

How does your Christian scorecard look

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into 2 Peter chapter 1, focusing on the progression of adding virtues to one's faith diligently. It emphasizes the importance of not selectively choosing virtues but adding all of them equally to become Christ-like. The speaker highlights the need for self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, stressing that without love, all other virtues are meaningless. The audience is encouraged to self-assess their spiritual growth and strive to increase in these virtues over time.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:5, 2 Peter 1:8, 2 Peter 1:9, 1 Corinthians 13:2, John 14:15, Galatians 5:22, 1 Corinthians 13:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 John 4:7

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "The Importance of Love in Virtue"

Description

This sermon delves into 2 Peter chapter 1, focusing on the progression of adding virtues to one's faith diligently. It emphasizes the importance of not selectively choosing virtues but adding all of them equally to become Christ-like. The speaker highlights the need for self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, stressing that without love, all other virtues are meaningless. The audience is encouraged to self-assess their spiritual growth and strive to increase in these virtues over time.

Transcript

2nd Peter chapter 1, and I'm going to read verses 5 through 11. 2nd Peter chapter 1, 5 through 11. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, 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. I shouldn't have closed it. So we started with this list last week in verse 5, but also for this very reason, because he has given us all the promises that we need in order to live godly lives.

He has need to give all diligence, so he has given us the promises, we need to give diligence, we need to give application, we need to put in sweat equity, if you will, and add to your faith virtue. And so remember

we said that this list is not a list of things that are built on one another, and that you you begin with faith, and then you add virtue, and then you add knowledge, but in fact all of these things need to be added all at the same time. And so also they are all equally important.

The problem with a list like this is that we we look at the list and we say, well, you know, I like knowledge, so I'll work on knowledge, and I'll ignore the others. No, you can't choose the ones that you want and ignore the rest. All of them are necessary.

All of them, in order for us to become Christ-like, to become who He wants us to be, needs to add all of these things in equal measure. Now you'll see that later on he says that we have some of these things, and we have probably most of them to some extent or the other. The question is not whether we have a little bit, it's not whether we have a C- in virtue.

Let's just use that one as an example. And we say, well, you know, that's fine. What we need to strive at is that we have an A-plus in each one of those, that we have an A-plus in every one of these areas that result in a complete and in a fruitful, because you'll see that later on he speaks about the fact that if we don't have these things, we are barren, or we are unfruitful.

And so we need to be giving diligence, and we need to add to our faith virtues. So it begins with faith, it ends with love. Those two are in the beginning and the end.

Everything in between is not in a particular sequence. And so we spoke about virtue or goodness, and to virtue knowledge. Now we get to verse 6. To knowledge we need to add self-control.

Self-control. Now you may remember that I said last week that all of these things are things that God does for us, but they are things that we need to be doing. So there is a aspect of what God does, and there is an aspect of what I need to be doing.

So if you go to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5, you'll find that it lists there self-control as a fruit of the Spirit. And so that is one of the fruit of the Spirit. There are obviously other aspects.

And so the emphasis is generally to say, well, you see, it's a fruit of the Spirit. You can't work for fruit. Fruit is something that comes out naturally, and that's true.

Fruit is a result of a relationship, really, and I'm not going to get into that. But here he is adding the other dimension, the other aspect. The self-control is not just a fruit of the Spirit, but self-control is something that we need to do.

The same applies, obviously, to each one of these things. Perseverance is something we need to do. There's a tendency amongst Christians to say, well, let go and let God.

In fact, there used to be a chorus we used to sing many years ago, let go and let God. And so I just need to let go and let God produce these things. No, Peter is saying you need to produce these things.

You need to add to your faith these things. And so self-control is something that we need to do. This is not God controlling us.

He does that to some extent, but by and large is expecting us to control ourselves. Now, of course, the other extreme, and we need to keep the balance in these things, the other extreme is that the self-made man says, well, you know, I can do all of these things. And remember that we emphasized last week that

none of us can do these things on our own.

We need God to help us. We do the little bit, and He does the big part. He does the heavy lifting.

So to say, well, you know, I don't have self-control, and if God doesn't give me self-control, then it's not going to happen. No, he is saying you begin to exercise self-control, and then God will help you, and He will add the bulk of what you need. But it needs to begin with self-control.

I mean, it speaks for itself. It's self-control. It's self-control.

