

II Peter 1:8-11 - Strong Encouragement to Grow in Godliness

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

9:45 AM

Introduction

A. From big to little: how does our passage today fit into the whole of II Peter

1. The Big Picture: Premise of II Peter
 - a. Dangers will not only come from outside the church but also inside the church. Therefore we should guard against these by knowing the true gospel. The true gospel is marked by godliness and is found in Scripture. A gospel that denies godliness or disregards the promises of God or twists Scripture must be rejected. God will judge such things and will protect His church. Since the judgment of God is imminent, we must be diligent now to make our calling and election sure by pursuing righteousness and godliness.
 - b. In order to guard against false gospels, we must recognize the true gospel as that which is marked by godliness and is found in Scripture, any other gospel must be rejected.
2. II Peter 1: The Gospel is Marked by Godliness
 - a. Making your calling and election sure - godliness and the gospel go together (1:3-11)
 - b. Be reminded of these things - godliness is defined in Scripture (3:12-21)
3. II Peter 1:3-11: Godliness and the gospel go together
 - a. In verses 3-4, Peter argues that godliness and the gospel always go together because God has provided power for godliness in the gospel
 - b. In verses 5-7, Peter gives eight qualities that display godliness.
 - c. In verses 8-11, Peter exhorts us that these qualities are absolutely necessary to the believer.

B. Read II Peter 1:8-11

C. Our passage this week is intimately connected to last week - In II Peter 1:5-7 Peter is calling us to growth in the Christian life

1. Comparison to other lists
 - a. We compared the list in II Peter with several other lists (Galatians 5, Matthew 5, Ephesians 6) to get an idea of what was the distinguishing quality of the list in II Peter 1:5-7
 - b. What is the big difference we see between this list and other lists? Peter's list has a quality of growth to it.
2. Growth is a topic that Peter brings up several times in II Peter
 - a. A survey over all of II Peter - several times in this first chapter Peter mentions growing in godliness, and then Peter closes the book with his summary statement - "*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*"
 - b. A survey over the first half of II Peter 1
 - i. In verses 3 and 4, God has added to us His power and His promises
 - ii. Therefore, in verses 5-10, we should be adding godly attributes to ourselves
 - iii. Then, in verse 11, there will be added to us and entrance into the eternal kingdom
3. So, this list of attributes represents growth in Christ
 - a. Both application and interpretation - we looked at the interpretative scheme last week - how do these qualities grow into each other
 - b. This week we are going to look at the application that we skipped last week - we must be growing in Christ!

D. Peter's theme for II Peter 1:8-11 is that godly lives are necessary to the professing Christian

1. Proposition: As opposed to many common views of salvation, Peter gives us four future reasons to put on godliness, that is, the list of attributes in verses 5-7.
2. Outline:
 - a. A desire for godliness
 - b. A warning against forgetfulness
 - c. An encouragement of assurance
 - d. A promise of reward
 - e. Applications

I. A desire for godliness (vs 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.

A. A future encouragement: Growing in godliness clothes us with the fruit of the gospel

1. Fruitfulness is always the outcome of salvation
 - a. Matthew 7:15-18 - *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.*
2. Growing in godliness, or the qualities expressed in verses 5-7, is the fruit of salvation
 - a. Romans 6:22 - *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*
 - b. Galatians 5:22-23 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
 - c. Ephesians 5:9 - *for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth*
 - d. Philippians 1:9-11 - *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*
 - e. Hebrews 12:11 - *For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*
3. But how is Peter's exhortation to fruitfulness an encouragement to grow?
 - a. Peter's encouragement is that we will be fruitful, but what if we don't want to be fruitful? How is this an encouragement?
 - b. God's desire and purpose is for us to be fruitful in salvation
 - i. John 15:8 - *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*
 - ii. Colossians 1:9-10 - *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*
 - iii. Romans 7:4 - *Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*
 - c. Our desires ought to conform to God's desires
 - i. Romans 12:2 - *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
 - ii. Ephesians 5:9-10 - *Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.*
 - d. Therefore our desire ought to be for fruit to grow in our life
 - i. This is Peter's assumption as we start verses 8-11, that we do desire fruit
 - ii. When our desires match God's desire we will be very encouraged when we are told we will be fruitful
 - iii. We ought to want to be fruitful, so when Peter tells us that when we grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love we will be bearing fruit, we will want to do these things
 - e. In conclusion - We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know that these attributes are the fruit of the gospel and we desire to bear fruit just like God desires for us to bear fruit

B. Wrong view of salvation: The purpose of salvation is primarily about saving us from punishment

1. Ephesians 2:15-18 - *His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*
2. Ephesians 3:10-11 - *His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
3. Ephesians 5:25-27 - *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*
4. Revelation 19:6-9 - *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"--- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."*

