

2 Peter 1:10-13

Hope in the Fight

Let Me Refresh Your Memory!



Vs. 10 – “...*make your calling and election sure.*”

We have been covering verses 3-9 for the last few weeks. They instruct us to put into our personality the character traits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter mentions *faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, brotherly-kindness, and agape love*. These certainly do not make an exhaustive list, but they closely resemble the list that Paul gives us in Gal. 5–9 - the fruit of the Spirit, which also include *joy, peace, patience, and faithfulness!* There are more – *generosity, wisdom, purity, mercy, humility, hospitality, and more still*. But, it is essential to incorporate them into the very core of our own character! That is actually impossible for us to do. We don't have the ability in ourselves to change the nature of our own personality. The curse and the fall of the first man, Adam, dominates our nature from birth. An evil temperament is so ingrained in most of us that we simply cannot change ourselves. We are unable to turn over a new leaf – to reform ourselves in any consistent way. So, God knows this. He does not leave us on our own to do something impossible for us to do. So He gives us His powerful Holy Spirit, to empower, to **uphold**, to **change** and **transform**, to **rebuke**, **encourage**, and **embolden** us, until we are quite different than we once were – starting on the inside and working its way to the outside of us! This is not optional! It is mandatory for the Christ-follower! When Christ enters our lives, He brings this transformation process with Him, by the fact that He gives us the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit then provides us with what we cannot conjure up on our own – power for the transformation process. His Presence changes us, transferring the qualities of Jesus to our own personalities! But He does not do this without our desiring it more than anything else we could possibly desire. Jesus said that we must love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and might! It is this love for Jesus that makes us want to please Him and which hurts and disappoints us when we don't! It is this **love** and all-consuming **desire** that the Holy Spirit capitalizes on and uses to change our hearts and then our lives. In the process, He gives us two purposes – to, as I said, be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit in our character, and to take upon ourselves the obligation to seriously pursue the purposes of God to win the world to Himself! This love for Christ cannot be half-hearted, or your desire to cooperate with the Holy Spirit will be half-hearted, and he will be hamstrung in His efforts! We will end up being a confusing mix of Adam's “old man” and of Christ's “new man”! We will try to crossover between kingdoms – the kingdom of darkness, and the kingdom of light! **[Eph. 4:22-24]** I have to give the sad assessment that this is where the great majority of Christians are at, hence the conflict, the unjust and malignant judgmentalism, the occasional or even constant turmoil at home, at work, & even @ church!



Vs. 10 – “...*make your calling and election sure.*”

So Peter tells us to incorporate these characteristics of Jesus into our lives so that we are actually living up to who and what we say we are. We say we are saved, born again, regenerate. But if we don't act like it, how do we know?

Many Christians plead the grace of God! They say “*I'm human, and humans all make mistakes, and God's amazing grace covers for my bad behavior*”. But when this plea confidently proceeds from the mouths of the consistently disobedient, it sounds like what it is - a self-serving attempt to manipulate God and fellow Christians! If proof would be compiled and judged to lean one way or the other the needle would often probably fall on the “*not*” side of the issue! These people don't want the people of their church to reject them so they sin almost with impunity and then plead the grace of God! *You've heard the expression “*have your cake and eat it too*”. In other words, you cannot both hold on to your piece of cake and also eat it. You have to make a decision to do one or the other, but you can't do both. In the same way many professing Christians want to keep doing their favorite sins, and they also want to be saved to avoid Hell and go to heaven. So they claim that the work of Christ on the cross will allow them sin and also save them! It is true, we all fail, and we all sin, but it is not true that Christ saves the unrepentant, unchanged sinner! Many Christians today seem more proud to admit they are one of Christ's failures than one of His successes! A real Christian has to choose between their sin and Christ. We cannot have both at the same time! Grace does not cover for our willful sin!



So when we choose Christ, we must forsake our sin! We don't do it by force of our own will because we **cannot** do it by force of our own will! Again, we willingly, eagerly, cooperate with the Spirit of God who indwells us! He is taking us into “*the life of God*” [Eph. 4:18] and we **LET Him do it!** The “*life of God*” is a rich, satisfying, rewarding life which is the gift of God to a faithful follower of Jesus, but which is denied those who resist Him and choose sin over the Savior! It is the character of Jesus incorporated into our life that tells the true tale of who and what we are! It is the character of Jesus in our life that shows us to be a transformed “*new creation*” of God and which identifies whether we have actually responded to the call of Jesus from the cross – our “*calling*” – and whether we are a part of the “*elect*” – in other words, whether we are part of the “chosen” people of God, chosen for a task of ³ calling a wayward people of this world home to their Creator!

