

TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

TEXT: II PETER 1:1-10

Introduction:

1. In II Peter 1:1-4, the apostle Peter deals with what God has done for us. Then in verses 5-7 he exhorts them in light of that and because of that, to do their part and to work that out in practice.
2. This is what Paul means when he says to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12b).
3. We do not work for our salvation (cf. Phil. 2:13) – but we must work out our salvation -- we must "give diligence to make our calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10).
4. Peter says, "add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge..." (1:5). Why? To make your calling and election sure (1:10).
5. Troubles from the outside (persecution and suffering – the theme of I Peter) and troubles from the inside (false teachers – the theme of II Peter) were causing some Christians to doubt their salvation.
6. When the unsaved "nominal Christian" has doubts about his calling and election, it is a good thing because it could motivate him to turn to God in genuine faith and repentance.
7. But when a true believer has doubts it is not good because Christians can never be effective servants for the Lord until they have total assurance of their salvation.
8. How can they lead sinners to Christ if they themselves are uncertain about their salvation.

I. MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE BY DEMONSTRATING THE CHRISTIAN GRACES (1:1-8).

1. The salutation (1:1, 2).
2. A call to Christian character (1:3 ff.).
 - A. First Peter 2:9 says we have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light.
 - B. We have been called to follow Christ in a pathway of suffering (I Peter 2:21).
 - C. We have been called to return blessing for reviling (I Peter 3:9).
 - D. We have been called to His eternal glory (I Peter 5:10).
 - E. We have been called by glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3).
3. We are assured that God has made full provision for us to have a life of holiness. This provision is said to be an evidence of "His divine power."

4. His divine power saves us, keeps us, has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.
5. This power to live a holy life comes "through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Just as His divine power is the source of holiness, so the knowledge of Him is the channel for holiness.
6. John 17:3 says to "know" Christ is eternal life, and progress in knowing Christ is progress in holiness. The better we get to know Christ, the more we become like Christ.
7. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD" (II Cor. 3:18).
8. This is why God saved us. Romans 8:29 says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."
9. We are standing on the promises (1:4) -- someone has estimated that there are at least 30,000 promises in the Bible. John Bunyan once said, "The pathway of life is strewn so thickly with the promises of God that it is impossible to take one step without treading upon one of them."
10. The promises of God are the last of seven precious things mentioned by Peter in his two epistles:
 - A. precious faith (I Peter 1:7)
 - B. precious blood (I Peter 1:19)
 - C. precious living stone (I Peter 2:4)
 - D. precious chief corner stone (I Peter 2:6)
 - E. Christ is precious to believers (I Peter 2:7)
 - F. like precious faith (II Peter 1:1)
 - G. precious promises (II Peter 1:4)
11. There are seven characteristics of Christian character (1:5-8). Peter starts off with faith – he assumes faith because he is writing to professing Christians, to those who have already exercised faith in Christ.
12. Peter uses mathematical terms. "Add to your faith" (1:5). In 1:2, "Grace and peace be multiplied."
13. W.A. Criswell said there were two ways to look at II Peter 1:5-7. He said some Bible teachers look upon it as a ladder with seven steps. We go up and up and up and up. When we have perfected one, then we are introduced to the other—a ladder of seven steps (1:5-7).

14. However, Criswell said he preferred a different interpretation. He said, "It is like a rope, a cable of seven strands, intertwined. The seven graces make a composite picture of the Christian life and they're all present in a newborn babe, in a newborn Christian, and each one is to be developed as the babe grows in knowledge and in the goodness of the Lord. Now, I say this ladder is correct, I think. It is not a ladder like this. We go up and up and finally we reach the top. But is like a cable or a rope; all seven of them are entwined" ("Our Calling and Election," 03/13/83).
15. Before describing the false teachers in chapter 2, Peter describes the characteristics of a true believer here in chapter 1. The best way to detect a counterfeit is to understand the characteristics of the truth.
- A. Virtue – moral excellence, valor. The ancient Greeks used this word to describe the power of their gods to do heroic deeds.
 - B. Knowledge – especially knowledge of the Bible (cf. 1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8; 3:18).
 - C. Temperance -- discipline and self-control.
 - D. Patience – enduring trials and troubles, adversity and persecution; perseverance.
 - E. Godliness -- true piety.
 - F. Brotherly kindness – genuine evidence that you are saved (I John 3:14, 15; 4:11-21).
 - G. Charity – love for all mankind (not just the brethren).
16. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren (idle, empty) nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:8). Taking in knowledge of the Bible but not giving it out to others is "unfruitful."

II. MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE BY ESCAPING WORLDLY CORRUPTION (1:4, 9).

1. If you have trusted Christ, you are "partakers of the divine nature" (1:4). Evidence that you have been saved is that you have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
2. Galatians 1:4 says Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world."
3. Unfortunately, some professed believers give no evidence that they have been delivered from this present evil world. Some appear to be even more corrupt and more worldly than the unsaved!

4. A fellow got saved and his old friend was surprised to see the great changes in his life. The Christian said, "One letter in the alphabet made the difference – I used to love the world but now I love the Word."
5. The Bible talks about pigs and dogs and sheep and goats. A pig likes to roll around in the mud, and a dog will even eat its own vomit (II Peter 2:22; Proverbs 26:11), but the sheep desires green pastures.
6. The true believer says, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters" (Psalm 23:1, 2).
7. Peter says "he that lacketh these things (i.e., the seven characteristics, 1:5-7) is blind..." (1:9), i.e., spiritually blind; more concerned with material things than with spiritual things; living as if this world was all there is; lacking spiritual discernment.
8. Why do some people doubt their salvation?
 - Some are not genuinely saved and the Holy Spirit is trying to warn them.
 - Some are saved but are so weak in the faith, so worldly, so backslidden, and so indifferent, that they begin to wonder if they are truly saved.

III. MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE BY BEING ESTABLISHED IN THE TRUTH (1:10).

1. There is a distinction between calling and election. Our election took place before God created the world (Eph. 1:4). Our call took place the moment we believed the Gospel (II Thess. 2:13, 14).
2. Here calling is mentioned before election because calling comes first in our apprehension. First we recognize God's calling, and then we respond to God's calling, and then later we realize that we were elected.
3. Spurgeon wrote that, "Never had Cromwell driven his foes before him if it had not been in the stern strength of this almost

omnipotent truth; and there shall scarcely be found a man strong to do great and valiant deeds unless, confident in the God of Providence, he looks upon the accidents of life as being steered by God, and gives himself up to God's firm predestination, to be borne along by the current of His will, contrary to all the wills and all the wishes of the world."

4. To "make sure" your calling and the election means to confirm them by growing in grace. If we stay close to the Lord, stay active in church, stay steadfast in prayer and Bible reading, we "shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10b).
5. Second Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"
6. Matthew Henry said, "It requires a great deal of diligence and labour to make sure our calling and election; there must be a very close examination of ourselves, a very narrow search and strict enquiry, whether we are thoroughly converted, our minds enlightened, our wills renewed, and our whole souls changed as to the bent and inclination thereof."

CONCLUSION:

1. Are you making your calling and election sure? Are you sure that you are saved?
2. Spurgeon said he was so sure of his salvation that he could grab on to a cornstalk and swing out over the fires of hell, look into the face of the devil, and sing, "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine."
3. A person cannot be effective in serving God until he has assurance of salvation. When they started building the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, no safety devices were used and 23 men fell to their deaths. Then they installed a huge net and 10 men fell into it and were saved.

After the net was put up, 25% more work was performed because the workers were assured of their safety.