

Have you ever thought about the last words you want someone to hear?

Flight in Myanmar ...

I'm not very good at planning things out when it comes to stuff like that.

But if I had the time to really think about what the last thing I would want my kids or the people important to me to know, I find myself wondering what it would be?

Maybe that's an impossible question to answer, but what we find in the book of 2 Peter is exactly that.

Context: 2 Peter was written to most likely the same network of churches in the same area, Asia Minor, modern day Turkey.

It was also most likely written from the same place. Peter was in Rome

To mostly non-Jewish Christians

Letter would go to these Christians referred to as exiles in 1 Peter. The Christians that we found out about in the letter of 1 Peter which we spent time walking through not that long ago. They endured real, unarguable persecution. Far and away beyond anything any of us have experienced.

He took the time to make it really clear to the people, and to us as we spend time in this letter, that we are one in the family of God if we know Jesus. That the suffering we endure in this life can actually be something that points people to Jesus if we do it well and that one day this will end and there is hope for every person who knows Jesus.

He mentions in this letter that he feels like his time is short. That whatever is going on around him is headed down a path where he would be killed. We have decent evidence that Peter was killed under the rule of emperor Nero which seems to line up time wise.

So this letter that we are going to be walking through is kind of like Peter's final words to these Christians he loves and cares so much about. And I think that is significant as we read through this. Now we believe that this letter, like all of Scripture, is God breathed, inspired by the Holy Spirit. That everything in here is meant to be in here, but these letters were also written down by human hands in the middle of human moments and experiences. And we can see that here. If Peter sees the end of the line, this is what he felt most passionate about sharing with these Christians.

He starts at the beginning to give one final challenge. These are his final words for anyone who will listen and maybe even those who will quit reading a few sentences in.

Let's read a bit together.

## Greeting

V1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

(that is, anyone who has put their faith in Jesus that He was Who He said He was, that through His death and resurrection we can have right relationship with God, and that through faith in Him, we can have eternal life.)

V2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

(in other words, "I want you to experience more and more grace, more and more peace, regardless of circumstance as you continue to grow in your knowledge and understanding of Who Jesus is and what living for Him is all about.")

And then he gives us what I believe to be a pretty raw and close-to-home challenge that Peter not only feels is important, but the more we look into it, one of the larger character development arcs in his story.

## Confirm Your Calling and Election

V3 His (Jesus') divine power (His God-ness) has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, 4 by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Basically Peter does a two-verse breakdown of the Gospel right here and tells us this is what it's all about. He lays out how, because of a broken world, our desires can't be trusted. And really anyone with a shred of intellectual honesty would agree. Christian or not. But by His power, He has given us what we need to escape that train headed toward disaster. And what's the end goal? What is all this for? To participate in the divine nature of Jesus. I'll put it in other words we should all be familiar with at this point. It's all about becoming like Jesus.

It's worth it to stop right here for a moment and just let that truth sink in. Because sometimes I think it's easy to lose the plot when it comes to understanding the Gospel.

It can be easy to recognize our sin and stop there. That's making it about shame.

It can be easy to experience forgiveness and stop there. That's abusing grace.

It can be easy to enjoy the good gifts and endure the hard times but stop there. That's still making it about **me**.

It can be easy to think it's a one-time event to cover yourself when you die.

What Peter seems to make very clear is that actually every promise, every piece of knowledge, every experience is there so that we may become partakers in the divine nature, aka, it's all there to help us become more like Jesus.

Every moment of our live, regardless of what we do for jobs, when we live, where we live, the conditions we are living in. Our relationship status, our financial situation, our best moments and our worst should be seen as an opportunity to become more like Jesus. I know sometimes when I look at my life I don't see that to be true. Maybe you do to.

But first point in his final words to us were do not forget what this is all about. Jesus has saved you, but not just to sit around, or to just observe, but to actively become more like Him. To think like Him, act like Him, respond like Him, endure like Him, to challenge like Him, shake things up like Him, forgive like Him and to reflect Him better today than I did yesterday. Any other Gospel has some massive holes in it. It's weak. It's not worth the cost. But participating in the character of God, that's something worthwhile, if not a pretty tall order. That should maybe frighten us a little bit. It is no small thing to be rewired like that.

But here is the beautiful thing, He gives us everything we need to accomplish what seems like an impossibility. What great news. Simply by knowing Jesus, Peter says that we have been given everything we need to live a life of constantly becoming more like him.

It's like this ... trigger warning story

Schools and equipment ...

What does this mean for us? That Jesus does all the heavy lifting. That He did not call us to become like Him then say, "See yah later hopefully you've figure it out." No, He gives us every last thing we need. This says to us that we actually can't become like Jesus through our own strength or merit. That actually not only was the goal given, but also the way to get there. This is what separates us from other ideologies and faiths.

And honestly, this is the message we would hear at most churches. It's true, and I'm so grateful for it, but then Peter throws in something that seems problematic at first glance. He tells us this is all about becoming like Jesus. That we can't do it on our own, but He has provided all we need. Then he goes off and says this.

V5 *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith*

Wait. I thought he said we had everything we need. Are you somehow saying that our faith isn't enough, that there is something else we need to add? You don't have to be around the church long to get an idea that that is bad theology.

Extremes- I've said it a million times ...

This isn't a matter of earning. Instead it's a matter of priority. If something is of the utmost importance to you, why would you not give it everything you have?

D. A. Carson explains (Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church [Zondervan], p. 228), "... the dominant biblical pattern is neither 'let go and let God' nor 'God has done His bit, and now it's all up to you,' but rather, 'since God is powerfully at work in you, you yourself must make every effort.'"

How do we do that? Peter lets us know.

*V5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness (“Godliness” refers to “a very practical awareness of God in every aspect of life”), 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*

Really what Peter is saying here is, “Make sure to pursue the very things that faith in Jesus produces.” Faith produces these things, then as we do these things, our faith is strengthened.

Like a snowball

But this isn't just for kicks, there are real stakes here.

*V8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

Love working with teens—they haven't decided what God is capable of yet. They believe the crazy stuff. Kids so excited—then sometimes I see the light fade out in their eyes.

*V10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

If your priorities are right, you know where your strength comes from and put the maximum effort in, you won't fall for anything.

If this whole message could be wrapped up in a sentence it would be

**DONT STOP GROWING**

Peter's life.

This is my challenge and what I'm doing—running through this list every day this week.