

Will you Stumble or Make a Grand Entrance

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into 2 Peter 1, emphasizing the importance of diligently adding virtues to our faith to ensure a fruitful and abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. It discusses the need for believers to confirm and ratify their salvation through faithful application and cooperation with God, highlighting the significance of not only being saved but also pleasing God with our actions and receiving rewards for our works in heaven.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:5, 2 Peter 1:8, 2 Peter 1:10, 2 Peter 1:11, James 2:26, Matthew 25:21, Revelation 22:12, 1 Corinthians 3:12, 2 Corinthians 5:10

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Faithful Stewardship"

Description

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Transcript

2 Peter 1, 5 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 Saviour Jesus Christ.

And we're in verses 10 and 11 this evening. And so you'll see that those verses are a continuation again of all of the thoughts that he has been dealing with before. If you just look at your Bible, hopefully you have and you can see in the dark.

But verse 2, he begins with grace. And verse 3 is not a new sentence. And verse 4 is not a new sentence.

Verse 5 begins with a word but. 6 is still the same sentence. And so is 7. Verse 8 begins with 4. And so that is still connected.

And then verse 9 begins with 4. And verse 10 begins, therefore. And verse 11 is still the same sentence. In other words, this is one long thought that goes from verse 5 right through to verse 12, in fact, because you'll see that verse 12 also begins with the word 4. All right.

So verse 10 is a difficult verse to understand for some people, particularly if you have a Calvinistic background. But for us who are not Calvinists, it's because it matches the rest of Scripture, the rest of the teachings of the Scriptures. And so we don't have to perform any sort of intellectual mental gymnastics to try and figure it out and try and make it work.

So in the light of what he has said, remember he begins by saying that he has provided everything that we need. And because he has provided everything that we need, we need to add to our faith virtue and those eight different things that need to be added. And then he gives us the warning that if this doesn't happen in verse 8, if these things are yours and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful.

And if we lack those things, we are short-sighted and we are not cleansed from our faith. In the light of all of that, he then says, therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure. So the word diligent, we've spent some time on that, and you remember that it appears in verse 5. This is at the beginning of these things that we need to add.

Also for this very reason, giving all diligence, application, doing, faithful application, effort. Some translations use the word giving all effort. And so the same word appears again here.

And so be even more diligent. So verse 5 says that we must be diligent. For this reason, give all diligence at your faith.

But now he says, be even more diligent. So having been diligent, we now need to be even more diligent. So we can never be diligent enough when it comes to the things of God.

And remember, just to remind you in case you've forgotten, because it's been a few weeks since we were there, diligence is always in connection with work. And remember that we've emphasized, and I'm going to come back to this in a moment, the fact that there is this cooperation between God and us. There's a part that God does, there's a part we do.

God does His part well. God is perfect in everything that He does. But now it's up to us to do our bit and respond to God.

We cannot save ourselves, He saves us. But we need to be diligent to add to our faith, virtue, and so on. And so be even more diligent to make your call and election sure.

Now, of course, some people stumble over this word election, of course. And remember that we don't believe that individuals are elected or chosen to be saved, that He chooses the church. And the word election, whenever it is used, is used in the context of the fact that He has chosen the church in Christ.

If there's any sense in which He has chosen individuals, He's chosen us in Christ. But we believe that it would make God unjust and unrighteous to choose some to be saved, because by definition, and they'll argue about this endlessly, but by definition, if you choose one to be saved and you don't choose the other

one, then the other one is chosen to be condemned or to be damned. And so for God then to naturally, and they like this word sovereign, sovereignly choose one to be saved and another to be damned, we believe that that makes God unrighteous.

He is not willing, as Scripture says, for any to perish, but all to come to repentance. That God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever, not just those that He has chosen, but whosoever will believe on Him will not perish, but will have everlasting life. And so when He uses the word call and election, remember we found Peter using these two words in conjunction in previous verses also.

And when he uses those two words, it's not in the same way as Paul does. When Paul uses two words, he is using them to draw degrees of comparison. All will go from one word to a stronger word, to a stronger word, or the other way around.

When Peter uses two words, those two words invariably mean exactly the same thing. They are not degrees of comparison. They are not stronger or weaker words.

