

“FOUNDATION”
2 Peter 1: 3-11
Holiday Island Presbyterian Church
July 9, 2017

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

10 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION:

On the way to Fayetteville, driving along Highway 45

I happened to notice a sign for a new church.

I have passed it before but I don't remember the name.

What is significant about it is that

**it must have been under construction - at least at one time -
- because there was a concrete foundation in place
but completely void of any signs of recent construction.
Just a foundation . . . sitting there . . . waiting.**

**I wonder what happened?
Change their plans? Run out of money?**

**And then the dots began to connect.
I remembered the sermon I was preparing for today
and I started thinking . . .**

**I came to the realization that this is the fate
of every church that does not progress beyond its foundation.
The foundation of all Christian churches -
- and each individual Christian -
- is the belief that Jesus is the Christ, Son of the Living God
- and savior of the world.**

**But what happens if our growth in Christ stops there?
What happens when a church doesn't go beyond the foundation?
Or if the Christian stops growing in Christ?**

**WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CALLED/ELECTED:
Let's explore what Peter had to say about that subject.**

**First of all,
it is important to understand who Peter is addressing
"To God's elect, exiles scattered . . . who have been chosen
according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the
sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ
and sprinkled with his blood." 1 Peter 1:1**

**Peter is addressing Christians -
- people who already accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior**

- followers of Christ

It is addressed to those who are elected and called.

Those who have already accepted God's invitation.

**This is not a call to accept Jesus as the Christ,
or a call to join a church.**

This is a reminder of who the people are -

People who share the faith of the Apostles.

It is a call to these people

to shun the false teachings of others

and to build upon the faith that has united them.

The advice Peter was telling the people of that day -

- and what God is saying to us today -

is we are to remember and recognize

what it means to be elected and called.

God loves us enough to offer us salvation

through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.

The invitation to salvation is freely given -

- it does not depend on anything inherent in any person chosen -

or on any act that a person performs

- or on any belief that a person exercises.

Nothing we say or do earns us the right to salvation.

Our election rests upon God's loving desire

to reconcile us to Him.

When God elects us - calls us -

God expects us to progressively deepen our faith

through actively living out our faith and calling.

Now that's high expectations, indeed.

**But our salvation came at a great cost
and it is not to be taken lightly.**

**So Peter gives us an idea
of what that progression might look like.**

Peter's formula is to:

**“add goodness to your faith; and add knowledge to goodness;
add self-control to knowledge; add perseverance to self-control;
add godliness to perseverance;
then add mutual affection and love.”**

**Peter is basically saying,
that if our faith is genuine and strong enough,
we will move away from the immoral things of the world
and towards the things Christ modeled for us.**

**The further we pursue that which is virtuous and moral
the more we become aware of the will of God
and the more knowledge of God's will we gain.**

**Paul said it this way to the Church at Corinth
“When I was a child, I used to speak like a child,
think like a child, reason like a child;
when I became an adult,
I did away with childish things.” 1 Corinthians 13:11**

**When we become Christians,
we begin to mature in our faith
and we *should* begin to move away from worldly things.**

**We begin to *think* like maturing Christians
and that knowledge leads us to greater self-control.**

Because we are also creatures blessed and cursed with free will,

**we often choose not to use self-control;
we choose to follow the ways of the world
and we stray from the paths of righteousness.**

**We are prone to wander to the outer edges of faith -
As Paul warned Timothy:**

**“For the time will come when they will not endure sound
doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will
accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own
desires . . .” 2 Timothy 4:3**

**We follow trendy theology
or to get caught up in the events of the day
or accept half-truths which appeal to our desires.**

**We approach faith like a buffet . . .
. . . choosing something here and something there
and ending up with a hodge-podge of *stuff*.**

**We make poor choices; sinful choices.
Choices which lead us away from God.**

And we wander from the foundation of our faith.

