

Quality Faith: Knowledge

This is the third sermon in a series on Quality Faith. As we live on this earth, going through the motions, getting through life one day at a time, our faith may be the most important thing, however we don't always treat it as so.

I started this series with faith. In 2 Peter, Peter tells us how to have fruitful growth in our faith. He gives a list of characteristics that we are to add to our faith. But it all starts with faith.

If we are not careful and intentional with our faith, we can place our faith in things other than Jesus. You can see the evidence of this in your own life. Consider how you respond to adversity.

How do you think when things aren't going your way? How do you speak when things aren't going as planned? What do you place your faith in? self, others, things around you?

Do you give in to fear and worry? That is faith as well, faith that something bad will happen is faith in the devil!

So the first thing we have you grasp is the importance of our faith. What do you believe in? What do you trust in and have confidence in?

Is that belief, trust and confidence in the promises of God? In Jesus' work on the cross? That is where Quality Faith starts, consistently having faith in the one thing that is constantly good....Jesus!

Last week we looked at the first thing that we are to add to that faith, virtue! Virtue is moral excellence. It is choosing to make the Word of God the standard for your life, not the man made standards of society.

If you are going to compare your life to the standards of society, then you really aren't conforming to a standard because what society says is constantly changing.

The standards of man change..... that's why they are no good. They change to fit what man wants. That's not really a standard at all. Standards are what you use to measure or compare something to.

When you are talking about moral excellence, there is only one standard, the Word of God.

1. because it was created by a perfect, all knowing, eternal being
2. because it doesn't change, it is constant no matter what

PRAY

2 Peter 1:2-4 (NKJV)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through
the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to
us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of
the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So by His divine power Jesus has given us ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness.

It's by His power, He has extended to us His grace and grants us the faith that we have.

But it's by that divine power, grace, and faith, that we are able to hold fast to His exceedingly
great and precious promises! So.....

2 Peter 1:5 (NKJV)

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue
knowledge,

We start with faith, faith in God, it is the foundation. Without faith, everything else is worthless.
Without faith, we are not even Christians.

Virtue, moral excellence is next. We can't just produce this moral excellence in ourselves. We
have to choose to act in a way that reflects the moral excellence of Christ, not of man/self. We
have to choose goodness over corruption.

We must have these godly standards in our life so that we can have a clear conscience knowing
that we are living a life pleasing to God. If we live in disobedience to God's Word how can we
expect Him to reveal His truths to us?

To this virtue, we are to add knowledge. Knowledge is going to be the focus today. How do we
add knowledge? Why should we add knowledge?

Knowledge (gnosis) i.e. practical wisdom, obtained by acting on the understanding which truth
imparts.

Knowledge is understanding truth.....knowing what the Word says and understanding it....and
then acting on it.

Faith, virtue, knowledge

Trust in Jesus, live as He lived, know truth. It doesn't do us any good to know the truth if we are
blinded by the world's moral system that brings conviction. It doesn't do us any good to know
truth if we don't trust God.

But if we get faith and virtue, then knowledge is so important. To know the truth is to know the very heart of God. Don't you want to know the heart of God? If you know His heart, you know His desires.

John 8:31-32 (NKJV)

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Knowledge....if you abide or remain in His Word.....you shall KNOW THE TRUTH.....and the truth shall make you free!

Oh church, if we could all just get this one. It's in the name of this church - Freedom Reigns in Christ. If we are IN CHRIST, remain in Him, abide in Him, we can have freedom!

It's not Freedom Reigns Church. There is no freedom to reign without Christ! What did Jesus say in John 8?

If you abide in the Word, the fruit will be a knowledge of the truth, THEN the truth shall make you free!

The word for "know" in John 8:32 is the Greek word ginosko, meaning to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of, perceive, feel

It is the recognition of truth by personal experience!

John 8:36 (NKJV)

36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Need freedom in your life? Ask yourself, self do you know the truth? If you don't know the truth, then you know the lies!

If you are not experiencing the freedom of the truth then you are experiencing the bondage of the lies!

A lack of knowledge, is called ignorance and where knowledge in truth brings freedom, ignorance brings bondage.

Isaiah 5:13 (NKJV)

Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.

Most people in the world are driven by wrong priorities that occupy & control their whole lives.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow, who after studying the motivations of human behavior, concluded that all human behavior is driven by the same basic “hierarchy of needs”: water, food, clothes, housing, protection, security, preservation, self-actualization, significance.

But what did Jesus say about our needs?

Matthew 6:25, 33 (NKJV)

25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Knowledge of truth only comes from Jesus.

John 1:14 (NKJV)

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus is FULL of grace and truth. It all ties back to the beginning of the section in 2 Peter

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Grace.....found in the knowledge of God

Peace....found in the knowledge of God

Truth.....found in the knowledge of God

ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness.....found in the knowledge of God

To your virtue, add knowledge. Read the Word, meditate on the Word but also fear the Lord!

Proverbs 1:7 (NKJV)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The reason that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge is that the moral life (virtue) begins with reverence and humility before our Creator and Savior.

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

For many different reasons people have a fear of their boss, their parents, their teachers.....who are these people? their authorities!

Yet many of these same people do not fear God, the ultimate authority!

People toe the line around worldly authorities. They will watch what they say, how they act, what they do. And these people can only make life on this earth slightly more difficult. At the worst it could cost your life (hopefully not).

Yet when it comes to God, most people have no fear of eternal judgement. I don't know how many of you remember this but months ago I shared with everyone this amazing revelation that the Lord had shown me....eternity is a really, really, long time....like forever!

And there is One who makes the call on where you spend it.....and that one is not you! It's God.

Why do we humble ourselves before men, when do we respect and honor and submit to men but yet we are often not willing to do the same before God?

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. When you know that He and He alone is the judge of FOREVER, then you know that He and He alone is the one that you have to please, and when you have the knowledge of that truth, it will set you free.

Proverbs 2 (NKJV)

1 My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
4 If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
5 Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.

Don't seek the approval of men, at least not at the expense of pleasing God.

How many have heard the saying "Knowledge is power"?

I believe the heart behind that quote is that with knowledge or education, one's potential or abilities in life will increase.

Biblically, that is true. With a knowledge of God, you have truth, and the truth sets you free, therefore your potential in life will increase because you are no longer bound, you are free.

I don't think it would take much to convince anyone that you can do more when you are free than you can when you are in chains....

Having knowledge is widely recognized as the basis for improving one's reputation and influence, or power. This is also true in the Kingdom.

It's through the knowledge of God that we are given all things pertaining to life and godliness by the power of God. By that same power, we can have influence on those around us and even beyond.

We have to remember that in John 8, Jesus linked knowledge with freedom, not with power. Most people will choose power thinking they can take freedom by force.

The knowledge of truth is the most liberating power in the world. It's by that freedom you are empowered, not the other way around.

The freedom from sin, freedom from condemnation, freedom from our past, freedom from the pressures of life, all come from knowing Jesus.

We must pursue the knowledge of God. Isaac Newton said this: "What we know is a drop. What we don't know is an ocean."

Proverbs 14:6 (NKJV)

A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it, But knowledge is easy to him who understands.

If you understand what Jesus has done for you, the truth is easy to accept. That's why faith is first.

Ecclesiastes 1:18 (NKJV)

For in much wisdom is much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

The more we know of the truth the more sorrow should increase. The more we understand this knowledge of God and all that pertains to it including the heart of God toward people, the more heart breaking it is to see all who reject Jesus and truth.