**Multiplication by Addition:**

**You are Peculiar**

**3-6-22**

We are now more than half way through the list of qualities that Peter suggests will make us fruitful and effective in our knowledge of God when we continually add them to our faith.

* We have already spoken about adding goodness, knowledge, self-control and perseverance to our faith.
  + And if you have missed any of those messages, I challenge you to go online or on the Rock App and process just what Peter is telling us.
    - Because we have discovered that these qualities are much more than we might think at first glance.
  + I know that I, personally, have been challenged by these words and have recognized my need for a renewed intentionality to continually add these qualities to my faith.
    - Not just so that I might be fruitful and effective.
    - But even more, so that I can participate in the Divine nature with Christ, my Lord.
  + Nothing less than this is promised to us if we continually add these qualities to our faith.
    - Little by little
    - Bit by bit
    - Day by day
    - For when we do, God multiplies exponentially the little bits we have added – like loaves and fishes – to create in us that which is more than we could ever ask or imagine.

And today’s quality is no different. At the end of vs 6 we read: *and to perseverance* *add godliness.*

* Now this is perhaps the first of the qualities that some of us might truly have very little idea just what it is.
  + We thought we understood what goodness was.
  + We figured we had a handle on knowledge.
  + Self-control, while elusive, was not beyond our comprehension.
  + And perseverance is something we have seen and sought throughout our lives.
* But what, exactly, is “godliness”?
  + Is it the same as “holiness”?
  + Does it mean being “like God?” And if so, in what way?
  + Does it have to do with our behavior, or is there more to it than that?
* And once we figure out what it is, how on earth do we “add” such a quality to our lives?

Well, perhaps we can begin to understand what godliness is by getting a good look at what it isn’t.

* In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, the Apostle Paul is warning Timothy to be on guard concerning false teachers and others in the church who have “an appearance of godliness”, but are far from it.
  + He writes:

*But you must realize that in the last days the times will be full of danger. Men will become utterly self-centered, greedy for money, full of big words. They will be proud and contemptuous, without any regard for what their parents taught them. They will be utterly lacking in gratitude, purity and normal human affections. They will be men of unscrupulous speech and have no control of themselves. They will be lustful and unprincipled, treacherous, self-willed and conceited, loving all the time what gives them pleasure instead of loving God. They will maintain an appearance of godliness, but their conduct will deny its power. You must keep clear of people like this.*

* + They have “an appearance of Godliness”.
    - Or, to put it another way, while on Sundays and with church folk they will, by all appearances, be good church-going Christian folks.
      * They might know their Bibles well and frequently have great insights to share at a Bible Study.
      * They will often be VERY involved, and sometimes even rise to a level of leadership in the church – sometimes even pastor.
      * Some will even be most passionate in their calls for purity and condemnation of sin and sinners.
    - But then you begin to hear from those outside the church how in their non-religious life they look far more like the world.
      * How their reputation in business is one of being ruthless and deceptive.
      * Or how at work they are known to be abusive and inappropriate in their language and behavior.
      * Maybe it comes out that they have embezzled money or taken someone else’s spouse.
      * Or maybe its just that their conduct online does not depict the grace and love that is on exhibit when at church.
    - There are many degrees of this, and to a certain extent it is true of all of us because what Paul is saying is that those who *have an appearance of godliness but deny its power* look to one degree or another exactly like the culture.
      * Self-centered
      * Greedy
      * Arrogant
      * Contemptuous
      * Disrespectful
      * Lustful
      * Ungrateful
      * Unprincipled
      * Self-willed
    - Paul says that they are:

*7 …always learning but are never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.*

* Godliness, on the other hand, is the opposite of this:
  + Peter uses the Greek word, “*Eusebeia”,* which can be translated “good devotion” or “genuine devoutness”.
    - It speaks of the inward quality of a heart set completely on God, His kingdom, and His purposes.
    - In short, this word means: “God-centeredness”.
  + Which means that true Godliness is not identified or defined by behavior alone (though a godly person will seek to be holy because his/her Father in heaven is holy)…
    - Rather, true Godliness begins as a quality of the heart and works its way outward to our behavior.
    - It is our internal “God-centeredness” (as opposed to “self-centeredness” that transforms our behavior.
      * It cuts off our selfishness
      * Undermines our greed
      * Tames our fears
      * Upends our arrogance
      * Deflates our contemptuousness
      * And reveals our depravity
    - God-centeredness empowers us to change – to become godly from the inside out!
      * Because God-centeredness come from God and returns to God.
  + Does that seem a little difficult to understand? Well, join the club.
    - None less than the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:16,