**You know,
no self-respecting sheep gets up in the morning
and decides to get lost.**

**They simply wander aimlessly from one tuft of grass to another
and suddenly realize they are lost.**

**Only a foolish person
would make the conscious decision
to move away from God . . .
. . . but it happens . . .
. . . one choice at a time.**

**That's when we must allow the Holy Spirit to convict us -
- to point out to us that we have strayed -
- and to call us to confession and repentance.**

**I met with the subcommittee on ministry this past week
to determine if I had the right education, skills,
and grasp of Presbyterian theology and polity
necessary to serve here as an interim pastor.**

One of the questions I was asked was:

**“How would you respond to someone who approached and said
they were tired of having to confess something in each worship
service, it made them feel guilty and interfered with their
worship.”**

My answer was:

**“Good! I hope you do feel uncomfortable!”
That's the purpose of a call to confession!**

**But then the assurance of pardon has to be genuine!
You have to believe that confession and repentance
leads to a restored relationship with God.**

This is where perseverance comes into the formula.

Paul says we are to “run the race . . . with perseverance . . .”

**Near the end of his life, Paul said to Timothy
“I have fought an excellent fight;
I have finished my race and I have kept my faith.”**

**God asks us to keep moving forward,
to deepen our faith
to face the trials we will face with confident faith.**

To hold to the promises.

Well, sometimes we pause or even move a bit backward.

Christians - especially older Christians - are prone to rest.

Too often we reach a point where we simply say:

What I have done; what I have given is good enough.

I've done my share.

I speak from experience when I tell you this.

I was getting very settled and comfortable in my retirement.

I had joined several clubs -

- was enjoying time for myself

- to do what I want; when I want, with whom I want.

I had a mantra concerning going to work.

1. If it meant I had to be somewhere at a certain time - nope!

2. If I had to answer to *anyone*; had any kind of supervisor - pass!

3. And if there was even the slightest possibility of complaint -

- you could count me out.

So much for *my* plans!

God had other plans.

God had given me specific talents and skills.

Talents and skills which are not necessary for beekeeping;

not necessary for fly tying and fly fishing.

But these specific talents and skills are for the people of God.

So it is back to the discipline of study (which I do enjoy)

to learn all I can about reformed theology

Presbyterian polity and practice.

You see, we reach a spiritual plateau in our lives,

a place where we are comfortable, content.

A place where we think:

“Life doesn’t get much better than this.”

**However, by persevering in the faith,
we can continually move towards godliness,
mutual affection and love.**

EXHORTATION TO RESPOND:

So, that’s the formula Peter leaves us with.

But Peter doesn’t stop there,

he exhorts us to:

“ . . . make every effort to confirm your calling and election.”

**Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm
your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never
stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal
kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Vs 10-11)**

**Our calling and election is lived out
by building upon the foundation
by which we came to know Jesus as Christ and Lord.**

Brick by brick -

- action by action -

- faithful response by faithful response -

**- we grow closer to God and the ability to love
as God commands us.**

CONCLUSION:

There is good news, today.

God never gives up on us. Never!

I don’t care where you are on your faith journey . . .

**... just starting out
trying to decide if you want to put your faith in Jesus.**

**Or just hanging out ... on a spiritual sabbatical ...
... resting ...
... smelling the daisies and spiritually treading water.**

**Or we're paused somewhere along our spiritual journey...
... wondering what the next step might be for you ...
... feeling like something is missing ...
... like we've had a good meal
and somehow missed something at the buffet table.**

**There is building to be done, my brothers and sisters.
The foundation is laid
and it is time to build the Church God expects us to be.**

**I once had a woman ask to meet with me.
She was advanced in years
and had just buried her husband of many years.**

**I braced myself for what I thought was going to be a grief session.
She totally caught me off guard
by sharing a vision for forming a group of elderly folks
to fellowship with one another!**

**That conversation led to purchasing a new church van
to transport these folks all over Oklahoma
to visit unique places and eat some great meals together.**

**What vision do you have for a new ministry?
What is God gently - or maybe not so gently - calling you to do?**

**Peter says we are to
“make every effort to confirm our calling and election.”**

**As Presbyterians,
that translates into not only being a community of believers.
But also a community of doers.**

**As James, one of Peter's colleague in ministry said:
But prove yourselves doers of the word,
and not merely hearers who delude themselves. James 1:22**

**May God bless us with a clear vision for the future . . .
. . . and grant us the strength and courage
To confirm our calling and election
through our loving actions.**

PRAYER:

**God of us all, grant us to wisdom to recognize that we possess
everything we need to live the life You have chosen for us - the life
You have called us to.**

**Then give us the courage to strive for that goal until our last
breath here on earth and we can enjoy the sweet fulfilment of Your
promises. In the name of Jesus, the one who unites us in our faith.**

Amen