The problem is that we often lack self-control, and we say, well, you know, it's not my fault. The devil made me do it, or God made me do it. Remember, there are those who believe that God makes people do bad stuff.

No, you need to add self-control. And this self-control is in every area of our lives. It deals with sin.

It deals with addictions. It deals with habits. It deals with our anger.

It deals with every area of our lives. We need to be self-controlled. In other words, self-disciplined.

And this is something that many people are not good at, for all sorts of various reasons. But it is something that we need to learn. We can't just allow ourselves to do whatever we want to do.

That's the modern tendency. That's the modern trend. And we have a technical name for it, and it's called hedonism.

Hedonism means that I can do whatever I want to do, and it's all about me and I, and if I want to do something, then, as Nike says, just do it. No, we don't just do it. We exercise self-control.

We exercise self-control in what we say. You say, but it's the truth. Yeah, it may be the truth, but it may not be helpful.

So you need to exercise self-control. We say things to one another, particularly in the context of marriage, things that should never be said. And we say, well, it's the truth.

It needs to be said. Now, there are certain things that should not be said, and that need to be just internalized. We need to exercise self-control.

When we feel we don't want to come to church because it's too cold tonight, or it's whatever it is, there's a need for self-control. When it comes to eating, there's a need for self-control. When it comes to overwork, people who are addicted to work, they need to exercise self-control.

When it comes to our prayer life, there's a need for self-control. When it comes to studying the Word of God, there's a need for self-control. When it comes to applying myself in my relationships, there's a need for self-control.

Every area of my life needs to be controlled. And as I've said, it's not just me controlling things, but it is allowing God to empower me to control myself, and to make sure that I'm not just running around wild, just doing whatever comes to mind. That's anarchy, and we see anarchy in certain parts of the world, and we'll see more of it here in America.

But a lot of people's own lives are just anarchy. There's just no rules. There's no law.

They just do whatever they choose to do. That is not what a Christian does. A Christian exercises self-control.

To self-control, you need to add perseverance. And again, this is something we need to do. Perseverance—I don't need to get into the technicalities of the word.

The word is well translated in English. It simply means endurance. There's a very good English word, which you may not know, called stickability.

Anyone hear the word stickability? The ability to stick things through, to stick through difficulties, through hard times. We don't need perseverance when things are easy. We need perseverance when things are hard.

And yes, things are hard right now. Things are very hard for many, many people in 2020, because of everything that has come upon us. And in fact, I was having a conversation with another pastor overseas during this week, and he was saying that we always thought about the tribulation as being a time—and I'm not saying we're in the tribulation.

I don't believe that we're in the tribulation now. But that, you know, that it's going to be all these wars, and yes, it's going to be those things. And that what we're experiencing now is really unimportant, because we're not seeing dead bodies in the streets.

People have enough to eat. We're making do. But in fact, the impact on people's emotions and on their psyches is unprecedented, as we deal with the virus and the uncertainty of that, as we deal with the political environment and the stuff that's going on in our country as a result of the elections that are coming up, the financial difficulties, the physical difficulties.

There are problems on every side, and we don't begin to understand the impact that it's having on us. And many people just want to opt out, just want to run away. Many, in fact, do that.

They just close the doors, and they get stuck in front of their televisions, and they just watch one movie after the other, trying to escape what is going on. No, we need perseverance. Many churches are choosing not to be open right now.

Others are choosing to break the law and to meet inside. And it's uncomfortable outside. It's noisy.

It's cold tonight. But we need perseverance. And the temptation for me to give up on this is easy, to say, well, we've had enough of being outside.

We're going to go inside. No, we need perseverance, folk. We need to see this thing through.

We have made a commitment to obey the law as far as this is concerned, because we don't believe that it is contrary to the will of God. And so we need to persevere. We need to see it through.

And I'm going to speak about that a little bit later in the announcements. It's not beginning that matters. It's how we end that matters.

And I'm sure you know the story in Aesop's fables of the rabbit and the tortoise. It's not how fast you are. It's not how well you begin.

It's whether you persevere and make it through to the end. He who endures to the end will be saved. And the longer you serve God, the harder it gets, because the excitement of being newly saved is over.

The excitement of reading the Word of God. I heard of somebody the other day said, well, I've read through the whole Bible now. I'm done with that.

