

# Ministry of Grace Church

## 2 Peter 1:10-15 - Speaker Notes

### *Diligence*

#### Background

Peter opens this section of Scripture with a challenge for us to be diligent in making our calling and election firm. Last week we looked at the Greek word translated “diligent,” noting that it means that we are to use every ounce of effort to do something. This seems to be one of Peter’s current “favorite” words.

We were told last time that we are to put every ounce of effort into building some specific Christian character qualities. These include: faith, morality, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape love.

Do you remember how you felt the day you got saved? Excited? Full of joy? Hopeful and optimistic about your future? Secure? At peace? Relaxed and relieved? Full of life?

So, how does that compare to how you feel today about your walk with God? Are you still excited? Do you still feel full of joy? Are you still hopeful and optimistic about your future? Do you still feel secure? Do you still feel at peace? Are you still relaxed and relieved? Do you still feel full of life?

If you’re like a lot of Christians, the honeymoon is over, the gem has lost its sparkle, the rose has lost its bloom, your vision has become blurred, the paint is faded and chipped. You don’t feel any less saved, but do you feel closer to our awesome, almighty, loving God? Or, maybe, you feel like your life has become enveloped in smoke and you don’t see things as clearly as you once did.

Here’s what Peter says to do about it:

#### 2 Peter 1:10-11

**Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and choosing sure; for in doing these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

In the preceeding verses, Peter talked about the character qualities that all Christians need to develop in order to be mature, and he spoke in verse nine about the consequences of not pursuing these qualities. Those who don’t work hard at developing these qualities actually become less Christ-like and become blinded, unable to see the truth, like they’re walking about in thick smoke, and they become forgetful of the work done to wipe out the

consequences of their sins. **Therefore**, says Peter, work even harder at developing these Christian characteristics.

What does Peter mean by, “**make your calling and choosing sure**”? Is he implying that we can lose our salvation? The word “**sure**” is from “*bebaios*,” meaning “fixed” or “firm.” Figuratively, this word refers to the foundation upon which something is built. Literally, we could translate this word as “foundational,” meaning that upon which other things can be built.

When Peter says to “**make your calling and choosing sure**” he is not questioning the doctrine of election; rather he is affirming it by saying that we are to be diligent in demonstrating the firmness of our calling and election. Some translations follow this with, “**for if you do these things ...**” However, the word “if” is not in the original Greek. Just do them!

We can be sure of our salvation when we build on it with faith, morality, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape love. As we work on developing these things in our life, we know that our lives are becoming more like Jesus, which shows that we are being conformed to the image of God’s son (**Romans 8:29**). However, please take note, these character qualities do not develop on their own. It takes effort on our part. That’s why Peter told us to use every ounce of effort to develop these character qualities. How? By reading and studying His word and applying what we learn to our own lives!

Peter goes on to say, “**for in doing these things, you will never stumble.**” The expression “**you will never stumble**” is translated from *ou me ptaisēte pote*, which literally means, “you will no not stumble, ever.” The double negative, although improper in English, is common in Greek as a way of emphasizing the point. We could translate this as, “for in doing these things there is no way you will ever stumble!”

There has been much debate about what he means by this. But if we look at the next verse, we see that he is talking about our entrance into the everlasting kingdom. In other words, Peter is telling us that as we build on the firm foundation of our salvation, which was made sure by our calling and election, then we will absolutely never lose our salvation, ever!

I know that some of you struggle with the idea of election, that God chooses who gets saved. Not only does it seem to be unfair, but it means that no matter how much you try, you can’t convince someone (perhaps someone in your own family) to get saved. That just doesn’t seem right. But if you believe that God is righteous, that He always does what is right, that He is holy and does not sin (even in choosing some and not others), then you can rest in the fact that He will be correct in the ones He chooses. Now, back to Peter.

He starts off verse eleven with the Greek words *houtōs gar*, which are connective words meaning, “for in this way.” In other words, “having built these character qualities upon the foundation of our calling and election, your entrance into the eternal kingdom ...”

The next two words are wonderfully descriptive. They are, *plousios*, meaning “abundantly” or “copiously,” almost to the point of being excessive, and *epichorēgeō*, which is made up

of *epi*, meaning “over” or “above” and *chorēgeō*, meaning “to furnish, to supply, or to outfit.” Therefore, we will be lavishly outfitted or “dressed” for a very spectacular event. That event is our entrance into the eternal kingdom

Peter has been exhorting us to work diligently to build the previously mentioned Christian character qualities upon the foundation of our calling and election. He said that in doing this, we will never lose our salvation. Peter is now telling us that there will be a future benefit to us as well, if we develop these character qualities.

