

Shortsighted and Barren

by Anton Bosch

This sermon from 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 5 through 15 emphasizes the importance of diligently adding virtues to our faith, such as knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. It warns that lacking these virtues leads to being short-sighted or even blind, forgetting the cleansing from sins. The message urges believers to make their calling and election sure by abounding in these virtues to avoid being barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, ultimately aiming for an abundant entrance into His kingdom.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:5, 2 Peter 1:9, Hebrews 6:7, Revelation 3:17, James 1:22

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Virtue in Faith"

Description

This sermon from 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 5 through 15 emphasizes the importance of diligently adding virtues to our faith, such as knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. It warns that lacking these virtues leads to being short-sighted or even blind, forgetting the cleansing from sins. The message urges believers to make their calling and election sure by abounding in these virtues to avoid being barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, ultimately aiming for an abundant entrance into His kingdom.

Transcript

2 Peter chapter 1 and we'll read 5 through 15. 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 5 through 15. 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 neither be 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 it 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. So we were in verses 5 through 7 in the last two weeks and so we need to be diligent we need to be faithful and we need to add these various things to our faith beginning with faith ending with love. There's a total of seven or eight of those things and so he then gives the reason why we must do this.

He gives us the beginning he says because we have all of these promises we do them in the light of the promises but then he says that we do them because there are certain consequences there are certain results of us not if we are not adding these things and so if these things are yours and abound you will neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So let's be reminded again what these things are. They are faith begins with faith, virtue or goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

So he spoke about having a doing a scorecard last week and I trust that you've brought your scores so we can discuss them this evening. No not really that's between you and the Lord obviously so but I trust that you did go through them even if not on paper but at least in your heart and mind and say are these things present and so you'll see then that he says that if these things are yours that's the first thing if they are yours the word yours there is a is a property term from those days and it literally means you are in full possession of it the same ways if you hold your property free and clear in other words you have no mortgage on it and you have the title deeds if you have the title to your property it is yours the bank doesn't own a share in it it is yours and you own it totally that's the word that he is using here so he's saying these things need to be yours and they need to be fully yours they cannot be yours in in a sense that you're grasping after them there are many times when we when we look at these things if we if we look at self-control there is a sense in which we say well you know I'm I'm trying to get to it I'm trying to grab hold of it I'm trying to reach it but I don't have it what Peter is saying is no these things need to be ours we need to be in possession of them not just hoping to have them not just grasping over them for them not having them as a ideal somewhere in the future but having them in possession and so again we need to do that scorecard we need to go through these things and say do I possess faith is it mine is virtue or goodness is it mine do I have it do I have knowledge do I have self-control do I have perseverance do I have godliness do I have brotherly kindness do I have love so that's the question that we we must ask ourselves he says if these things are yours but not just that they are ours but that they abound it for if these things are yours and abound so we're going to find that same word again next week in verse 10 I think it is of course the word abound is simple it's not just that I have a little bit but I have an abundance the you remember that Paul likes this word in the book of Ephesians and he speaks about the super abundance having not just enough not just being filled but having an overflowing of these things so you can see that if we go back to the to the to the scorecard we spoke about having maybe a C minus or a B plus this is having an A plus it's having more if you can have more than a hundred percent it's having more than a hundred percent it's an abundance it is not just enough but there is it's overflowing and so again we need to go through that scorecard we need to go to that list and say do I have these things number one and number two do I have them in abundance and I think if we go back to the list we and if we're honest we will say no I don't have all of these things in abundance I may have some of them I may be grasping after others and I may be abundant in one area or the other but I am not abundant in all of them and I don't think that there's one of us who can say that we are that we abound in faith virtue goodness knowledge self control perseverance godliness brotherly kindness and love I think that most of us just sort of make it so then he says if these things are yours and abound you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ now you remember it all begins with knowledge he begins the the beginning of this whole thing he speaks about knowledge we said that he uses this word I think six times in

