**Multiplication by Addition:**

**20/20 Vision**

**3-27-22**

Well, today we come to the end of our series of messages on this passage from 2 Peter 1.

* Since the beginning of the year, we have spoken of little else other than God’s amazing *Multiplication by Addition.*
  + The miracle He works in us:
    - When we add to our faith these seven qualities little by little, bit by bit, day by day…
    - Only to have Him multiply them in our lives, transforming us into His likeness so that we participate with Him in His divine nature.
  + I don’t know about you, but I have been amazed by this passage as it has deeply challenged and encouraged me in so many ways.
    - Truly, the Word of God, as the writer of Hebrews wrote:

*12 …is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

* + - This has been true for me as I have studied this passage, and I hope it has had the same impact on you.
    - This is why I encourage you to go back and listen to any messages you might have missed on the Rock app or the our website.
* But the Apostle Peter has his own reasons that He would have you go back and examine whether or not you are adding these qualities to your faith.
  + And he finishes this passage by telling us why we need to be in the business of Multiplication by Addition.

*8 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. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*

* + Now to be honest, we could spend several more weeks unpacking all of the benefits Peter lists here to continually adding these qualities to our lives.
    - They keep us from being ineffective and unfruitful in our knowledge of Jesus.
    - They confirm to both us and the world around us that we have been called and belong to Jesus.
    - And they will keep us from EVER falling!
      * Have you ever seen THAT guarantee in the Scriptures before?
      * And antidote to EVER falling?
  + It’s no wonder that Peter introduced these qualities by saying that they constitute *everything we need for life and godliness.*
    - And that by adding them to our faith, we not only enjoy salvation from our sin…
    - But we are able to *participate in the Divine nature*!
      * Or as Jesus prayed in John 17, we become One with Christ as He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.
  + Friends, I can hardly think of a passage of Scripture that promises more…
    - What Paul says constitutes *more than anything we could ever ask or imagine.*
    - All here, compacted into ten verses.
* I don’t encourage you to go listen to these messages to get us hits or to stoke my ego.
  + Friends, there is wisdom and life in these words – and I so don’t want any of us to miss out on them.
    - In fact, I am so convinced of this that I am planning to establish a group after Easter that will go over this passage again…
      * Lingering over each quality and seeking to find practical ways to practice adding them to our faith.
    - Because while our faith – that foundation for all of it – is pure gift from God.
      * Given to us by His grace so that we might be rescued from death and brought into life in Christ.
      * Just as Paul wrote to the Ephesian church in Ephesians 2.

*4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.* ***8 For by grace you have been saved through faith****. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For* ***we are his workmanship****, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

* + - * This is the foundation – the faith on which we now built – to which we now add these qualities.
        + And without which these qualities are pointless and measly.
        + Giving no promise at all.
      * Thus, if you do not have faith – if you have never responded to Christ’s call on your life.
        + If you have never entrusted yourself to Jesus and delivered yourself up to Him for forgiveness and the quickening of your soul.
        + Then, these promises we have spoken of – participation in the divine nature, fruitfulness, effectiveness, confirmation and so on.
        + Then none of these are for you.
      * If you are trying to build your life without this sure foundation, then Jesus said it is like trying to build a house on sand.
        + And when the storms of life come, your house will surely fall – washed away and you will suffer complete loss.
      * Begin by responding to God’s calling – step into the faith He gives you and deliver yourself into His arms by the deliverance given us in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
        + Receive the sure foundation on which you can begin to build.
        + All of this is pure gift – grace abounding, full and free.
  + But while this great salvation for all eternity – this foundation for our souls – is freely given to us, WE chose how we will build on it.
    - The Apostle Paul wrote about this to the Corinthians church in 1 Corinthians 3.

*11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

* + - But while Paul speaks of the eternal implications of how we build on this foundation…
    - Peter focuses on the present implications – the immediate impact of how we choose to build on that foundation of faith laid by Jesus in our lives.

And for all the promise multiplication by addition gives, Peter also includes a picture of the tragic alternative – what happens in this present life if we decide to, as Paul put it, build on this great foundation with “wood, hay and straw” rather than precious stones.