Before we go on, however, I want to look at an often-misunderstood verse in Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians.

so that He may strengthen your hearts blameless in holiness, before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. (1 Thessalonians 3:13)

Many people interpret this as referring to the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the Tribulation. But is Armageddon going to occur “before” or “in front of” our God and Father? The word translated “before” is *emprosthen*, which literally means “in the presence of,” or “in front of.” I believe that this is not referring to Armageddon, but an event that occurs right after the Bema Seat Judgment.

Scripture tells us that immediately after the rapture of the church, when Christ returns with the departed saints and unites us all with our heavenly bodies, we will appear before the Bema Seat (the Judgment Seat of Christ). This is the believers’ judgment, where we will receive rewards in the form of crowns for the things we have done for Him in this life. The next thing after the Bema Seat Judgment will be the introduction of the saints, the chaste bride of Christ, to Jesus’ Father, the great King of Kings.

You see, part of the Jewish marriage ritual is for the groom to go to the bride’s home and bring her to his father’s house where the groom presents her to his father. This is exactly what will happen to us at the rapture.

We will be lavishly outfitted for our entrance into the eternal kingdom and our presentation to the God of all creation. Peter refers to it as “the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” This will be our celebratory homecoming event.

But let us not lose focus on what Peter is saying in the midst of all this pomp and circumstance. The point he is making in this verse is that what we do on this earth with the life (both the physical life and the spiritual life) which we have been freely given, will have a dramatic future effect on us that is worthy of note.

Some will be ushered into the eternal kingdom with the smell of smoke clinging to them (figuratively speaking) as all their earthly works have been burned-up because they were self-serving instead of God-serving. Others will be ushered into the kingdom lavishly adorned because they have spent their time of sojourning here on this earth in the humble service of their Lord and Savior. These are those who lived this life for the glory of God rather than for their own glory. These are those who have developed the character qualities of faith, morality, knowledge, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness and agape love.

How will you be dressed when you are ushered into the kingdom and appear face-to-face before God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Will you smell of smoke, or will you be richly adorned, wearing a crown that you will later cast at His feet?

## **2 Peter 1:12-15**

**Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been strengthened in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has indicated to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.**

Peter begins verse twelve with another connective word, “therefore.” He told us that we need to develop the Christian character qualities of faith, morality, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape love and that in developing these we become fruitful, we maintain our spiritual vision, we become stabilized on the foundation, and we affirm our genuine salvation. He also told us that developing these will cause us to receive a splendid entrance into the presence of the King. Therefore, Peter is compelled to continually remind us of these truths.

Obviously, he thinks that there is great importance in developing these qualities. That is why he has used such strong language in urging us to work hard on them and why he gives such evidence of their effect on us. He tells the infant church of his day that he personally will not be negligent in constantly reminding them (and us) of these things. It is not that Peter thinks we have not yet learned what he has told us. In fact, he makes it clear that he knows that these truths have already been learned.

In other words, Peter is saying that he believes his readers have already worked hard at developing these character qualities in themselves, having perceived their importance, and having become firmly established, not in the past but “**in the truth which is present with you.**” There is some disagreement as to exactly what Peter is referring to by this expression. Either it refers to all the truth that has been learned from God’s holy Word, or it is a specific reference to the gospel truth, the truth in which we were saved. Whichever it is, Peter wants to make sure that it is constantly taught and re-taught so that we will be firmly grounded in it.

It is incumbent on us all, not just preachers, to constantly remind each other of the importance of things that we have already learned. Not so much because we forget, but because the cares of this life, the things of the world, and our own sin nature cloud our memory, blind our vision like thick smoke, and distract us from our mission.

There is something remarkable in the simplicity of this message. Peter has already made a couple of references to the fact that he is going to die soon (physically), and he makes reference to it again here. Yet he is neither without hope nor without purpose. The race is nearly done for him, and he is not easing up at all. Instead, he is ever mindful that he still has work to do, and he has found a way to continue that work even after his departure.

Here is a demonstration of true love. In his final days in this life, Peter is more concerned about what he can still do to help other Christians than he is about himself. He even wants to leave something behind which will continue to edify Christians after he is gone.