this chapter or five times in the chapter seven times in the book and so it all begins with knowing God knowing the Lord Jesus Christ knowing his word and remember we said this is not just knowing him in an academic sense but knowing him with our hearts knowing him personally not just having read about him but knowing him you remember Job and I don't remember if I quoted Job when we dealt with this a few weeks ago but Job comes out of that that huge experience as God allows Satan to attack him at every level and he comes through that experience and he says I have heard of you by the hearing of my ear but now mine eye sees you Job was a good and a righteous man he had a knowledge of God but it was a second-hand knowledge he had heard of God through whatever way God revealed himself to him but now he comes to a place where he says I see you I know you better than I knew you before I know you more intimately because remember God reveals himself to Job not in his suffering so much but in his questioning God reveals to Job his greatness and his glory and so if these things are yours and abound you will neither be unfruitful or barren unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ so we can know him Peter saying but that knowledge can be unfruitful that knowledge can be barren so let me deal with those two words and then we'll go back to the to the to the knowledge so so we have these two words barren and unfruitful now Peter's style of writing is different to Paul's style of writing Paul will use different words sometimes several words that are the same but they're not exactly the same so they they they build on an idea and so if you look at it on the surface what Paul is saying you say well why did he use three words to say the same thing no he's not saying the same thing all three those words are slightly different and there's a different aspect or facet of the truth that he is highlighting Peter here uses a different device and what we call a literary device a way of of expressing himself a way of writing and and what he does is he uses two words that are exactly the same so these are not two words that are building on an idea but they are exactly the same and and in a sense he uses it later on in the next in the next verse also but we'll speak about that so the word barren is the Greek word is generally translated idle idle so in the sense of not doing anything it appears I can't remember exactly but probably eight times or so in the New Testament you remember that he tells a parable of a man who goes out and hires servants in the marketplace in our context it would be at at Home Depot where the men stand wait to be hired and he gets there and he finds some men and he takes them he hires them and he goes later and and he he finds more and he says why are you standing idle why are you standing here and doing nothing obviously the answer was because no one had hired them yet but you see the the word they are there but they are achieving nothing they just waiting for something to happen they're waiting to be hired and so that's the way the word is normally translated here the word is translated barren because obviously the context requires that and it's simply me and it's a good translation in other words fruit without fruit and the word unfruitful different Greek word but exactly the same meaning in other words there is no result there is nothing coming out of your knowledge and you remember that this is a this is a message that the Lord Jesus speaks on over and over and over I remember he comes to the fig tree and he finds there's no fruit on the fig tree and he curses the fig tree the fig tree is a symbol of Israel and as he comes to Israel to his people he finds them barren he finds them fruitless and he curses them in in the sense that he he rejects them remember he speaks another parable tells another parable of a man who goes into his into his orchard and he finds a tree and the tree is barren the tree is fruitless it's not bearing fruit and it's been there for a long time so he says to the gardener why is this tree here all this time and it's it's it's using up the soil it's using space that we could have put another tree that is bearing fruit and the gardener pleads for the tree and he says well you know give me another year and I'll fertilize it and I'll water it and let's see maybe it'll be a fruit if it doesn't bear fruit then we'll chop it out and so over and over Jesus uses this parable or this example the simile of a tree that is not bearing fruit and that has no right to existence and so here's exactly the same thing and remember Peter's master Peter's teacher was the Lord Jesus so he's

