What the saved life is for

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[0:00] Simeon, Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power is granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to be his own glory and excellence, by his own glory and excellence.

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. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and with virtue with knowledge, and with 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 keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
For whoever lacks these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you practice these things, 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 Saviour Jesus Christ.
And may God bless his word. Well, we're going to stand and sing now, and then we'll come back to the word then.
The Bible's there, please. You can open them at 2 Peter, but I will be referring to other passages as we go. So, this evening's message is really a follow-on from this morning's message, which is a following from last week's messages.
[2:18] So, on the whole, last week was very much to do with how we were saved and the new life that is then given to us. But this morning was very much dealing with why we are saved. And the two questions are not the same.

How we are saved is a different question than why we are saved. Well, this evening we move into the area of what is our life for.
And as we saw this morning, the person who forgets that they have been cleansed from their former sins forgets a whole lot more than just that. They forget the purpose that their life is for, and therefore they don't fulfill the purpose that God has given them because they don't remember that they have been cleansed from their sins. They just carry on as they were before.
So, the issue this evening is to, firstly, for us to understand the difference between unity and harmony. Okay? The obvious illustration is a piano. White keys and black keys are found together. But it takes a lot of skill to make a harmonious sound. I can get on the piano and make a sound. Ian can get on the piano and make a different sound. But why is it the case that one sounds better than the other?
[3:35] Okay? Why is it the keys have to be depressed in a particular order to make a beautiful sound rather than in the order that I would do them and make a sound that none of you would want to hear?

Okay? Well, the issue is that unity is important, but unity is supposed to lead to harmony. Okay? Unity leads to harmony.
Unity would be one of your children tying another one of their children's hair to the washing line. They're unified, but there is no harmony there.
In fact, there's anything but harmony. But you could argue, well, they're united. Yes, but not in the way that they're meant to be. So, there's a couple of issues here. Unity is a key issue, that things are brought together.

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And some things are meant to be together, and some things clearly are not meant to be united. But the things that are meant to be united are then meant to be harmonious. You have been united to God in Christ Jesus.
[4:40] Okay? You have been united to God in Christ Jesus. The issue now is, is your life harmonious? Is your union with God a harmonious one?

And that has very much to do with why we were saved. We were saved in many ways, if I can put it this way, to make a beautiful sound. We were saved in many ways to be harmonious in the most beautiful way.
And the way that that comes out of our life is in the virtues that God gives us. So, you'll notice here in verse 5, that we are to supplement our faith with the gifts that God has given us.
And verse 1, verse 3 rather, that God has given us all of these things that pertain to life and godliness. So, all of these gifts in verse 5 through to 7 are the things that God has given us that pertain to life and godliness.
All of these things that will create in our life that harmonious sound, that harmonious reality that God is looking for.
[5:53] Now, if we are to delight in God and God is to delight in us, then we are both to delight in the same things. It means that we are to sing off the same hymn sheet. We are to row in the same direction.

There is to be a unity, but there has to be a pulling together. We have to be moving in the same direction. So, delighting in the things of God is the way that we live in harmony with God.
And the way God does this is by giving us the things to delight in. Now, before I go any further, there is an element of caution here that needs to be sort of just stopped and taken hold of.
When Peter says that you will never fall, if you practice these things, you will never fall, verse 10, these qualities. If you supplement your faith with these qualities, and if you continue to do that, and they're increasing, you will never fall.
He's not indicating that a person can fall away from God and lose their salvation. That's not what he's saying. Because that would undermine everything else the Bible says about a person who is saved never being anything but saved.
[7:06] And that's a glorious reality, something that you should never, ever forget. That when a person is saved, they can't undo the work of God. Because salvation is a work of God, there is nothing that a person can do to undo that work or to rubbish it in any way.

And Romans 8 is a clear expression of that truth, that there is nothing in heaven on earth that can separate us from God. Absolutely nothing. However, here's the caution.
That does not mean that though you are united and cannot be anything but united, that doesn't mean that you are automatically harmonious. What it means is, is that the person who could fall, falls into sin.
Not a sin that can separate them from God, but a sin that makes a horrible noise. Okay? The sin that is ugly. You've got union with God, but you've got this clanging sound over here.
And what it is, is you not supplementing your faith with God's qualities. You're believing things, you're acting in ways that you shouldn't do. And so you're not delighting in the things of God.
[8:12] Rather, it's just a horrible clanging sound. So what Peter is concerned with here is that that doesn't happen. Not that you don't fall away from God, because that's not the issue.

