

Title: Confirming Your Calling (Part 5)

Passage: 2 Peter 1:6b-7

Theme Growing in the knowledge of grace demonstrates the reality of grace

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Next year (2011) will mark two anniversaries for me

[a] Month of May will mark 30 years since I graduated. from H.S.

Makes me feel a more than a little old. I look at it this way: when I grad. in 1981, t/class then celebrating it's 30 yr reunion was t/class of 1951. That would have seemed like ages ago from my perspective back then. Well, for a teen who's going to be t/class of 2011, 1981 sounds to them like 1951 sounded (and still sounds) to me!

[b] The 2nd anniversary date is integral to who I am today

Mo. of Oct.r next yr will mark 30 yrs since I came to believe in JC as my L & S.

I was raised in RCC. I re-devoted myself to t/CH my Jr. yr. Like millions of others, t/peace that comes from new life in X eluded me. It wasn't until t/HS convicted of me of my sin & utter inability to ever be right B4 God on t/basis of my works & supposed "graces" of t/RCC.

So in Oct. of that year I was very literally born again by t/Spirit of God & understood for t/first time in my life what t/Gospel really was.

[ii] In nearly 30 years of living the Christian life I've seen much

I now see myself as becoming a grizzled veteran of t/faith. I bear some of t/grey hairs, scars, & battle wounds that come w/pursuing X.

Theologically I've made grown from a semi-pelagian to a rather robust Calvinist; from a dispensationalist to one who views those sorts of systems as all-too-often an altar upon which men sacrifice truth.

Over 3 decades I've witnessed scores of men & women default from t/true faith to doctrines of devils. APOSTASY. As t/years continue to click away t/apostasy increases all around us--even as t/Evang. CH decreases in it's commitment to truth.

Today, as much as ever, every person who claims justification by grace alone thru faith alone in X alone needs to be certain of their calling & election.

We see a chain of 7 virtues in this passage – virtues that serve to confirm whether a professor of X is really a possessor of X.

And I can't think of any 2 virtues more closely related to a sure calling and election than perseverance and love.

That's where we land this morning.

We began in verses 3-4 ==>

I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)

A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)

[It is by Christ's] **divine power** [that we have been granted] **everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)

We're talking in terms of being "fruitful." Cf. v. 8.

A. We talked about how this passage unfolds – note the connection (how verse 5 begins)

Now for this very reason also . . .

Points back to vv 3-4. IOW - We see our responsibility to be diligent & to exercise virtues like moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, love– But those virtues have to spring from a heart transformed by grace.

"For this very reason also" ==> Because Xt has given you everything they need for life and godliness // He called you to life while you were dead in your sin // He made you a partaker of t/divine nature ==>

Now for this very reason also, apply all diligence . . .

A. Faithfulness Demonstrated Through Seven Virtues (5-7)

There are 7 virtues that are to flow out of a healthy, genuine faith. That itself is born out of God's power & grace. We don't seek to be Xns by adding virtues to our lives; we live virtuously because we are regenerate.

1. We have a chain or a ladder of 7 virtues

That chain comes in t/form of a literary device => "sorites" (σωρητις). It's a written argument formed by taking t/predicate of 1 statement & making it the subject of t/next statement.

We noted that this is common in ancient Jewish Literature (I gave you an example from the Mishnah). Another example is take right from t/NT: Rom. 5:3-5 **3** ...we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; **4** and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; **5** and hope does not disappoint...

Similar thing here in 2 Peter ==> **5** moral excellence > knowledge > **6** knowledge > self-control > self control > perseverance > persverance > godliness **7** godliness > brotherly kindness > brotherly kindness > love.

It is a chain of virtues that leads, step by step, to a crowning virtue. In Romans 5 ==> HOPE. Here in 2 Peter ==> LOVE.

1. Moral Excellence (5)

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence . . .

a. ἀρετή

Excellence or goodness in a moral or ethical sense. As partakers of t/divine nature, believers are to demonstrate moral excellence in their lives—the same kind of ethical goodness that characterized JC.

2. Knowledge (5)

. . . and in [your] moral excellence knowledge;

a. γινωσις – NASB translates "true knowledge"

That was something t/false teachers who Peter addresses didn't have. 2:12 ==> false teachers had no true knowledge (ἀγνοέω - have no understanding).

3. Self control (6)

. . . and in [your] knowledge, self control . . .

