

2 Peter 1:1-8

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of growing in faith and character through reliance on God's power to be fruitful Christians.

Duration: 37:22

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 4:7, 2 Peter 1:1-7

Topics: "Mental Renewal", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a renewed mind and not conforming to the ways of the world. He references Philippians 4, urging believers to fix their minds on things that are holy, right, pure, beautiful, and good. The speaker also highlights the battle against deceptive thoughts and the need to capture every thought and submit it to the authority of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the significance of guarding our minds and being careful about what we allow into our thoughts. The sermon concludes with the encouragement that despite past mistakes, God offers restoration and desires for believers to live fruitful lives for Him.

Transcript

I would like for us tonight to look in 2 Peter chapter 1, read a few verses. We'll read from verse 1, 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ says to them that it obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. By which are given unto us the exceedingly great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'd like for us to think about the matter of fruitfulness as far as the Christian is concerned. God has done something wonderful for us, he has saved us, and we are members of the family of God.

In the 15th chapter of John, the Lord Jesus has laid out very clearly for us that I am divine, ye are the branches. And he also adds this, that without me you can't do anything. Now, God expects something from you and me as believers in the Lord Jesus.

Peter, in writing in this 2nd epistle that's very close, says that are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the desire of God. God has a purpose, God has a plan for our lives.

He saved us, and he expects us to be fruitful. He wants our lives to be productive in a way that brings glory and honor to the name of our Savior. Now, the Lord Jesus, when he reminds us that I am divine, ye are the branches, I'd like to remind you that the Lord Jesus being that vine, we the branches, that anything that is produced by the branch, of course, is dependent upon the vine.

I could put it this way. The Lord Jesus is the vine, he is the branch, he is the flower, he is the fruit. Anything that is produced that is for the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, he produces it.

Now, when he says, without me you can't do anything, we think about the power that is available, the power that must be appropriated in a way that glorifies God. Anything that we seek to do in our own strength, then we have erred in our judgment. Again, I would remind you that what we are in Adam is completely unable in any way to produce anything for God's glory.

We appropriate that which God provides. He works in and through us, and when we are walking in the Spirit and we fulfill not the lust of the flesh, when we appropriate that divine power, when we yield to his control over our lives, then we can be fruitful, we can be productive for God. When we lean upon the arm of the flesh, then we go astray.

Certainly Peter seems to be in harmony with this wonderful truth that to be fruitful for God is very important. That passage in John 15, of course, reminds us that fruitfulness is something that God approves of for you and me as believers. The subject of growth in Christian character is all a part of this.

To be productive along lines that make our testimony as Christians something that is meaningful and for God's glory. And we're not leaning upon the arm of the flesh. What I do for God's glory is that which God is pleased to do in and through me.

Without me, you can't do anything. God reckons us to have died with Christ. So we know that what we are, again as natural men and women, we are reminded that God gets no glory from the exercise of the flesh, that which is done independent of what he wants to do in and through us.

Peter knows this. Peter is a man that very often you discover that he acted impulsively on many occasions. He did things that certainly the flesh is the only reason that we can have for some of the response of a man like Peter.

The Lord Jesus could remind us that he said to Peter, he says, You know, now Satan has desired you that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you. And the Lord Jesus was praying that Peter would come to his senses and realize, Peter, as long as the flesh is the motivating power in your life in which you are acting independent of the power that I provide for you to live for the glory and honor of God, as long as you do that, you're always going to have problems. You're yielding to the flesh, and there will be nothing there in the way of true fruitfulness for God.

Peter recognized that. Peter had many things happen in the course of his life in which he had to learn many valuable lessons. So when he closes this letter with an appeal for growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is aware that that is a must.

Growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. God expects us to be making progress, and there's that recognition that it is through the help that God provides that we grow strong, that we come to a better understanding of grace and knowledge. God wants his children to be fruitful, and of course, to be fruitful we must grow spiritually, make some progress.

God wants his children to develop a true Christian character. It's so important that we amount to something for God. It's not the energy of the flesh.

It's not hurrying on in that which we know is not of God. We can handle things on our own. We can work things out by our own wisdom.

This is not of God. This is not what we're thinking about in being productive. So when God makes known to us that he wants us to develop true Christian character, as a parent we can relate to this.

We want our children to develop and to grow strong, not just physically, not just that the intellect might be expanded, they might grow and develop in these areas, but spiritually speaking, we want our children to be something for God. Every Christian parent prays for their children. They want God to have his way in their lives.

In 1 Peter 1, we're reminded, it tells us, that God's desire for us as he continues to change our lives, it says that, but as he is holy, each one of us is looked upon because we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus that we've been called. He wants us to be holy in all manner of life. Do we as Christians prize the thought of being holy as God is holy? The Apostle Paul says, Godliness with contentment indeed should be considered great gain.

