

THE REWARDS FOR MAKING YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

Please take your Bibles and turn to II Peter 1, beginning with verse 5. Last week we spent a considerable amount of time **reviewing** what we looked at previously; today is going to be the **exact opposite**. We are going to jump right into the text so I have a little more time to explain it. Please follow along as I read vs 5-11. The title of my message this morning—*The Rewards for Making Your Calling and Election Sure*—obviously comes from verse 10 and we will be focusing on verses 10-11.

Before we talk about **the rewards**, though, we need to understand what Peter means by “make your calling and election sure.”

1. The meaning. What is meant by “your calling and election?”

First, let’s consider... A. What “your calling” means

Calling in this verse **is not** a reference to your occupation in life. The Greek word it comes from—*klay’-sis*—is used 11 times in the NT and refers to an **invitation from God**. Sometimes it refers to an invitation **to receive God’s gift of salvation**; other times it is a **call to live a life worthy** of being a child of God—like Eph 4:1 and Phil 3:14.

Pretty safe to say that here in vs 10 it refers to God’s **invitation to salvation** because it is tied to **election**. What does **election** mean? We’ll come back to that in a minute.

Why do we need to be invited by God to accept the gift of salvation through Christ?

Because we **do not naturally seek** after God! The Bible is unmistakably clear on this point:

Psalm 14:2-3 “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to **see if there were any** that did understand, **and seek God**. ³ **They are all gone aside**, they **are all** together become filthy: **there is none** that doeth good, no, not one.”

How many seek God? None; they are all gone aside!

God had Paul repeat that same thought in Romans 3:10-11 “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is **none that seeketh after God**.”

Since we do not **naturally seek God**, God is the One who **first seeks us**. In fact, Jesus said we only come to Him **because God draws us to Him!** **John 6:44** “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...” So if you are seeking God, it is because God is drawing you to Himself!

Does everyone accept God’s call to come to Christ? **No**, they don’t! How do we know?

Because Jesus Himself tells us! **John 5:39** “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

The people Jesus was talking to had a proper view of the Scriptures—which at that time was only the OT. They believed that the **key to having eternal life** was found in the Bible—and they were right! We know that because Jesus was commending them for searching the Scriptures. But...Jesus also reminded them that the Scriptures **pointed to Him!** It seems they **didn’t want to acknowledge that**, though.

How do we know? Because Jesus says they **refused to come to Him!** **John 5:40** “And **ye will not come to me**, that ye might have life.” I can’t help but think there was sadness in Jesus’ voice when He spoke these words. ‘I wanted you to come—but you refused!’ Just a few verses later we see Jesus making a similar statement in John 5:43 “I am come in my Father’s name, and **ye receive me not**: if another shall come in his own name, **him ye will receive**.”

The calling, then, that Peter is referring to **is their call from God to salvation**—and **their acceptance** of that call. How do we know **they accepted God’s** invitation to be saved?

--Because vs 1 says they had **obtained like** precious faith—meaning saving faith—through the righteousness of God

--And because vs 4 says they had **become partakers** of the divine nature

--And because vs 5 says they were to **add to their faith**—the saving faith—that they already had

--And because vs 9 refers to those who had **been purged**—meaning cleansed—from their sins

--And because here in vs 10, he refers to them as **brethren**

Next, let's consider...B. What "your election" means

The Greek word that "election" comes from is used 7 times in the NT. It means "a choosing out, a divine selection." Here are a few of examples:

--In **Acts 9:15**, we see that **God chose Paul** to be **a missionary** to the Gentiles. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a **chosen** vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:" "Chosen" is the word translated "election" here in II Peter 1:10.

--In **Romans 9:10-11**, we have a reference to **God's choice of Jacob** over Esau for the lineage of Christ. "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; ¹¹ (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God **according to election** might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;)

So "election" refers to **God's choice** of Paul as a preacher—and **God's choice** of Jacob over Esau. But...election also refers to God **choosing us as His children**.

We see that in **I Thess 1:4** "Knowing, brethren beloved, your **election** of God." You also may notice this when you read the Bible: **God calls** those **He has chosen** His "elect." Examples: **Mark 13:27** "And then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together **His elect** from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

Romans 8:33 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of **God's elect**? It is God that justifieth."

Colossians 3:12 "Put on therefore, as **the elect of God**, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;" The "elect," then, are **God's chosen ones**.

But **who** does God **elect**? **Who** does **He choose** to be **His children**?

On the **one hand**, you can say that's easy—**God chooses those** who choose Jesus! We see that truth in **John 1:12** "But as many as **received Him** [Jesus], to them gave He **power [authority] to become** the sons of God, even to them that believe on His [Jesus'] name:" Simply put, **God receives** those who **receive** Jesus!

We also know this: **God knows** who will receive Jesus before they receive Jesus because He knows everything! **I Peter 1:2** "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

But...how does God know ahead of time who will be saved without "over-influencing" them to get saved? **I don't know**—and I'm 99.9% sure you don't either! It is a mystery that our minds can't fully grasp because **God's ways are higher** than **our ways**!

