

Sermon Notes for Feb. 23 (2 Peter 1:5-7) Fortifying Your Faith

- There has been lots of fear and uncertainty around the world in the face of the Coronavirus (or CoVid-19). Over 75,000 cases have been confirmed and over 2,100 have lost their lives.
 - The **world** has responded with deliberate and diligent action (quarantines; travel restrictions; recommended health guidelines, etc.)
 - The **church** faces a far greater virus that's been spreading around the world since the fall of mankind. Sin spreads its evil in many forms and one of the most insidious is false teaching by false teachers (2 Pet 2:1)
- How can believers avoid this pandemic spiritual virus?
 - **Understand and embrace the nature of your faith** (1:1: "*receive a faith of the same kind as ours*")
 - **Understand and embrace the sufficiency of your faith** (1:3-4)
 - **Understand and embrace the growth of your faith** (1:5-7)
- Peter knows it's easy for believers to let their guard down or become complacent even in the face of predatory practices. He therefore calls for the church to strengthen their faith.

1. Fortify your faith with divine motivation (1:5a: "*now for this very reason also...*")

- Motivation is important in life and we find ourselves motivated by many different things, but Peter looks back to v. 3-4 to inspire our faith-building effort.
- God has given us "*everything*" (v. 3) we need to utilize and strengthen our faith (see also Rom. 8:31-32; 1 Cor. 15:57-58)

2. Fortify your faith with diligent effort (1:5b: "*applying all diligence*")

- It is good to remember that coming to Christ is a **monergistic** effort by God alone who delivers us from our sins and we have nothing to do with it. But living for Christ is **synergistic** and requires our effort by His power to develop our faith (Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 15:10)

- **Notice** the choice of words Peter used about **doing our part**:
 - **“applying all”** (“*make every*”) = bring in your part and do it with a whole heart (“*all*”)
 - **“diligence”** (“*effort*”) = give your effort with speed and eagerness
 - **“supply”** (“*supplement*”) = God wants us to fully supply our faith in a lavish way
- The Christian life isn’t easy, so we are called to give our best effort in fighting the good fight and running the race with endurance.
- **Check your effort**:
 - How would you rate your “*applying all diligence*” or “*make every effort*” faith commitment?
 - Do you give intentional time to wrestle with where you need to grow?
 - Are you actively avoiding being on autopilot with your faith?

3. Fortify your faith with designated virtues (1:5c-7)

- Peter gives us a list of **seven specific qualities** to fortify our faith with (lists were common in the first century and the New Testament provides 12 virtue lists and 8 vice lists)
- Peter most likely chose these seven qualities because they were the opposite of the evil and immoral character of the false teachers. Additionally, the order of these qualities has a divine logic and flow out of the seedbed of “*your faith*”. A vital orthodoxy (belief) flows produces a willing orthopraxy (behavior)
 - **“moral excellence”** (“*virtue*”): grow in developing the moral perfections of Jesus Christ (v. 3 – like a Christlikeness)
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 - **“knowledge”**: grow in knowing how God wants you to live and to know Christ better (v. 8)
 - **“self-control”**: grow in controlling your own desires and cravings which is the opposite of false teachers who live immorally (2:2; 3:3). This quality is worked into our lives by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23) as we discipline ourselves (1 Tim. 4:7-8) like athletes to win (1 Cor. 9:25)

- **“perseverance”** (“*steadfastness*”): grow in your inner calm and loyal faith that keeps enduring over the long haul in the face of hardship and opposition. This perseverance produces “*proven character*” (Rom. 5:4) that leads to becoming “*perfect and complete lacking in nothing*” (Jms 1:2-4)
- **“godliness”**: grow in your attitude of appropriate reverence for God and respect for others. Again, this is not evident in false teachers who despise authority and are driven by self-will (2:10-12)
- **“brotherly kindness”** (“*brotherly affection*”): grow in your loving affection for your spiritual blood brothers and sisters. Believers treated each other like physical kin (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:22)
- **“love”**: grow in willfully seeking the highest good of others around you. A faith that doesn’t love this way is deficient or spiritually devoid (1 Jn. 4:18)