

- As we continue our journey into our 3rd teaching of 2 Peter
 - Remember – Peter wrote this letter to a group of Gentile believers living in Asia Minor or what's known as Modern Day Turkey.
 - Two weeks ago, we began this letter – and we did it as we always do – with an introduction to the letter, we answered the basic questions of who wrote the letter;
 - when it was written and of course,
 - who it was written to etc..
 - And from there, we ventured into Peter's opening words – where he called himself a bond-servant (a *doulos* in the greek) of Jesus Christ, and then immediately following those words Peter opens by making another statement of sorts where he said this in verses 2&3:

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

- Last week we dug in – and went in *depth*, highlighting – Peter's words, which also happened to be – the same words Paul uses as a prayer for the people he was writing to.
 - In our last teaching, we talked in depth about prayer and how it was – that the prayers that we often pray, don't seem to line up – with the prayers – that the men of the Bible prayed.
 - I gave you multiple examples of prayers in the Bible,
 - I also challenged you to find the central theme of those Biblical prayers,
 - And what we discovered – was that – the central theme didn't really line up with the central theme of the prayers most of us pray.
 - And what was the Biblical Central Theme of all the prayers we covered last week.
 - It was that God and His Son Jesus Christ are the focus
 - God is the central theme – He is the point
 - And most if not all the prayers of the Bible were all about God – meaning, with each prayer we read we noticed that, yes – people are part of the prayers but – the prayers they pray, are either
 - all about the betterment of the people they would pray for (as it related to God), or
 - the prayers were for the betterment of that individual (as it related to God),
 - They were not for their betterment as it related to their current life here on this earth,
 - It was always for their betterment – (as it related to them serving God),

- Specifically, how it would be - that they might become instruments of God and arrive at a place spiritually where He would use them for His own Glory.
- And what we discovered was, for a person, or a group of believers to accomplish this goal, there was a common link to that process a direct correlation – between the individual believer and that of his or her increased knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.
 - And then – from there Peter tied the increasing of their knowledge directly back to something else.
 - Something I didn't touch on last week – but something I'd like to point out this morning.
- And that showed up in the form of, two words –
 - Grace and Peace!
- The words Grace and Peace are often used together –
 - They are repeated throughout the scriptures, and almost always tie directly back to an increase in the knowledge of God.
 - So, the formula is always the same:
 - The more you come to know God not just know Him – as in the traditional sense – as in the "I am saved sense",
 - But know Him, in an intimate way sense, as in – the more we come to deeply know Him – specifically know His truths
 - The more Grace and Peace will enter our lives, and the way that process works, is through the process of “Progressive Revelation”
 - I call it those uhuh moments
 - When you study something in the manuscripts, and it hits you in a deep, systemic way, causing you to pause and take note.
- Let me ask you a question: Does what I am saying resonate with you in any way?
 - Have you personally had any of those moments in your Christian life?
 - Meaning: Have you ever studied God's Word, and had a revelation hit you out of nowhere?
 - Do you know what I am talking about?
 - I am speaking specifically about when you study something in God's Holy Manuscript, and you see something you have never seen before.
 - You read something, and it hits you in a way that causes you pause – which then causes you to do a double take as you process what you just read.
 - Let me say, if you've never experienced that, you are missing out on one of the greatest blessings God has ever made available to the believer, and I will tell you - those moments are not just random or rare moments.
 - They happen every time I study the Bible, and they aren't just reserved for the Pastor/Teachers.
 - They are available to you as well, and it's in these times, that the Grace and

Peace of God are made manifest in your life.

