53] So Peter is helping us now to understand what we have been called to do if we indeed have been genuinely converted.

and what he does is he gives this link of seven virtues or qualities which he says that we are to be diligent to add to our faith.

So the way to think of it is this way. Our conversion begins with God. He initiates it. We are in saving faith.

He has granted that to us. The gift from him. Peter says now to us in verse five, for this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith.

Brothers and sisters, we grow in assurance when we supplement our faith as we are being called to do. If we don't supplement our faith, again, we are not going to grow in assurance and as a matter of fact, we could very well undermine assurance.

[39 : 04] Now, Peter is not saying that salvation is deficient and it needs something added to it. He is not saying that at all. Instead, what Peter is saying is something that I am sure you have heard before that although we are saved by faith alone, saving faith is never alone.

It will always be accompanied by evidential work that we are saved. So, Peter is not saying that our faith is deficient.

Our faith that God has given to us, it is complete. It is total. But, he says, you need to be diligent. You need to make every effort to do this.

And let us not think as well that Peter is now saying, well, God has finished his work, he's folded his arms, now you need to go and do what you have to do. Not that at all. The diligence that we are called to, the work that we are called to, is grace motivated work, grace enabled work.

That's the only way that we can do it. That's the only way that we can do it. Have you ever seen a child who misbehaves?

[40 : 22] And maybe a teacher or some adult says to the child, okay, if you could behave for 10 minutes, I'm going to give you this or that. I'm going to behave and sit down. He behaves for two minutes, three minutes, five minutes.

But, he's just misbehaving, so he just can't last for the 10 minutes. He does something, says something. That's what it's kind of like trying to do what Peter says to do here without divine grace and divine ability.

You can't do it. It will not last. So, these seven qualities that Peter gives, we should also remember that Peter's not saying this is exhaustive, you must do these particular seven things.

No, Peter's saying to us that there are particular virtues, there are particular qualities that are to be exhibited in our lives if we are believers and we need to be diligent and we need to be intentional to seek to grow in these particular areas, to mature in our faith, to produce the fruit of what it means to be a Christian.

He's saying to us we need to be intentional about this. Now, I'm going to look at these seven virtues quickly, we're going to run through them, but again, this is not exhaustive.

[41 : 49] So, he says to us that we to add to our faith, first of all, virtue. And those of you who have a Bible like mine, you'll notice that there's a footnote there, number five in my version, and it refers to excellence.

It's using the same word that was used before in verse three where it says that God has called us to his own glory and excellence. So, virtue is the same word for excellence.

and refers to all that is noble, all that is good as determined by God. And so, as we seek to live life, as we seek to live as believers, as those who have been genuinely converted, we do our best to live life in accordance with what God calls us to, to the glory of God.

We're to be considering, what is excellent, what is excellent in God's sight in this situation, or that situation, and we have to pursue it diligently as best we can.

That's what it means to add virtue to your faith. We said about, Lord, I want to live my best for you, I want to live excellently for you.

[43 : 08] What does that look like in this decision I need to make? What does this look like in this trial that's in front of me? How can I add excellence, virtue, that which is noble by God's standards, to my faith?

And then he says to virtue we have to add knowledge. And here knowledge is not just general knowledge, but it is knowledge that is rooted in God's word.

Because again, in the Christian faith, the only thing that we really know with certainty is what is in this book. God's and I cannot stress this enough. The only thing that we know with any degree of certainty is what is written in this word from God.

everything is to be tested by what is written in the word of God. And it is the knowledge that we are to be growing in from God's word that is to cause us to get to know God more intimately, to get to know God more deeply through prayer and through communion.

But fundamentally, this knowledge that Peter is telling us to add to virtue is referring to knowing God's word. And so it entails what we are doing this morning, sitting under the instruction of God's word.

[44 : 37] It entails what we do personally and privately as well, not just corporately and publicly. It entails what we do in Discipleship Foundation class.