got the same idea obviously by the Holy Spirit and what he is saying then is that it is possible to know the Lord to know the Lord in the sense of being saved but still to be unfruitful still to be unfruitful that's a serious place to be at because if we are unfruitful there is the danger that the tree can be chopped out now we understand God's grace but as we if we are fruitless if we're not bearing fruit the Christian life is a strange thing we need to bear fruit not so much for his sake because he can cause things to happen he can do things he doesn't need us to do things on his behalf but we need to be bearing fruit for our own sake and when we see barrenness in our own lives it is it is discouraging it should be discouraging but in fact what happens is we become content with not bearing fruit with just being all show and no go remember the tree had leaves but there was no fruit on it and unfortunately so many Christians are all show and no go they can talk the talk they can they can put on the the act they can look like the real deal but in fact there is no fruit whatsoever Hebrews chapter 6 speaks about the fact that we need to produce fruit for the sake of those who are tilling the soil for those who are working in our lives the gardener represents in the sense the the leadership of the church who are who are fertilizing and watering and looking for fruit and those who who lead in the church are entitled to fruit and I'm not talking about money I'm talking about seeing some results on their labor and when there is no result when the tree is barren year after year after year it becomes very discouraging for the individual but particularly discouraging for those who are ministering to that particular tree so there is a very real possibility of being barren and so we need to then extend the scorecard and say is there fruit on these things we go back to the list is there fruit to my face is there fruit to my goodness now remember we said these things are fruit in themselves but here Peter is not speaking of them as being fruit in themselves but as things that we need to add to our faith so they we add them and then they become fruit is their knowledge is their self-control or fruit on our knowledge am I just accumulating information but it's not really improving my life it's not changing who I am and unfortunately there are many Christians today who are accumulating Bible knowledge they listen to all the teachers they read all the books they read the Bible they have the knowledge but in fact it is fruitless there is no fruit on it is there fruit on my self-control is there fruit to my perseverance is there fruit to my godliness to my brotherly kindness and to my to my love so that's the first question we must ask ourselves is am I adding am I owning these things are they mine are they in abundance and he says if they are then they will cause me to not be barren nor unfruitful so we can try and work on the fruit-bearing side but in fact that's not going to help very much the tree doesn't doesn't you can't go to the fruit tree and say well you know you better bear fruit it just doesn't work that way you what the fruit tree needs to do is the fruit tree needs to be drawing from the soil the ingredients that it needs and obviously from the rain and from the Sun from the light it needs those things and as as it draws from those things the fruit come automatically and as we draw these things from the Lord Jesus and as these things are working in our lives that produces fruit we can try and produce fruit and we don't have these things in abundance and there will be no fruit it's simple if that if the tree is deficient in a nutrient whatever it may be and I don't know much about about these things but I understand that they need nitrogen and they need phosphates and they need alkalines or pH soil of a particular pH they need a certain amount of water a certain amount of light all of these things need to be present if one of those things is not present the tree will not produce fruit and so he is saying these things need to be in my life what things these things and they need to be abounding in other words these are the ingredients that will result in fruit so it's no good trying to fix the fruit part what I need to do is fix the nutrients the ingredients I need to be adding to my face and when we plant plants we add things to the soil whatever the soil is deficient in if the soil is deficient in nitrogen we add nitrogen and it's a highly developed science and so they will test the soil and then they will even develop a fertilizer that contains all of the detailed all of the the micronutrients that the soil needs in order to bear fruit now the same thing is true of us there are certain things that we need if we're going to bear