Two more thoughts and then we'll move on.

1) When on the topic of election, I often say this: "Since I don't have **to do** God's part, I'm okay with **not understanding** God's part!" Some of you might be thinking, "But that's a cop-out, Pastor!"

To which I reply, "Yep! But if godly, brilliant men have struggled with this for centuries, I'm certainly not going to think I can adequately understand it and explain it!"

2) Along the same lines, here is what I believe to be a **wise approach** from one of my college professors: "This is one of the places where we must take the statements about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility as parallel truths in tension, accept them by faith, and not try to resolve what Scripture leaves unresolved." (Dr. Fred Moritz, ST 613, Soteriology II, page 7).

Back to vs 10. C. What does "make your calling and election sure" mean?

We now know that "calling and election" is a reference to **salvation**. It refers to you hearing God's call—and you responding to that call by receiving Jesus in child-like faith. But what does it mean to make our salvation "sure?" "Sure" is an adjective that means "certain, absolutely dependable, firm, secure, and unshakable."

But in what sense are we to make our salvation "enduring and firm and unshakable?"

First, Peter **does not mean** that we need to work to keep ourselves saved. How do we know that that is not what he means? Because just as we can't **save** ourselves—we also can't **keep** ourselves! God does the **saving**—and the **keeping**! **Phil 1:6** "Being confident of this very thing, that He which **hath begun** a good work in you **will perform** it until the day of Jesus Christ:" God **begins** the work...**keeps it going**...and **will complete it**!

So... **if it doesn't mean** to make certain that we **stay saved**, what does it mean? **Who** are we making our salvation certain, firm, and unshakable **for**? **MacArthur** suggests that we are to do this **for ourselves** because it is an encouragement to our assurance. Others suggest that we are to do this for a testimony **to others**.

I tend to think it is both. In vs 8, we see that when we pursue spiritual growth, we will not be **unfruitful**—meaning **others will see** the results of our growth. But in verses 10-11, we see the benefits—the rewards—that are given **to the believer**. We'll look at those in a little bit.

2. The manner. How do we go about making our calling and election sure?

Answer: work at it—**diligently!** I mentioned this last week, but I'm going to say it again today: It is an **absolute must** that we work on our spiritual growth! Some of you might be thinking, 'We know, Pastor, you keep saying it!' To which I reply, '**I keep saying it** because God through Peter **keeps saying it!**'

--We have him saying it in vs 5 "giving **all diligence**, **add**—meaning abundantly supply—these spiritual qualities to your faith; your Christian life.

--He says it again in vs 8: "For if these things **be in you, and abound...**" What things? The qualities of vss 5-7.

--And he says it again here in vs 10 "...give **diligence** to make your calling and election sure: for if ye **do these things**, ye shall never fall." If ye do **what things?** Diligently work at supplying to our Christian life the spiritual qualities listed in verses 5-7!

3. The motivation. Why does it matter? What are the rewards for doing what God says?

Last week we noted the **two** listed in vs 8. **First**, we will **not be barren** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a reminder, "knowledge" does not mean **collecting facts** about someone—it is about knowing them on a **relationship level**. If we pursue spiritual growth, we will have an **effective and useful** relationship with the Lord. It will matter. It will impact our lives and benefit us.

Second, we will **not have an unfruitful** relationship with the Lord. As we pursue spiritual growth, spiritual growth will **show up** in our lives. It will be seen—it will be evident—and it will impact others.

In the end of vs 10, we see another reward: A. We will have a persevering walk with Christ

A **persevering** walk means a consistent, faithful life that is lived for God. We see that in the phrase "...for if ye do **these things**, ye shall never fall:" What does it mean to "**never** fall?"

First, let's think about the word "never." People much smarter than me point out that "never" is actually translated from a **double negative** in Greek. It carries the idea of "no not ever." If my memory serves me right, my Pastor in Marshfield used to say something like: "never, no never, don't even think about it because it can't happen!" That's a pretty strong "never," isn't it?

What does **fall** mean? Does it mean we will **never sin**? No; it doesn't mean that! It means that we will not **fall away from God**. We will **not abandon** Him; we will **remain faithful** to Him.

Spurgeon put it like this: "Mark the difference between falling and falling away. The true believer can never fall away and perish; but he may fall and injure himself" (https://www.preceptaustin.org/2_peter_110-11#1:10).

Makes sense, doesn't it? If we are diligent about putting effort into our spiritual growth, it's pretty hard to fall away from God, isn't it? When we work at pursuing spiritual growth, we will be able to do what the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 12:1 "...run with patience"—meaning perseverance—"the race that is set before us..."

I think it is also true that when we **put forth the effort** to walk with God, God **keeps us** from falling. We see that in **Jude 24** "Now unto Him that is able to **keep you from falling**, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,"

But if we don't, we will end up **like Demas**. **Who** is Demas? At one time, Paul referred to Demas as a **fellow laborer**. But towards the end of Paul's life, he sadly wrote to Timothy "...Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," (II Timothy 4:10).