Vs 9 says that if someone who says they are a Christian does not exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, they are “*nearsighted and blind*”. Nearsightedness is a condition of the eye whereby the shape of the eyeball is not quite right, and without bothering to give you a scientific cause, it makes the things that are distant appear blurry, while the things that are nearby appear sharp. Peter is saying that those that decide to keep sinning are focused on short term gain, but have lost sight of the bigger picture, the overwhelming advantage of the long-term gain that God has in store for those who love Him and serve His purposes! In choosing the pleasures of here and now, they forsake the pleasures of eternity, and it is a very poor exchange! Peter continues that anyone who chooses to continue sinning has forgotten that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Being cleansed from our past errors and sins does not open up the way for a sordid future! Our cleansing by the blood of Jesus opens up a future where we are free from avarice. Avarice is the uncontrolled desire to always have more no matter the cost to oneself or others – it is the most repulsive form of greed. And, Christ frees us from being unethical and dishonest. The Holy Spirit simply will not let us go on conducting business on anything but the most honest level – full disclosure! Jesus died for our sins and our sinful inclinations to release us from their power over us, *not to maintain or even increase their power over us!* The grace of God is amazing only because it takes a sinner to ***new heights***, not ***new depths***! So Peter is pleading with Christians in the early church to become what Christ has already made them – good, pure and right, godly, holy, knowledgeable and wise, with self-control and the toughness to persevere under duress. He wants them to possess the qualities of brotherly kindness, and most of all to just love – starting with loving Him (God) with all our heart, soul, and mind - and from there moving on to love ***people*** indiscriminately – without being choosy! Social status, physical appearance, age, IQ, personality characteristics, communication skills, – none of that matters! We are just to love them and to *show them* love, even if our love is not returned in a satisfactory way, or even if it is angrily refused! That is the difference between the world’s love and God’s agape love! Agape love employs faithfulness, commitment, and sacrifice in the pursuit of another’s greatest good. It is a selfless love – putting others above yourselves – putting their needs above your own.



Vs. 10 - *"If you do these things you will never fall"*

The implication is that if we do not include these characteristics of Jesus to our character and personality, or, if we once included them in our character and then discontinue them, then Peter implies that we can fall out of the faith. He is not saying that Christians can be saved and then unsaved – heaven-bound and then hell-bound! He is saying that the fruit of the Spirit are a sign that we truly are saved. The lack of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives could very well indicate that we never were saved – that we dabbled in Christianity and tasted of its sweetness, but never were fully committed to Christ – never had our entire heart and soul in the faith! Or, it could also mean that we were saved but have backslidden – in other words, at some point we made a wrong turn, stopped following Jesus, and lost our way. The apostle Paul acknowledged that such a thing could happen to a true Christ-follower, and that such a person is still saved. But it is very hard to tell the two apart – the one who has fallen away vs. the one who is not fallen away but back slidden. They look the same! Fortunately it is not our job to tell them apart but God's! Only He knows the heart and, of course, we don't. *But one difference is that, if given time, the saved individual will turn from their sin and their miserable state of being, and return to Jesus, very much like **the prodigal son**, after coming to his senses eating pig food, returned to his home and to the loving embrace of his father! THAT is a beautiful thing when it happens! I have not seen it happen often, but it does happen from time to time! But if you persist in the Fruit of the Spirit and do not falter and incorporate them into your everyday life in increasing measure,.. well, those people are showing all the signs of authenticity. It is not that true Christ-followers do not ever fail, because we all do. But we are learning from our mistakes and growing better at obedience and stronger! A Christ-follower knows that in him or herself, there is no good thing, but they also prepare themselves each day to follow the dictates of the Holy Spirit and not their own impulses. Those natural impulses are unbelievably strong, but when we are aware of our weakness, and prayerfully and in submission turn them over to Jesus at the beginning of each day, then the Spirit is given permission to do what He wants to do in and through us, and we are prepared mentally and emotionally to do things differently, and also *empowered to ACTUALLY do things differently!*



Vs. 11 - “...and will receive a rich welcome into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ”. This is an indirect admonition that a Christ-follower is a forward-thinking person. They live their here-and-now with a seemingly distant “**then**” in mind. They live their lives with heaven in mind - with the throne of God in mind, where they know they will be answering for their choices! It is a farsighted approach to life in the here and now! God is real to them, Christ is real to them, and heaven is a real place and there will be a real time when they will either enter heaven or be cast out! Of course we do not enter God’s heaven on the basis of our good choices, neither by our good works. We enter because we have placed our faith in Christ who is perfect. Perfection, not goodness, is what is required to get into heaven, and there is no human alive that has been perfect. We can only get into heaven by riding on His coattails! When we place our faith and trust in Him, when we surrender to His supremacy and put Him first in our lives we are “in Christ” and everything about Him that qualifies Him for heaven *becomes ours* - every honor, every title, everything He has ever earned, becomes ours, and our lack of merit is covered by His abundant merits, and we become qualified to live in the Presence of Almighty God! But like James, I contend that our lives on earth should be recognizable by the Fruits of the Spirit, the character traits of Jesus, our leader and example! Peter would certainly back me up on that. Our “*calling and election*” is certainly “*sure*”, through Christ and His work on the cross to pay for our sins, and His many other gifts that He showers upon us so that we might have the spiritual status we need to live with Him in His “Father’s house” [Jn. 14:2,3] This is a rich reward indeed! For everything that we lose in following Christ here on an earth that is hostile to Jesus, there is a far greater reward in heaven! I’m saying that we get it all back and so much more that we cannot imagine it! Whatever we might lose here is NOTHING compared to what we will gain there if we persevere in all the things that matter to God! That is Peter’s urgent message to the church.



So what are you choosing these days. How do you live your life? In the immediacy of NOW, or in the joyful anticipation of a glorious future? If so, then let your life reflect the glory of the personality of Jesus NOW, today! Call upon the Spirit of God that He may give you an easy spirit of humble submission before God!