Self mastery. This is to exercise dominion over one's desires and actions.

That brings us to where we left off last time.

4. Perseverance (6)

... and in [your] self control, perseverance . . .

a. Common word: ὑπομονη - from ὑπο + μονη (from μενω)

In general contexts it was used of the endurance necessary to win an athletic context or even a war. But in the NT its focus is spiritual in nature. The endurance necessary to finish the race which is the Xn life.

Chrysostom called it, "The queen of the virtues." [cited in Barclay]

William Barclay ==>

"In the Authorized Version it is usually translated *patience*; but *patience* is too passive a word. *Hupomone* has always a background of courage. Cicero defines *patientia*, its Latin equivalent, as 'The voluntary and daily suffering of hard and difficult things, for the sake of honour and usefulness.' . . . *Hupomone* does not simply accept and endure; there is always a forward look in it. It is said of Jesus, by the writer to the Hebrews, that for the joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2). That is *hupomone*, Christian steadfastness. It is the courageous acceptance of everything that life can do to us and the transmuting of even the worst event into another step on the upward way." [Barclay, 303]

b. This isn't only bearing under trials and sufferings (perseverance)

Greater context is remaining true to t/once for all delivered faith (false teachers). In that regard, this virtue parallels what we refer to in theology as "The Perseverance of the Saints."

(1) Reformed Scholar Louis Berkof ==>

"The continuous activity of God within the believer whereby the work of grace that was begun in the heart is brought to final completion."

Implicit in that definition is t/contention that the true Xn will continue in t/faith. IOW - He or she will not permanently or finally fall away. The true Xn won't depart from t/truth.

(2) Perseverance is not the same thing as Eternal Security

ES is a subset of Pers. IOW - if you believe in Pers. you uphold ES, but not everyone who upholds ES believes in Pers.

(a) "What's the difference?"

There are those (I encountered many of them in Xn College & Sem.) who say that since salvation is all of grace, works are never a part of it, even as a fruit of saving faith. Therefore, repentance is only a change of mind and once someone believes he or she may or may not continue in the faith. Regardless, because salvation is all of grace, that person will be saved in t/end.

(b) For example ==>

Popular SB preacher Charles Stanley writes in his book "E.S." that >> "The Bible clearly teaches that God's love for His people is of such magnitude that even those who walk away from the faith have not the slightest chance of slipping from His hand." [74]

Those who "walk away from the faith"?!

That wasn't what TAJ thought. He identified those who "walked away from the faith" as false brethren, not true believers:

They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19).

i. There is a faith that does not save.

That IS clear. Spurious faith. That this non-saving faith exists is repeatedly affirmed by the authors of the NT. Therefore, there is no warrant to conclude that when the Bible speaks of falling away it must be a defection from genuine belief.

As D.A. Carson notes: "John presupposes that spurious faith is possible, but that genuine faith, *by definition*, perseveres."

Yet, like so many others who have bought into this false theology, Stanley isn't opposed to using the words "unbelieving" and "Xn" in the same breath:

"Christ will not deny an unbelieving Christian his or her salvation because to do so would be to deny Himself." [94]

Hebrews 10:39 **But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

1 Peter 1:4-5 **4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Standley follows his mentor, the late NT professor at DTS Zane Hodges in devising Protestant Purgatory from Matt. 25.

Jesus' parable of the Talents. Parable was about faithfulness. The faithfulness of a believers vs. the faithlessness of a false professor. What happens to t/faithless slave at the end of t/parable?

30 "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"The final verse of this parable is so severe that many commentators assume it is a description of hell. It is not. To be in the "outer darkness" is to be in the kingdom of God but outside the circle of men and women whose faithfulness on this earth earned them a special rank or position of authority. Just as those who are found faithful will rejoice, so those who suffer loss will weep. As some are celebrated for their faithfulness, others will gnash their teeth in frustration over their own shortsightedness and greed." [124,126-27]

26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave...'"

(c) May be no more disastrous teaching to the health of the church

==> decisional regeneration & this bare-bones understanding of E.S. They are related. Decisional regeneration – t/idea that you can manipulate someone into making a decision for X & once they've said t/magic words, they're in! Doesn't matter if they follow X. In fact, it doesn't matter if they continue to believe in Him!

