

Title: Confirming Your Calling (Part 9)

Passage: 2 Peter 1:10

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

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{{Read Passage}}

We make our way to the last two verses of this passage, vv. 10-11

Note how the text has unfolded ==>

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

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

Fruitfulness (or the evidences of genuine saving faith) is grounded in the Believer's Inher. (or Salvation's Sufficiency). As we saw back in v. 3 this comes by God's grace.

So we're not talking about some kind of "works salvation" but rather a "salvation that works"

So you have to begin at step 1 (point I) before you can get to step 2 (point II). Only then, can you get to step # ==>

III. Salvation's Surety: The Believer's Assurance (10-11)

That's the order (do you have an inheritance in t/Gospel of grace; have you truly been called....) > Is that evident in your life? Growing?

There's no assurance of salvation apart from God's grace, saving faith, and fruitfulness.

That's why we have t/warning in vv. 8-9 (last time).

B. Staying Out of the Danger Zone (8-9)

1. A Positive Exhortation (v. 8)

For if these things are yours and are increasing, they make you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(πλεοναζω = abounding / multiplying) – t/evidences of grace in your life should be like breeding rabbits!

2. A Negative Warning (v. 9)

For he who is lacking these is blind or shortsighted, being forgetful of the purification of his former sins.

Peter's switch from the plural in v. 8 to the singular "He who" implies that he's speaking hypothetically.

He has t/apostates of chap 2 in mind who would have professed X at their baptism; who would have made a break w/the world, but like a dog, they returned to their own vomit (that is, they went back to t/world, 2:22). But also this verse serves as a warning to Xns whose walk has come to a crawl.

The warning for the believer is that dullness in living t/Xn life is tantamount to spiritual myopia. It's to receive forgetfulness when it comes to t/blessed Cross-work of X.

And to wallow in that, or turn backwards, is to evidence that one was never truly converted in the first place.

Last week I mentioned a man I briefly knew, Ken Pullium, who died very suddenly last month. Ken had gone from a professed fundamentalist Xn, pastor and theologian to an avowed atheist-agnostic.

He became an authority of sorts on the subject of "Deconversion." His blog answered the ? >> "Why he de-converted from Christianity."

Tributes to Ken on the internet are replete with accolades from fans who laud him for helping them through their "De-conversion."

Of course, from our perspective, we ask *"Was this person ever converted in the first place?"* Theologically, we would say "no." Or it may have been an external conversion to t/religion of Christianity that was devoid of t/inward regeneration of true Christianity.

But here is where systematic theology at times bumps heads w/exegesis. It's an apparent bumping, not a real one. WIMBT - We are so caught up in maintaining our systematic integrity that we find no place for what to us are tensions. Election and Responsibility // Warnings and Assurance // Sovereignty and Evangelism // Providence and Sorrow.

Warnings against disbelief and falling away from t/Living God are given to believers as a means to keep them in the race. When someone falls into disbelief they, and only they, are responsible. It's not God's fault; they have been duly warned.

And we have to keep in mind that this isn't all binary. Black and White. Yes or No. Hot or Cold. There are gradients of unbelief. In fact, even t/best Xn harbors slivers of disbelief in his heart.

Why else would we waste so much time on t/trivial when eternity hangs in the balance? Why else would we trust in our own understanding and wisdom rather than in the One who alone can direct our paths?

Over the past few yeas as Gold prices have soared so have attempts to create fraudulent gold coins and gold bars. One trick is to fabricate gold bars using tungsten as a core with gold plating added. Tungsten and gold have a nearly identical density and even banks have been duped, losing millions of dollars on gold-covered tungsten bars. In the final analysis, that which would appear genuine fails the tests and is proven to be counterfeit.

No one walks around with a lump of coal trying to pass it off as gold. The lines between the two are clearly drawn. That's an illustration of t/apostate. Apostates don't look like real Xns and can't be passed off as one.