So when I think about holiness of character, is it something that I aspire to be in my walk as a Christian? Do others detect that, indeed, I'm holy? The idea of being sanctified, set apart. Have I sanctified the Lord God in my soul? Am I ready to give an answer to every man concerning this hope that is within my own soul? We can't be fruitful for the glory of God unless we aspire to this standard of holiness. It matters.

A presentation of the body as a living sacrifice before God. Having our minds, our hearts renewed, not being conformed to the way of the world, not being pressed into the mold that this world would impose upon each one of us. Scripture, of course, reveals, I believe, several important areas.

Not all by a long shot, but at least several important areas of life in which character should be displayed. I thought about Philippians, in which we read verses like this, that if we really believe in goodness, this is Philippians 4, if we really believe in goodness and if you really value the approval of God, it says, fix your minds on the things which are holy and right and pure and beautiful and good. That's according to Phillips' translation, but the thought that I would like to urge upon you is, what do you do with your mind? What do you think about? I'm reminded that Paul, in writing to the church at Colossae, said, set your affection upon things that are above.

You know, what we think about, what we concern ourselves with, really matters. A lot of people get in trouble because their minds are defiled, their minds are polluted with so many things in this life that haven't served to the least to edify and fill them up. It starts with the mind.

Let this mind be in you which was also in the Lord Jesus. When I think about this, as we read in the Philippian epistle in chapter 2, understanding that leads to right action, does it concern me as to what I think about? If you can let your mind wander, and if you can find so many pleasurable thoughts or things that seem to bring some sort of satisfaction to you in which the mind is occupied with something that is defiling. It has a defiling influence upon you.

We should be aware of this. Lord, I need to do something. I need to discipline myself so that I can sanctify or set apart my mind so that the things that this mind is occupied with are those things that will produce fruitfulness for God in my life.

Am I occupied with things that, indeed, help promote true Christian character? Are they holy and righteous? Are they pure and beautiful and good? This is a challenge. You know, it does matter what you think. Some have said, you know, you may think sometimes that it really doesn't matter how I let my mind run sometimes.

All of the things that sometimes occupy my mind. Well, I'm reminded that Paul says that we should bring every thought into captivity concerning the Lord Jesus. Paul was assured that it was important that to just have a mind that would wander and envision and fantasize about so many things of which there was no profit.

So what we think about determines very often whether we are productive and fruitful for God or not. How much time is devoted to things that have no profit? They don't serve to edify and build us up in our most holy faith. Why? Because the mind is undisciplined.

The mind wanders. I've never been able to figure out how anyone could think that they could grow spiritually if they neglected the Word of God. How can one know anything about the person of Jesus Christ? How can we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus? How can our understanding be enlarged and there be spiritual growth if we neglect the Word of God? Yet people try to.

Sometimes you're almost quite sure that thoughts that are introduced have no basis in the Word of God. Things that sometimes just appeal to the flesh are introduced as having tremendous value, and it all starts when the mind begins to go astray, when the mind is no longer governed by the truth that we find in God's words. It is easy to, indeed, go astray.

That passage that we find in the Corinthian epistle is one that I looked at this time when I thought about casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Paul valued knowledge of the person of our Lord Jesus. He acknowledged, I'm in the flesh, I'm living, maybe you want to refer to it as a normal human life, but when I think about my spiritual life and the battles that I'm often involved in, and after all these are spiritual battles on the spiritual level with the recognition that we have an enemy, and that enemy is Satan, and he would ever get us to act independent of our God.

He sought to do that when he tempted the Lord Jesus. When this test was put before the Lord Jesus, he sought to get the Lord Jesus to act independent of God his Father, turn these stones into bread. The Lord Jesus responded with the word of God, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Fall down and worship me, and I'll give you all of the kingdoms of this world." This temptation.

Cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and with an offer, look, people will be impressed by this. Again, let me remind you, so many things that are introduced that they may appear at the time, perhaps maybe the end, will justify this compromise. Never, never.

The Lord Jesus didn't compromise. It is written. There again, Paul would bring us back to the word of God.

If you have a mind that is inclined to wander, if you have a mind that sometimes comes up with the strangest notions that have no basis in the word of God, brother, sister, I believe Satan is just saying, press on. No reference to the word of God, no proof of what you say you believe to be profitable, no proof that it is found in the word of God. The word of God gives no confirmation to those thoughts.

Strange thoughts, and so often you hear things that are absolutely strange, strange indeed to behold. A battle, Paul says, is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God. We are to fight.