James Boice's words, written a few decades ago, are as relevant today as they were then ==>

"It is a tragic error. It is the idea--where did it ever come from?--that one can be a Christian without being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reduces the gospel to the mere fact of Christ's having died for sinners, requires of sinners only that they acknowledge this by the barest intellectual assent, and then assures them of their eternal security when they may very well not be born again. This view bends faith beyond recognition--at least for those who know what the Bible says about faith--and promises a false peace to thousands who have given verbal assent to this reductionist Christianity but are not truly in God's family."

[James Montgomery Boice, from the Foreword to *The Gospel According to Jesus*, by John MacArthur]

(d) There is a profession of faith that falls short of regeneration

Like I've said before, a profession is like baptism. Your baptism doesn't save you & your profession of faith doesn't save you. Your profession, your baptism are only as good as the reality of your salvation.

Lots of people profess things that are not in their hearts. Talk can be cheap.

i. But, for those who truly believe ==>

Those who are born again by God's grace – they will continue in that faith by which they were saved.

Westminster Confession of Faith: "They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." (chapt. 17, sect. 1).

Does not mean that Xns may & do sin & fail, miserably sometimes. The Westminster Confession also says:

"Nevertheless [believers] may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein; whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgements upon themselves." [Section 3]

Those who are truly believers God will discipline so that they repent & become fruitful once again. Acc. to bibl. doct. of persev. there's no such thing as a fruitless Xn. - not totally.

May be periods when it doesn't seem like there's much fruit, but even then, God as the vinedresser (John 15) lifts & prunes t/vine so that t/believer becomes fruitful once again.

Even in Jn. 15 - the mark of t/true believer is distinguished from that of a false believer by way of fruitfulness and perseverance.

6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 8 "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

IOW - Our pers. in t/faith ensures our salv. in that our persev. in t/faith demonstrates that we are truly redeemed.

The finality of our salvation, our glorification is reached by t/path of perseverance.

1 Peter 1:5 . . . protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

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

e. Perseverance is a gift of God's grace

P. is "The Response of t/Redeemed based upon t/Grace of t/Redeemer."

It echos t/promise given thru Jeremiah==>

Jeremiah 32:40 “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.”

Phil. 2:12-13 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Here you have divine preservation and human perseverance. We persevere by virtue of God’s effective preservation.

(1) Perseverance is both a gift and a responsibility

God’s grace insures our persevering, but does not make it any less our p. We cannot acquire "t/prize of t/upward call of God in CJ" unless we "press on toward t/goal" (Phil. 3:14). But as we "work out our salv. with F&T" (Phil. 2:12), we will find that it is "God who is at work in us, both to will & work for His good pleasure" (2:13).

"See how foreign it is from the truth to deny that perseverance even to the end of this life is the gift of God. . . . He makes the man to persevere to the end." [Augustine, On the Gift of Perseverance, 41]

"If I am a Christian I must persevere; If I am a Christian I will persevere."

P. is not t/cause of salv., but t/result of it. Not: I don’t know if I am saved because I don’t know if I will p. I know that I am saved because I am persevering. My confidence is in X & continues to be in X.

What does it mean when someone claims to be a Xn & later departs from the truth? It means they didn't have t/gift of perseverance. Why

didn't they have t/gift of perseverance? Because they didn't possess t/gift of salvation.

f. You can see how relevant this is in light of Peter's audience.

Cf. 1:12; Chapter 2.

This message is so relevant today. The contemporary American CH is beset with 2 plagues. Both begin w/the letter "A."

(1) Apathy

Apathy is another word for indifference. CH's are filled w/people who are indifferent to t/things of X. There's no joy in serving Him; No passion for His Word. The allure of the world has greater power and sway in their lives than does the beauty of X.

(2) Apostasy

To be apostate is to depart from the truth. You can depart from t/truth by becoming an atheist or agnostic // by embracing a pagan religion // retaining t/title "Xn" while at t/same time denying cardinal doctrines of t/faith (sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura).

It seems like today where we don't have Apathy we have Apost. and where we don't have Apost. we have Apathy.

Make certain about His calling and choosing you!

applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in [your] moral excellence knowledge; and in [your] knowledge, self control; and in [your] self control, perseverance . . .

... and in [your] perseverance, godliness;

5. Godliness (6)

a. εὐσεβία = same word we saw in verse 3

That connection to v. 3 cont. to reinforce the fact that this is all of grace. God has given to us, by his grace, everything pertaining to life and εὐσεβία (godliness). Therefore, we are to reflect in our lives that which God has graced us in our nature.