II. A warning against forgetfulness (vs 9)

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

A. A future encouragement: Not growing in godliness may demonstrate we have not been saved

1. This is the other side of our last point - without fruit we aren't accomplishing God's desire for salvation
 - a. Matthew 12:33 - *"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit."*
 - b. Luke 13:6-9 - *And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"*
2. Fruitless professors will be cast off by God - if we aren't accomplishing God's desire for salvation then our salvation is worthless to God
 - a. Matthew 7:15-27 - *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*
3. Is Peter saying that there are unfruitful Christians?
 - a. God never fails to accomplish His purposes
 - i. GENERALLY: Ephesians 1:11-12 - *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.*
 - ii. SPECIFICALLY: Romans 8:28-30 - *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

- b. Blindness usually refers not to immature believers but false professors
 - i. I John 2:9-11 - *Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*
 - ii. John 9:35-41 - *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.*
 - iii. II Corinthians 4:3-4 - *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
- c. So, no, Peter is not talking about unfruitful Christians, he is talking about false professors
 - i. Peter is using some gentle sarcasm to demonstrate that those who aren't bearing fruit never understood what salvation was about
 - ii. If they never understood what salvation was about, they never truly came to Christ
 - iii. But, from our point of view, the two look about the same - someone can make a good profession of faith in Christ and look like a Christian to us, but if he or she does not grow in godliness, then their profession was false, they are not true believers
- 4. In conclusion - We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know that those who lack fruit are demonstrating a lack of knowledge of God and we do not want to be false professors

B. Wrong view of salvation: Salvation is only about the free grace of God

- i. Romans 3:5-8 - *But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come?---as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.*
- ii. Romans 6:1-4 - *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

III. An encouragement of assurance (vs 10)

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

A. A future encouragement: Growing in godliness gives us the basis for true assurance of salvation

1. Growth in godliness is the basis of assurance of salvation
 - a. I John 2:3-5 - *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*
 - b. I John 3:2-10 - *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*
2. Therefore we are called to examine ourselves - to test ourselves to see if we are growing in godliness
 - a. II Corinthians 13:5 - *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*
3. Not only does growth in godliness demonstrate that we have been chosen by God, but they also are the tools of God to prevent us from falling away
 - a. Hebrews 3:13 - *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.*
 - b. II Peter 3:17-18 - *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*
4. So being diligent to grow in godliness is being diligent to make our calling and election sure
 - a. In some translations, it is hard to see the direct connection between verse 5 and verse 10
 - b. Verse 5 and verse 10 start out almost exactly the same
 - i. Verse 5 - be diligent to supplement your faith with virtue
 - ii. Verse 10 - be diligent to make your calling and election sure
 - c. The parallel phrasing indicates that the two things are the same, being diligent to grow in virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love is being diligent to make our calling and election sure
5. In conclusion - We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know that as we do our assurance of salvation will grow deeper and our growth in godliness will guard us against falling away

B. Wrong view of salvation: Assurance of salvation is based solely on a one-time encounter with God

1. Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23 - *That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty...Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."*

2. Ryle (Holiness) - *Another common cause of the absence of assurance is, slothfulness about growth in grace.*

I suspect many true believers hold dangerous and unscriptural views on this point; I do not of course mean intentionally, but they do hold them. Many appear to think that, once converted, they have little more to attend to, and that a state of salvation is a kind of easy chair, in which they may just sit still, lie back, and be happy. They seem to fancy that grace is given them that they may enjoy it, and they forget that it is given, like a talent, to be used, employed, and improved. Such persons lose sight of the many direct injunctions "to increase, to grow, to abound more and more and to add to our faith," and the like; and in this little-doing condition, this sitting-still state of mind, I never marvel that they miss assurance.

I believe it ought to be our continual aim and desire to go forward, and our watchword on every returning birthday, and at the beginning of every year, should be, "More and more" (1 Thess. 4:1): more knowledge, more faith, more obedience, more love. If we have brought forth thirtyfold, we should seek to bring forth sixty; and if we have brought forth sixty, we should strive to bring forth a hundred. The will of the Lord is our sanctification, and it ought to be our will too (Matt. 13:23; 1 Thess. 4:3).

One thing, at all events, we may depend upon, there is an inseparable connection between diligence and assurance. "Give diligence," says Peter, "to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). "We desire," says Paul, "that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. 6:11). "The soul of the diligent," says Solomon, "shall be made fat" (Prov. 13:4). There is much truth in the old maxim of the Puritans: "Faith of adherence comes by hearing, but faith of assurance comes not without doing."

Is any reader of this paper one of those who desires assurance, but has not got it? Mark my words. You will never get it without diligence, however much you may desire it. There are no gains without pains in spiritual things, any more than in temporal. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing" (Prov. 13:4).