He has spent the better part of this letter urging us all to continue to work hard at developing Christian character. Peter knows the importance of not slacking in this endeavor, and he is leading by example. This is not some kind of theological positioning by Peter, nor is he simply pontificating. This is the real deal to him. He is so convinced of his position in Christ, he is so aware of what his God has done for him and what God expects of him, that he will not ease up until the race is finished.

Peter says that he, himself, “will make every effort” to do these things. Peter’s mind was fixed on the work that God had called him to do. He was not looking to retire and he was not looking to ease up until his departure. He even wanted his work to continue on after his departure.

### **So What?**

Perhaps you have been taught that if you commit certain kinds of sins you will lose your salvation. According to Peter, however, if you are demonstrating your salvation by developing these character qualities, it is proof that you are saved, and you will never ever lose your salvation. Therefore --

Let our ears not become deaf! Let our minds not become cloudy! Let us not be caught asleep on the watch! Rather, let us purpose in our hearts to stay awake and work diligently, for the time is fleeting, our life is short, and He is coming soon!

When you reach death’s door will you be ready to calmly lay aside this tired, wornout body and head into eternity? Or will you finally realize that you could have done much more if your focus had been on God instead of yourself? It’s not too late! We still have time, so let’s get to work for God and for His glory!

Are you busy right now working for our Lord, or are you working for yourself? Do you even know what God wants you to be doing? If not, then get on your knees and ask Him. Then, let us all be like Peter, continually working our hardest for God and His glory, right up until we take our last breath! Then, we shall be ushered into the presence of the King, arrayed in our finest, prepared to cast our crowns at his feet because He is worthy!

Let us never get to the point where we think we know all there is to know about living a victorious Christian life. No matter how much we know about the Bible and our faith, we can always learn more. We all need continual refresher courses in living a life committed to our faith and submitted to our God. We need to keep encouraging each other to “stay the course” because we haven’t much time left.

Peter is aware that he is being rather forceful in his admonition to us all regarding the necessity of Christian growth and maturity. He has used very strong words to urge us on in this regard, but he is not apologetic regarding his words. He says that it is right for him to do this. He believes that he has a responsibility to be constantly reminding us all to be continually working on becoming more mature in our Christian experience.

Specifically, Peter feels that he is obliged to stir up our memory. We all have a tendency to get lazy and careless regarding our walk with the Lord, and Peter feels compelled, as we all should, to grab us by the shoulder and wake us up. He does so by reminding us of those things that we already know.

Peter also knows that his time on this earth is coming to an end, and he feels a necessity to do as much as he can in the time he has left. When we were young, we had our whole lives ahead of us, and there was not much of a sense of urgency to do what we knew we should be doing. As we got older, we realized that time was passing us by, and time that has passed cannot be made up. As we recognize God's calling on our life and realize how much He has done for us, we feel more compelled to work hard for Him in the things He expects from us. As the end of our life approaches, we become acutely aware that this life is transient, and only what is done for God has any real lasting value.

That's where Peter is right now. He wants to make the most of his remaining days by constantly reminding us to work hard for the One who has given His life for us. Life here on earth is short and temporary. What we do during this time, however, will have eternal consequences.

Peter knew that the time of his death was drawing near. The type of death he would die was prophesied by Christ some 30 years earlier ([John 21:18,19](#)). On the surface it seems that this is all Peter had to say in today's verse. But - as is often the case with Scripture, if we are in a hurry when we read, we dash right past some nuggets on the way. This nugget is what Peter refers to as his tent or his tabernacle. He knows that this body is temporary, and the time spent in it is fleeting. But he is ready to calmly and confidently lay it aside and walk into eternity. He's not looking at death, he's looking at eternity with Christ. Remember, this is not our real life, it's only the audition for the real life ahead.

One day in the future we too will put off this temporary dwelling place as we end our audition and pass through the gates that lead from this earthly life to eternal life. It is both an end and a beginning, the end of our time on this earth and the beginning of glory in the presence of the Lord. When we walk through those gates, we will be able to look back and see whether it has been a life of service (the production of eternal rewards) or a life of emptiness (time wasted that could have been used for God's glory), which Solomon called "vanity."

Are you ready for your audition to be over, or do you still have more to do for Him?

My final words in this message to you are: "Let's get to work. He is coming soon!"

Let's pray.