The issue is, now that you're united with God, be harmonious. Don't be an annoyance over here. Don't be a horrible sound or the horrible smell that, you know, who left that in the house overnight? It should have been taken out the night before. That's the kind of issue that we have here. So Peter's concern is that if we have come to share in the divine nature, and we have come to become part of God, that we are united with God, we therefore ought to be, the next thing is, harmonious with God.
Now, he doesn't use the word harmonious, but that's clearly the direction that he is moving in. God has given us life to live in a godly way, to put it bluntly.
Holiness without which, okay, no one gets into his kingdom. No one gets into heaven. So verse 5 is the imperative. You who have faith in God, in Christ, are to supplement that faith with these qualities.
[9:30] So if you have faith in God, which you do, you are therefore then to supplement that faith with the qualities that God gives you.

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So here's a summary of the qualities and what they are for. Verses 5 through to 7 clearly indicate virtue, knowledge, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love, a number of other things that we are supposed to supplement our faith with, which indicates two things.
Number one, the faith that saves you is alone. You're saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone, as Melanchthon once put it, okay? You're justified by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.
It comes with gifts. It comes bearing gifts. It comes to give you so much more. But faith is the predecessor of all of them. You need to have faith to have the rest.
But now that you have faith in God, you are then to supplement your faith with these other things. Now, you've heard me say it before. The only gift, you know, if you're Galatians 5, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the gifts here, one of the only gifts that cannot be counterfeited, okay, is self-control.
[10:47] It's the only gift. It's the gift of the Holy Spirit given to men, women, boys, and girls who are saved. They cannot be a counterfeit. Now, other things you can counterfeit.

You can have a counterfeit knowledge. You can have a counterfeit love. You can have a counterfeit commitment, steadfastness. But you cannot have a counterfeit self-control. Self-control is self-evident.
You're either self-controlled or you're not, okay? And that there is the key indicator to part of this harmonious life that we're looking for.
What kind of control can you exert over your own life? Okay? Well, the only control you can is the control God gives you, okay, which is setting you free from the corruption of sinful desires and giving you a divine nature.
And that new nature then produces a new set of control, unlike the illustration that we used earlier, where the person cannot help but do what is in their nature.
[11:53] So you'll notice that these qualities given to us have a purpose of making us fruitful and not ineffective, making us stable and steadfast and not falling away, that we would never fall away.

And the person who practices these things and increases in these things is living the life of godliness that God actually wants them to live. Now, there's something here, really easy to notice, but it's one of those things that most people only ever notice it once it's pointed out.
And so verse 5, you'll notice, comes before verse 6. Yeah. Okay? And 2 Peter comes after 1 Peter. Now, these things matter. These things matter for a very obvious reason, is that Peter is writing this second letter saying, I'm reminding you, reminding me of what?
Well, of what I said to you in my first letter, that the whole Christian life is to be one offering to God, that we are a priestly service to offer offerings to God.
[13:00] And what we offer is our whole life. Now, the reason verse 5 comes before the others is because Christians can often make the mistake of not supplementing their faith with these gifts, but replacing their faith in God with these gifts.

Okay? Let me say that again. Christians can often make the mistake of not supplementing their faith with these gifts, but replacing them. So, in other words, they don't have much faith in God, but they're really committed.
Or they don't have much faith in God, but do you know what? They're the most loving person you'll ever come across. That they don't have much love in God, but faith in God, but boy, is their knowledge amazing.
Okay? That's naughty. That is not God's intention. Faith is to be supplemented with these. It is not to be replaced by these.
Because the issue here is what really matters is the person, not the gifts. What really matters to God here is the type of person that person is becoming with the qualities given to him rather than the qualities themselves.
[14:17] Yes, they are God's qualities. Yes, they are good qualities. But what's more important is the person who performs them. Okay? And what God looks for most importantly is not that they're performed, that these gifts are given to God or these virtues are practiced, but rather how they are practiced.

And that's why it's crucial to understand that faith is the predecessor to all of these others. So let me explain, because this is really quite important, especially as we come to communion this evening. So I'm going to explain it in this way. Distinctions and differences. Okay? The argumentative. So the man says the door is black, and the woman says, no, it's white.

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Okay? And the woman then has to point out, we could say it's husband and wife, but we'll just stick to general terms as man and woman. No, the man knows the door is white, but he's going to call it black, and he won't be shifted.
And you know that you can't get anywhere with a person like that. You know the door is white. You know you've not got a problem here. But he's convinced, and he wants to convince you that it's black, even if he's not convinced himself that it's black.
[15:36] That's argumentative. Okay? The difference is easy to tell, but the issue is not the difference here. The issue is there's no agreement, or one person's not coming.