They are just two different words for exactly the same idea. And he's using it as emphasis, the same way as Jesus says, verily, verily, or truly, truly. Why doesn't He just say truly? He's emphasizing.

We do the same in English. We say that something is very, very big. Why do we say it's very, very big? Well, because we're trying to emphasize the fact that it's really, really big.

And I've just done exactly the same thing there again. Used the same word twice. So what Peter does is he uses then the same word, or different words, but exactly the same idea.

So calling and election are not two different things. They are the same thing. And they refer to our salvation.

They refer to our salvation. So we have been called, and we don't believe that He calls only some. I believe that He calls all men to repentance.

So all are called, but not all respond to the call. Remember, there's that cooperation thing again. So God calls, we need to respond.

If we don't respond, well, then God's call comes to nothing. Now Calvinists speak, just for those who study these things, they speak of the effectual call of God. In other words, when God calls, it is irresistible.

You cannot say no to God. Well, we know very clearly from many examples in Scripture that you can say no to God. It's very easy, in fact, to say no to God, to just not respond to His call.

So He's then saying, our salvation. Let's just use that word because it makes it a little easier to understand. So make your salvation sure.

Now here's where we get into difficulty. So how then do I make my salvation sure? Can I save myself? We've said, answer that question. No, I cannot save myself.

Can I improve on my salvation? No, I cannot improve on my salvation. It's a complete, finished work at the cross of Calvary. He has done everything.

So in what sense then do I make my call and election sure? Well, the answer is in the Greek word that is used here. Unfortunately, sometimes we have to look at what the original word is. The original word is a legal word, the word sure.

It is a contractual word, and it is used in the confirmation of a agreement or a covenant or a contract. In other words, when you draw up a covenant or a contract or an agreement, if the one party draws up the contract and fills in all the relevant information and signs it, is that a valid contract? No, it's not. When does the contract become effectual? When does the contract become valid? When the other party has affirmed, has signed the contract.

Now, we're not talking about God's covenant with Abraham. Remember, that was a unilateral covenant. God makes the covenant on his side.

Abraham does nothing to enter into the covenant. But in a normal covenant, a normal contract, both parties have to sign. And as long as only one party has signed, the contract has no value whatsoever.

Go to court and say, well, you know, he promised that he was going to buy the land or whatever it is. He promised he was going to do this and this and the other thing. But where's the contract? The judge will always ask, where's the paperwork? Where's the contract? Where's the agreement? Oh, here's the agreement.

So whose signature is this? No, that's my signature. So where's his signature? No, it's not on there. But you can understand what the judge is going to do.

He's going to laugh at you. He's going to say, just go away. You're wasting my time.

Because the contract has to be ratified. And some translations use this word ratified for the word sure. It has to be ratified.

It has to be co-signed, or has to be signed by the other party before the contract becomes of any value. That's the word that is being used here. So what he is saying then is that God has called us.

He has saved us. But what is now required is that we need to ratify the call of God upon our lives. We need to confirm the salvation that He has given to us.

And how do we do that? Adding to our faith virtue until we get to the point of love in the previous passage by being diligent. So that is the part that we play. So God does His part.

He pays the price for our redemption. He enters into a covenant with us. He does everything for us.

But until we accept the covenant, until we say, yes, Lord, we believe, there is no covenant and we are still in our sins. Now we say, well, are we not saved just by faith? Yes, we are saved by faith. But faith, you should know what I'm going to say now, without works is dead.

So how do I prove my faith or how do I show my faith? I show it by works. And that's exactly what Peter is talking about here. Now some theologians will say, well, Peter is contradicting Paul.

No, he's not contradicting Paul at all. Paul says exactly the same thing. James says exactly the same thing.

So faith needs to result in works. My salvation is confirmed by my actions. Not my actions do not save me.

Let's be absolutely clear about that. By I can work my, you know, till the Lord comes and I can add to my faith, virtue and goodness and all of these things. But unless I'm saved, unless these things are no good.

And in fact, we know that many, there are many people in the world who are working very, very hard to try and be saved, particularly in those denominations where you have a lot of rules and you have to do these things. You have to jump through all these hoops in order to be saved. No, we don't jump through any hoops.

