

26-0830p - Detailed Summary

26-0830p - *Peter's Recipe for Christian Growth, Part 2*, Jim Lokenbauer

Bible Reader: Mike Mathis

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Peter's Recipe for Christian Growth, Part 2

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader (0:04 - 0:58): Mike Mathis

2 Peter 3:17-18: Mike read 2 Peter 3:17-18. The passage addresses the beloved as those who already know these things beforehand and therefore must beware, lest they fall from their own steadfastness by being led away with the

continued

error of the wicked. Instead they are commanded to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 25:40), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(1:03-3:15) Welcome, Recap of Persecution, and Setting of 2 Peter

Jim welcomed the congregation back to Part 2 of the series on Peter's recipe for Christian growth. He recalled that the morning lesson had briefly described the beginning of a period of intense satanic persecution aimed at wiping Christianity out of existence. That campaign began under the Roman emperor Nero, who reigned from 54 AD to 68 AD. The immediate occasion was Nero's decision to blame Christians for the nine-day fire that broke out in July of 64 AD and destroyed much of Rome because the city's wooden buildings stood tightly packed together. Jim remarked that today people would blame such a fire on El Niño, but in that era it was blamed on "El Nero." The familiar story that Nero played the fiddle while Rome burned is a myth, he noted, because fiddles had not yet been invented; perhaps Nero played a recorder instead. The resulting danger extended to Christians throughout the empire. Those circumstances, together with events in Peter's own life that had prepared him for the work Jesus wanted him to do, likely prompted the apostle to write his second letter. Part 1 had ended with Peter's formula for growth in 2 Peter 1.

(3:15-5:10) Review of 2 Peter 1:2-11

To supply context, Jim re-read 2 Peter 1 beginning at verse 2. Grace and peace are to be the readers' in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus their Lord. God's divine power has already given everything needed for life and godliness through knowledge of the One who called them by His own glory and goodness. Through those same things He has given very great and precious promises so that believers may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this reason they must make every effort to add to faith goodness, to goodness knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. If these

qualities are possessed in increasing measure they will keep a person from being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who lacks them is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten the cleansing from past sins. Therefore the brothers should be all the more eager to make their calling and election sure, because if they do these things they will never fall and will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(5:10-8:43) Why Learn God's Word and How Divine Power Supplies Life and Godliness

One central purpose of learning God's word, Jim said, is that believers can know the mind of God, discern His will, and possess a new standard of truth by which to measure themselves. Scripture also shows what must be done in order to be with God in eternity. Peter understood this. As he saw approaching the day Jesus had foretold—the day he would pass from this life into eternity—he considered what he most wanted his church family to remember and therefore wrote the letter. Verse 3 declares that God's divine power has given everything needed for life and godliness through knowledge of the One who called them by His glory and goodness. As people come to know God by studying the Bible, He blesses them by that divine power, granting what they need. His providence, protection, and preservation help His people obtain what is required to survive. Jesus' teaching on worry in Matthew 6:25-34 reminds hearers that God already knows their needs for food, shelter, water, and clothing; if He provides for the creatures of nature, how much more will He provide for His people. When they practice what they read, the Holy Spirit transforms them into the image of the Son so that they become like Him—"little Christs." Through His glory and goodness God both called them and gave the precious promises by which they participate in the divine nature, that is, godliness of character.

(8:43-11:07) Epignosis Versus Gnosis and the Call to Be Doers

Returning to verse 2—"May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord"—Jim observed that Peter chose the Greek word **epignosis** rather than **gnosis**. **Gnosis** refers to seeking to know, the process of obtaining facts. **Epignosis** goes further: it is the continual process of possessing full knowledge of the facts and then participating in and using that knowledge. The distinction means believers must not merely study the word but be doers of it. Throughout the Christian journey they should study Scripture and put what they learn into practice until they enter the next life. No one can know it all, yet they strive for fuller understanding and should work at it with the same diligence they would give a regular job. Paul advised Timothy to study to show himself approved to God, a workman who need not be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of God, and to watch his life and doctrine closely, persevering in them so that he would save both himself and his hearers. Knowing God's word is therefore a matter of spiritual life and death both for the individual and for anyone who listens.

