

Add to Your Faith - 2 Peter

by Anton Bosch

Anton Bosch's sermon on 2 Peter emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth through knowledge, diligence, and understanding God's promises amidst false teachings.

Duration: 46:01

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3-5, 2 Peter 1:10-13, 2 Peter 1:16-18

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the practicality of the Word of God and how it provides guidance for dealing with life's challenges. He highlights the importance of diligently studying and applying the teachings of the Bible. The speaker also discusses the concept of endurance and how it is necessary for Christians to persevere in their faith. He encourages listeners to not give up easily and to seek understanding by reading and studying the Bible, which serves as a manual for life.

Transcript

Turn with me please to the second letter of Peter, 2 Peter, between Hebrews and Revelation. You'll find Peter's epistles and John's epistles, and we're in 2 Peter, and I'm going to read from chapter 1, 2 Peter chapter 1. And as we've been going through the Bible, book by book, week by week, we have a few more weeks to go before we finish the Bible. I think last time Brother Mike was with us, we were in the book of Ruth, which was a long time ago.

And so we're in the book of 2 Peter today. And just for those who were not in the Sunday school, 2 Peter is written about three years later than 1 Peter. 1 Peter was written to warn the believers against the threat that was coming from Rome, the persecution that was coming from Nero.

That was the main message of 1 Peter. 2 Peter is a very different letter. 2 Peter is written just about at the time of Peter's death.

It may literally have been written days within before he died. And so this is his final message to the church, and he shows his incredible concern for the church. He's concerned that people, that Christians will grow and go on to maturity.

He's concerned that there would be false teachers who would bring destructive heresies into the church. And he's concerned that the word of God be upheld as the supreme authority. These are the three main

issues that he deals with in this letter.

And so it is different to 1 Peter. It is written with a different tone. It's written in a lot of haste.

And it is showing just the things that are really essential and that are really on his heart. And the one thing that he is dealing with here is the need for us to grow and to continue to full maturity. 1 Peter dealt with newborn babes.

He says newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word. But 2 Peter is now saying, now that we have been saved and we are born again, we need to go on to maturity. And so we're going to read from 2 Peter chapter 1, and we'll read, in fact, we'll read the whole chapter.

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as his divine power is given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by glory and virtue, 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. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For he who lacks these things is short-sighted even to blindness and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore brethren be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble, for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

Yes I think is right as long as I am in this tent to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when such a voice came to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And we heard this voice which came from heaven and when we were with him, sorry when we were with him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Knowing this first that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. One of the themes in this book is knowledge, knowing. Sixteen times Peter uses different forms of that word, knowing, knowledge, know.

And so this is a very, very important aspect of the book. And you'll see that he is warning them that there will be false preachers who will speak great swelling words. In other words, who will be able to move

people emotionally.

But he is saying to them that their security is in knowing the word of God, in knowing God. And he emphasizes a number of times the fact that the scriptures that we have are not things that men wrote because they thought they were great ideas or that they dreamt up, but they were speaking the word of God. And he says that in the Old Testament when the prophets wrote and spoke, it says they, verse 21, the prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

That word moved literally means carried along, born along, just like a man would fall into the, we know this happens every year, somebody falls into the LA river. I still can't get used to calling it a river. I mean, it looks like a concrete furrow, but anyway, canal.

But anyway, people, and we see this happen every year, people falling to the LA river. And what happens? The river carries them along. They can't say, I want to go this way or that way.

They go where the river takes them until they are rescued or not. And so he is saying in the same way, the Holy Spirit carried people along and they wrote as the Holy Spirit carried them along and gave them the words to write. And so he says that these things are God's words.

He's saying they're not man's words, they are God's words. And so they are important for us. We live in a time when there's a lot of attack against the word of God and many preachers no longer believe that the word is the word of God.

And in fact, the bulletin article this morning, I deal with a little bit of that. So Peter is saying, this is a more sure word of prophecy. He says, we spoke and we wrote what we saw, what we heard from Jesus.

Now I know that there are many people who are saying to us today that the scriptures that we have were written 300 years or 400 years after Jesus came. And that what happened was that people verbally carried over the tradition from one generation to the other. And that eventually the time came when they actually sat down and they wrote these things.