But now that we are saved, we confirm our salvation by our diligence, by our diligence. So it's, we've got to get the cart before the horse, the horse before the cart, not the other way, the other way around. So make your call, make your salvation sure, ratify, confirm your salvation by the way that you live.

That's really what Peter is saying. And he's addressing the false teachers, and we'll speak a lot about them in the coming weeks. So I'm not going to go there right now.

Now, here is the warning that if we don't do this, for if you do these things, you will never stumble. You will never stumble. Now let me deal with that word stumble.

The translation is a good translation of the Greek word, but all commentators, whether they are Calvinist or not Calvinist, are agreed that he does not have in mind here a temporary hiccup in my walk with God, a temporary getting into sin, a temporary backsliding, whatever you want to call it. Clearly what he has in mind here is the day of judgment, I don't make it. And you can see why for those who have a Reformed point of view, this becomes a very difficult verse, because they don't believe that, they believe that once you're saved, you're always saved.

But clearly what he is saying here is that there is a possibility that you can't make it, that at the end, you're going to fall short. I can prove that to you by going through many, many other scriptures, but I'm not going to do that. But I'm going to jump forward to verse 11, and then come back to verse 10, because you'll see it in the context.

For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the kingdom. So you'll get entry into heaven. So he is saying then, let's go back to verse 10, if you do these things, you will never stumble, but you will have entry into heaven.

I'm just paraphrasing, I'm going to deal with this verse in more detail. Can you see that he's not dealing with a temporary thing, he's dealing with a final thing, with the ultimate thing, whether I'm going to get into the kingdom, whether I'm going to get into heaven or not. And so he is saying then, in verse 10, that if we are diligent, and we're confirming, ratifying salvation, then we will never fall.

Some translations use that word fall. We will never not make it, but we will make it into heaven. So you can see that this is a very, very serious warning.

Now I know that there are many, many people who believe that you cannot lose your salvation. Well, you have to explain the scripture. You have to deal with the scripture, and there are many, many others.

But this is just one of the many that we have to explain away, and that's why you get into all sorts of problems when you try and explain away plain scriptures like this one. All right, so there's a need then for

us to make sure, in a sense, that we are saved. Now again, I don't save myself, but I tie my salvation.

I make it fast. That word sure is used also, and we don't use it in modern English anymore. We speak about when you tie something with a rope and make it sure.

You make it tight so that it can't come loose. It's the same idea. And so we make our election tight, tied ourselves to our salvation by being diligent.

Let me just use that word and cut it short. And so if you do these things, all the things that he has spoken about that we've been speaking about the last three weeks, you will not come short. Simple as that.

We know that there are many who do come short because they're just on the screws to heaven and say, well, you know, Jesus has paid it all, and all I need to do is I just need to get on the train, and I'm on my way to heaven. No, abide in me, Jesus said. Abide in me.

We need to remain in him. In fact, I was listening to another pastor speak last night, and he was using this analogy of a train in our salvation. And it was the very first time I'd heard it, but it was a really good one.

What he said is that many times we see our salvation as a ticket to heaven. So we got our ticket, we just get on the train, and then we're off, and we're going to heaven. But in fact, it's not that way.

Jesus is our ticket. And he is not standing at the door and saying, well, where's your ticket? Okay, you got a ticket so you can get on the train. You're on your way.

No, he has the tickets. It's the same way as when you're flying with children. You don't give them the tickets and say, well, you know, there's the tickets.

Now we're going to go and visit grandma or whatever. You hold on to the tickets because they may lose the tickets. And so you hold on to the tickets, and they'll be with you, and then they can get on the plane.

And that's exactly the same thing with our salvation. Jesus has the tickets, but we have to be with him. We have to be in him.

And when we're with him, he holds the tickets, and we're good. And so make your calling and election sure. And if you do these things, you will never stumble.

Now he says, for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So let me deal with the end of the verse like I sometimes do, and then we'll go back to the beginning. So I've already given you the key.

This is simply speaking about heaven, the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Scripture speaks about the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. Here it's speaking about the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It's all the same thing. And in this sense, the kingdom represents eternal bliss heaven. This is not the millennial kingdom so much that he is speaking about.