fruit and these are the things if they are not there the fruit is not going to happen and so the same way as we add things to the soil you need to add things to your life and if we add those things to our lives the fruit will happen but of course if we sit back and we say well you know it's just going to happen God's going to somehow produce fruit out of my life it's not going to happen you have a certain role to play you have to add certain things and when we add those things the fruit happen and so if these things are yours and abound you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ now verse 9 for he who lacks these things so you can see that he's he's saying the same thing but in verse 8 he's saying it in a positive sense and in verse 9 he's saying the same thing in a negative sense again it's a it's a tool that he's using to emphasize the point and those of you have listened to me for the last 17 years will know that I say the same thing over and over just in different ways in the same message and from one week to the next I say the same thing just over and over but I should say differently why because I want you to get the message and Peter does exactly the same thing in fact it was Peter who says that you say the same things to you he says it's not tedious he says it's necessary and so Peter is coming at this thing from two different angles hoping that the penny will drop and so in verse 8 he says if these things are yours and abound verse 9 says if you don't have these things here are the consequences the positive consequences if we have these things in abundance there will be fruit we will not be barren we will not be unfruitful the negative consequence is if we lack these things then we are short-sighted even to blindness and has forgotten that he was cleansed of his old sins that he lacks these things and I think that if you did your scorecard you may recognize that there is maybe lack in one area or the other he lacks these things is short-sighted now this translation says even to blindness the original says is blind and short-sighted and you'll find that most translations have it in that order again we have the same problem we had in the previous verse and that is that these two words mean basically the same thing in how can you be blind and be short-sighted you can't be both if you're blind you can't see at all you're not you can't see far you can't see close you see nothing but again he's he's emphasizing the same point and so what this translator the New King James translators have done is they've tried to explain this by saying well short-sighted even to blindness I think that they've taken license with the translation again it's simply the same idea you are blind you can't see and you and or you are short-sighted now we we don't need a optician optometrist to explain what short-sighted means I think we all understand it means you can see close by but you can't see further away some of us are far-sighted we can see far we can't see close others are short-sighted they can see close they can read without glasses but they need glasses to see further away so he's now saying then that if these things are not present in our lives we are short-sighted and I'm gonna deal with that one and then I'll deal with blindness we are short-sighted we cannot see beyond the immediate here and now all we can see is what's right in front of us and there are two aspects there are two senses in which we become short-sighted the first is he gives us the first one here he has forgotten that he was cleansed of his old sins in other words he cannot see back to his salvation all he can see is now he has forgotten the miracle that God did in his life to cause him to be born again he has forgotten where he came from what he came out of he has forgotten the peace that God has brought into his life he's forgotten the miracle it took to save him in other words he has got used to being saved and he said well that's just the way it is and folk when we lose the ability to see back and obviously we don't go back we want to be careful that we don't revel in the in the dirt and the filth that we come from but we can never forget where we come from and you remember that God reminds Israel over and over and over that he brought them out of Egypt that in Egypt they had heavy taskmasters that in Egypt life where they were not free that things were hard and difficult in Egypt and he reminds them that I brought you out of Egypt never forget he institutes the feast and particularly the Passover that they might be reminded that God brought them out of Egypt never forget that God brought you out of the world and the moment we forget

that God has brought us out of the world we are short-sighted we must remember we must remember but you see when these things are not present in our lives all we can see is what we're dealing with right now with my present situation with my present problems and I've forgotten where I come from I can't see past today but obviously there is another sense and you'll see that the next few verses which I'm not going to get into this evening but you'll see that in the next few verses he's pointing to the future so there's a need for me to be able to look back at where I come from but there's also a need for me to be able to look forward to where I'm going and that's the biggest problem that Christians have today is because they're living for today and they forget about the future they forget about the fact that Jesus is coming soon they forget that there is a judgment coming they forget that there is an eternity to be spent in heaven they forget that there's a day when all of our trials and troubles will be taken away and there will be no more crying there will be no more sorrow and we will be eternally in his presence we forget those things we forget that there's a day when I will give an account for the opportunities that God has given me we'll forget that there's a day that he will call me to give an account for his word that he has given me for his spirit that he's given for the church he's given me to all of these things that he's given me there's going to be a day that he's going to call me to give account and somehow we we can't see that far because all we can see is today and we try to gratify our desires for today and we forget about the future. I believe that if we can see into the future and obviously we are our ability to see into the future is very limited God doesn't show us that much of the future for good reason he does give us glimpses of what's going to happen when Jesus comes but you remember that a few weeks ago I played you that hymn my favorite hymn the hymn that has changed my life and it speaks about the fact that when I see him I'm just paraphrasing and summing it all up in one or two sentences when I when I see him when I fully understand the price he paid for me I wish I'd given him more more so much more you see because on that day we will fully understand the price he paid for me we will fully understand what it cost him the Holy One to bear away my sin and we'll say but Lord I could have served you better in the light of what you've done for me you see we're short-sighted we can't see Calvary that's why he gives us the Lord's table as we come to his table week after week or months after months we are reminded of what he has done he's reminded to look back not just at the day we were saved but to look back 2,000 years ago when he died for me at the cross of Calvary that I may be reminded of these things that I might not be short-sighted and become so engrossed in living my temporary life now that I forget what happened back there at the cross that I forget what's going to happen when Jesus comes there's that book that I trust none of you have read your best life now your best life now no this is not our best life now as I said before if your best life is now well then you're not you're not a Christian because my best life is coming in glory in his presence in heaven that's going to be my best life now I'm not looking for my best life now I'm looking for my best life in his presence when Jesus comes but you see this is how gullible Christians have become this is how short-sighted the church has become that one of the best-selling Christian books today is telling us on the idea of the here and now it's not about here and now it's about eternity remember that Peter in his first epistle compares our suffering and he says they're just for a while they are a light affliction in the light of our eternal glory and so when we look at our and our troubles and our sorrows and our problems and our afflictions that they are temporary in the light of eternity they are small in comparison to the glory which is waiting for us the moment a marathon runner forgets the goal he gives up the race the moment he begins to focus on his aching legs and his panting breath and his tiredness he gives up but he has to have in front of him all the time the end goal remember looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith we need to see him as our beginning at the cross we need to see him as the end of the day of the glorious day of the resurrection we need to see him in those both those perspectives looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame what caused