It entails what we do in care groups. we are getting to know God through getting to know God's word. Brothers and sisters, if we are not intentionally getting into God's word, we are not getting to know God in the most important and the most certain way.

You know that knowing God through his word is more important than knowing God through prayer. because we can only properly relate to God in prayer through his word, understanding his word.

Like for example, Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount how we should pray. He says, don't use a bunch of vain repetitions, rambling on, believing that God is going to hear you because of that. The pagans do that. But if we pray uninformed by that, we will be missing the mark often in how we pray. And again, there's no competition between the two, no competition between reading God's word or prayer.

[45 : 52] We need to do both. But the priority is knowing God through his word, understanding the Christian life through the word of God. The word of God needs to hold a high place in all of our lives.

It is foundational for the other virtues of the Christian life. Next, we're told to add to knowledge, self-control. And this speaks about governing our lives in a manner that is fitting for those who belong to Christ.

It speaks to controlling our appetite, bridling our tongue. It speaks to moderating our speech and our conduct and in other aspects of life.

Self-control should mark our lives as Christians. We're told to add to self-control steadfastness. You know the most steady people, the most trusty people, those who endure and hold up in the midst of great difficulty should be believers.

Because one, we're not doing it on our own strength. We're doing it on the strength that God gives. But he calls us to be steadfast, to be consistent, to persevere, to continue in the face of triumph.

[47 : 17] These are evidences of genuine conversion. We're told to add to steadfastness godliness. And this is simply living in a manner that is Christ-like and reflective of what we see Christians being called to be in the Word of God.

So it means to be godly. it means that we are reflecting more and more of who God is as revealed in Scripture.

And so when qualities like mercy and kindness and goodness and patience, when they're being manifested in our lives, we are manifesting godliness because those are attributes that belong to God.

Next is brotherly affection. We're told to add it to steadfastness. And this is a very important attribute in the Christian life because it is one that is a real test as to whether we are Christians or not, whether we're born again or not.

And notice that he's going to go on to say that we have to add love to it. So he's not talking about the same thing. Brotherly affection is not love. Brotherly affection is a unique heart affection for those who belong to Christ, those who are brothers and sisters in Christ.

[48 : 57] it is unique and special. Listen to what 1 John 3, 14 says. We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers.

We know that. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

brothers and sisters, we are to be growing over time in our love for those who belong to Christ. And I'm not talking generically and universally although we are to love them, but this is primarily lived out in the context of the local church with people we know to be our brothers and sisters in Christ because we claim God is our father together.

John says we know, we know this, that we have passed from death to life and we love the brothers. It's something that God puts in our heart. It gives us this assurance.

[50 : 07] I genuinely love my brother. I have affection for my brother, my sister. I've passed from spiritual death to spiritual life. love. And then finally, we're told to add brotherly affection, we're told to add to brotherly affection love.

I notice again, these are two different qualities, two different attributes. Love is for all people, brotherly affection is for brothers and sisters in Christ.

all of these things are to be added to our faith. But again, this is not all to be added to our faith.

Peter's saying to us, our faith must not be naked, our faith must not be in isolation.

We must not be saying, I'm a Christian, but there's nothing else added to that profession of faith, that prayer we prayed, that commitment we made that day, we've added nothing else to.

He says, you're not going to grow in assurance. if that is your situation. Notice in verse 8, Peter gives a promise.

[51 : 19] Peter says, if these qualities are yours and are increasing, here's what they will do. They will keep you from being ineffective and untruthful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, you're not going to be in a situation wrong, you have to hold it with your faith. He says, if you do these things, your faith will be adorned with truthfulness.

Your faith will be adorned with the evidence that you belong to God. Your faith will be adorned with the evidence that you've been truly, generally converted.

And he gives this challenge in verse 9. He says, for whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

He's essentially saying this person is like one who is professing Christ, but they are just in the same environment, the same general location, not realizing they've been cleansed from their former sins, and they now need to be manifesting a completely different kind of life.