He's talking about our ultimate entry into the new Jerusalem. But now I want for you to see that he says that if we are diligent in these things, in other words, if we apply everything that we've been speaking about in the last three, four weeks, a abundant entrance will be supplied to us. An abundant entrance.

Remember that word abundant appears a few verses before as well. He has abundantly supplied everything that we need. So just think about that.

If there is an abundant entrance, is there then a entrance that is not abundant? Remember the word abundant means over the top, more than enough, superfluous. If there's an abundant entrance, is it possible then to have a not abundant entrance? Well, I believe so. Because otherwise, why does he speak about an abundant entrance? Why does he just say then, for so an entrance will be supplied in the everlasting kingdom? But he's saying there's an abundant entrance.

Now if you go back to Paul's teaching, Paul speaks about the judgment of believers. And he says that our works will be tested. Remember that? And some of our works will be burnt like wood, hay and stubble.

And others' works will endure the judgment, will endure the test, because they were the right kind of works. And I don't want to get too sidetracked on these. But remember that wood, hay and stubble really is work that is done for the wrong motive, for the wrong reason, the wrong works, being in disobedience.

Even if we're doing good things, but we're not doing it in the will of God, because we're just following our own minds, that doesn't count. Work that we've done to get the applause of men, giving our gifts to the poor and blowing a trumpet so everybody can see us giving. He says you have your reward.

It doesn't count. They are what we call dead works. But then he says that if a man then brings his works at that judgment of, and some people call it the beamer seat judgment.

I'm not entirely happy with that word. But if we at that judgment of believers, remember the judgment of believers is not as to whether we are saved or not. This has nothing to do with saved.

This has to do with rewards for our work, for what we have done. He says if my work is burnt, in other words, everything I've done is wood, hay and stubble, it doesn't count. Then he says he will be saved.

In other words, it's not a judgment concerning salvation. This is work. He will be saved so as by fire.

In other words, he gets into heaven, if I can put it in a modern, in my paraphrase, he'll get into heaven by the skin of his teeth. He is saved, but that's it. He has no reward.

He's going to get into heaven. And we say, well, what do I want rewards for? Remember what we want the rewards for. We want the reward so that we can worship him, because the book of Revelation says that because part of our reward is a crown.

And the book of Revelation says they took their crowns, and they cast their crown at his feet, and they said, you are worthy. And so you can't take a gift from here and say, well, I'm going to collect things, and so that when I get to heaven one day, I can give them to Jesus as a form of worship and of thanksgiving for what he has done. Because we don't get to take anything there.

All we get to take is what we send up in advance. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. And we're not just talking about money.

We're talking about our labor and our work. And as we lay up treasures in heaven, what are we going to get? What are those treasures in heaven? We're going to give them to Jesus. We'll have something to worship him with and say, Lord, you're worthy.

You've saved me. You've kept me. You've empowered me.

Everything that I have is because of you. And so some will have nothing, and they'll stand before him empty-handed, but they're saved. Now, I know there are some Christians who say, well, you know, that's all that matters.

I just want to be saved. But remember that we've spoken about this recently when we played that hymn that I love so much, that when we see him, we'll wish that we'd given him more, more, so much more. You see, one day when we understand the price he paid for us, and we see and know everything, even as we are known, it says, and we look back and we look at how slothful we've been, and we look at the price that he paid for us, we'll wish that we'd given him something.

And so I don't want to make it into heaven by the skin of my teeth. I want an abundant entrance. I don't have any ambitions of being able to be brought into heaven like Paul or like John the Baptist or John the Beloved.

These are the great heroes of the faith. All of the missionaries have given their lives, who've laid down their lives, some of them physically, paid an enormous price for the preaching of the gospel. There's no way that I can stand anywhere near those men.

But I don't want to be ashamed on that day. I want to be able to come into his presence. With something to lay at his feet and say, Lord, you're worthy, because you've loved me and you've bought me with a terrible price.

I don't want to get into heaven by the skin of my teeth. And I know that this is really exaggerating it in a sense, but, you know, sort of feeling guilty that I don't really belong here, you know. No, we're going to be saved by the blood of Christ.

But there are some that are going to have an abundant entrance. The martyrs will have an abundant entrance. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, good and faithful servant.