Jesus to endure the cross the joy that was set before him the joy of winning for himself a church and a and a bride and so folk we need to have our eyes eyes tested we go for certainly I do go every second year to have my eyes tested because they're they're getting better and better every year just like the rest of me and they're not really but how often do we test our spiritual eyesight are we able to see spiritual things are we able to see eternity are we able to see the cross are these things real or has our eyesight become dim and we're not able to see have we even become blind to spiritual things and many many many Christians these days are totally spiritually blind they don't have a clue what is going on in the world they don't have a clue about God's Word they don't have a clue about this the soon return of the Lord Jesus he lacks these things is short-sighted may even be blind you remember the Church of Laodicea which we often refer to because it's the church of this age Revelation chapter 3 the Lord Jesus says to them I urge you by of me I solve that you may see you see their material comfort their material riches had blinded them to spiritual truths and Jesus said don't you understand that you're rich wretched miserable poor blind and naked they said we can see he says you don't see all you can see is your money all you can see is your temporary stuff you cannot see your spiritual bankruptcy he says but I'll give you I saw that you may see and I believe that maybe tonight there are those of us who need to have our eyes tested again and that we need to get I saw from the Lord Jesus that we might be able to see we may be able to see the past that we may be able to see the future but finally that we might be able to see ourselves the way we are you see here's the other problems this is my last point many of us are so short-sighted that we cannot even see ourselves in the mirror where's the mirror here's the mirror Paul says in Corinthians that we looking into the mirror or the glass and we are changed from one level of glory to another and when we can't see our faces in the mirror and recognize that we need to wash we have a real problem of course James speaks about those who have the other problem that they can see themselves in the mirror but they go away and they forget that they needed to wash their face but the problem I think that most of us have remember we touched on this last week when we spoke about the scorecard and I said you know we we all are very good at scoring ourselves and some laughed and you had reason to laugh because we're not good at scoring ourselves because we can't even see the mirror we can't even see what we look like in comparison to the Lord Jesus who also appears in the same mirror next to us how's your eyesight tonight father thank you for your word thank you Lord that you're encouraging us to press on towards that mark Lord that you're encouraging us to be fruitful in our knowledge to be fruitful in our in our faith to be fruitful in our love and Lord that we may not be those who are barren Lord that we may be those who can see Lord help us to see help us to see what it cost you as the song says the Holy One to bear away my sin help us Lord to see you'll soon return help us Lord to see your judgment help us Lord to see heaven help us above all or to see ourselves the way we really are not the way we think we are but the way we really are Lord that we might make the adjustments and the corrections that are necessary that we may be fruitful and that we may abound in fruit to your honor and to your glory Lord is not about us patting ourselves on the back and saying well I have great fruit but Lord that we may bless those around us the fruit is not for the tree the fruit is for those who come to the tree looking for food and for sustenance Lord that we may be there those who are bearing fruit that those around us in this in this world that is that is hungry and thirsty for righteousness and for truth Lord that they may come to our lives and find in us fruit that satisfies help us Lord we pray to get from you that we need in order that we might see I pray Lord that you would write these things upon our hearts Lord it's so easy for us to listen and to be pricked in our hearts in the in the preaching of your word and yet to go away and forget what we have heard like James says forgetting what we've seen but Lord we pray that we may be hearers doers of your word or that we will make corrections that are necessary that we may not be those who are barren and unfruitful but Lord that we may be those who bring joy to you in Jesus name we pray pray Lord that you'd continue with us now on the rest of the service in Jesus name

we pray amen

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