But when they wrote them down, they'd been carried over from one generation to the other over 300 years. And so we really don't have a firsthand account. But Peter is saying, and in fact, John emphasizes this in one John chapter one, and he's saying, we are writing what we saw.

We are writing about the one that we touched and that we handled. And so these are firsthand accounts by the men who walked with Jesus, by the men who saw him crucified, by the men who saw him risen and who were taught by him for 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension. And so Peter is saying, we have a word that is reliable and trustworthy.

But the problem is that as long as that word is on the shelf, it is of no value to us. That word needs to become knowledge and it needs to become personal knowledge. And so let's have a look at how he deals with us.

And so he begins in, and I'm going to begin in verse two, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. How do we get grace and peace? By knowing God. Now I need to just take one step back.

How do I know God? I know him through the word. There are many people who believe that I can know God without the word. And in fact, there are many people who say that you can't really know God through the word.

You have to know God through a personal experience. Now, while I don't deny the fact that many people have a personal experience, they somehow feel God, they have a vision, they have a dream, they have whatever it is, they have a voice, they somehow believe that God has spoken to them. And I don't want to deny anyone's experience.

But the point that Peter is making here is that we're not going by some experience. We're going by a word that is confirmed. You cannot build your faith on an experience.

You cannot build your faith on a dream. Because one of the things about a dream or about an experience is that it is temporal. It's something that happens.

And then a few days later, you don't even know whether it actually happened. We sometimes speak about, did I dream that? We don't even know whether it was a dream or whether it was a reality. And our feelings change and we have other experiences.

And so if we're going to build our faith on experiences or on dreams or on visions or on a prophetic word that has been given by a man, you're going to be building your faith on something that is insecure and that is not reliable. In the old days, you used to do business based on someone's word. Someone would say, I'm going to do this and that's the deal.

You pay me so much, I'll give you that or whatever the deal is, and that would be good enough. But times have changed. We can no longer do that.

Today, we only do business based on a signed agreement, on a piece of paper, a contract. And even then, people find ways of getting out of it. But the only way that we can be sure today that we have someone's commitment to something is when it is actually signed.

When you actually have it written down on a piece of paper. And the wonderful thing is that God has given to us his word written down. So I don't have to go by somebody else's word.

I don't have to say, well, can I trust this preacher or can I trust that dream or this vision? But I'm able to actually look and find God's word in black and white. And I'm able to find in it a revelation of him. And when I find a revelation of him, what it does is it brings to me grace and peace.

You see, when we're going by emotions or by feelings, we often don't have peace because one day I feel good and the next day I don't feel good. But when I'm able to build on the solid rock of the word of God, I'm not tossed to and fro, but I'm able to find peace and I find grace. Now he says it must be, it's multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.

Verse three, as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Now this is a verse which is often misquoted, but he is saying his divine power has given to us everything that pertains to life. What does he mean by that? Everything that I need for this life.

So he has given to me everything I need for this life and he has given me everything that I need for godliness, for my spiritual life. So he's provided all of those things. How did he do that? How do I get what I

need for life and for godliness? Verse three, through the knowledge of him who called us by glory and virtue.

So when I know him through his word, he gives me everything I need for life. How to raise my family, how to do my job, how to deal with my finances, how to keep my home, how to relate to the government. We speak about these things often.

So he gives me everything I need as far as life is concerned, but he also gives me everything I need as far as being godly is concerned, as far as my spiritual life is concerned. And it all comes through knowing him. I am not equipped to deal with life if I don't know him and I don't know his word.

Many people are trying to find their way in life, but they reject the manual. They reject the word that tells us and gives us the knowledge how to deal with life. And you've heard me say many, many times, and we all have the same problem.

We buy these pieces of furniture from Ikea or wherever it is, and it's all in a hundred little pieces, and we start to put the thing together. And then we discover, but it doesn't fit. It doesn't work.

Something's missing. And then what do we do? Then maybe we'll take it back to the store, or maybe at the last resort we'll read the manual. And when we read the manual, we discover how the thing works.