Now what? What now? So let's go and look at this or look at that. No, we need perseverance in studying the Word of God over and over and over. And the wonderful thing about the Word of God is, in fact, that every time you examine it, there are fresh things, and it is new, and it's exciting.

It never loses. For the true child of God, it never loses its excitement. But at the same time, we need to persevere.

We need to persevere in the same way as we need to exercise self-control in those many areas in our lives. We need to persevere in all of the areas of our lives. We need to persevere in our marriages when things are tough.

We need to persevere when physically we're not feeling up to the task. We need to persevere in Bible reading. We need to persevere in prayer.

We need to persevere in church attendance. We need to persevere in witnessing and in evangelism. We need to persevere in loving the brethren.

We need to persevere in resisting evil. We need to persevere in keeping our minds under control. And the list goes on and on and on and on.

Folk, we need perseverance, and perseverance is hard, not because perseverance is hard, but because of what we need to persevere in. You don't have to, you don't have to persevere. I don't have to persevere when it comes to eating ice cream.

It takes no perseverance to eat ice cream. It takes perseverance to deal with hardship and to deal with difficulty. And as we face difficulty, and as we will face more and more difficulty in the country and in the church and in Christianity in general, we need to endure.

We need to persevere. We need to, the scripture uses the word patience, and remember that word patience generally is the same word as the word endure or persevere. So there's a need, probably as never before, and certainly in the 50 years I've been a Christian, 48 years I've been in the ministry, there has never been a time that Christians needed perseverance more than right now, more than right now.

These are the darkest times that I have ever seen. Maybe you say, well they're not that dark politically, they're not that dark economically. They are dark, they are desperately dark spiritually.

I don't think we begin to understand how desperate the time is, how severe the onslaught and the attack against the truth and against true Christianity is. It has never been as it is today. We need perseverance.

And then we need godliness. We need to add, and remember the whole idea is adding, adding, adding. We need to add godliness.

And again, it's an easy word to understand. Godly means to be like God. And we, and you remember that, that he spoke about that earlier on in verse 3 or 4. We need to increase them in being more like God, being more like Him, being godly in, again, every area of our life, being godly in our marriage, being godly as a citizen, being godly as an employee, being godly as a brother in the church, being godly in our behavior in the streets, in the stores.

In every area of our lives, we need to be like God. That's the purpose that He saved us for. He didn't save us to be ourselves.

I mean, if that was what it was about, then He didn't need to save us, because we were pretty good at being ourselves. But we needed to become like Him, and that's why He saved us. That's what it's all about, that He might make us like Himself, that we might be godly.

But He is making us, but He is also asking us to be and to add godliness to our behavior, godliness to our thoughts, godliness to our emotions and our feelings. We need to check our feelings, because we say, well, you know, I just feel angry. I feel frustrated, as these are feelings that people are experiencing right now.

But is that a godly way to feel? No, I need to feel the way that God feels. I need to think the He thinks. I need to respond, and I need to react the way that God responds and God reacts.

Every area of my life needs to reflect Him, and that's a challenge. I think that that one on its own probably encompasses all of these others, because God is self-controlled. God is enduring.

He is long-suffering. God is good, virtuous. Remember in the previous verse.

So godliness encompasses all of these things. And so the question really is, to what extent am I adding godliness? Now, when we're adding, I don't mean to teach you math, but I think we all understand that adding means that you start with something, and you put something more to it. So if you have one, and you add one more, you now have two.

So there needs to be an increase. And so our godliness needs to be increasing. We need to be adding ever more godliness.

If our godliness, or any of these things, is reducing over the last six months, over the last year, over the time that we've been born again, if our godliness is reducing, we're not adding, we're subtracting. I mean, that's really deep, isn't it? We need to be adding. There needs to be more godliness today than there was yesterday.

There needs to be more godliness than there was six months, a year, five years ago. And the same applies to all of the others. So let's go to verse 7. To godliness, add brotherly kindness.

So we're coming to the end of the list. And to brotherly kindness, love. Now, again, he uses two different words here.

The word for brotherly kindness, it's one Greek word, but it's translated in two words here. And that's a word we know very well, the word philadelphia, or philadelphos. So, brotherly love.

And then he says love. So there are two different things here. There are some people who say, well, there's no real difference between these words.

