

In 2 Peter 1:9 we are exhorted that sometimes we can even forget to some degree how powerful this redemption is and Peter teaches us in the previous verses 5-8 of how we stay keenly aware of our redemption and in 10-11 how we can overcome this which is a good comparison to what Paul writes about in Ephesians concerning election, which we have already studied.

“For he who lacks these qualities, is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.” Vs. 9, in other words the work of redemption.

Lets revisit some things we learned when we studied 2 Peter a few years ago.

What are those qualities we have as a result of redemption because we are the elect?

**"5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge," 2Pe 1:5.**

Various translations use different words for moral excellence. It is called goodness and virtue. Perhaps saying live by the standard of Christ, live by the ethic of Christ might be a better way of saying this.

Because we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust we are to pursue the qualities that show us to be Christ's sanctified people. It is not enough to say ' I am a Christian". There must be evidence of it by the way we live, by the way we reason, by the way we interact with the world around us.

I don't believe it a good explanation of the next two verses to say something like "here we have 7 Steps To Proving and Improving Your Sanctification." It makes for a nice seminar title and it makes something spiritual sound so very pragmatic.

I prefer to see this as a finished picture with all of these qualities of character, according to verse 8, being pursued with diligence because this is who we are in Christ.

Did Christ exhibit moral excellence or goodness or virtue, (standard of righteousness), discernment of what this was, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love? Of course He did.

So, do I pursue these as individual qualities of who I am in Christ or is it a package?

Do I say, "Joe today you are lacking in moral excellence, work harder at it." Well I might fall short of the standard today in some area but that is not the point. Why?

Because if I fall short at the moment, I certainly am not exhibiting a present godliness, I will be self-centered and not showing brotherly kindness and so on.

However, if I am pursuing a greater knowledge of Christ, if I am growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ my Lord then I am improving in all of these qualities.

Think about this for a moment. How do I supply or as the NIV puts it "make every effort and add" or the NKJV "applying all diligence, add " these qualities to faith?

These are all God given qualities as a result of His divine calling and His divine power giving me everything I need to live godly in the present age. They are a part of my being, my reality but the qualities can be improved upon, I can mature, while I am still housed in this wretched flesh with its connection to Adam.

And they will improve as I progress in living for the glory of God.

They are meant to improve and increase as qualities according to verse 8.

**"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." 2Pe 1:8.**

Now I want you to think about these qualities for a moment.

Each one of qualities of character or are specifically mentioned in a Christian context in many ways throughout the New Testament Scriptures.

Each one of these is in some way a part of the radical call to discipleship given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. This is what a disciple looks like as he lives in the world. Paul gives instruction in his letters about each of these qualities when he gives instructions to Timothy or gives warnings to weak or possibly false believers.

Each of these qualities increase as we grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ and each of these is a result of obedience to Christ. As we love Christ more our obedience increases as we hate our sin more and more. His commands are not burdensome but

Each of these qualities makes us who we are in Christ and have a drastic affect on how we view a fallen world and how we live in a fallen world.

So, if these qualities are indeed yours and increasing there is a direct result as you progress or grow in your sanctification because you have been given the ability by Christ to do so. You cannot get more sanctified, your sanctification does not progress or grow, you do not become more holy but you do grow/mature as one who is sanctified. Here is a good place to understand the importance of the now/not yet principle of Scripture.

I am saved yet Scripture says I wait for a day of salvation. I am sanctified yet a perfect life without needing to progress still waits for me. I am saved and sanctified in Christ and by Christ and in Him I am already complete and whole and perfect in all things but in this life I live with the future state of being in mind. I believe in the promises of Christ that this is true and it motivates me to live as close to that as I am able to in this life because in Christ that is who I am already, but I now have some limitations but no lack of motivation to do so.

You see, there is a true knowledge of Him and a false knowledge of Him. In this Peter is laying the foundation for addressing the false teachers later in the letter. No matter what a genuinely false teacher teaches about Scripture, in the end, the teaching is something that is false about Christ because in the end all of scripture's priority is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He called us by His own glory and excellence, in other words His divine character and high moral quality that impacts all true believers in Christ. His high moral quality may be well spoken of by unbelievers but they cannot speak of His divine nature.

**"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." 2Pe 1:8.**

As these qualities increase you are fruitful in the true knowledge you have of Christ.

As these qualities increase it is proving your understanding of the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is being understood and applied in your life as you cling to Him and His promises and pursue godliness for His glory.

"9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins." 2Pe 1:9.

It must be remembered that Peter is writing to believers. Those who lack these qualities have a loss of perspective of the true knowledge of Jesus Christ and particularly the greatness of our redemption and the ongoing work of grace.