But there are others who are counterfeit Xns and look a lot like the real thing. Like the fake gold, they have a covering, a veneer of Xnty that hides what's really inside. They're not going to deny X, not openly. They're going to say they are all for Jesus. They are going to affirm in their heads their Xn orthodoxy.

They may be good counterfeits and they may be poor ones. Some are a clear mixture of t/sacred and profane. They are just "Xn" enough to get by and just "worldly" enough to satisfy their carnality. They attempt to dine with angels and demons.

These are in every bit as much danger of hell as the most hardened apostate. With the apostate, at least we know where he stands. There are times I want to say to some professed Xns, *"Get off the fence! If you're*

a follower of X, then follow him. Stop claiming him with your lips while denying him with your life!"

What Paul writes of the Jews is true for so many with a dirty profession:
For **“THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,”**

These cautions are so relevant in our day when Xnty has been trivialized by, of all things, the church.

So we come to verse 10 ==>

Therefore, brethren, be diligent to make your calling and election sure, for in doing these things you will never fall.

III. Salvation's Surety: The Believer's Assurance (10-11)

We're going to ask 4 questions as it relates to these 2 vv. – 4 ?s that relate specifically to a sure calling and election.

A. Being Certain About Your Calling and Election

1. What Does It Mean? (v. 10)

... make your calling and election sure . . .

[**make certain about His calling and choosing you, NASB**]

First we have to ask ==>

a. What are "calling" and "election"?

If we're to be sure about these things as they relate to us as believers, we have to know what they mean.

(1) Calling (Greek noun κλησις)

Simple definition: "God's act of bringing the sinner to salvation."

(a) It is both sovereign & effective

Sovereign: John 6:44; Effective: Rom. 11:29.

It is wholly the work of God as the Holy Spirit opens hearts and minds to believe the Gospel.

(2) Election (Greek noun ἐκλογή)

Simple definition: "God's choice of the sinner unto eternal life."

(a) Election is pre-temporal

It occurs outside of time.

As such it is as aspect of God's eternal decree. Eph. 1:4.

Before anything or anyone was ever created; God determined that he would save certain ones whom he had yet to create, and that He would send X to die on their behalf.

Election is eternal; Calling is temporal (calling happens in time).

Calling is grounded in election (Not the other way around)

b. There is one article governing two nouns

"The calling and election"

Calling and election are viewed as a unit, not separate.

Calling is grounded in election. Both are God's sovereign work.

God will call to faith every single person that He has ordained to be recipients of his grace.

Romans 8:29-30 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

2 Thess. 2:13-14 pulls it all together (turn there) ==>

13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, [why?] because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation [election] through sanctification by the Spirit [calling] and faith in the truth. [what does God use to call us?] 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Being Certain About Your Calling and Election

1. What Does It Mean? (v. 10)

It means that all of those who profess to be followers of JC are to be sure that they are among the called and chosen.

c. We don't cause our salvation

We can't birth ourselves spiritually any more than we can physically. But we can examine ourselves to be sure we are in the faith.

(1) We don't cause our salvation but that doesn't mean we're not responsible when it comes to belief or disbelief

When we read warnings such as those found here in 2 Peter or elsewhere like the book of Hebrews, we take those to heart.

Beware lest there be in any one of you a disbelieving heart in falling away from the living God. We are responsible to that!

God calls the sinner to salvation because he has elected him from eternity. Yet, we are to be sure about our calling and election.

This has nothing to do with turning the hand of God's providence, as if we were in charge of the eternal decree. It has everything to do with being assured of where you are. If you are a believer, to be assured of that. If you are not, if you are counterfeit Xns, to be sure of that—and to repent of your pretensions at being a Christian.

The worldliness of the today's American Church is astounding. There are millions who claim to love Jesus all the while their mouths and hearts are filled with the things of the world. They have a paper Savior, an emasculated God in their own image stripped of his Lordship. They go to fun churches where their sin is never addressed. They're never exhorted as to the demands of Christ. They're not warned that they may not be in the faith at all. Many, if not most, wouldn't tolerate that sort of message.