Clearly there's a difference, because he's using these two different words. And of course, the word for love here is agape, godly love. And so the first thing then in this verse is that we need to add brotherly kindness, brotherly kindness, brotherly love.

Where do we show brotherly love? Well, obviously to the brothers, in the context of the church, in the context of the body of Christ. There needs to be love amongst the brethren. And of course, this is a theme that goes right through the New Testament.

Paul over and over says, brethren, love one another. John's epistles are all about loving one another. If you say you love your brother, and you don't meet his needs, you don't really love him.

And so, love for the brethren. How do I show that brotherly kindness? How do I show that brotherly love? Well, I show it in practice. You see, here's the problem.

All of the things that he is dealing with in these three verses are things that need to be shown. They are not emotions that I feel. Godliness is not something I feel, it's something I am.

Persevering is not something I think, it is something I do. And so these are things that are shown in a practical way. And when we say, well, you know, I love the brothers, but I don't want to be with them in church.

Well, do you really love the brothers? I love the brothers, but, you know, I really can't stand them. Brotherly love needs to be put into real practice as we love one another, care for one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, build one another up in our most holy faith. These are practical things that need to be done.

And again, they need to be added to. We can't say, well, you know, I'm just an introvert, or, you know, I'm just not expressive in my... No, we need to... And I'm not talking about a sappy, you know, shallow kind of, oh, you know, I just love the brothers, you know, I just love you guys, you know. No, this is something that is needs to be shown as God demonstrated His love towards us in that Christ died for us.

God didn't send a sappy hallmark card and say, you know, I love the world. He showed His love. He proved His love by Christ dying for us at the cross of Calvary.

And if we have brotherly love for one another, that needs to be shown and demonstrated in our care for one another, in our concern for one another, and so on and so forth. And so to our godliness, and so from godliness flows almost brotherly kindness or brotherly love. And then to brotherly love or brotherly kindness, love.

And remember that Paul says, this is the greatest of all the things, greater than faith. Now where did we start? We started with faith. Add to your faith.

So it begins with faith. But greater than faith is love. Now love obviously without faith is no good.

The same way as works without faith is dead, or faith without works is dead, so faith without love is dead. And love without faith is dead. Now I hope I'm not confusing you.

So it needs to end in godly love, in godly love. So if brotherly love, and that word Philadelphia or Philadelphus can be translated, you know I think the translation here is fine, it's okay, brotherly kindness, but really strictly speaking or literally it should be brotherly love. So if I'm exhibiting brotherly love towards

the brethren, then what do I do with love? Because he's now dealt with the brethren, and the sisters too obviously.

Well obviously the love is something that relates to God. I don't have a brotherly love for God. Remember that was Peter's problem in John chapter 21.

Jesus says to Peter, do you have love? Do you have agape for me? And Peter says, I phileo you, I have a brotherly love for you. Was that what Jesus wanted to hear? Not really. I mean it was the truth, and Peter did well to speak the truth.

And so the loving for, of loving the brethren is not how we love God. We need to love God at a higher and a deeper level. What is the greatest command? That you love the Lord God with all your heart, all your strengths, and all of your might.

We need to love God with everything. That's where it begins. So we need to love the brethren, but we need to love God at an even higher level.

And in fact, why do we love the brethren? Because we love God. That's really where it begins. We don't love the brethren just because we love the brethren.

That flows from our love for God. We love Him and your neighbor, he says, as yourself. And so I believe that when it speaks about brotherly love, it deals with our relationships amongst ourselves.

When it speaks about love, agape here, it deals with my relationship with God. So all of these other things you can have in place. Let's go back.

You can be diligent. You can have faith. You can have goodness.

You can have knowledge. You can have self-control. You can have perseverance.

You can have godliness. You can have brotherly kindness. But if you don't have love, you have nothing.

Isn't that exactly what Paul said? Even though I have all knowledge, and I have no love, I have nothing. I can even give my body to be burnt as a sacrifice. I don't have love.

I have nothing. And so none of these other things matter if I don't end up in loving God, and if it doesn't flow from loving God. That is what it's all about.

If we love Him, Jesus said, you will keep my commandments. Are these things commandments? Yes, they are. Are they His commandments? Yes, they are.

Because Peter goes on, and we'll see that in the next few weeks. Peter says that we haven't sucked these things out of our thumb. These are things that we received from Him.