We are to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we sense the urgency? Do we sense the importance of this? We should. What I think about is so important to God, because I can go astray by having strange, unbiblical thoughts that have no basis in the word of God.

Therefore, to be productive for God, be careful what you let come into your mind. Now, what we think about, sooner or later, is going to be evidenced by what we say, and someone has said, perhaps the reason very often, that we began to speak, we began to talk about things that sometimes have no basis in the word of God, is because the tongue is so close to the mind. Certainly, we can speak sometimes without acting in a way that supports what we say we believe.

You see, walk is not consistent with our creed. It's not consistent with the word of God, and again, Peter, I believe, was one of those that his awareness of all of this, in which he reminds us of how important it is to indeed be productive, to be holy in our walk, he could say, listen, this indeed is important for our lives. Paul says, let your speech, writing to the church at Colossae, let your speech be always seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man.

Now, we're talking about salty talk of a different kind. Some people talk about salty talk, and believe me, some of it is really, it's not appropriate at all. Salty talk that is of this world, very often it's lewd talk.

It's language that is completely out of order for that person that professes to know God. But let there be a saltiness about us that bespeaks of our separation from the world. There's a difference in that man, that woman, that knows the Savior.

We are the salt of the earth, saltiness in the sense that there is holiness of character, that everywhere we go, what we are as believers because of what we've been thinking about, what we advance as solutions to problems, there's a saltiness. There's something that preserves and keeps from all of the things that threaten in this life, that would pollute and defile. Salt is aseptic, not an antiseptic, and you and I, wherever we go, our saltiness should be in evidence.

So, what we say, let your saltiness. We ought to be able to give an answer to a man in such a way that not only with the lips, but by our very conduct, God has touched my life. My life has been changed by God.

I'm a new creature in Christ Jesus, and God wants me to be fruitful and productive in a way in which I glorify God in my life. In 1 Peter 2, Peter reminds us that he wants us to have our behavior honest before

all men, or the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they shall behold glorify God in the day of visitation. There's a day of judgment coming.

We have to learn to resist evil, that's for sure, but we must maintain good works. We don't work to earn salvation, we don't work to merit God's salvation. Good works are a product of what God has done in our souls.

Good works are the outpouring of a life that is involved in activities that bring glory and honor to our God. Others behold our good works. We may be accused of being evildoers.

One may say, you know, that man, that woman, they insist on such a rigid adherence to the word of God. They may even accuse us of being evil, narrow-minded. They may accuse us, for often today it's become very unpopular, to be classified as a fundamentalist, the suggestion being that someone insists on literal interpretation of the scriptures, and believing what God says in his word has such a grip upon my life that what I do with my life becomes of prime importance.

So, good works which they shall behold. Now, it's possible for men and women to have a life that is perfectly consistent with the word of God, be loyal to what the scriptures say, have their minds fixed upon things that are above, occupy their minds with things that are precious, edifying, and build us up, and so often speak words that are for the glory of God, and then do things that in some times will be so destructive. We have to be careful about how we walk.

The way we walk does matter. What we do with our lives. There again, fruitfulness.

Is that fruitfulness that which identifies itself with the vine and what it is able to produce in this life? If it's not, it's of the flesh, and this passage is worthy of being repeated over and over again. If we walk in the spirit, we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. This flesh that is within us, it desires recognition.

It can be very active. It can do many things that those that lack spiritual discernment would not detect that it was not of the Lord. But those that have spiritual discernment readily detect very often that some things that are being carried on in the name of the Lord are really not of the Lord.

In fact, there's been a departure from what the word of God lays down as a means and a way to become truly fruitful for God. A lot of activity. Be busy.

Do a lot of things with little or no attention to the quality of that service that's being rendered. Are those works truly of God? If we are misaccused, if we're wronged by those that make this wrong judgment, let's be aware of this. Let God receive the glory.

Let Him be the judge. The Lord Jesus, when He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He suffered, He didn't threaten.

Remember from the cross, He looked down and He said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. And I know that that man living in this world today, dead in trespasses and sin, never having a living encounter with the Lord Jesus as his Savior, he doesn't know what he's doing.

He lacks any discernment that is able to detect that which is truly of God, and to turn his life unreservedly over to the Lord and let the Spirit of God fill him and produce spiritual fruit in his life is something that that person that is dead in trespasses and sin knows nothing about. And yet that life may be lived in a way that

would be very impressive. But remember this, God knows.

Over and over in the word of God, God knows. God looks within the inner recesses of the heart. He knows the motive for that service that's rendered, and when we read, You can't do anything apart from that enabling grace and power that I provide, an unsaved man doesn't know this.