There's unity over the fact that it's a door, but there is no harmonious reality here. There's a difference. But let's say you come across another person, and they call brown what you call red. And you go, oh, there's something up here, because I've just called that orange, and you're calling it brown, and I've just called this over here a different color, and you're still calling it brown. Are you sure you're not colorblind?
Well, as a matter of fact, that's exactly what I am. Well, suddenly we begin to see that differences can occur, differences can occur, because of blindness. Colorblindness is just one example of how differences can occur.
So you've got two people arguing over the color of the carpet, which is red, and one says, oh, it's brown. Right? But then he admits, well, I do suffer with colorblindness, and that's why I think that it's brown.
[16:38] That's why I came to that conclusion, that it's brown. And you begin to realize, actually, now we can work out why there's difference. Okay? It is because we're seeing different things, but we're seeing different things because one can see and one can't, or they can see, but it's a colored blindness.

It's altering their view. That's an issue. But then there's another example, and this is where we come to the very crutch of it, or the very heart of it.
If God, and you're stood beside God, calls this, that particular blue, royal blue, and you go, well, I just so happen to think that it's cornflower blue, which apparently is very similar in color on the hex codes, which is a color chart.
Okay? It's always going to be royal blue. It's not going to be anything but royal blue. Okay? Why? Because there's a difference between the true color, which God created, and your opinion of the true color that you're looking at.
Okay? So you can't sit down with God and argue this one out as though the color is a matter of an opinion. Okay? I can understand that that can happen between people, but when you're dealing with God who is the creator of color, who is the creator of differences, you can't use that on him.
[17:58] Okay? If God says it's royal blue, it's not dark blue. Okay? If God says it's royal blue, it's not navy blue. Okay? You can't say that it's something different. Not because God can't be argued with, though he can't be argued with.

Though God can't be proven wrong, though God cannot be proven wrong, which is clearly the case. And the fact that you think that he could be proven wrong. But actually, it is because God is God. And God is the author of truth. God is truth. And therefore, it is the way that it is because God said so. So if you're trying to debate with God, no, no, this is cornflower blue.
Okay? You've got a problem. Because you're exerting something onto God that seems to have equal authority is what God says it is. You think, well, where are you going with this?
You're trying to explain differences. I'm going to explain it in a different way, but I need to ease you into it gently. Okay? Here's the second type of illustration. Think about it this way.
[19:01] Between what is acceptable and unacceptable. Because the standard is never, ever accepting. Okay?

The standard is not for you to be accepting. The standard is always what is acceptable. Okay? So let's imagine for a moment a silly situation, but one that could be true.
A drag queen comes up to me with a pineapple on his head and says to me, Christianity, for you, is a wonderful thing. And I accept you as a Christian.
I accept what you believe. And I accept that your belief in God because you believe that God exists is fair and just and real. Well, thank you very much.
But it doesn't follow from that that I have to accept that his position as a drag queen is something that I need to accept. Because the standard isn't accepting.

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[20:03] The standard is what is acceptable. and there's a difference between the two. A major difference between the two. So if the drag queen said to me, well, you know, what do you think of my position?

Well, I have the freedom under God and the authority according to his word to tell him what it is. Why? Because the standard is not for me to accept him. The standard is what is acceptable and God is the standard of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable.
Well, how can I get him to church if I don't go to one of his shows? Right? There has to be a bit of tit for tat. There has to be this sort of accepting nature going on. No, not at all. Not at all.
Because accepting is not the standard. What is acceptable is. And it's not acceptable for me to go to a drag queen show. Not in the slightest. Well, what about getting into church?
Well, here's the wake-up call. I don't want him to come to church. I want him to come to Christ and Christ will bring him to church. Okay? I don't want to get him to church.
[21:10] I want to get him to Christ and Christ will bring him to church. And that's the issue. So now we're getting a bit closer because there's a lot of Christians who fall into this category of supplementing when they're actually replacing.

Suddenly, it's no longer what is acceptable but rather let's be accepting. But being accepting is not the standard. The standard is what is acceptable to God.
And there are some things as clear as the light of day which are acceptable and some things which as clear as the light of day are not. And they're easy to point out.
Now, you may be like the first person who wants to argue that it's black when in fact it's white. or you might be like the second person who wants to argue that it's brown instead of red because you have color blindness. But it's still red if it's red and it's still white if it's white because they're the standards.
And if God says it's royal blue, it's royal blue. This is how Jesus put it. Jesus told us this in the very same kind of way.
[22:23] And this is how he put it in Matthew 5. He says, leave your gift at the altar. Just leave it there. And go be reconciled with your brother.