These are His commandments. And you say, well, these are not commandments. Yes, they are.

When it says add, let's go back to the beginning, add to your faith virtue. What is that? It's a command. It's not a suggestion.

It's not a philosophical idea. It's a command. Christians, you must add to your faith virtue.

You must add to your virtue knowledge. It's a second command. You must add to knowledge self-control.

These are commands. If we love Him, we will keep His commands. We will do what He says.

You can see how these things are intertwined and interconnected. You can't have one without the other. But it must begin with faith.

In other words, if you do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, all of these things, you can do all of these things, and it's going to be worthless. It doesn't add. It doesn't count.

In fact, you can't do them because you need Him to help you. And if it doesn't, if it's not capped off by a divine love, a love for God, and obviously flowing from that, a love for His Word, a love for His people, and so on, again, I'm incomplete. And in fact, Peter goes on to say that, and I'm just going to introduce this, and we'll deal with this next week.

So if we go to verse 8, for if these things are yours and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I didn't write down the next verse, but the next verse says, He who lacks these things is short-sighted even to blindness, and is forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. In other words, you are barren, fruitless.

There is no fruit in your life if these things are not present. And in fact, you have forgotten that you were saved. Now, I'm going to deal with that in much more detail next week.

So I think that we have some homework here. I think that we need to go home and say, let me look at this list. And Peter likes the list as much as Paul likes these lists, and we tend to look at the list, and we say, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, okay, I've got it.

Now, I think that we need to draw up a scorecard. And I would urge you to go home and draw up a scorecard of each one of these things. Begin with faith.

End with love. How am I doing? Rate yourself. Now, I know that we're pretty good at rating ourselves, aren't we? No, we're actually not very good at it.

But we need to try and say, and remember, what is the standard? The standard is Jesus. Did Jesus endure? Yes, He endured. Was Jesus—did He exhibit brotherly love? Was He godly? Did He have goodness, virtue? Yes, He had.

That's the standard. And that's the basis on which we score ourselves. And so, I would encourage you to go home and actually write it down, you know, because the thing is, we look at the stuff, and we say, well, I know it.

As I've told you before, I didn't do very well at school, but later on, I learned to study a little. And one of the keys that I learned was that it was no good looking at the page and saying, yeah, I got this. What I needed to do is I needed to close the book and write it down.

What does it say? Write it down. And then I realize, oh, I don't even know where to start, or I know where to begin, but I don't know what the next step is. So I don't have it.

I don't understand it. So let me get back to the book. Now let me test myself.

All right, now I've got it. I still do exactly the same thing when I prepare to preach. My final test is to go through the passage in my mind and say, what is it that I understand? What is it I need to say? Without notes, without the Bible, but knowing that I know it.

And so I would encourage you, test yourself. Don't just say, I know the list. I've heard the sermon.

No, write these things down one after the other, and then grade yourself. How are you doing? And then I want you to do one more thing, and that is to grade yourself against where you were a year ago. Where you were a year ago.

Have I increased in brotherly love? Have I increased in goodness or virtue? Have I increased in godliness? Or am I in the same place? Or am I subtracting? Am I moving backwards? You say, well, you know, I don't really like to do that. Well, I guess the reason we don't like to do that is because we know what the results may be. Well, that's good.

It's good even if you fail the test. It's good. Because hopefully that will drive us to say, you know, I need to improve.

I need to do better. I need to be adding and not subtracting. I need to be adding and not staying in the same place day after day, year after year.

And so let me encourage you to take this passage and to do a little bit of homework. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, that it is eminently practical.

And Lord, that you don't just give us all kinds of theology and theory, but Lord, you give us stuff that we need to do. And Lord, I pray that we may be those who are doing these things that are adding to our faith, those things that you require of us. Lord, because we don't want to be unfruitful and barren.

We don't want to be those who have forgotten that we were purged from our former sins. But Lord, we want to be those who glorify you in our lives. And so, Lord, I pray that you would help us as we deal with these things and as we struggle with them.

Lord, we pray that you'd continue with us in the rest of the service as we spend time in prayer and as we spend time in encouraging one another. Lord, we pray for those who are not here. We pray that you would minister to them according to their need.

We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/oafNTi74k04.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/anton-bosch/how-does-your-christian-scorecard-look/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net