- And this is what Peter and Paul repeatedly speak and pray about.
- But why is Grace and Peace so important?
 - They are important because of this fallen, God-forsaken world we live in where something is always “Taking the joy out of living”
 - Where life is constantly draining us, wreaking havoc on us, dragging us down – pressing in on us – causing us to feel depressed, causing us to lose our joy
 - And this by the way is a primary tool of the enemy.
 - If he can get us down and depressed about our circumstance, he can cause us to become disconnected from God's People – from the Church, which is our primary support system!
 - And then, from there – overtime – once depression and discontentment take root.
 - The enemy can slowly rob us of our effectiveness in the work of ministry, causing us to refrain or have any desire to participate in what God is doing in and around us.
 - Essentially sidelining us – you see when we are happy and content with our life and our journey with God, that's what emboldens and empowers us to do more. It creates a desire in us – compels us to ask God to put us in the game.
 - And that is all a byproduct of the Grace and Peace – that God makes available to us when His Word brings Progressive Revelation into our lives!
- Moving on, next we pick back up with verses 4-11 and before we read those verses let me back up and re-read the first 3 verses again – keeping us in context.
 - And here's what Peter wrote – one more time:

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Peter 1:6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

2 Peter 1:7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

2 Peter 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

- As I said a couple weeks ago in our introduction, there is a lot being put forth here. I am going to try and get through most of it this morning. So, let's get started.
 - In verses 3-4, we are given what I would call a promise or guarantee, along with an outline of how it works.
 - Listen to it one more time:

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

- Alright – so Peter, as I said, has given us a road map of sorts in his writings, and he does so when he lays out and or defines for us “a cause and effect”, situation of sorts.
 - In this cause and effect situation he clearly defines for us how we can obtain access to everything – pertaining to life and Godliness and how that access is clearly granted – through the true knowledge of Him, who called us by His own Glory and Excellence.
- Let me break this down for you really quick: Are you confused about life? Are you confused about Godliness?
 - What Peter tells us is that once we come to grips with the true knowledge of God, all that confusion begins to fade away. The clouds begin to roll away!
 - Another way to say this is, once we come to grips with the character, intent, and ways of “The God” of scripture, then – through His eyes – your confusion will begin to dissipate.
- Now this process tends to be a little more complicated than it sounds because the believers of today, which includes, every single one of us who came to church this morning.
 - When we arrived at church this morning – we came with a set of presuppositions, meaning we are pre-supposed to look at something – based on what we have been told or taught.

- And this is true, regardless – if what we were taught was backed up by proof, fact, or even evidence.
- You see early in our life, or in our walk with God, we placed our trust in someone to lead us and tell us what we believed, and therefore whatever that person said, more than likely we just went with it!
 - And we did this – not because we were lazy, but because that is what the institution of church has evolved into.
 - Therefore – we didn't know we were doing it!
 - And if what the Pastor said seemed to make sense – then, that just served to reinforce our belief system.
 - This statement applies to almost everything in our life, but it certainly applies to religion.
 - What I mean is, each one of us came to church this morning with an idea of who God is, how He works, what His intent is, and hopefully – what His expectations of us are.
 - And almost 100% of us arrived at our conclusions by and through what we have been told. Which then, is what formed our paradigm!
- So, that means if what we were taught was wrong, then by default there will not be any progressive revelation of God to speak of.
 - Because – when His Word is twisted or taken out of context then it loses its ability to deliver those revelatory moments. Essentially – it loses its power!
 - That's the sense of what I am trying to relay here, when Peter says:
 - Grace and Peace, be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - That Grace and Peace – is available – but only when it's coupled with an increase in the “true knowledge” of God
 - The concept of “True Knowledge” – is also another reoccurring theme, and why do you think that is?
 - Because it was an issue – the twisting of God's Word and the twisting of His Character was an issue.
 - And guess what? It's more of an issue today.
 - And why? Today – unlike any other time in Church History, we are living in an era where everyone one has 24 hour access to the Bible, yet most believers don't read it, much less study it.
 - Instead, they rely on the Regal Cinema Model, The Movie Model:
 - Where they go to church – much like going to the Movies – and listen and then head home.
 - And they do so, never really knowing whether what the Preacher said was right or wrong. Hence the problem!
- Anyways, if we want to access the power God, we don't do that through an emotional music filled service

- And it doesn't happen when the preacher tells us jokes or recites a sad story – causing us to become emotional.
- Gods' prescription for accessing this type of power begins by increasing a true knowledge of Him. And if when we do that, Peter says – our eyes will be opened:

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

- By the way this process is transforming from the inside out, and it reminds us of Romans 12:1-2 – where Paul says:

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Moving on, next let's reread verses 5-11 one more time:

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Peter 1:6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

2 Peter 1:7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

2 Peter 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

- You know there is a Great Debate that has been raging since theologians became

theologians, and that debate is over the Sovereignty of God vs. Man's Freewill.