* + Look at vs. 9

*9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

* The contrast between Peter and Paul here is truly amazing.
  + For while Paul uses dramatic imagery of the last day with its refining fire revealing the quality of what we build upon our faith.
  + Peter uses a rather mundane image of a person who is nearsighted, nearly to the point of being blind.
* Now nearsightedness in our day is not even much of an inconvenience.
  + I have been nearsighted most of my life and have worn glasses to correct this flaw since I was about nine years old.
    - And while there have been seasons when I have been impatient with either the bother or the look of glasses, it hasn’t really been much of an issue.
      * At least so long as I have had my glasses handy.
    - But take away my spectacles and I might become a spectacle.
      * For I am nearly blind to anything more than just a few feet away without them.
        + Oh, not blind in the sense of blackness and the inability to see anything.
        + But rather the blindness that comes from the inability to discern or distinguish anything beyond the end of my nose.
    - So, for example, without my glasses I would not be a very safe driver (in fact, it is illegal for me to drive without them).
      * In an area I don’t know, I could easily get lost.
      * And I may not be able to quickly perceive what is happening in front of me, making it dangerous for me to be speeding along at highway speeds.
      * And at night it would be even worse.
    - In fact, if I didn’t already know some of you by shape or sound, I would not be able to even distinguish who you are from where I’m standing right now.
    - No, without my glasses I would be a more tragic version of Mr. McGoo.
      * An old cartoon character who led of life of blissful misadventure due to a pronounced case of nearsightedness.
        + Always doing more damage than good, but never being aware of it because he saw no further than the end of his own nose.
* Now this is the picture Peter gives us of the believer who fails to add these qualities to his/her faith.
  + They are spiritually nearsighted, unable to see beyond the here and now.
    - Now it’s sometimes easy in our day to forget how difficult things we now find to be innocuous might have been for ancient people.
      * Such is the case for nearsightedness, which, of course, they didn’t have the technology to fix.
    - In fact, they didn’t really even have a word for it, except the descriptive word used in this text that we translate as “near-sighted.
      * The Greek word itself doesn’t really describe the idea of nearsightedness, but rather the physical manifestation of it.
        + The word literally means “to squint” or to “close the eyes” in order to better see.
        + It is what those of us who are nearsighted do when trying to see without our glasses.
  + Peter says that when the Christian – that is a follower of Jesus – does not choose to add to their faith the qualities we have talked about these past weeks…
    - They, in effect, have to squint to try to see spiritual realities.
      * They are rendered “spiritually nearsighted” and are nearly blind to what God is doing – not only around them, but even in them.
* So much so, Peter says, that they can even forget how Christ has cleansed them from their former life of sin.
  + The implication being that they step back into such sin all over again.
    - They forget the hold that sin had on them.
    - They forget the spiritual battle being waged against their soul.
    - They forget the great sacrifice made on their behalf by Christ, Jesus.
    - They forget the promise of life and godliness made available to us in Christ.
    - They forget that there is more given to us in Christ Jesus than just eternity in heaven…
      * But there is life in Him here on Earth.
  + Instead, Peter says, we live as if what we see closest to us – life on Earth – is all there is and we interpret everything only in the light of what we see up close.
    - So, we can barely perceive God at work in the world around us, and often miss His presence with us.
    - If fact, it’s as if we are missing even the capacity to discern God’s leading in our lives and rarely hear Him speaking to us.
    - So as a result, we find…
      * Little use for prayer (except in the most extreme circumstances)
      * Little clarity in Scripture (except for the simplest of passages)
      * Little need for the community of the Church (except when we are in greatest need)
      * And little importance in Worship (except that the Bible says we should)
  + We just don’t see spiritual things as all that practical or helpful in our everyday lives – BECAUSE – Peter says, we can’t see much beyond our everyday lives.
    - We are “near-sighted”.
* And the effect of that, as Peter describes it, is EXACTLY the way many believers experience it.
  + Our knowledge of Christ – our faith in Him – feels “ineffective and without fruit” in our lives.
    - It feels like there should be more – that our faith doesn’t live up to everything the Scriptures make it out to be.
    - Or in the words I have heard so many times before, “it just doesn’t work for me”.
  + Well, it doesn’t work because you are trying to live out your life on a slab.
* Think about it. Why are we so excited to finally begin building the structure of our Children’s Discipleship Wing at the end of next month?
  + After all, we have the foundation out there. Shouldn’t that be enough?
    - Well, we’ve been able to use it for a few things.
      * We had movie nights on the slab.
      * And the kids have played some games on the slab.
    - But that foundation was never meant to be all there was to the Discipleship Wing.
      * It’s great and solid and ready.
      * But it was never meant to be an end in itself – rather was meant to be the beginning of something entirely new.
      * Something on which we would build an effective and fruitful structure.
        + A place where lives might be rescued and transformed.
    - We would never be so foolish as to give up on the whole project just because the slab is not fulfilling the purpose of a completed building.
* Your foundation in Christ was never meant to be an end in itself – it is the beginning of a whole new life.
  + But one in which you and I have to participate by adding these qualities to our faith, little by little, bit by bit, day by day.
    - As we add goodness and knowledge and self-control and perseverance and godliness and brotherly-kindness and love…
      * We begin to participate in the divine nature.
      * You could even say that we begin to gain God’s 20/20 vision of all things.
    - Suddenly, we are no longer so near-sighted that we can only see what’s right in front of us.
* In 2 Kings 6, we are told of a time when the prophet Elijah was being pursued by the King of Syria who had taken offense at his prophetic proclamations.
  + And when he found out where Elisha was he sent his army to capture him. We pick it up in vs. 15.

*15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” 16 Elisha said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

* + - It’s not that Elisha’s servant did not believe – he was in fact a key part of Elisha’s ministry.
    - But he was near-sighted.
      * He only could see what was right in front of him, and that left his faith, at that moment, ineffective and unfruitful.
    - But Elisha could see with God’s 20/20 vision and so had no fear.
      * His faith was both effective and fruitful as He walked with God through this crisis and the many that followed.

Friends, don’t let this series just pass by – another interesting Bible study that changes little to nothing in our lives.

* Peter says, *For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith…*
  + Those qualities that will broaden our vision so that we might see beyond the end of our nose and live in the light of God’s reality.

**Benediction**

Now *open the eyes of our hearts, Lord, that we not only see You, but that we might also see as you see and become effective and fruitful in our walk with Jesus.*