The problem is that most people in the world, and it seems to me today, most Christians never even bother to read the manual at all, even when the whole thing falls apart. They'll run to the pastor or to the counselor or to the psychologist in a hope to find some kind of answer instead of just taking the manual and finding how I need to deal with life and how I need to deal with godliness. And so he's given to us everything that pertains to life and to godliness through the knowledge of him.

Now, verse three at the end, it says, who has called us by glory and virtue. I'm going to come back to that word, virtue. Verse four, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature.

Now, this part of the verses, or this verse is also misquoted. We have these great and precious promises, and they're all in a little box, little cards. Have you seen them? Some people call them a promise box.

All of the promises of God are in there. And what are the promises of God? Oh, I'll never leave you nor forsake you. I'll bless you.

Now, those are wonderful things, and they are the promises of God. But notice what he is saying here. He is not saying that he gave us all of these promises that we can feel good or that we should be encouraged, but that through these promises we may be partakers of the divine nature.

The purpose of the promises is not what we use them for. We use the promises to encourage us when we feel down, to bless us when we feel that we need a blessing, to guide us. Sometimes people use those promises when they have to make a decision, and they pull out the promise, and they say, well, you know, here's a promise.

Go forth and multiply. But the promises that he gives us are for this purpose, that we may be partakers of the divine nature. What does that mean? So that we may become like him.

Isn't that what it's all about? And again, you see, we have the wrong outcome in mind, and so when you buy that cupboard from IKEA, and you start putting the thing together, you bought a cupboard, but you actually want a desk. And so you start putting this thing together, hoping to get a desk, but there's no way you're going to get a desk, because the pieces that you got and the manual you got is for a cupboard, not for a desk. And the problem is that many Christians take the bits that God has given to them in the many things he gives us.

He's the church, he's word, he's spirit, he's grace, all of the things that he gives us. And what God gives us is what we need to produce what? People like Jesus. That's what it's all about.

But we take the ingredients that God gives us, and we say, well, never mind what the manual says, never mind what the picture on the box is all about. What I really want is, I want a good life. And yeah, I want to get to heaven also.

But I really want a good life. That's what it's about. And so I start taking the bits that God gives me, and I start assembling them, rejecting the manual, and think that I can use these pieces to build what I really want.

When in fact, what God gave us, and what the instructions are for, is for something totally different. What he gave us is that we might become like Jesus. That's God's purpose.

And that's our problem, is that my plan and my goal, and God's plan and God's goal is often very, very different. And so I'm constantly trying to use what God gives me to achieve my goals, and of course it doesn't work. You can use the planks that you got to build a cupboard with to go some other way to making a desk, but you're never going to get a good desk.

And you can use the Word of God, and you can to some extent achieve some kind of happiness in this life, but you're never going to be truly happy, because it's really not what it's designed for. And so he has given to us these things, that we... Verse 4, precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. I'm going to skip over that, not that it's not important, but I want to get through the bits that is on my heart this morning.

So verse 5, but also for this very reason, giving all diligence. And so this is what we need to do, and I like the Word of God because it is so practical, but the problem is we turn it into a whole bunch of theory, and we theologize about it, and we'll debate it, and we'll discuss it, and yet it's very, very practical. And here he says, this is what we now need to do, the theory is that God has given us everything through the knowledge of Him.

We have all the parts that we need. He's given us the purpose that we might be partakers of the divine nature, but now how am I going to assemble this whole thing? How am I going to put it all together? And so here's the recipe, here are the instructions, and you need to follow these instructions step by step. Don't do what I do.

I'll build the thing to some point, and then I get stuck, and then I'll jump to point number 23 on the list of the instructions, and I'll start doing number 23, and I'll progress to 24, 25, 26, 27, I'll get to 31, and I realize, oh, I should have done number one, and I have to undo all of the stuff I did, and I have to begin at point number one again. Now here he's giving us the sequence, and you have to follow the sequence step by step. And so he says, for this very reason, giving all diligence, that's where it begins.

It begins with diligence. You've heard me speak about this word before, and you've heard me say that diligence is not something we use in connection with vacation. We don't say that John is a diligent vacationer, or Don is a diligent sleeper.

We only use that word diligent in connection with work. And so your testimonial will say he or she is a diligent worker. And so he's saying we need to be diligent, we need to apply ourselves.