(1) The word is especially common in the Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Tim.

Titus)

Used in the context of living a life that pleases God. The "godly" life is a God-honoring life. Something that's connected w/sound doctrine or truth.

1TI 6:3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

TIT 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness

We're brought back to knowledge. A true knowledge of God and His Word. Cf. connection in 1:3.

6. Brotherly kindness (7)

... and in [your] godliness, brotherly kindness,

a. Verse 7 - we're almost to the top of the list!

b. φιλαδέλφια = brotherly love, brotherly kindness

Perhaps better rendered "brotherly affection." "Fraternal love."

This was a word that was generally used of the natural affection shared among members of the same family.

That Peter uses this word in a Xn context isn't unique. It's the way he uses it that is. This isn't t/love and affection shared among blood relatives; it's the love and affection shared among spiritual relatives. That was unique.

This is the transforming nature of the Gospel. It makes men of different races and classes one. One family in t/HS of God.

Jew/Gk./Man/Woman/Slave/Free/Rich/Poor.

Goes against the grain of 1st c. culture.

Family was everything.

Yet, here is a bond that consists of a spiritual glue that out-adheres genetic relationships.

So much so that members of a crowd could point out Jesus' mother and brothers and he could yet call those gathered around him his mother and brothers.

MAR 3:35 "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

MAT 10:34-37 34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 "For I came to \set a man

against his father\, \and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law\; 36 and \a man's enemies will be the members of his household\.

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Several times in the NT we are exhorted to greet one another with a holy or loving kiss. This was normally a greeting reserved for members of one's family.

We love one another as family. We bear w/one another as family. We forgive one another as family. We sacrifice for one another as family.

In the first few centuries of t/Xn church the pagans despised Xns for their treating ea. other as family.

Tertullian, Apology 39 "But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another, for themselves are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves will sooner be put to death. And they are wroth with us, too, because we call each other berthren [we] are called and counted brothers who have been led to the knowledge of God as their common Father, who have drunk in one spirit of holiness, who from the same womb of a common ignorance have agonized into the same light of truth! But on this very account, perhaps, we are regarded as having claim to be held true brothers, that no tragedy makes a noise about our brotherhood, or that the family possessions, which generally destroy brotherhood among you, create fraternal bonds among us. One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us but our wives" [182-83]

Doesn't it make sense that those who are not only adopted as sons, but born again by the Spirit should be one as a spiritual family?

I am often disgusted by t/shallowness of love that Xns demonstrate. We flit from CH to CH like bees among wild-flowers. As soon as t/nector runs dry in one place, we go on to t/next.

My parents church back in AZ..... We love ea. other – until we become disappointed. Then we part. We still say we love this person or that person. But if we look deep down there's little affection but much disdain.

7. Love (7)

. . . and in [your] godliness, brotherly kindness, and in [your] brotherly kindness, love.

a. Here's the apex of the sorites

The top rung of the Christian ladder of virtues. No surprise is it?

13:1 IF I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails;

This is the consequence of partaking in the divine nature! Of being born again!

ROM 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

COL 3:14 And beyond all these things {put on} love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

HEB 13:1 Let love of the brethren continue.

1PE 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

Among believers there are few things I abhor more than pettiness and unforgiveness. Those are sins that can literally destroy a CH and bring great reproach on t/name of X.

I cannot understand how one who has been forgiven so much can withhold forgiveness for another. One who has been forgiven by a thrice holy God who in sin wades in petty resentment toward another.

1JO 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

And even then we learn to 'sanitize' our contempt of others, do we not? I've been convicted of this lately. I can be cordial toward those who, deep down, I have qualified as unregenerate, immature, unsound in doctrine. In my depravity it's hard sometimes to unscrew t/truth from

sinful attitudes. That person may be unregenerate/immature/bad theol.
But I am to pray for that person have have compassion upon them.

Psa. 139:24 **Try me; see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the everlasting way.**

A. Faithfulness Demonstrated Through Seven Virtues (5-7)

1. Moral Excellence (5)
2. Knowledge (5)
3. Self control (6)
4. Perseverance (6)
5. Godliness (6)
6. Brotherly kindness (7)
7. Love (7)

Verse 8 . . .