
Sermon Notes

February 4, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Make Every Effort

2 Peter 1:5-7

Godly Response

- ❖ Through His divine and sovereign power, God works to provide salvation for His people
 - when God welcomes children into His family He also promises to provide all the resources necessary for them to prosper and grow in the faith
 - God does this so that His children can embrace the wholeness, completeness and beauty of the holy lives He makes possible
- ❖ In response to all God gives us, we are meant to pursue godly living with our maximum effort

Diligence

- ❖ The Christian life is **NOT** accurately characterized by the misleading phrase, “let go and let God”
 - although we rest entirely on what God has done and is doing for us, we must apply all the diligence of which we are capable to develop a full, rich, transformed life
 - we are meant to be continually renewed and reformed according to the riches Christ makes available to us
- ❖ Saving faith is the ground in which the fruit of Christian sanctification grows

❖ *Make every effort*

- if you belong to Christ, your growth and progress in the faith is not optional or something to treat lightly
- the pursuit of spiritual maturity is a goal which you need to give your whole self over to every day
- ❖ To help us *make every effort*, Peter lists 8 virtues that lock together like the pieces of a puzzle
 - only when they are all put together do we see the picture they convey of Christlike character
 - Peter calls us to *supplement* our faith with each of these 8 character qualities
 - *supplement* = choirmaster
 - in Greek culture, choirmasters were responsible for supplying everything needed by their groups
 - in time, the term for choirmaster came to refer to anyone who provided any kind of group with the equipment necessary to perform their job (soldiers)
 - we are to make every effort to equip our souls with all the virtues needed for them to thrive and grow in holiness

8 Essential Virtues

- ❖ Peter’s list begins in v. 5 with *faith* and ends in v. 7 with *love*
 - God’s gift of faith serves as the foundation for all Christian virtue
 - true faith always “leaks” out of our lives in the form of love and good deeds
 - loving God and obeying God go hand in hand

- ❖ **Virtue** (moral excellence, goodness)
 - a courageous quality that makes one stand out from the crowd
 - out front for all to see as we shine for Jesus (Phil 3:14)
- ❖ **Knowledge**
 - more than "just the facts"
 - intimate, personal knowledge of God along with an understanding of who we are becoming in Christ
 - a growing ability to understand and apply the whole body of Biblical truth so we conduct our lives with wisdom
- ❖ **Self-control**
 - "to hold yourself in"
 - commonly connected with the discipline required of athletes
 - how we are to focus our strength, energy and attention on lives of holiness and purity
- ❖ **Steadfastness** (perseverance, patience, endurance)
 - helps us stay strong in the midst of the sorrows and afflictions that enter our lives
 - "to bear up under" or "to remain under"
 - in addition to accepting and enduring what we are going through the ability to look forward (Heb 12:2)
- ❖ **Godliness**
 - reverence for God, true religion, true worship, one who properly honors and adores God
 - holds a promise both for the present life AND the life to come

- ❖ **Brotherly affection with love**
 - flowing out of all our affection for God comes an affection for others
 - Jesus' Great Commandment (love God with all your heart, soul, mind... love your neighbor as yourself)
 - it is **both philadelphia** (brotherly love) and **agape** (unconditional love)
 - 1 Cor 13 says love is the crown of all Christian virtues
 - Moo: "Love is not only the last and greatest Christian virtue; it is also the 'glue' that holds all the rest of them together..."
- ❖ Peter does not offer this list in order to send anyone on a "guilt trip"
 - Peter wants to help us evaluate the extent to which we have each of these virtues growing in our lives
 - we must never be "self-satisfied" with our progress, neither are we to be neurotic or obsessive about it

Personal Reflection

1. What response are you currently making to the equipping for growth that God grants you through His divine power and His great and precious promises?
2. Peter tells us to be diligent and make every effort when it comes to growing in the faith. How do you assess the current level of effort you are making to grow? What, if anything, could help you do better with this?
3. Review Peter's list of virtues and consider to what extent you are supplementing your faith with each of them. Where are you strong? Where is their room for growth? What will you do about that?