Now there is a huge problem here, because we live in a time which is after the Reformation, and you remember what the Reformation was all about. Before the Reformation, the Roman church said, it's all the stuff that you do, you're saved by works. So you have to go to mass, you have to say your confessions, you have to take communion, you have to do all of these things.

And if you do all of these things, then maybe you can get to heaven, maybe you can be saved. And so you're saved by works. And then Martin Luther discovered that we're not saved by works, and he discovered in the that we're saved by faith.

Not through anything that we have done, but because of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary. But now what's happened is that we've gone to the other extreme, and we say, well, I don't have to do anything. He does everything.

Now that's only half true. Yes, he has done everything, but I need to do my little bit. I don't initiate the work, he begins the work.

But I have to respond, and step by step, I need to be obedient. And so we have a problem in that many people believe that I don't have to do anything. As long as I say I've believed, then I'm saved.

And so millions of people are in the church today, they believe that they're Christians, but they were never born again, because it's the wrong message. And so here Peter is bringing correction to that, because this is not a new problem. And he's saying, we need to add diligence.

I had some lengthy correspondence with a man in the last couple of weeks, who has a problem with unforgiveness. He is very angry and bitter with his wife, his ex-wife, and with his kids. He refuses to forgive them.

And he quotes all sorts of scriptures to prove that it's not up to him. God has to do this in him. God has to make him forgive.

This is an old teaching that goes way back to some Roman Catholic mystics, and some modern writers have caught on to that. And so really there's nothing we need to do. We're just along for the ride.

No, Peter is saying, you need to give diligence. You need to apply yourself faithfully. Now, folks, hear me.

I'm not saying that we're saved by what we do. We're saved by what he does. But having entered into what he has done, I now need to apply myself diligently.

And this is how we do it. Add to your faith, virtue. That's interesting.

He begins with faith. It begins with faith. The things that I do and the things I'm going to speak about in the time we have left this morning are not things that I do in order to get saved, in order to come to a point of salvation.

These are things that follow having believed. Let's go back to the people of Israel and illustrate this. The people of Israel came out of Egypt.

God brought them out of Egypt. Did God give them the Ten Commandments in Egypt and say, you need to keep the Ten Commandments, and if you keep them, I'll take you out of Egypt? No. What happened? God just took them out of Egypt.

They did nothing. All they had to do was believe, put the blood on the doorposts, pack their bags, follow the cloud or follow Moses and get out of the land. That's all they had to do.

God did the rest. But then once he had taken them out of Egypt and he brought them to Sinai, in fact, he says he brought them to himself, he now gives them the Ten Commandments. And he says, now that I've brought you out of Egypt, now this is how you need to live.

And God does the same with us, but we just put it back to front sometimes. God doesn't give us any standard and say, if you attain to this kind of level, if you keep these rules, then you'll be saved. He just saves us.

Of course, as I said concerning the people of Israel, I need to believe God's word. I need to pack my bags and leave Egypt, the world, and my old lifestyle. But he does it all.

But now that he has brought us to himself, he's now saying, this is how you need to live. Now that you have believed, these are the things that you need to do. And the first thing you need to do is you need to add to your faith, virtue, goodness.

Now, again, people say, but this is something God has to do for me. God has to make me good. And that's partly true.

There is an aspect in which God does change me. But there's also a part that I have to do. And I need to not just believe, but I now need to add to my faith being good.

And I'm not going to elaborate on that any further, because we're going to run out of time. And I think that you get the message on that point. And then you need to add to your character before he deals with knowledge.

And isn't that the way God deals with us? He saves us, and he deals with our character. He deals with the things in our lives that displease him first. When we first get saved, we stop doing certain things.

We start doing things that we didn't do before. There's a change. And that change is first of all in my character.

It's first of all in the things that I do. But it needs to move on from that. And there are many, many Christians in very good churches who preach the gospel.

And week after week, the preacher preaches that you have to live a good life. But it needs to move on from there. That's good.

That's one step away from just believing. But now I need to take another step. And I now need to add to my character knowledge.

And that's an area where we have enormous needs in the world today. Many, many Christians don't know the first thing about the Word of God. They don't know the first thing about God.