- In other words – the question to ponder is, who is in control – is it God or is it left up to the freewill of man to decide?
- The Sovereignty View – often referred to as Calvinism (which isn't technically correct) – but for our purposes here today – we will go with it.
 - Calvinism earned this name because of a 15th Century Reformer and Theologian – a man named John Calvin who emphasized the complete Sovereignty of God in the Bible.
 - But then he took it to a whole other level which created a whole lot of controversy. Which by the way is still controversial today!
 - Anyways, the Calvinist view says – all things are controlled by God.
 - And then they try and prove this point through an Acronym called T.U.L.I.P
 - Total Depravity
 - Unconditional Election
 - Limited Atonement
 - Irresistible Grace
 - Perseverance of the Saints
 - We don't have time to get into all that this morning, but I encourage you to go study it for yourself, because it is fascinating!
- Anyways – so we have Calvinism – and then 2 centuries later we saw the emergence of another theory, called Arminianism – named after Jacobus Arminius – a Dutch Reformed Theologian who found fault with the Calvinist view.
 - Arminianism is what we would call the flip side of the coin – and it emerged as a counterbalance to Calvinism in the 17th Century.
 - The Arminian would say Man has Free Will – and has a choice to do what he pleases. Let me say that description of the Arminian view is not 100% technically correct either, but for today's purposes, once again, we will go with it!
 - The Arminian theory says – If someone does the God Honoring thing, God will honor them.
 - If they do the world honoring thing, God will not honor them.
- Both views seemingly show up in the scripture, and the verses we just read prove this to be the case.
 - Let me show you:
 - Back in verses 3-4 – we see the language which lends itself to the Calvinist view – listen for it.

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

- But from there we now move into the Arminian view of the equation where we clearly see a command for the individual believer to do something – to participate in their own spiritual development – and this shows up in a crescendo or cascading progression of sorts.
 - Listen to it one more time:

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Peter 1:6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

2 Peter 1:7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- In these verses we can distinctly see where man has responsibility for his own spiritual growth and maturity.
 - Which tells us – that you cannot outsource your personal spiritual maturity to anyone else. YOU MUST DO IT YOURSELF!
 - This also tells us that the Regal Cinema or Movie Model won't work!
 - Just because the Pastor teaches you something – you must do something with it – you must apply it!
 - And that is exactly what Peter is telling this group and (by extension) this is what he is telling us as well.
- In verse 5 he says, "applying all diligence" meaning you must put forth the effort.
 - You can't just show up to church – absorb what you can through hearing – and God will take care of the rest
 - No – you must apply what you learn – and do so diligently.
- Diligently means to zealously seek for something with all your heart, strength and might.
 - And so the question we should be asking ourselves is: How are we doing with this?
 - If we are truly honest with ourselves – are we doing good, or not so much?
 - If not, the next question would be – why?
 - And are we willing to begin doing something about it?
 - And then of course – how do we do it?
 - We do it the same way we lose weight, one step at a time and one bite at a time.

- Maybe – in the morning – you begin by giving God your “First Fruits”
 - Your First Fruits being giving first, of what’s most important in your life.
 - And top of that list is time!
- So, maybe your first step of applying diligence begins by giving God 15 minutes in the morning – prayer – study – and do this before you do anything else.
 - Don’t check your phone – watch TV etc...
 - That would be a good start, and then simply improve from there!
- But time isn’t necessarily what Peter is talking about when he says applying diligence – so from there he proceeds to give us a list. A cascading list of sorts.
 - And it begins in verse 5 with Peter saying:

