

2 Peter

2) An Abundant Life and An Abundant Welcome

'But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love'

(2 Pet.1:5-7)

- ✓ **'For this reason', i.e. because His divine power has given to us all things for life and godliness**
- ✓ **Peter does not ask us to do anything until he has told us what God has done for us in Christ. Before there can be any activity there has to be life**
- ✓ **In the Greek it is clear that one characteristic is developed in the exercise of another. *'Out of your faith add virtue...'* We can only work out what God has worked in, Phil.2:13**
- ✓ **The life God gives is spontaneous, though not automatic**

✓ **Virtue, i.e. excellence. From the Greek word *arete*. It refers to the fulfillment of a person or thing's full potential or intended function. The excellence of a human being is to bring glory to God**

✓ **Jesus was a man 'par excellence'. He fulfilled humanity excellently**

✓ **The new man in Christ excels the old man in Adam**

✓ **Compare the fruit of the false teachers in chapter 2**

✓ **Knowledge - Not zeal without knowledge. Peter's own past example**

✓ **Self-control – handling pleasures. Example:** *'I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion' (1 Cor.7:9).* **The Gnostics claimed that knowledge released them from the need of self-control,** *'Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you"' (Acts 24:25)*

✓ **Perseverance – handling pressures. If self-control is the ability to bring pleasures under control, perseverance is the ability to cope with trying circumstances and trying people**

✓ **Godliness - i.e. Godlikeness**

✓ **Brotherly kindness – true godliness cannot exist without brotherly kindness, 'If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?' (1 John 4:20)**

✓ **Love – Brotherly kindness should be reciprocal. Agape loves all, even the unlovely, without expectation of love in return. This is the essence of the divine nature**

- ✓ **Agape** desires the highest good of others, and manifests itself in sacrificial action, *'By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren'* (1 Jn.3:16)
- ✓ This is the climax of the Christian life. Christianity begins with faith and grows to completion with love. *'But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection'* (Col.3:14)

***'For if these things are yours and abound,
you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the
knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ'***

(2 Pet.1:8)

- ✓ **These are not the products of human endeavor, but of the life of God already in us. Each quality is resident in the new nature**
- ✓ **This is a picture of the abundant life we have in Christ**
- ✓ **They are in us, and if they abound in us we will be neither barren (idle, passive, inactive, lazy) nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ**

'For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins'

(2 Pet.1:9)

- ✓ **Peter does not question the salvation of the one who lacks these things. He has already said they possess the same faith as he and the other apostles. And here he says that they have been cleansed from their sins**
- ✓ **Nowhere in the NT is a believer who is struggling with sin told to question their salvation. That would not help them. Only unsaved, religious Pharisees get (false) assurance this way, (Luke 18:9-14)**

- ✓ **Negatively, one who does not grow in the Christian life is short-sighted and blind**

- ✓ **How can a person be short-sighted and blind at the same time?**
 - **Short-sighted = only seeing this life**
 - **Blind = no vision for the coming kingdom**

- ✓ **Our Christian walk includes first, a constant looking back to the greatness of His redeeming love in lifting us out of our sin and the kingdom of darkness; and second, a looking forward to the glorious kingdom which awaits us**

'Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble'

(2 Pet.1:10)

- ✓ **Our calling and election here do not refer to salvation, but to our position in the coming kingdom, as the next verse makes clear**
- ✓ ***'Never stumble'* is a picture of a march. We will never fall out of the march and be left behind**

'...for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ'

(2 Pet.1:11)

- ✓ **The word translated 'supplied' is the same word in v.5 translated 'add'. The spontaneous result of an abundant life in Christ is an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**
- ✓ **All the NT writers spoke of the inheritance of believers in terms of a 'kingdom', (*basileia* meaning rule or reign)**

- ✓ **This is a prominent theme of the NT, and we are often reminded of it for our encouragement**
- ✓ **For example, Peter, Paul, James and John referred to the privilege of our inheritance as receiving a crown**
- ✓ ***'Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life'* (Rev.2:10)**
- ✓ ***'Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown'* (Rev.3:11)**

- ✓ **They also spoke of reigning with Christ, 'If we endure, we shall also reign with Him' (2 Tim.2:12)**
- ✓ **'And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth' (Rev.5:10)**
- ✓ **'I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them' (Rev.20:4)**

- ✓ **There are two kinds of entrance into the kingdom, as seen in the New Testament**
- ✓ **For example, Paul gave the following warning to the Corinthians, concerning those who were teaching worldly wisdom and human philosophy (flesh), and those who were building their lives on these teachings...**

'According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire'

(1 Cor.3:10-15)

- ✓ **But others will receive a rich and abundant welcome. To these Christ will say, *'Well done!'* (Matt.25:21)**
- ✓ **God made us with the need for approval – His approval. The less spiritual we are, the more we will seek man's approval, and the more we will be affected by criticism. The more spiritual we are the more we will live for His, *'Well done!'***
- ✓ **The meaning behind an 'abundant entrance' was a choral entrance. The idea was of a Roman conqueror coming into his city, welcomed by singers and musicians who would join him in a glorious, happy procession into the city**