And so I need to... And I know there are people who say, well, I don't really want to know, because if I know, I become responsible. In fact, there was a very interesting article in Time magazine a few weeks ago. And this writer was saying that the Roman church needs to go back to the Latin mass.

In other words, not have mass in English, but they need to serve mass in Latin. And the reason why he said it, he said, because I don't really want to know. I just want to feel good about going and doing what I... and going through the ritual.

But I don't really want to know anything more than that. And if it's in Latin, I don't know anything. And that's great.

No, it's not great. Ignorance is no excuse. And you cannot stand before God one day and say, well, I did not know.

You can't drive down Magnolia Boulevard at 110 miles an hour and go to court and say, well, I didn't know it was wrong to drive 110. You think that's going to work? It won't work. And it's not going to work when you stand before God one day and say, I didn't know.

Maybe you genuinely didn't know. But he's simply going to say, but I gave you opportunities to know and you chose ignorance. And so I need to add knowledge.

That's why we emphasize the teaching and the preaching and the reading and the studying of the word of God. But now I can get stuck at that point and still not achieve what I'm trying to achieve. I still won't achieve the goal, which is becoming a partaker of the divine nature.

Because now I can just have all of this knowledge. And so there are Christians who just have faith. There are others who go a little bit further and they add to their faith character.

And then there are others who go a little bit further than that and they add to their character knowledge, but they get stuck at that point. I remember Paul says knowledge puffs up. Now, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be knowing, that we shouldn't be studying, but when all it is is knowledge and that knowledge does not progress to something more, I eventually become so proud of what I know, but I'm really not doing anything.

And so that knowledge needs to move. And he says in verse 6, so to knowledge, add self-control. Again, that's interesting.

He's not saying God control. He's saying self-control, discipline. This is something which we all struggle with.

We have such an emphasis. We say, well, you know, I'll do it if the Spirit leads me. I'll pray when the Spirit leads.

I'll read. I'll go to church if I know self-control, discipline. And so Paul says, I keep my body under control.

I don't allow my life to be controlled and be dictated to by my carnal desires, by what my body wants, by what my mind wants, but I control things by the Word of God. I live a disciplined life according to the Word

of God. I go to church.

I read the Word. I pray. I do the things that I need to do.

Why? Because God requires them of me. Now remember, we can go to the extreme where we say, well, you know, I'm living this kind of disciplined life. The Pharisees did that.

I fast twice a week. I give money to the poor. I do this.

I do that. They lived very disciplined lives, but they were still not saved. So we can have the discipline without having the reality.

No, it needs to begin with faith. Faith needs to move to character. Character needs to move to knowledge.

Knowledge needs to lead to self-control. So when I read the Scripture and the Scripture says, be angry and sin not, what do I do? Well, God, you need to make me not angry. You need to make me to not sin when I get angry.

No, it's an instruction that He gives us. Husbands, love your wives. It's an instruction.

How do I do that? By living a disciplined life, by self-control. Wives, submit to your husband. How do you do that? Well, God hasn't done it in my life yet.

No, you do it. Self-control. Running out of time.

To self-control, perseverance. Perseverance. Stickability.

Endurance. It's easy to give up when it gets tough. When things get hard, it's easy to just find an easy way out.

But we need endurance. He that endures to the end. Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

And so we need to endure. Too many Christians just give up. I'm sure that some of you tried and began to read the second Peter this week, and you gave up.

You didn't endure through the three chapters. Or maybe you read it the first time and you said, well, I don't understand. And you didn't endure to read it a second time and persevere to read it a third and a fourth time until you understood what it was about.

We need perseverance in every area of our lives. You need perseverance to make your marriage work. You need perseverance to run your family in a way.

You need perseverance to deal with the issue of debt in your life. We need perseverance on a Sunday morning when the weather is beautiful and we want to go to the beach and I know I should be in the Lord's house. There are so many areas in our lives where we need perseverance.

We need to see it through. I praise God that Jesus didn't give up, but that he endured to the end and paid the full price, that Peter didn't give up. And remember how many times Peter almost gave up, yet Peter endured in the end.