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, **2 Peter 1:6** and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, **2 Peter 1:7** and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Moral Excellence – what in the world is that?
 - Now before we dig deeper into this topic let me say:
 - I (Pastor Greg Driver) am not your “convictor” and it’s not my job to intervene on behalf of the Holy Spirit –
 - And – let me say, I don’t personally make the news – I simply report it!
 - I will teach you what it says – and it’s between you and God what you do with it.
 - So, that’s my caveat before teaching on this.
- Anyways – on this topic of Moral Excellence:
 - The actual word used in the Greek is “virtue” which simply means behavior showing high moral standards, which tells us why the translators translated it “Moral Excellence”.
 - So Peter says apply all diligence, in your faith supply “moral excellence” and in your moral excellence, knowledge
- Now “Moral Excellence” – is exactly what you probably suspect it to be, but to simplify it, let me tell you how you can know if what you're doing is Morally Excellent or Not.
 - In this life when we make decisions – and those decisions do one of two things, they either:
 - A – Glorify God or

- B – Crucify Him
- And this applies to both our actions and our words, and I'll take it a step further and say it also applies to our demeanor and or attitude.
- Now if you are confused about this and don't know when a decision is God Glorifying or God Crucifying, simply ask yourself the question – is this a God Glorifying decision or is it a “flesh” Glorifying decision?
 - If you are saved you will immediately know which one it is because the Holy Spirit will convict you about it.
 - So Peter says, apply all diligence in Moral Excellence –
 - Which means – in everything you do, in every choice you make – seek earnestly to Glorify God with your choices
 - And only you and you alone know what you are or are not doing that meets, or falls short of this standard.
 - Then Peter says:

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

- This is interesting – and it gave me pause.
 - Generally speaking – knowledge is the first step to anything.
 - Example – learn how to change the alternator – and then go change it!
 - But in Peter's list of cascading virtues, he lists knowledge second – after applying all diligence in Moral Excellence.
- Normally, you would learn what's right and wrong and then go apply it, but in this verse – that's not the case.
 - So, we wonder why?
 - Well – I believe there is a reason – and one that applies to all of us sitting here today.
 - One that leaves all of us without excuse, at least as it relates to this sequence of virtues!
- Let me explain. You see this letter was written to believers, which means they have something inside of them that lets them know, if what they are doing is right or wrong.
 - That something is called the Holy Spirit.
 - Regardless of whether you have been taught – that drunkenness is wrong, or adultery is wrong, or lying is wrong or murder etc...
 - Once the Holy Spirit takes us residence inside your body, you have a built in Convictor
 - And you don't have to have the knowledge to know when you are not Glorifying God.
 - Which means – Peter assumes these believers don't need knowledge to know God's

right from wrong so – I believe (and by the way) – me saying, I believe – doesn't make it so. Go study it for yourself!

- Having said that, it does, however, make sense and lines up with the testimony of scripture!
- So, Peter says: apply all diligence Moral Excellence – and in your moral excellence knowledge.
 - The way this reads – it's a little confusing because of our English Translation.
 - It should combine moral excellence and knowledge together.
 - That is not the way it reads in the Greek. Let me read it to you in the Greek –
 - And [very reason] for this now, earnestness all having brought in, supplement into the faith of your virtue, into and virtue knowledge
 - In other words, we move from virtue or moral excellence as a topic and then move into knowledge as its own topic.
 - The two are separate – they are not run together
- Moving on, and we will close quick here:

2 Peter 1:6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

2 Peter 1:7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- I am going to stop right here, and leave you with a little homework of sorts: I want you this week to go study these verses for yourself, and I want you to meditate on, and study what and why Peter is beginning his letter this way.
 - There is a reason – and the reason applies to us – so study it!
- Now, before finishing up this morning, I want to leave you with the application. So - what have we learned?
 - We learned that if we want to access the power of God as it relates to Grace and Peace in our life – we must increase our knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.
 - And we must pursue this – it doesn't just happen.
 - And that pursuit is a constant – it never goes away, which means – you don't just arrive
 - And then of course we must apply this same diligence in our pursuit of virtue and moral excellence in our life.
 - This means – resisting the things of the enemy and being intentional in our pause.
 - Meaning – being intentional about pausing when it comes to how we act – what we say – and how we react.

- Spiritual Maturity is front and center of Peter's letter, and as I said last week – nothing could be more applicable to the believer of the 21st Century!
 - Amen – Amen !