[52 : 31] if you profess Christ this morning as Lord and Savior, what is true of you? Is it true of you that over time your faith has been adorned by evidence, evidences like these?

Or is it true that you're more nearsighted and blind and never realized, you know what, I've been set free from all that stuff, and I need to be on a journey of growth in godliness.

Again, brothers and sisters, if our conversion is genuine, it will be manifested in continued growth, and the result will be our assurance salvation.

Peter addresses this in verses 10 and 11, and this brings me to my final point, my third and final point, how genuine conversion ends. Notice the assuring promise that we have in verses 10 and 11. therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall, for in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[54 : 19] Peter says that we are to confirm our calling and election, by evidencing the fruit of genuine conversion.

Now, he introduces here two very important words, calling and election. Election is what God determines before time began, before the foundation of the world.

In eternity past, God shows God elected those whom he would save. And then in time, he called them. And this is what Peter addressed this earlier in verse 3, when he talks about his divine

powers granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him. He called us to his own glory and excellence. In eternity past, God elected to save. And then in time, God calls those whom he elected to the salvation that he elected them for.

Now, we can profess that. Here's what Peter says. Peter says, you need to make that sure. You need to confirm that. It's not just enough to know that.

[55 : 41] It's not enough just to say that. He says, we need to confirm it. And the way we confirm it is we have these evidences. We're being diligent.

We're being faithful to grow in grace. And again, no amount of willpower could produce this for any extended period of time.

If we're doing this in the flesh, we will fail. It's only by the grace of God that we are able to do this. But notice that there is this division of labor.

There's that which God does and there's that which we do, which God enables us to do, and we need both of them. And that is the way we are going to grow in assurance.

We are to confirm these things he says. And he says if we do them, if we practice these qualities, we will never fall.

[56 : 42] Now, clearly, Peter's not saying to us, if you do this, you will never sin. The reason we know he's not saying that is that both scripture and experience would refute that.

Scripture doesn't tell us that when we come to Christ, we will no longer sin. We will never fall. And we've been serving the Lord long enough to know that that just is not so. What he's talking about is we will never fall away eternally forever.

We'll never be lost is what he's really saying. If you do these things, you do these things, these are yours in increasing measure, you will not be absolutely lost in the end.

It's the plain word that Peter is trying to communicate to us at this particular point in the passage.

And then he says to us in verse 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.

Genuine conversion will result in being saved in the end. We will be given an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

[58 : 08] That's how genuine conversion ends. Every single genuine conversion will end this way. No genuine conversion is aborted somehow and someone who was converted ends up in hell.

No, he says, genuine, it's going to start with God, it's going to continue with us being diligent, adding to our faith, confirming our election and our calling, and he says that in the end we're going to be finally saved.

And why? Again, because God started it, God will continue it, God will complete it. And this is how we are assured.

and this message that Peter was getting across to his hearers was important because false teachers and false teaching abounded.

And we will see in chapter two how Peter is talking about these false teachers, they're living in open adultery, they're grieving for money, and yet they had an audience.

[59 : 22] If they had no audience, Peter would not be concerned about them, but they had an audience and people were being drawn to them. And therefore these things become important.

Let us not rely on some distant past experience, some prayer we prayed, some emotional experience that we had, and let that be our confidence that we belong to Christ, that we were genuinely converted.

Let's not rely on that. It is so much more than that. Instead, we need to be diligent to confirm our election and our calling, and when we do that, we will grow in our assurance of salvation.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word this morning. And Lord, in a time and an age when false teachers and false teaching abound, help us to grow, help us to know that you are Lord and that we are able to enjoy to the end once we are truly converted.

So we give you thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to have questions for a second, so if you guys can just hold on for a moment. Are there any questions from the sermon?

[61 : 11] Any questions? Yes. I trust that the smell of the food is not muffling our questions. No questions?

That's a very good question. Let me answer it from the perspective of a person who is truly safe. I would say, knowing the realities of the Christian life, knowing the realities of the enemy and how he would buffet us and he would bombard us, believing in election, believing that God determined