IV. A promise of reward

For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A. A future encouragement: Growing in godliness will secure our final reward

1. Our future reward is totally secured in Christ - grace is always the source of our reward
 - a. Ephesians 2:4-9 - *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*
2. But, this doesn't preclude the necessity of works to secure us our final reward
 - a. Romans 2:6-10 - *He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.*
 - b. Matthew 25:31-46 - *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*
 - c. Ephesians 5:5-7 - *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.*
3. Therefore, our growth in godliness does, in some way, secure for us an entrance into Christ's kingdom
 - a. They do not gain us entrance based on merit - our works cannot earn us an entrance into heaven, they could never be good enough to either please God on their own or to wash away our past sins
 - i. Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*
 - ii. Titus 3:4-7 - *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

- b. They do gain us entrance based on evidence - our works are either evidence of degeneration or regeneration, we are either given to sin or given to righteousness
 - i. James 2:14-26 - *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe---and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"---and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*
 - ii. Romans 6:20-23 - *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 - iii. Matthew 12:34-37 - *"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*
- c. So the evidence of godliness is required for us to gain an entrance into Christ's kingdom - this is the only way to make sense of all of the passages that emphasize the necessity of works
- 4. In conclusion - We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know our growth is, somehow, preparing an entrance into Christ's kingdom

B. Wrong view of salvation: Works are entirely unnecessary for final salvation

- 1. Ephesians 2:8-10 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
- 2. Piper (Romans 1:28-2:11) - *In the courtroom of the kingdom of God all the world will be assembled before the righteous judge, and all will be guilty of a capital offense. Yet some will be acquitted and others condemned. The deepest reason for the separation is that one group has been forgiven because of their identification with Christ through faith, the other group has not. But what Paul is teaching in Romans 2:7–10 is that in that courtroom a witness will be called forth to testify to the reality of faith or its absence. And that witness is our deeds, which we can see from Romans 1:28–32 includes deeds of the mind as well as the body, attitudes as well as actions. It is by grace we are saved through faith; not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. But the heart that is full of faith will overflow in attitudes and actions very different from those which flow from unbelief. Therefore, our deeds will testify truly to the genuineness or absence of faith, and it is not inconsistent for God to judge us according to our works.*

V. Applications

a. Examine your desire for godliness

- i. We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know that these attributes are the fruit of the gospel and we desire to bear fruit just like God desires for us to bear fruit
- ii. Matthew 5:6 - *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."*
- iii. Are your desires for salvation aligned with God's desires for salvation?
- iv. Do you desire to be presented to Christ holy and blameless?
- v. Does this statement from Peter encourage you to be even more diligent in your fight for sanctification?
 - 1) If so - run all the harder! Look at the great promise of fruit and strive all the more diligently after the things of verses 5-7.
 - 2) If not - go to God in prayer! Repent of your hard heart! Plea with God for mercy that he might change your desires!

b. Consider the danger invoked

- i. We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know that those who lack fruit are demonstrating a lack of knowledge of God and we do not want to be false professors
- ii. Hebrews 12:14-17 - *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.*
- iii. Have you spent time recently considering how important holiness truly is? This isn't a small or secondary thing! Without holiness no one will see God! The branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off and burned! Spend time meditating on these things and be encouraged once more to fight for godliness.

c. Examine your growth in godliness

- i. We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know that as we do our assurance of salvation will grow deeper and our growth in godliness will guard us against falling away
- ii. I Corinthians 13:5 - *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*
- iii. As you look at your life, do you see evidence of godliness growing in your life?
- iv. Especially as you ponder your life over longer time periods, for example as you consider where you were last year, have you seen growth in the things of Christ?
- v. Is your assurance of salvation based on seeing the work of the Spirit exhibited in your life?
 - 1) If so - rejoice and praise God that He has granted to you both justification and sanctification and be encouraged all the more to continue on. The Spirit's power is at work in your life you have no reason to turn back from these attributes.
 - 2) If not - again, go to God in prayer! Examine before God why you have not seen growth in your life. Repent of those sins that have grieved the Spirit of God and have put distance between Him and you. Even consider before God whether you have ever truly repented of your sins and come to Christ for salvation. And, either for the first time or once again, plea with God for mercy that He would fill you with His Spirit that you might put to death the deeds of the body and grow in the fruits of the Spirit!

d. Consider the reward promised

- i. We ought to be greatly encouraged to grow in godliness because we know our growth is, somehow, preparing an entrance into Christ's kingdom
- ii. Hebrews 10:32-35 - *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*
- iii. Have you spent time recently considering how great the reward of godliness is? As you put on and grow in these attributes, you are not performing a thankless task. The reward of them is no less than an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Go home and ponder this and be encouraged to fight for godliness all the more!

Conclusion

A. Four encouragements to grow in godliness found in this passage

1. Growing in godliness clothes us with the fruit of the gospel
2. Not growing in godliness may demonstrate that we have not been saved
3. Growing in godliness gives us the basis for true assurance of salvation
4. Growing in godliness will secure our final reward

B. Four wrong notions about salvation combated in this passage

1. The purpose of salvation is primarily about saving us from punishment
2. Salvation is only about the free grace of God
3. Assurance of salvation is based solely on a one-time encounter with God
4. Works are entirely unnecessary for final salvation

C. Four applications to take with you from this passage

1. Examine your desire for godliness
2. Consider the danger invoked
3. Examine your growth in godliness
4. Consider the reward promised