Remember the scriptures that speak about the fact that he will acknowledge us before the Father and before the angels, so that there will be those that he will deny before the Father and the angels. I don't know what it's going to be like, but I can just imagine Paul or some of these other great men as they come into the presence of God. And Jesus points to them and says, here's Paul, my faithful martyr, the faithful man who faithfully defended the faith, who planted many churches.

Father, here is my brother. I'm pleased with him. This is my beloved son.

Remember the Father says of Jesus, will Jesus on that day be able to save us? Here is Tom or John or whoever, my beloved brother. I am pleased with him or her. I'm pleased with the way they served me faithfully.

I'm pleased with their diligence. Father, bestow upon them a great reward. And so I believe that there will be those who will have an abundant entrance.

And yet there will be others who will have, and I don't even know what the word is, a measly entrance who will enter by the side door. And really, of course, there is no side door. Jesus is the door.

But they'll get in by the skin of their teeth. What kind of entrance are you going to have? Folks, this is not about ego. This is not about pride.

But this is about pleasing Him who saved us. I don't want Him to be ashamed of me. Many of us grow up with our fathers being ashamed of us.

It's a terrible thing. At the end of the day, I didn't care. I don't care what my father thought.

But I care what my Heavenly Father thinks. It's the only thing that matters. I don't care so much about what you think, about me or my preaching or my ministry.

But there's one thing that drives me, and that is that I am pleasing to my Father, and that I stand before Him on that day. And it's not about millions of people saved. It's not about building big churches.

It's not about any of those things. It's about faithfulness. And all I want to hear is a well-done, good, and faithful servant.

This week, Inna and I attended a virtual awards thing for our granddaughter in South Africa, and she made third place. But I know the disappointment. I didn't make first place.

I didn't win the prize. Folks, that's nothing. That's temporary.

I want to win that prize. And it's not a matter that I'm going to win a bigger prize than you, or that we're going to be first, second, and third. We're not going to be measured by one another.

We're going to be measured by our own potential, by what God has placed within our hearts, the calling and the gift that He's given to each one of us and asking us. And if we have fulfilled our obligations, if we've reached our potential, and I use that word very carefully, but there's no better word for this. If we've reached the fullness of what God has deposited in us, we will be pleasing, and we will get the prize.

And if we have not reached the potential of what God has placed within us, we will not have an abundant entrance. So, folks, here are a few things, then, as we draw to a close. The first is, are you going to make it on that day? Are you going to make it on that day? And, folk, I am deeply concerned that there are folk in this congregation, and there are those who are watching online, who might not make it on that day.

As we said before, there are empty seats here. Some folk are on vacation, others are sick. There are others that are not here for good reasons.

But there are empty seats here tonight of those who've come back to the world. They're not going to make it. There's nothing we can do but pray for them, and we do pray for them.

Our hearts go out, and we know their names. But the question tonight is not about them. The question is about you and me.

Are we going to make it on that day? And secondly, having made it, will we enter with an abundant entrance? With an abundant entrance. Please, brother, don't just say, I just want to make it into heaven. No, we want to please Him who called us.

We want to enter with an abundant entrance. How do I do that? Well, simple. Go back over these last four weeks.

Go back over these first eight verses or eight verses before this tenth verse. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent. Be more diligent to make your call and election sure.

Add to your faith. Let me just go over those that you remind us. 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.

Therefore, be more diligent to make your call and election sure. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You, Lord, for Jesus who saved us and brought us into His kingdom.

And yet, Lord, we know that there's a part that we have to play. And Lord, I pray that You would help us to understand, not just that we're saved, but to understand our responsibility, to understand our calling in the sense that You've called us to serve You. And You've called us to fulfill a particular part in the body of Christ.

And so, Lord, we pray that You'd help us to be those who are faithful and that we will stand on that day before You. And Lord, that we will hear those words. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy of the Lord. Lord, we want to please You. We're, Lord, so often concerned about what other people think.

But Lord, it's what You think that is more important. And so, Lord, I pray that You'd help us to not be hearers of the Word, but to be doers of the Word. I pray that You'd be present with us as we continue in the service now, and part with us as we go home later on.

We ask these things in Jesus.

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