

26-0830p Transcript

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: (0:04) Okay, our reading tonight is from 2 Peter 3, verses 17 and 18, which reads, (0:21) You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, (0:29) Beware, lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away	<i>continued</i> with the error of the wicked. (0:42) But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (0:51) To Him be the glory, both now and forever. (0:56) Amen. (0:58)
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Transcript (0:04 - 25:40), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(1:03) Well, welcome back to Part 2 of Peter's Recipe for Christian Growth. (1:09) This morning we briefly talked about the start of a period of time in human history (1:15) which began the most satanic persecution of a specific group of people of that time.

(1:25) Of course, I'm talking about Rome's all-out attempt to purge Christianity out of existence. (1:34) The persecution really started with the Roman emperor Nero, who reigned from 54 AD to 68 AD. (1:45) And the occasion for the persecution was that he blamed the Christians (1:50) for the nine-day fire that happened in a July in 64 AD.

(1:56) And that destroyed much of the city because most of the buildings were made out of wood (2:04) and they were tightly packed together. (2:07) And so once it was up in flames, it spread. (2:12) And today we would have blamed the fire on El Nino.

(2:16) But back then it would have been blamed on El Nero. (2:21) Nero was said to be playing his fiddle while Rome burned. (2:26) But that's a myth because fiddles weren't made yet at the time he was around.

(2:31) Maybe he was playing his recorder, I don't know. (2:37) So the times were dangerous for all Christians throughout the Roman Empire. (2:42) We looked at the circumstances that likely led to the Apostle Peter writing his second letter.

(2:50) We talked about some of the events in Peter's life that prepared him for the work the Lord Jesus wanted him to do. (2:59) We concluded Part 1 of the morning lesson looking at Peter's formula, or recipe if you will, for Christian growth. (3:09) And that's found in the first chapter of Peter's second letter.

(3:15) And I'll re-read that this morning, this morning's scripture, just to give us context. (3:22) So

starting at verse 2. (3:27) 2 Peter 1, verse 2. (3:31) Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (3:37) His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

(3:49) Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, (3:54) so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (4:04) For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness. (4:11) And to goodness, knowledge.

(4:13) And to knowledge, self-control. (4:16) And to self-control, perseverance. (4:19) And to perseverance, godliness.

(4:22) And to godliness, brotherly kindness. (4:25) And to brotherly kindness, love. (4:27) For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, (4:33) they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(4:41) But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, (4:45) and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (4:50) Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. (4:56) For if you do these things, you will never fall, (4:59) and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

(5:10) So the point of learning God's word, well there's many points, many benefits, (5:21) but the point I want to bring out is that we can know the mind of God, (5:28) what his will is for us, and to have a new standard of truth to measure ourselves by. (5:38) And what we must do can be found in scriptures to be with God in eternity. (5:45) Peter understood this as well.

(5:47) And when he saw the day approaching in which Jesus told him about, (5:52) when he would pass from this life to the next, to enter into eternity, (5:58) he started thinking about what he most wanted his church family to remember at his party. (6:07) And so he wrote this letter. (6:09) In the opening of the lines, we have 2 Peter 1-3.

(6:19) And it says, (6:21) His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness (6:27) through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (6:34) And if you remember this morning, we've gone over verse 2 already, (6:40) which says, you might as well hit that again, (6:44) May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (6:53) And so I'll get back to that in a second.

(6:59) So in verse 3 here, as we get to know our God by studying his word, the Bible, (7:08) he will bless us by his divine power, granting to us all the things we need for life and godliness. (7:20) His divine providence, protection, and preservation for his people (7:26) will help us to obtain the things we need to survive in this life. (7:32) Jesus' discourse on worrying in Matthew 6, 25-34, (7:42) tells us that God already knows what we need in this life, (7:47) like food, shelter, water, clothes, etc.

(7:52) And that if he provides for all the creatures in nature, (7:58) how much more will he provide for us? (8:02) And when we practice what we read in his word, (8:07) the Holy Spirit will transform us into his Son's image. (8:12) And we will become like him. (8:16) We become little Christs as we put his teachings into practice.

(8:22) Through God's glory and goodness, he called us. (8:26) And through his glory and goodness,

he gives us his precious promises (8:31) so that through those promises, we can participate in the divine nature, (8:38) which is godliness, to be like him in character. (8:43) So back to 2 Peter 2, (8:46) May grace and peace be multiplied to you (8:49) in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

(8:52) So Peter uses the Greek word epignosis (8:57) rather than gnosis for the word knowledge. (9:00) And this is significant in order to get a deeper understanding (9:05) or sense of what Peter is telling us. (9:09) Gnosis is to seek, to know.