*16 Unquestionably, the mystery of godliness is great …*

* + - Because somehow, godless, self-centered people become godly “Christ-centered” people who exchange the values of the world for the values of God’s kingdom.
  + Making us, as Peter says, a “peculiar people”.
    - Taking on the mind of Christ.
    - And being infused with the person of Jesus Christ, Himself, in the form of His Holy Spirit.
  + This blows Paul’s mind as well as ours. The rest of the passage says:

*16 Unquestionably, the mystery of godliness is great,*

***who*** *was revealed in flesh, was vindicated by (the) Spirit,*

*appeared to angels; was preached among the nations, was*

*believed in the world, was taken up in glory.*

* + - Did you see what Paul just did there?
      * Most of our translations try to smooth this out to help it make textual sense, but Paul doesn’t.
      * In the Greek text, Paul simply moves from talking of godliness to using the pronoun “who”.
      * In other words, he identifies godliness as a person.
    - Jesus, Paul says, is godliness personified.
    - And our godliness is derived directly from Him.
      * Our God-centeredness is God-given!
      * It is derived directly from having the only true godly one, Jesus, at the center of our lives.

Peter says it plainly in 1 Peter 3:15-16 where he describes what what godliness looks like when lived out in our lives.

* He begins by reminding us of where our godliness comes from:

*15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.*

* + Here the key to godliness is revealed - “God-centeredness” means to “set Christ apart as LORD”.
    - That is, the beginning and end of godliness in our lives is determined by who is LORD in our lives.
      * Peter says, “set Christ apart” as Lord.
        + He cannot share the throne in with you or with another.
        + He is unique, different, separate.
      * The Greek word used here is most often translated “sanctify” or “make holy”.
        + In this context it means that Christ is given sanctity in our lives – He is ordained, crowned, set apart as ruler in all things.
        + There is a holy coronation after which He rules over ALL the affairs of our lives – not just our religion.
      * This means, His Will and His Way always take precedence.
        + Over our politics, our prejudices, our emotions, our opinions.
        + It’s not just “what would Jesus do?”

It’s “what would Jesus think?”

“What would Jesus feel?”

“What would Jesus say?”

“What would Jesus long for?”

* + Peter says, decide in your heart, every moment of every day, that Jesus is Lord, not just Savior.
    - By doing so, this adds godliness.
* Peter then goes on to describe how this godliness changes both the way we live and the way we are experienced in the world around us.

*…always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;*

* + Peter makes clear here at if you are godly – that is, if you are “God-centered” rather than “self-centered”, then you are peculiar – notably and noticeably different.
    - But what makes you so is not just your knowledge or your morality – though those will be noticed the more counter-cultural they are.
    - No, what makes you peculiar and a curiosity goes deeper than that – it goes to your sense of hope!
      * Godly people live in hope themselves and offer hope to others, even in the darkest of days.
    - What is it about godliness that gives hope, you might ask?
      * Well, Peter made it clear back in chapter 1 where he wrote in vs. 21:

*Through [Christ, Jesus] you believe in God,* ***who raised him from the dead and glorified him****, and* ***so*** *your faith and hope are in God.*

* + - * The godly live in hope because the God whom we have sanctified as Lord in our lives *raised Christ Jesus from the dead!*
      * When all seemed most dire; when all was lost – the whole plan gone array and evil triumphant – God raised Him from the dead.
      * This same God – who sits enthroned in our lives – in Sovereign and in control of all things today as well.
    - So the godly live with the hope of David:

*1 God is our refuge and strength,*

*an ever-present help in trouble.*

*2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way*

*and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

*3 though its waters roar and foam*

*and the mountains quake with their surging.*

*4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,*

*the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

*5 God is within her, she will not fall;*

*God will help her at break of day.*

* + - * There is eternal hope in Christ; the godly live in it, and it shows.
  + And, Peter says, the godly are prepared to share the reason for their hope.
    - Like I said, you are peculiar in your hope.
      * The godly do not quake with fear or fall into despair.
      * The godly do not worry as the world does nor do they complain or panic or moan.
      * Rather, the godly embrace hope even in the face of darkness and uncertainty, making them a curiosity that begs the question, “why?” “Why this hope?”
    - Peter says that the godly are ready with an answer.
      * The godly know the source of their hope.
        + They are filled with His goodness
        + They know Him on a personal level
        + They are self-controlled, keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus
        + And in that state they can persevere in the face of all kinds of trials.
      * They are not tongue-tied or conflicted about the source of their hope.
        + And if someone asks, they are happy and confident to answer.
        + With the Psalmist we can say:

*5 Yes, my soul, finds rest in God;*

*my hope comes from him.*

*6 Truly he is my rock and my salvation;*

*he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.* (Ps. 62:5-6)

* + But while ready to give an answer, Peter finishes this picture of the godly by indicating that the way the godly answer is also a reflection of their godliness.

*15…being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;* ***yet do it with gentleness and respect****,*

* + - Godliness is found not just in the answer, but also in the way that we answer.
      * We answer with the grace Christ exhibited to the woman caught in adultery,
        + to the rich young man stuck in his legalism,
        + to the woman at the well trapped in her cycle of sin,
        + to the Roman centurion whose daughter was dying,
        + to the woman who reached out and touched his garment in hopes of some healing
        + to the thief on the cross next to him to asked to be remembered
        + to his own mother at the cross who was losing her oldest son.
    - The godly reflect the One who IS our godliness.

So, if Christ is our godliness, then how do we follow Peter’s instructions and add godliness to our faith?

* Simply put, we need to “add more of Jesus every moment, every day.”
  + And the only way to “add more Jesus” is to spend more time with Jesus.
    - Each day, “set apart Christ as Lord” several times a day.
    - Make it a conscious choice, before we speak and before we act.
* This is where certain disciplines or regular practices can help us grow in godliness.
  + For example, at the end of each day (or even immediately following an interaction) practice what is called “examen”; which is a review your day and your heart with Christ.
    - Was Jesus securely ensconced on the throne of my life throughout the day and in each interaction?
      * Make note of the times where He shone through and rejoice.
      * Take note of the times you sought to shove him from the throne and seek His forgiveness and strength.
  + Another discipline that might help is then to testify – that is share with others your victories and your failures so that you might remain authentic in godliness.
    - Just this past week I received an email from a sister here in the church who described an interaction she had with a man at the grocery store.
      * It would have been an easy situation in which to take offense or become angry or terse.
      * But, instead, her godliness shown through and the man responded to it with actual confession and seeking her forgiveness.
        + (Not that she described it as “godliness” though I recognize it as such)
    - We share these stories as much to celebrate the work of God in our own lives as to celebrate what He is doing in the lives of others.
      * And as we find joy in godliness, we will find more godliness added to our faith next time.
  + A third discipline that can assist us in adding godliness to our faith is what is called the daily office.
    - Which is a commitment to stop anywhere from two to several times a day to seek the Lord.
      * A morning devotional time and prayer is one such instance of a “daily office”.
      * But it becomes more effective in adding godliness to our lives when we stop what we are doing and intentionally turn our attention to our Lord and Christ throughout the day as well.
      * For it begins to train our hearts and minds to look to Him throughout the routine of the day as well as in the crises.
      * And since Jesus is godliness personified, then spending intentional time with Jesus will inperceptively add a little bit of godliness to our faith with each interaction.
    - And this little addition will be multiplied by the grace of Jesus so that it becomes clear and perceptive in our lives, day by day.
* So experience God’s new math and add to your faith daily godliness.
  + Perhaps through the examen, or through testifying, or through the daily office.
    - Adding little by little, bit by bit, day by day…
    - And watching as God exponentially multiplies these little offerings into a life of godliness for His own glory.

**Benediction**

*7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*