Notice the phrase blind or shortsighted. The NIV says blind and shortsighted and a person cannot be both. The NKJV says shortsighted leading to blindness. The NASB says blind or shortsighted. So which is it? Well it is not so much which is it but what is the point. The point is that it is a temporary loss, it is a losing perspective or not having the correct perspective of the true knowledge of Christ pertaining to these qualities.

Have you ever been confused as a believer about how to live for Christ because you did not properly understand the Scripture? It occurs to all of us at some time. Hopefully it is earlier in our life as Christians and not later.

Sometimes we labor and labor and get frustrated because it seems that it is not just working. That only means we are very ignorant of Scripture if we are true believers. We are not looking to the promises of Christ and growing in the grace and knowledge of Him. And it is to our own detriment. We suffer a lack of spiritual quality of life, in the now when we lack these qualities. We are forgetting the forgiveness of our sins. We are living as if we are losing the battle instead of knowing it is already won on our behalf by Christ. We enter into a spiritual lethargy and if you are saved this cannot continue indefinitely because there must be progress. My progress is not measured by your progress but there must be progress.

Later in the letter there is also a statement concerning unbelievers who seem to have a start as believers and then prove to be false. So the warning here applies in that sense as well.

So even though these qualities are a whole package, we are to move forward and be improving in all of them as overlapping as they are. To consistently fail in one of these qualities is to fail in all of them. We need to be very intentional in seeing that these qualities are growing in our lives.

"10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;" 2Pe 1:10.

How do we make certain that we are God's elect?

Let me quote from John Piper here:

"Therefore Peter says, "Confirm your election! Make sure of it!" How? By standing in your faith and pressing on to virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. John said (in 1 John 3:14), "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (cf. 2:3). The confirmation of your election is your progress in sanctification. God predestined all the elect to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Therefore, the reassuring evidence of our election is Christ-likeness.

So verses 10 and 11 conclude: "If you do these things (referring back to vv. 5–7), you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly affection, love—these are not the wages that we pay to earn entrance into the eternal kingdom, but they are the necessary evidence that our trust in God's promise is genuine, and in that way they are the confirmation of our call and election."

So brethren if we are truly God's elect we have desire and motivations to pursue these qualities. At times can these be diminished? Yes. And the question is why? It is because we are not growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8 reminded us that if we do not progress in these qualities we are useless and unfruitful in the true knowledge of Christ. That is quite a warning and should get our attention. We are called to be fruitful and useful for the glory of God.

Remember the Sermon on the Mount. The radical call to discipleship, this is what my people will look like in action. This is the result of election and sanctification - a people that the world cannot understand. Peter was there and he heard it.

Let's recall 1 Peter 1:2-5

"2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:2-5.

By making our calling and election sure in verse 10 we will not stumble or fall to such a degree that we will prove to be false, in other words apostates. As long as we practice not forgetting what Christ has done for us and pursuing these qualities by growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ we will never ultimately stumble or fall away from the faith. We will stumble now and again but not in this final sense. The stumble here is like one running a race and when he stumbles he loses the race. If we are truly God's we will run the race and endure until the end.

It reminds me of the scene in Chariots of Fire when Eric Liddell stumbles because he is crowded off the track by another runner. He gets up and continues to run and wins the race even though it almost kills him. If you are Christ's you will get up and run and run even harder because the goal and the prize are Christ Himself.

There comes a time in our lives as believers when our spiritual laziness should be loathsome, and disgusting. That is good. To wallow in it is not healthy. To push forward is what is right. There are times when we recognize our unworthiness. That is good. As

Ephesians:1:7-8a Redemption New Covenant Baptist Fellowship Pastor Joseph Krygier 3/7/010 17  
my pastor/friend Murray McLellan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan said during a bible study on line, " Recognizing your unworthiness is part of what makes you "worthy".

For example to participate in the Lords Table is only possible because we are worthy to partake in this celebration. We are not worthy in ourselves but when we recognize what we really are by God's grace, we are worthy to receive what Christ has for us and it is ours because of Him. We are only worthy because of Him. The Father sees us in the worthiness of His Son.

**"11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." 2Pe 1:11**

The guarantee of the entrance into the eternal kingdom is making our calling and our election sure by practicing the qualities that prove we are Christ's. Everything we need to be assured our place in the eternal kingdom will be abundantly supplied to us. Everything we need to live godly in this present world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His divine power will be granted unto us.

4. Redemption through Christ's blood is according to the riches of God's grace, which He lavished on us.

Paul adds, "according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us," to show that there are no sins too great for God to forgive through the blood of Christ. This has always been God's appeal to repentant sinners. In Isaiah 55:6-7, the prophet calls, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Abundant pardon! Rich grace lavished on us!