(9:12) The process of obtaining facts and epignosis is more. (9:18) It is the continual process to have a full knowledge of the facts (9:24) and to participate and use the knowledge that is obtained. (9:29) I think that translates to not just to study the word, (9:36) but to be a doer of the word.

(9:40) In other words, in our Christian journey, (9:42) we should continually study God's word (9:45) and put what we learned into practice as we go. (9:50) This we do our whole lives until we enter the next life. (9:55) We can never know it all, (9:58) but we strive for and reach for a fuller understanding.

(10:05) We hopefully work at it just as hard as we would at a regular job. (10:11) That's how important it is to know God's word. (10:15) Paul gave that advice to Timothy, saying, (10:18) study to show yourselves approved of God, (10:22) a workman who does not need to be ashamed, (10:24) but correctly handles the word of God.

(10:29) He also said, watch your life and doctrine closely. (10:34) Persevere in them, because if you do, (10:37) you will save both yourself and your hearers. (10:42) So it's a matter of life and death spiritually to know God's word (10:48) for yourself and for anybody who might be listening to you.

(10:55) Peter gives his readers his recipe for Christian growth (11:00) in the verses that were read for us earlier. (11:07) If you look at 2 Peter 1-2, the New King James says, (11:12) Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (11:20) And did you hear that? (11:22) He just revealed a biblical principle there.

(11:26) The more you study and gain knowledge of God's word, (11:30) the more grace and peace God will give you. (11:36) As your knowledge increases, God supplies you with more grace and peace. (11:43) That's a neat deal, isn't it? (11:47) So there's benefits to studying God's word.

(11:54) And having godly character will help us to escape the corruption in the world (12:00) which is caused by evil desires. (12:04) It's by our studying God's word and continually increasing our knowledge of him (12:10) that his divine power and promises to us change us (12:17) so that we take on his holy nature. (12:21) We become like him.

(12:23) And Peter lists some of those godly virtues he wants us to be conscious of (12:29) and to deliberately work at in order to participate (12:34) or in order to incorporate them into our personalities (12:40) to make it become part of our character. (12:43) And in 2 Peter 1-8 it says, (12:47) For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness (12:52) and to goodness knowledge (12:54) and to knowledge self-control (12:56) and to self-control perseverance (12:59) and to perseverance godliness (13:01) and to godliness brotherly kindness (13:04) and to brotherly kindness love. (13:07) For if you possess these qualities or these godly virtues in increasing measure, (13:15) they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive (13:20) in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(13:30) So as you practice your Christianity, (13:36) you've got to be conscious of God's word and how he wants you to be. (13:41) You know, like adding to your faith goodness and goodness knowledge, (13:46) knowledge self-control, perseverance, all of those down the line. (13:51) And those happen to be fruits of the Spirit, by the way.

(13:56) So you could probably lump those in with the fruits of the Spirit Paul mentions (14:01) in the Thessalonian letter. (14:04) So when we add these godly virtues to our life, (14:08) we take on the image of Christ. (14:11) And by practicing these virtues, adding them to our faith, (14:16) putting them into use, (14:18) being an effectual doer of the word, we bear fruit for God.

(14:24) And that brings him glory. (14:27) And the other blessing to us, that is, our knowledge will continue to increase. (14:34) So you kind of see what's happening here.

(14:37) It's a wonderful maturation process (14:41) that's kind of a circular upward spiral of Christian growth. (14:48) And here's what the cycle is. (14:49) We study God's word, put it into practice, and gain knowledge of God's will.

(14:56) Then we become more godlike. (14:59) God increases his grace and peace to us and sees to our needs. (15:05) His divine power gives us everything we need for life and godliness.

(15:12) And he blesses us with more knowledge when we're studying, (15:18) which we put into practice, and we become even more godlike, (15:24) transforming into the image of his Son, (15:27) which he then increases more grace to us and more peace. (15:32) And so this is a continual process. (15:38) Excuse me.

(15:43) And so why does the Lord keep lavishing on us all of this grace and peace? (15:59) We know the Lord gives us peace, his peace, to help combat against anxiety (16:08) when we put our faith and hope and trust in him and practice godly virtues, (16:14) as Paul points out in Philippians 4, 4 through 13. (16:21) Steve read most of that this morning in his class, so I won't go over that. (16:29) But he gives us more grace and peace because we are going to be tried.

(16:39) We are going to be tested along the way. (16:43) And that is going to prove if we get it or not, (16:48) if we're understanding what it is we're trying to put into practice (16:53) and to see if we're serious about our faith or if we're just kind of stumbling along. (17:04) God wants to see if we're committed to the way.

(17:09) We will have some challenges to our faith and our life, (17:13) and we will have some failures, and we will sin along the way as well. (17:20) But guess what? (17:23) So long as we're walking in the light, as he is in the light, (17:28) we have fellowship with God, and the blood of Jesus, his son, (17:34) purifies us from all ungodliness. (17:37) And that's grace.