B. How Do We Do It? (v. 10)

1. I think we've been answering that question all along – but let me give you some guidelines

a. First the responsibility is ours and ours alone

. . . make your calling and election sure . . .

The word "make" is a present middle infinitive. Reflexive. "make for yourself"

This isn't something someone else can do. Other's can't say "*Oh, I know you're a true Christian.*" That can be dangerous. How do you know?

I'm not saying that there isn't a time to encourage the doubting, but in the final analysis it's not your responsibility.

Yet, what do we do? We tell people we know they're saved because we saw them do what? Make a decision. "*I was there when he walked the aisle to be saved?*" "*I was there when he prayed the prayer.*"

Parents give their children, even grown children, false assurance in this way all the time.

George Whitefield, the great 18th c. Evangelist ==>

"There are so many stony ground hearers who receive the Word with joy that I have determined to suspend my judgment till I know the tree by its fruits. Do you think any farmer would have crop of corn next year unless he plowed now? You may as well expect a crop of corn on unplowed ground as a crop of grace until he soul is convinced of its being undone without a Savior. That's the reason we have so many mushroom converts, so many persons that are always happy! happy! happy! and never were miserable. Why? Because their stony ground is not plowed up; they have not got a conviction of the law ... they fall away ... That makes me so cautious now, which I was not thirty years ago, of dubbing converts too soon. Now I wait a little, and see if people bring forth fruit; for there are so many blossoms which March winds blow away that I cannot believe they are converts till I see fruit brought forth."

The Xn life isn't a decision it's a direction. The emphasis isn't as much on how you started the race as it is how you're running it.

b. Second, it takes diligence

Therefore, brethren, be diligent to make your calling and election sure . . .

The word implies zeal, diligence, effort. Imperative.

Same word is used in 2 Tim. 2:15 ==>

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

We've already seen the noun form in verse 5.

"It is a term for zeal, effort, and the expenditure of energy. For example, Timothy is to make an effort to come before winter (2 Tim 4:21), and, more to the point. Christians are to make effort to enter into God's rest in Heb 4:11 or to keep the unity of the spirit in Eph 4:3. Thus this term indicates making something a high priority for which one will expend physical or moral effort." [Davids, 187]

We don't take this lightly. We're diligent when it comes to being sure we're in the faith.

HEB 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end.

c. Third point – We can be sure!

This isn't a call to despair or doubt! It's not to be zealous because we can't know; it's to be zealous because we can!

There are those who believe that assurance of salvation is not possible. Among them are both Arminians and Calvinists.

It's not only possible, it's commanded – Here!

... be diligent to make your calling and election sure ...

A legal term in Gk. lit. referring to something that is valid, ratified, or confirmed.

d. Fourth - Take note of the context

(1) What's the first word?

Therefore, be diligent ...

This connects verse 10 to the rest of the passage. It's another way of saying, "In light of what I've just said."

In light of what I've just said ==>

... be diligent to make your calling and election sure, for in doing these things you will never fall.

It goes back to the beginning of the passage in verse 3

{{overview the context of vv. 3-9}}

Note the foundation of "faith" as the starting point v. 5.

"This is the admonition which Peter gives to us who believe, to agitate and perform those works by which we shall in this one conviction, namely, that faith alone justifies. Where this then is present, there works must follow." [Luther, 240]

Next week I'm going to wrap it all up with a final message, "Towards a Theology of Assurance" — what does it mean to be sure of our salvation and what is the basis for our assurance?

I'll tell you this much – the found. of our assurance = t/same thing that is t/found. of our very salvation: Christ!

Spurgeon wrote of this ==>

"Many persons want to know their election before they look to Christ, but they cannot learn it this way, it is only to be discovered by *"looking unto Jesus."* If you desire to ascertain your own election;—after the following manner, shall you assure your heart before God.