The measure of God's forgiveness is not according to how much we flagellate ourselves or mourn over our sin, although we should mourn we when realize how we have spurned God's great love (Matt. 5:4). Rather, the measure of God's forgiveness is according to the riches of His grace, lavished on us (on God's riches, see Eph. 1:7, 18;

2:4, 7; 3:8, 16). Paul does not say, “out of the riches of His grace,” but “according to the riches of His grace.”

The word “lavished” may be illustrated by ocean waves. They just keep coming and coming and coming. They never stop. God’s forgiveness is like that for those who are redeemed through the blood of Jesus. If you have trusted Christ as your sin-bearer, Paul wants you to experience the extravagant, lavish undeserved favor of God in forgiving all of your sins. Do you experience this?

C. H. Spurgeon used this story to illustrate that the good things we receive from God always come with the same prospect of more to follow. A large sum of money was given to Rowland Hill to dispense to a poor pastor. Thinking that the amount was too much to send all at once, Hill forwarded just a portion along with a note that said

simply, “More to follow.” In a few days the man received another envelope containing the same amount and with the same message, “More to follow.” At regular intervals, there came a third, and a fourth. In fact, they continued, along with those cheering words, until the entire sum had been received.

After his story he said, “When God forgives our sins, there’s more forgiveness to follow. He justifies us in the righteousness of Christ, but there’s more to follow. He adopts us into His family, but there’s more to follow. He prepares us for heaven, but there’s more to follow. He gives us grace, but there’s more to follow. He helps us to old age, but there’s still more to follow.” Spurgeon concluded, “Even when we arrive in the world to come, there will still be more to follow.”

Some may be thinking, “That is going too far! If you preach like this, people will go out and sin, knowing that they will be forgiven.” If you thought that, it’s alright because when Paul taught this same truth in Romans, he anticipated that response: “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Rom. 6:1-2). When you know that the Beloved Redeemer shed His own blood to secure your forgiveness, it binds



your heart in love to Him. It makes you hate your sin and strive against it all the more.

Do you believe this: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us”? “Yes,” you say, “I’m a Christian. I believe this.” But, do you experience it personally? And, do you extend God’s lavish grace and forgiveness to others?

One night in a church service God opened the heart of a young woman to respond to His call and believe on Christ as her Lord and Savior. She had a very rough past, involving alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. But, the change in her was evident as she experienced God’s forgiveness. Over time, she became a faithful member of the church, and served by teaching young children.

It was not long until she caught the eye and heart of the pastor’s son. The

relationship grew and they began making wedding plans. But then the problems began. Many in the church did not think that a woman with a past such as hers was suitable for a pastor’s son. The church began to gossip and argue about this matter.

So, they decided to have a meeting. Emotions heated up, tension increased, and the meeting was getting out of hand.

The young woman became very upset about all of the things being brought up about her past. As she began to cry, the pastor’s son stood to speak. He said, “My fiancée’s past is not what is on trial here. What you are questioning is the ability of the blood of Jesus to wash away sin. Today you have put the blood of Jesus on trial. So, does it wash away sin or not?” The whole church began to weep as they realized that they had been slandering the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (source unknown).

We sometimes sing the old hymn, “What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” Either that’s true or it’s not. If the blood of Jesus does not wash away all of our sins completely, then we’re all in a lot of trouble, because we all have a lot of

sins to deal with. If it only atones for minor sins, what good is that? "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us." Thank God that is true! Cling to it and live it each and every day!

The end of the film 'Saving Private Ryan' is moving. The captain, played by Tom Hanks, and most of his squad end up fatally wounded after trying to hold a bridge; but at least their mission has been accomplished: Private Ryan is safe. The big question is, was it worth it? It is impossible to answer. However, the dying words of Tom Hanks' character have to be some of the cruelest last words on film. Hardly able to speak, the dying captain whispers to Private Ryan his final command: 'Earn it! Earn it!' In other words, live such a life that gives the overwhelming loss of life purpose. 'Earn it!' They are cruel words, not least because it is clear that Ryan has been thinking like this anyway. To have it spoken aloud only makes the burden on him heavier. And it is a terrible burden. The film then closes with a scene in the present day as the now old man Ryan kneels at the captain's grave in a Normandy war cemetery. Tears stream down his cheek as he says to his wife, 'Tell me I've been good. Tell me I've lived a good enough life.'

"Can you imagine if Jesus' dying words on that cross were, 'You all earn it!' Can you imagine how much greater the burden would be? To earn the death of the one we worship as God! The pressure would be overwhelming. We could never do it. Instead, Jesus cried, 'It is finished.' The message of the cross is simply that we can never earn it; nor do we need to. How do we respond to that? Well, in one sense, we can't. It's too much. In another sense, there is only one way - to love our God with all our heart, mind, strength and soul- in other words, to worship our God. Not to earn God's love but to revel in his love; not to persuade God to love us, but to delight in his love." (Mark Meynell, "Cross -Examined" IVP, 2001, Leicester, pp.181&182)