(17:39) So he's piling on grace so long as we're walking in the light (17:44) and trying to work out our salvation. (17:51) So Jesus' blood covers us. (17:59) It also removes guilt, that blood, (18:04) so that we can have clean consciences to serve God.

(18:10) Anything we've done in the past is wiped away. (18:15) We can give it up to God, and we don't have to bear that burden anymore. (18:21) When you confess your sins to God, (18:24) and it doesn't have to be up here in front of everybody, (18:28) when you go to your closet in your bedroom and you pray to God privately (18:33) and you purge your soul to him, guess what? (18:40) You've just defused a very potent weapon that Satan uses on new believers.

(18:50) Remember that time? (18:53) You're guilty and you're not worthy. (18:56) Give up. (18:59) He will work on you.

(19:02) He will make you feel like you just stepped in something, (19:08) and that's you on the bottom of the shoe. (19:14) But by confessing your sins to God, (19:19) God is quick to forgive, (19:25) and God, when it comes to sin, removes our sin as far away as east is from west. (19:35) That's good news.

(19:36) You don't have to bear the burden anymore. (19:40) You're free. (19:42) When Jesus makes you free, you are free indeed.

(19:47) So Peter loved Jesus, (19:50) and that's plainly obvious to anyone who reads Scripture. (19:55) And he loved the Lord's church (19:57) and even shepherded a flock somewhere in Asia Minor as an elder. (20:04) And he was faithful both to his apostolic mission and to his job as an elder.

(20:12) Jesus gave instructions to Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, (20:18) commanding him to feed my sheep. (20:21) And that's what he did all the way up until his martyrdom. (20:27) Peter then says, (20:30) So I will always remind you of these things.

(20:34) Peter, knowing he was soon to die, (20:39) offered his parting advice to those he loved, the church. (20:44) They were to keep progressing in their knowledge of God. (20:49) Knowledge is the key.

(20:51) You just can't come and sit and mentally disengage while you're here. (20:58) You've got to be listening. (21:00) You've got to be participating, studying.

(21:03) And then you've got to leave here and put it into practice. (21:09) You just don't immediately slip into another compartmentalized box of your life (21:17) where at work you behave a certain way and it's not as a Christian. (21:23) No, you've got to be 100% wherever you are genuine to Jesus (21:33) and letting your light shine.

(21:39) And I've completely lost my place. (21:41) Give me a second. (21:45) So the more knowledge you have, the more useful you can be for the Lord.

(21:51) And your faith will be stronger if you practice this process. (21:57) There is a warning we need to heed. (22:01) Paul tells us, told the Corinthians and us indirectly, (22:06) knowledge pumps up, but love builds up, he said.

(22:13) We can't become conceited in our knowledge, (22:18) never looking down our noses at those who have not yet come to the level that we may be at. (22:25) We have to exercise agape love and be patient and kind and gentle. (22:34) We must remember what it was like when we were new Christians (22:39) and the amount of Christianity we knew could have been, you know, fit in this bottle cap.

(22:50) So don't be conceited in your knowledge. (22:56) As a child of God, we owe it to ourselves to pick up the Bible and study it for ourselves. (23:06) So take Paul's advice to Timothy.

(23:09) He says, study to show yourselves approved, (23:13) a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (23:22) So we need to read his word,

meditate on his word, study the word with the saints (23:29) and put into practice what we've learned. (23:34) And then you can have all those promises from God.

(23:39) Grace, peace, love. (23:44) In the second chapter of Peter, he warns the church about Paul's teachers and the ungodly (23:52) and what their terrible end will be if they do not repent. (24:00) In the third chapter, Peter reveals what happens at Jesus' second coming, (24:06) the terrible day of the Lord.

(24:10) It brings about the destruction of the heavens and destruction of the earth. (24:17) And Peter closes his letter by listing one more benefit of having the knowledge of God. (24:27) He said, if you continue in your learning, it will guard you from error and false teachers (24:36) whose teaching can lead people astray.

(24:40) Second Peter 3, 17 and 18, as Mike read for us, (24:45) Therefore, beloved, since you already know these things, be on your guard (24:50) so that you will not be carried away by the error of lawless men (24:57) and fall from your secure position. (25:02) But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (25:07) To Him be glory both now and forever.

Amen. (25:14) So that's Peter's recipe for maturity, becoming mature in Christ. (25:22) It's a method.

(25:24) And I'm glad I could present that to everybody. (25:29) I hope it was beneficial. (25:30) So, if there's any reason you need the prayers of the church (25:35) or need any kind of assistance in any way, come forward. (25:40)