Do you feel yourself to be a lost, guilty sinner? go straightway to the cross of Christ, and tell Jesus so, and tell him that you have read in the Bible, *"Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out."* Tell him that he has said, *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* Look to Jesus and believe on him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for so surely as you believe, you are elect. If you will give yourself wholly up to Christ and trust him, then you are one of God's chosen ones; but if you stop and say, *"I want to know first whether I am elect,"* you ask what you don't know.

Go to Jesus, be you never so guilty, just as you are. Leave all curious inquiry about election alone. Go straight to Christ and hide in his wounds, and you shall know your election. The assurance of the Holy Spirit shall be given to you, so that you shall be able to say, *"I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him."* Christ was at the everlasting council: he can tell you whether you were chosen or not; but you cannot find it out in any other way. Go and put your trust in him, and his answer will be—*"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."* . . . [Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, July 17]

Another quote, this one by the 19th c. Lutheran Rudolph Besser. In answering the question, "How might I be sure about my calling and election?"

He writes ==>

"I know that the God of all mercy has called me to his eternal glory. unto which he chose me in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and I am certain that he will keep me firm unto the end, unto the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 11). Whence comes this blessed firmness and certainty for me? From some special revelation concerning God's secret counsel? No; but from the common revelation of the divine will of grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ in whom I believe. Because I know in whom I believe, namely in the God who has saved me and called me with a holy calling according to his own purpose and grace, therefore I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day, II Tim. 2:9-12. When the God of all grace perfects, establishes, strengthens me in faith, I Pet. 5:10, then is my calling and election sure." [cited in Lenski, 275-

76]

C. Why do we do it? (v. 10)

Why are to we make certain our calling and election? Why is this so important? We see why at the end of the verse as well as in v. 11.

... be diligent to make your calling and election sure, for in doing these things you will never fall.

1. "these things" goes back to vv. 4-7

2. What does it mean "you will never fall"?

Some think it is a synonym for "sin." (you will never sin), but that's not what Peter's talking about. He's not advocating some kind of sinless perfection here.

Others view in the word in the sense of "stumble." As a Xn your walk will be smooth and you won't be tripped up in the race. But as imp. as that is, Peter has something in mind that's more serious. This relates to the entrance into the KD (v. 11).

What Peter has in mind is that by doing these things, by cultivating their relationship with X through spiritual discipline, they will ensure that they are called and chosen and will not fall away into apostasy. It is to stumble or fall into ruin, something the false teachers whom Peter addresses in chapter 2 had done.

"Believers who confirm their call and election by living in a godly manner will not "stumble," that is, they will not forsake God, abandon him, and commit apostasy. . . Believers who abound in the qualities described in vv. 5-7 will never fall away from God. They are cultivating their relationship with him daily. Those seduced by the false teachers reveal that the problem is a moral one. They have forsaken goodness, allowed their wills to be captivated by evil, and are now easy prey for deception." [Schreiner, 305-06]

There's a nice parallel in thought found in Peter's first letter. It's a parallel not only in thought, but also placement in that Peter begins his first letter to these 1st c. Xns with similar thoughts.

Turn to 1 Peter chapter 1 (cf. vv. 3-9).

D. What is the Goal? (v. 11)

For in this way the entrance to the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be abundantly supplied to you.

We'll tackle this verse next time as we wrap it all up.

I want to close by reading a verse that looks at v. 10 from the other side of the coin, so to speak.

Verse 10 tells us that we are to apply all diligence in making our calling and election certain. Why? In doing that we will never fall. That's our side of the equation. That's perseverance.

The other side is preservation. That's solely a work of God. For we who are sure about our calling and His choice of us, these are comforting words ==>

Jude 24 **Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,**

He is able to keep you from falling. Not only that, but to make you stand in the very presence of His glory, blameless – w/great joy!

25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.