

02-07-2016

Message: A Final Reminder, Part 2

Text: 2 Peter 3:10-18

Introduction

- A. Last week as we began looking at the concluding two verses of this second letter of Peter, we observed that throughout this letter our Lord has inspired His apostle Peter to stir up, wake up us, His church, by way of reminding us of things we have already been taught.

2 Peter 1:12 Therefore, **I will always be ready to remind you of these things**, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*.

2 Peter 3:1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which **I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder**,

- B. So as we come to the end of the letter, it should not surprise us that Christ has Peter remind us in summary form what he has previously urged and exhorted us to do in this letter - guard, grow, & glorify.

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your **guard** so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,¹⁸ but **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the **glory**, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- C. By way of reminder, last week we fed on Christ's message to us in 3:17.

I. 3:17 Be on your guard

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall (ekpipto) from your own steadfastness**,

Galatians 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have **fallen (ekpipto)** from grace.

- A. Be on your guard for what?

1. For false teachers.
2. For your own heart, that it not be carried away by error.

- B. Why be on guard?

1. So we do not fall from our own steadfastness unto eternal destruction by being carried away by fatal error. The Greek word for “fall” (ekpipto) is a word that is used to refer to apostasy, of departing from the Christian faith unto eternal destruction (E.g., Galatians 5:4).
2. The warnings ,clearly directed to believers, are a means of God’s grace to protect the faith of believers, causing them to walk safely in steadfast steps of faith rather than to fall away to their destruction.
3. The truthfulness of Christ’s warnings to Christians to not be carried away by error unto their eternal destruction does not depend on whether or not such warnings come to pass. When you warn your children not to step in front of a moving 18 wheeler or they will die, does the truthfulness of your warning depend on whether or not it happens? Is the warning not still true, even if your child listens to you and lives? Is it not a means by which their lives are preserved? So also are the warnings of Christ to God’s children. They are a “means” by which He fulfills His promise regarding His sheep, ...

John 10:27 "**My sheep hear My voice**, and I know them, and **they follow Me**;²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and **they will never perish**; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

4. While false believers who fall away from the faith give evidence that they were never true believers to begin with, true believers, by God’s grace and power, safely inherit God’s eternal kingdom by paying attention to God’s warnings, not by ignoring them. So Christ is saying to us today, “be on your guard.”

II. 3:18a Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

- A. The way to avoid falling away from the Lord to our destruction is to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. (Ball illustration: If it is rising, it is not falling. If it is not rising, it is falling - no plateauing.)

2 Peter 3:18 **but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- B. Grow in the grace of Jesus.

1. What is grace? Grace is the undeserved, unearned favor and blessing of God. God’s Word describes 2 major kinds of grace, which we call “common grace” and “saving grace.”
 - a. Common grace is common to all people, experienced by all people. Believers and unbelievers enjoy God’s temporary blessings of this age - health, children, safety, food, shelter, electricity, etc.

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for **He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

Acts 14:16 "In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;¹⁷ and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that **He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.**"

Psalms 145:9 **The LORD is good to all,** and His mercies are over all His works.

- b. Only believers, God's elect, experience His saving grace - the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling, transforming Spirit of God, freedom from being slaves of sinful desires, the comfort of being led, loved, and protected by Christ our Good Shepherd, deliverance from God's coming wrath, the promise of resurrection unto eternal life in the presence of God's glory in the new heavens/earth.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ **being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;**²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.

Ephesians 2:8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- 2. It is in this saving grace that we are to grow, for we are not experiencing now all the saving grace of God that is to be experienced by believers in this life and in the life to come.

- a. Of course, there is more saving grace to be experienced by believers when Jesus returns for us.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, **fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and **it has not appeared as yet what we will be.** We know that **when He appears, we will be like Him,** because we will see Him just as He is.

- b. But notice in 2 Peter 3:18 that what we are called by Christ to do now is to grow in our experience of Christ's saving, Spiritual grace in this life.

2 Peter 3:18 but **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

2 Peter 1:2 **Grace and peace be multiplied to you** in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

- c. If you should wonder if the grace by which we grow in Christ is rightly called “saving grace,” then recall what Peter wrote in chapter 1.

2 Peter 1:8 For **if these qualities are yours and are increasing**, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... ¹¹ for **in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

- d. Don't let your heart be carried away to want to believe what is currently taught in some evangelical circles, as one popular Southern Baptist pastor wrote in his book, that once you are saved, so secure is your salvation that you could walk away from Christ and still be saved. Saving grace does not = freedom to do whatever we want without eternal consequences. It is not freedom from doing the will of the Lord, but freedom from sin to do His will by faith from the heart.

Jude 1:4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons **who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness** and **deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

Matthew 10:33 "But **whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.**

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, **but by their deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

3. So what does growing in the grace of Jesus look like? What it looks like is us growing to be more and more like Jesus.

2 Peter 1:2 **Grace** and peace **be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;**

C. Grow in the knowledge of Jesus.

1. The knowledge of Jesus in which we are to grow includes informational knowledge from His Word, which must be translated into experiential knowledge of Him, experiencing what it is like to live in conformity to His character - his love, forgiveness, mercy, generosity, humility, servant's heart, patience, self-sacrifice, endurance of hardship and suffering, etc.

2. Growing in the grace of Jesus and in the experiential knowledge of Jesus are necessarily linked. It takes the grace of the Lord's power to live increasingly like Jesus.

2 Peter 1:3 ... His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, **through the true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, **in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in *your* moral excellence, **knowledge**,⁶ and in *your* knowledge, **self-control**, and in *your* self-control, **perseverance**, and in *your* perseverance, **godliness**,⁷ and in *your* godliness, **brotherly love**, and in *your* brotherly love, **love**.⁸ For **if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

3. Think about it - which would require the greater power, the greater level of God's grace ...

- a. to forgive your spouse for becoming angry with you, or for becoming unfaithful to you?

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, **the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace**

- b. to share with the needy out of a surplus of money, or out of a lack of surplus?

2 Corinthians 8:1 Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you **the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia**,² that **in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality**.³ For **I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord**,⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,⁵ and *this*, not as we had expected, but **they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.**

- c. to humbly follow Christ in happy circumstances or when suffering?

2 Timothy 2:1 You therefore, my son, **be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**. ...³ **Suffer hardship** with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

4. Some among us have found grace at a deeper level than you previously experienced to endure the loss of a spouse or child- you grew in the experience of the grace of Jesus. How do we do this? We receive God's means of grace.

- a. We humble ourselves before the Lord of all grace.

1 Peter 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO**

THE PROUD, BUT **GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**.⁶ Therefore **humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God**, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

- b. We feed on the Word of God, seeking to feed ourselves and be fed by the ministries of others.

1 Peter 2:2 like newborn babies, **long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation**,

Ephesians 4:15 but **speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him** who is the head, *even* Christ,

- c. We pray to the Lord for grace which He generously supplies to His people.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help in time of need**.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And **God is able to make all grace abound to you**, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

- d. We stimulate one another's growth by our fellowship together in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:42 They **were continually devoting themselves** to the apostles' teaching and **to fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Hebrews 10:24 and let us consider how to **stimulate one another to love and good deeds**,²⁵ **not forsaking our own assembling together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Conclusion: Let us guard and grow for our own souls' sake and for the sake of Christ's glory.

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your **guard** so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,¹⁸ but **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity**. Amen.