

11-01-2015

Message: How Christ Brings Us Safely Into His Heavenly Kingdom

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-11

Introduction

A. Today, November 1st, has been designated as the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Jesus, while on earth, said to His disciples, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20), and through His apostle Paul said, “Through many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

B. Christians are suffering persecution and martyrdom today in places like Nigeria, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, putting pressure on them to deny Christ and fall away from their faith in Him. The persecuted, crucified, risen and now reigning Lord Jesus Christ, as our Good Shepherd, is as committed to protecting His people’s faith today as he was when He inspired Peter to write to the churches suffering during the reign of the Roman emperor Nero in the 60s AD. Peter writes to them in his first letter ...

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

1 Peter 5:10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

C. Both Peter and Paul will suffer martyrdom in Rome during this period.

1. Paul, shortly before his martyrdom, in his second letter to Timothy and his church at Ephesus tells them **that** Christ will protect Paul and deliver him safely to His heavenly kingdom.

2 Timothy 4:18 **The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom;** to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

2. Peter, shortly before his martyrdom, in his second letter to the churches tells them **how** Christ will protect them not only from outside threats to their faith by persecutors, but from inside threats to their faith from false teachers and teachings, and thus lead them to His heavenly kingdom. And how Christ does this is to cause us by His grace and Spirit’s power to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

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.

D. Having assured believers that Christ has by His divine power provided to us everything we need for life and godliness (1:3), Peter instructs believers **how** to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

1. We previously saw that we are to live by a faith in Christ that increasingly produces in us the virtues and character of Christ. If we are growing closer to Christ, then we are not falling away (baseball example).

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence** (spoudazo), **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** (eusebeia),⁷ and in *your* godliness, **brotherly love/kindness** (philadelphia), and in *your* **brotherly love/kindness** (philadelphia), love (agape).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.

2. We were assured that a faith in Christ that continually and increasingly conforms us to the image of Christ protects us from becoming characterized as idle and fruitless - a spiritual terminal condition.
3. Those who lack Christ's character qualities do so because they are blind to the glory and desirability of Christ above all else, and short sighted in not seeing the future consequences of an idle and fruitless life when Christ returns to judge the world in righteousness.

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

E. Now today in 1:10,11 which begins with "therefore," we look at the application the Lord would have us make in light of the previously revealed truths of this passage.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent (spoudazo) to make firm His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

I. To what are believers called and elected/chosen?

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make firm His **calling** (klesis) and **choosing** (ekloge) you

- A. God chose us before time and effectually called us in time to be holy and blameless, conformed to the image of Christ.

Ephesians 1:4 just as He **chose** (eklego) us in Him before the foundation of the world,

that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are called according to His purpose.**²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to* **become conformed to the image of His Son,** so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;³⁰ and **these whom He predestined, He also called;** and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

- B. God chose us before time and effectually called us in time to inherit the eternal glory of the Lord in His eternal, joyful kingdom.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has **chosen** (ekloge) you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.¹⁴ It was for this He **called** (kaleo) you through our gospel, **that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Peter 5:10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who **called** (eklego) **you to His eternal glory in Christ,** will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

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

II. We are we to “make firm” our calling and election.

- A. Luther, Calvin, as well as many modern commentators interpret this command to church members to mean they are to make certain that they are truly Christians, that God has in fact chosen them, as reflected in how the New American Standard Update version translates this verse ...

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to **make certain about** (bebaios) His calling and choosing you;

- B. But I think this misses Peter’s point.

1. Peter is writing to those who are truly God’s elect, who are truly Christians, having received from Christ the same kind of faith as Peter and the apostles, irrespective that there well might be unbelievers, including pseudo=Christians in their midst.

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen** (ekloge)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,

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, **to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours**, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2. He is not asking true Christians to take a diagnostic test to determine if they are truly Christians - he is addressing those he affirms are truly Christians. He is not asking them to become certain that God has called and chosen them, but to make what God has called and chosen them to be a certainty, a reality! "Bebaios" means "firm," "secure." We are to "make firm" what God has called and elected us to become and to inherit.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to **make firm (bebaios)** His calling and choosing you;

Hebrews 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and **steadfast (bebaios)** and one which enters within the veil,

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance **firm (bebaios)** until the end,

3. Christ through His apostle Paul exhorts us in a similar fashion ...

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling;¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; **take hold of the eternal life to which you were called**, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

III. How are we to make firm what God has called and chosen us to be?

- A. We are to be "all the more diligent" (spoudazo) to live by a faith that increasingly produces the virtues of Christ.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent (spoudazo)** to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you **practice these** things, you will never stumble;

- B. "These things" that we "practice" are the very virtues of Christ that our faith increasingly produces, rendering us neither idle or unfruitful.

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence** (spoudazo), **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** (eusebeia),⁷ and in *your* godliness, **brotherly love/kindness** (philadelphia), and in *your* **brotherly love/kindness** (philadelphia), love (agape).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.

IV. Why are we to make firm our calling and election?

A. If we live by such faith in Christ, that continually puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, we will never stumble.

2 Peter 1:10 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**;

1. In his first letter to these believers Peter has already described the disbelieving and disobedient as those who stumble over Christ to their doom. Jesus speaks of stumbling in the same eternally fatal way.

1 Peter 2:7 ... **for those who disbelieve**, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,"⁸ and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for **they stumble because they are disobedient to the word**, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

Mark 9:47 "If your eye causes you to **stumble**, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, **to be cast into hell**,"⁴⁸ where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

2. It is by an obedient faith that puts on the armor of light, the virtues of Jesus Christ, that we are protected from stumbling.

Psalm 119:165 Those who love Your law have great peace, and **nothing causes them to stumble**.

Romans 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and **put on the armor of light**. ...¹⁴ But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

B. All of God's elect will inherit Christ's kingdom and glory - in spite of sufferings,

persecutions, martyrdom, but only in the way that God has designed - by an enduring faith in Christ that increasingly bears the fruit of His likeness.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.**

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.

1. Illustration: Canoeing upstream example - no matter how far you have progressed, stop paddling and you will lose all progress and never arrive at your destination. So pull church, pull!
2. In these verses, God is not exhorting His people to determine the fact of His calling and choosing them, but to make what He has called and chosen them to be and to inherit a fact, a firm, certain reality in the only way God has designed that reality to become true for His elect - by their diligent, enduring, increasingly fruit bearing faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, **in which righteousness dwells.**¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent (spoudazo) to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,**

3. It is in this way, that we inherit the glory of God, the glory of Christ in His eternal kingdom in the new heavens and earth at Christ's return.

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