And he's writing these words a few days before he was to be killed for his faith. God help us to persevere and to perseverance, godliness. And I'm going to have to rush through these because I want to get to the conclusion.

Godliness add to that brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness add love. Now he says if these things are yours and abound, not just if they are yours, but if they abound, they need to be abundant in our lives. There mustn't just be a little bit of perseverance or a little bit of self-control or a little bit of knowledge.

There needs to be an abundance of these things. And if these things are ours and they abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, you can know Jesus, but that knowledge is unfruitful.

It doesn't produce fruit. It doesn't produce the fruit of the Spirit. It doesn't produce the nature of Christ.

It doesn't produce the kind of fruit in your family that you should, or in your job, or in the rest of your life. It's knowledge, but it's producing nothing. And unfortunately, the world is sick, and I'm sick and tired of Christians who have knowledge, but their knowledge is of no value whatsoever because it's not producing anything.

There is no fruit. And so how is your life? Is there fruit? Now, the problem is that if there isn't fruit, then we say, well, what I need to do is I need to somehow produce more fruit. But you cannot produce the fruit.

You have to fix the other problems first. And when you fix the other issues, when you add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, when you begin to do these things, what will happen? The fruit comes automatically. You see, if you have an orange tree in your yard, in your backyard, and the orange tree doesn't produce fruit, you can't make the tree produce fruit.

What do you have to do? You have to make sure that it has water. You have to make sure that it has enough sunlight. You have to make sure that it has the right nutrients, and so you give it fertilizer.

And when you create the right conditions, the fruit will come automatically. And when we do the right things in our lives, the fruit will come. But the problem is that so many of us are trying to produce the fruit.

We're saying, I want to be this. I want to be like God. And we're trying desperately to be like Jesus.

And it's not working. But you can't make yourself like Jesus. But what you can do is do the things that you need to do, create the right environment that the nature of Christ may come forth in your life.

And so you'll neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who lacks these things is short-sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure.

For if you do these things, you will never stumble. I'm going to close with verse 11. For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

An entrance will be ministered to you or will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom. Too many Christians just want to make it into the millennium and into heaven by the skin of their teeth. If I can just get there, that's all that matters.

Peter's saying, no, it's more than just getting there. It's more than just scraping in. It's getting in there with an abundant entrance.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. Jesus did so much for us, and yet we just want to do the minimum.

We just, we really just want to get to heaven. Now, he says, I want an abundant entrance. I want to go in with glory.

I want to hear those words. I want my Father to acknowledge me before the angels. I want him to acknowledge me before my brethren.

I want an abundant entrance. Father, we thank you for your word, and Lord, we pray that it's so easy for us to become discouraged, to give up, to not persevere. It's so easy for us, Lord, to try and skip the steps, and yet, Lord, we're so desperately trying to work on the outcome and trying to produce the results when, in fact, what we just need to do is to follow the guidelines and the steps that you've given to us.

Help us, Lord, to follow these steps. Lord, create within us a desire, and Lord, I know that there are maybe those in the service this morning, Lord, whose only desire is just to get to heaven. Lord, help us to change our thinking, and create within us a desire, Lord, to be like Peter and like Paul, who was able to say that, I've run the race, I've finished the course.

Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me. Lord, we want to have an abundant entrance, and we pray that you would create within us a desire for that. Forgive us, Lord, for trying to build something that you didn't give us the parts for.

Help us, Lord, to build the plan that you gave us. Help us, Lord, to build that divine nature. And so, Lord, as we struggle with these things, we pray that you would give us grace, that you'd help us.

Help us, Lord, just to follow the steps one step at a time. Forgive us, Lord, for trying to do a thousand things at the same time. Help us, Lord, just to do that one thing that you're asking us to do right now today.

Help us just to be obedient in that one thing this day, and not to go from this place without having made a conscious decision to be obedient to you in that one step that you're speaking to us about right now. We ask this in Jesus' name. Part us with your blessing.

Protect us in this world. Bring us together again safely this evening. We pray for those who are not here, who are away for various reasons.

We think of the terrorists in Washington, D.C., and we pray that you'd be with them, and protect them, and keep them, and bring them back to us safely. We ask these things in Jesus' lovely name. Amen.

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