(11:07-14:48) Grace Multiplied Through Knowledge and the List of Virtues

In the New King James rendering of 2 Peter 1:2, grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of God and of Jesus the Lord. Jim identified a biblical principle: the more a person studies and gains knowledge of God's word, the more grace and peace God supplies. Godly character formed by that knowledge also helps believers escape the world's corruption caused by evil desires. Continual increase in the knowledge of God allows His divine power and promises to change people so that they take on His holy nature. Peter therefore lists virtues that must be consciously and deliberately added: to faith, goodness; to goodness, knowledge; to knowledge, self-

control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; to brotherly kindness, love. If these qualities are possessed in increasing measure they keep a person from being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of Christ. These virtues, Jim noted, happen to be fruits of the Spirit and can be grouped with those Paul mentions in the Thessalonian letter. Adding them, putting them into use, and being an effectual doer of the word causes believers to take on the image of Christ, bear fruit for God, and bring Him glory. A further blessing is that their knowledge itself continues to increase.

(14:48-17:51) The Upward Spiral of Growth and Grace for Trials

Jim described the process as a wonderful maturation cycle, a circular upward spiral of Christian growth. Believers study God's word, put it into practice, and gain knowledge of His will; they become more godlike; God then increases grace and peace and sees to their needs; His divine power supplies everything required for life and godliness; further study yields still more knowledge, which is practiced, producing still greater likeness to the Son, after which God again multiplies grace and peace. The cycle is continual. Why does the Lord keep lavishing grace and peace? He gives His peace to combat anxiety when people place faith, hope, and trust in Him and practice godly virtues, as Paul teaches in Philippians 4:4-13 (a passage Steve had already read in class that morning). He also multiplies grace because believers will be tried and tested. Those tests prove whether they understand what they are trying to practice and whether they are serious about the faith or merely stumbling along. God wants to see commitment to the way. Challenges, failures, and sins will occur, yet as long as they walk in the light as He is in the light they have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus purifies them from all ungodliness. That purification is grace piled on while they work out their salvation.

(17:51-21:45) The Cleansing Blood, Confession, and Peter's Love for the Church

Jesus' blood also removes guilt so that believers can serve God with clean consciences. Anything done in the past is wiped away; they may give the burden to God and no longer carry it. Confession need not be public; a believer may go into a private closet, pray, and purge the soul before God. Doing so defuses a potent weapon Satan uses against new believers—the accusation that they are guilty, unworthy, and should give up. Satan works to make a person feel like something stepped in and left on the bottom of a shoe. Yet God is quick to forgive and removes sin as far as the east is from the west. That is good news: the burden is gone and the person is free. When Jesus makes someone free, that person is free indeed. Peter's love for Jesus is obvious to any reader of Scripture; he also loved the Lord's church and shepherded a flock somewhere in Asia Minor as an elder. He remained faithful both to his apostolic mission and to that elder's work. On the shore of the Sea of Galilee Jesus had commanded him to feed His sheep, and Peter did so until his martyrdom. Knowing he would soon die, Peter wrote that he would always remind them of these things. His parting advice was that they keep progressing in the knowledge of God. Knowledge is the key; people cannot sit and mentally disengage. They must listen, participate, study, and then leave and put the teaching into practice. They must not slip into a compartmentalized life in which behavior at work is no longer Christian. They are to be 100 percent genuine to Jesus wherever they are and let their light shine.

(21:45-25:14) Usefulness, Humility, False Teachers, and the Final Exhortation

After briefly losing his place, Jim continued that the more knowledge a person has, the more useful that person can be for the Lord, and faith grows stronger when the process is practiced. A warning must be heeded: Paul told the Corinthians that knowledge puffs up but love builds up. Believers must not become conceited or look down their noses at those who have not yet reached their present level. They must exercise agape love, remaining patient, kind, and gentle, remembering what it was like when they themselves were new Christians and the amount of Christianity they knew could have fit in a bottle cap. As children of God they owe it to themselves to pick up the Bible and study it personally, following Paul's counsel to Timothy to study so as to be approved, unashamed workmen who correctly handle the word of truth. They should read, meditate, study with the saints, and put into practice what they learn so that they may enjoy the promised grace, peace, and love. In chapter 2 Peter warns the church about false teachers and the ungodly and describes the terrible end that awaits them if they do not repent. In chapter 3 he reveals what happens at Jesus' second coming—the terrible day of the Lord that brings the destruction of the heavens and the earth. He closes by naming one more benefit of the knowledge of God: continued learning guards believers from error and from false teachers whose teaching can lead people astray. Jim then quoted 2 Peter 3:17-18 again: therefore, beloved, since they already know these things they must be on guard so they will not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from their secure position; instead they must grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and forever. Amen. That, Jim said, is Peter's recipe for maturity in Christ; it is a method.

(25:14-25:40) Closing Invitation

Jim expressed gladness that he had been able to present the material and hoped it had been beneficial. He invited anyone who needed the prayers of the church or any kind of assistance to come forward.