This is not exactly a news flash, but you know what's the best way to keep from falling away from God? Do what Peter says in verses 5-7! ***Diligently work at supplying the spiritual qualities that Peter***—and ultimately God—gave us! If we do that, we will never fall away from Him! We will not let the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things enter in and choke God's Word in our life.

But if we do absolutely nothing, ***we will stumble***; we will drift away. Why? Because we ***don't stay in the same place*** spiritually when we do nothing—we go ***backwards!*** That doesn't mean we lose our salvation, but it certainly means we will lack peace and joy in ***this life***—and miss out on rewards ***in the life to come!***

What are the rewards we can have in ***the next life*** if we diligently work on spiritual growth?

Look at vs 11. Here we see... **B. We will have a rich entrance into the kingdom of Christ**

We won't just have an entrance into the everlasting kingdom—it will be an ***abundant*** entrance.

First, notice the word ***ministered***; “an entrance shall be ***ministered*** unto you.” What does that mean? My heart was blessed to discover that the word “ministered” comes from is the same Greek word translated “add” in vs 5. Just to refresh your memory, when plays were performed in ancient Greece, they often involved large and expensive choirs. When a play was to be performed in a particular city, a wealthy person from that city would “foot the bill” for the choir. And even though these productions were quite expensive, the donors did not want to look stingy, so they ***lavishly supplied*** the needs of the choir. That is what “ministered” means.

Wonderful thought, isn't it? By Peter using the same word in vs 10 as he did in vs 5, he is saying that if we diligently work at ***lavishly supplying*** spiritual qualities to our Christian life, we will have a ***lavish entrance*** into God's kingdom!

Second, it is an ***abundant*** entrance – “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you ***abundantly***...” Abundantly means “richly;” it is used in I Tim 6:17 where it says God has given us “***richly*** all things to enjoy.” Just as Peter used a ***double negative*** to stress that those who pursue spiritual growth and godliness will “no not ever” stumble, it seems to me he is using a ***double positive*** to describe this entrance into heaven. ‘For so an entrance shall be ***lavishly and richly*** supplied unto you.’

This is the ***opposite*** of a “saved, yet so as by fire” kind of entrance. And it is the opposite of being ashamed before Him at His coming as John wrote in I John 2:28.

Some suggest that Peter's underlying thought may have been the kind of entrance a victorious Olympian athlete received when he returned home. **Michael Green** wrote: “When the victor returned home, the people of the town would welcome him with honor and escort him into the city through a specially prepared entrance through the city wall!” (D. Edmond Hiebert; BSAC 141:561 (Jan 1984)).

Another man wrote: “The thought of God's lavish reward should spur every saint to set their mind to seek “lavish living” for Him. ***Abundant sowing*** will be followed by abundant ***reaping*** as Jesus taught in Lk 6:38.” (https://www.preceptaustin.org/2_peter_110-11#1:10)

Third, it is a lavishly supplied and rich entrance into ***what kind*** of kingdom? An ***everlasting*** kingdom!

When does an everlasting kingdom end? It doesn't!

*“When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.”*

When will it decay...or deteriorate...or fade? It won't! ***1 Pet 1:4*** “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,”

Fourth, ***whose*** kingdom is it? Who does the kingdom ***belong to?*** “...our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

--Because Christ is ***the Lord, meaning the Ruler***—of His kingdom, ***Christ decides*** who gets into ***His kingdom***. He makes the rules...He decides the qualifications...He sets the entrance criteria.

--What are the qualifications ***for entry?*** **You have to be perfect; you have to be sin-free!** But we can't be—so He provided ***Himself*** to be the Savior. He took the penalty for our sins on Him when He died—and will forgive us for all our sins when we trust Him and Him alone. Not only that, ***God credits to our account Jesus' perfectness***; His righteousness. That is why we need to ***have Him***—not just know about Him!

So...do you have Jesus? Is He yours? I John 5:12 plainly states, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

--We must **have** Jesus; we must **possess** Him.

But how do we **possess someone** who lives in Heaven?

By faith! We come to Him in simple, child-like faith, admitting to Him that we have **sinned against Him** and do not deserve to go to heaven. We acknowledge to Him that **we cannot save ourselves** but believe that He died on the cross to pay our penalty. And then we **ask Him to save us**, believing that He will, because "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

Have you done that? If not, why not do that today? Oh, may Jesus not say to you: "And you would not come to me, that you might have life!"

So what would God have us do in light of what we've heard this morning?

1. First, are you saved; are you heaven-bound? Jesus wants you to be, but you need to **receive** Him.

2. Are you growing in your Christian life—or are you drifting from the Lord?

If you are **not working on growing spiritually**, you are drifting—there is no staying in the same place! Some have drifted since I have been here; others of you might be drifting right now.

Our life could end at literally any moment—or Jesus could come at any moment. When that happens, our opportunity to live a life that will be rewarded by Him is over.

What are you waiting for to stop drifting? Some kind of major wake up call? It is not a compliment to you that God needs to whack you with a 2x4 to get your attention!