And then come and make the offering at a later date. Now, we can clearly see from what Jesus has said that the problem is not with what's being offered.
The problem is not with the qualities, the self-control, the blessedness, the knowledge. it's not with the tithe. The problem is not with the service rendered.
Okay? In the church, the stewarding, the sound desk, or a number of other things. That's not where the problem is. If that was where the problem is, if the problem was with what was being offered, Jesus would say, take the offering away and come back with a better one.
But he doesn't say that. He says, leave your offering there and you go away. The problem's not with what's being offered. The issue is with the one who's doing the offering.
[23:26] Okay? The issue is with the one doing the offering. He is to go away. He is to get reconciled to his brother and then he is to come back and give to God the offering that he already brought.

The issue that God is addressing here in terms of the standard is not the additional things that we bring to God, but actually the way that we bring them to God.
This is how Proverbs puts it. Proverbs 15, 8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.
Okay? The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. As Proverbs says elsewhere, you've got two farmers out in the field. They both plough different fields, but they plough it in exactly the same way.
God looks upon one as righteous and he looks upon the other one as unrighteous. Why? They've done exactly the same work and exactly the same amount of hours in the exactly same size field.
[24:31] What's the problem? Well, the problem is not with the work. The problem was with how the work was conducted by the person who conducted it. Like, the wicked man here needs to realize that he cannot buy his way out through sacrifice.

He cannot get himself in God's good books through giving God something. This is very similar to the person who decides that they will pray more. That their whole motivation for praying more is because they want something or they want something to change.

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What are you doing? What you're doing is you're using the offering and you're bringing it forth and you're not listening to God telling you to go away. Okay? Why?
The problem's not with your prayer. The problem's not with your sacrifice. The problem's not... The problem is with how you have brought it. And the point here is to realize that even good sacrifices, that even good offerings, even all of these good qualities that we are meant to give to God in a holy life can be corrupted by the person who does them without faith.
in God and in His Word. Who does them not according to the acceptable standard, but does them because they think it's accepting. And that's the issue.
[25:54] That's the issue here. So understand what Peter is saying in verse 5. We are to supplement our faith. We are not to replace our faith with these qualities as if it's the qualities that really matter.

What really matters is you before the qualities. What God is really interested in here is the type of person you are becoming, not the amount of qualities that you can kick out on a Sunday morning or a Sunday afternoon or throughout the week.
It's not about how loving you can be. It's not about how knowledgeable you can be. It's not about how much brotherly affection you have. It's not really about that because as we've seen, God can say, leave your gift at the altar.
What it's really about is how you do them. And the way that we are meant to do them is by supplementing our faith in the received word of God.
We are to supplement our faith, not replace it. And faith comes by the word, the hearing of the word, the word of God, which is the acceptable standard.
[27:07] So here's the exhortation as we close. We need to understand that God has reasons and we have good reasons. Okay? God has God's reasons and we have good reasons and these are not always the same.

Our good reasons can actually cause us to be ineffectual. Our good reasons can even cause us to be unfruitful. But God's reasons for the way things ought to be done are the things that keep us from falling.
Okay? Not falling from our salvation, that's not the issue. But rather falling into a cycle of being ineffective and unfruitful, of being sinful. And none of us, hopefully, I pray, would want that to actually happen to our life.
And so this means we need to go all the way back and be careful with how we make careful distinctions. Being able to tell the difference not only between what is true and false, but also between what is right and wrong.
Now, I understand that some Christians can be pretty one-dimensional, that the issue is, well, let's just tell the difference between what is true and false. But that's not just the issue. The issue here is that the knowledge of God, which all of this is based in, is also being able to tell the difference between what is right and wrong.
[28:31] And that's crucial. Because it's not just a knowledgeable, this is true, this is false, objectively, but actually, this is right for me. It's a moral, ethical issue here.

Why? Because you've been given life. And you've been given a life to live that is full, to be filled with godliness. So to quote the scriptures, godliness with contentment, with contentment is great gain. You brought nothing into the world and you're going to take nothing with you. And so the godliness with great gain is the great gain experienced by supplementing your faith with these qualities.
Not being able to produce these qualities all by yourself. Because if we could offer to God an offering that was acceptable apart from faith, then what we are effectively saying is Jesus died for nothing.
Our faith is in the true offering. And that's the only reason why our offerings are acceptable. Because our offerings come out of faith in the true and perfect offering of the Lord Jesus Christ.
[29:44] So we are able to tell the difference in all that we offer between, not just between black and white, but between white and off-white. between what is acceptable and what is unacceptable and avoiding the danger of just being accepting.

Being able to tell the difference between true and false and right and wrong. All because God has saved us for godliness. God has saved us to enter into an eternal kingdom.
What we bring to God matters. What we bring to God always matters. But how we bring it to God is the much more important issue. Why?

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Because what really matters to God is you. Will you be acceptable? Will you be acceptable? God makes us acceptable and this is how he does it.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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