But God forbid that God's people would be blind to the fact that we cannot do anything apart from that enabling grace and power that God provides. I'm no more capable as a believer in Jesus Christ and letting the flesh be the ruling force in my life and seeking to serve God than that man that is dead in trespasses and sin. It is what the Spirit of God, by the indwelling person of the Lord Jesus Christ, can do in and through me that is for God's glory.

That is true fruitfulness for God. Now, in this passage in 1 Peter, or 2 Peter that we've read, it tells us that God has equipped us to grow in character. If God expects something out of us, He provides all that is necessary to accomplish His will.

There again, I'm not left to my own imagination as to how to accomplish this thing. Power is afforded me, enlightenment in my mind so that I might speak and walk in a way that glorifies God, and sometimes to put this picture together and to realize God has a plan, God has a purpose. And Peter, through the course of his dealings with the Lord, he learned this lesson.

Peter made many mistakes. Many, as you read about the life of Peter, we identify with Peter. He was so human, he made so many mistakes.

He erred in his judgment so often, but he learned these lessons. We know how to grow and develop Christian character as God works in and through us, as we obey His word, as we bring into captivity to the person of the Lord Jesus. Every thought, no mind that is giving to going astray, no, let the Lord Jesus let him have his way in our lives.

Then we have a list of qualities that are evidenced in a mature Christian life. When we talk about the fruit of the Spirit, someone can say, I am filled with the Spirit of God. It might be some sort of boast.

They may, of course, be very sincere. I am filled with the Spirit of God, yet there is not one single evidence in that life that there has been spiritual fruitfulness for God. Love, joy, and peace, and patience, and goodness, and faith, and longsuffering, none of these things in evidence in that life, and yet they claim spiritual maturity.

It is so easy to be deceived. Satan, as that minister of righteousness, as an angel of shining light through those that indeed are in his service, they minister so much to the world today that is completely foreign to the word of God. Activity abounds in many circles today.

Activity that impresses other men, but it's not of God. Activity that is entirely of the flesh, and so appealing to men that are indeed in spiritual darkness. I think verse 8 is a verse that tells it all, for these things that we read about, if they abound in our life.

And I think about fruitfulness in a way that you say there is a mark of success upon that life. That individual has discovered the true meaning of living and serving the true and the living God. Peter realized a long time ago that he made many, many foolish mistakes.

He was embarrassed by it all. We can be embarrassed, but God makes the provision. We confess and forsake our sins, and we press on.

We don't let Satan, in a sense, come in and accuse us in such a way that says, throw up your hands, give up, forget the whole matter. No, we can be restored. We can be brought back to a place of fruitfulness for God, and that's what God wants in our lives.

He doesn't want sterile lives, unfruitful lives. We abound, is the word, fruitfulness. Not barrenness, a full knowledge of our Lord Jesus that produces a change to his likeness.

And, after all, that's what God wants. He wants you and me to be more like the Lord Jesus, and I'll tell you, that takes some doing. We acknowledge that.

Do others see Christ in us? If our life is fruitful for God, they will detect that we have been with the Lord Jesus. It requires time. There are no shortcuts.

Very often, we are impressed by that Christian, that man or that woman, that their contact with the Lord is one of intimacy and fellowship and communion with the Lord. They know the Lord. It takes time.

It takes effort. We were reminded this morning about Daniel. He purposed in his heart.

More and more God's people today need to purpose. There needs to be a determination within our hearts and our minds. I want to be more Christlike.

That's what God wants. That's what God wants. And when our minds, our total being, is reconciled to his will and his way, you know, a lot has been achieved in our lives.

That willingness to say, you know, I can never be spiritual in that sense. Some people are just naturally spiritual. Oh, no, they're not naturally spiritual.

True spirituality comes from that work of the Spirit of God in our hearts in enlarging and enriching our lives through the word of God. And so often, Christians' lives are so shallow and so superficial. No real, true grasp of the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, is revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus.

It's important as to what we do with our lives. It does really matter. It matters to the point that one day in his presence we may hear words like this, Well done, good and faithful servant.

We have an opportunity today to serve God and to live for the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus. The decision is with us. Shall we pray? Our fallen heaven, we do thank thee for this reminder today that it's very important to thee as to what we do with our lives.

The word of God reminds us that we're not alone. We're purchased with a price, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. Lord, help us to take seriously what it means to understand more perfectly your will and way for our lives.

Help us to grow and be fruitful for you. Help us to read and study the word of God. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

Oh, Lord, supply in a fresh and a new way every day an enlarged vision and understanding of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to be all that you want us to be for your glory and honor. This we pray in

the wonderful name of our Savior, with thanksgiving.

Amen.

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