

2 Peter 1:1-11

2-23-10

“Usefulness & Fruitfulness!”

I. **INTRO:** Show #1

- A. The great Scottish Bible expositor Alexander MacLaren once wrote: “We may have as much of God as we will. Christ puts the key of the treasure-chamber into our hand, and bids us take all that we want. If a man is admitted into the **bullion vault of a bank** (bullion=gold or silver in bulk before coining) and told to *help himself*, and comes out with **one cent**, whose fault is it that he is poor?”
- B. What best describes your Christian life in the big scheme of things? Relevant or Irrelevant?
- C. German Poet Johann Goethe once said, “A useless life is only an early death.”
1. A bored student; a burnt-out CEO; the bone-weary mother; or a dog-tired dad may all slip into *feelings of uselessness & fruitlessness!*
 2. It happens to *believers* who have lost their way, from pursuing God’s **meaning & purpose** for their lives.
 3. Peter now deals with how to keep from feeling **useless & unfruitful**.
 - a) He shouts, don’t slip into irrelevance!
- D. **Show #2 Book Overview:** 2nd Peter is almost Peter’s “last will & testament” (see 1:14)
1. Written right after his 1st epistle(see 3:1). *Date: approx. 66 ad.*
 - a) Eusebius places Peter’s death (1 yr. after 2nd Pet) in the 14th year of Nero’s reign.
 - b) **Show #3** - St. Peter’s Basilica
 - (1) The present-day plaza before St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.
 - (a) **Show #4** That area was known as the *Circus* of Nero, an arena where numerous Christians were tortured & killed in the 1st & 2nd cent.
 - (2) The arrow marks the approx. location where Peter probably was crucified, while his mortal remains likely are entombed deep beneath the altar under the dome.
 - (3) So, the importance of Peter’s **last words** to the church.
 2. **Ch.1** Exhortation to Spiritual Maturity; **Ch.2** Denunciation of False Teachers; **Ch.3** Anticipation of Christ’s Return.
- E. Peter here stresses the importance of *Christian Maturity/growth!*
1. **Outline for Ch.1:1-11:** His Part(1-4); Our Part(5-11).

II. **USEFULNESS & FRUITFULNESS!**

- A. **HIS PART!** (1-4) **Show #5**
- B. C.H. Spurgeon, “God sends every bird his food, but He doesn’t throw it into the nest.”
1. God has provided everything for living a godly, Christian life, but I must do something to make it mine!
- C. (1a) **Bondservant/Humility & Apostle/Dignity.**
- D. (1b) **Like precious faith** – “faith of equal value”.
1. Peter strikes right to the heart of the **Gnostic lie** going around, of some “**special, exclusive, elite knowledge of God**”.
 2. **We have the same precious faith as Peter possessed!**
 - a) There are no 1st & 2nd class believers.
 3. **Also, don’t miss the clear statement of Christ’s deity! God & Savior.**
 - a) Yet Jesus didn’t replace the OT God. Note vs.2 **God & Jesus** [like Jn.1 **was God & was with God.**]
- E. **Show #6 blank** (2,3) In **knowing Christ** we have everything we need for the spiritual life!
1. (2) **Knowledge of God** – The Christian faith is based on historical, objective, revealed truth!
 2. As soon as you were saved you were given **all** of what was needed for **life & godliness!**
 - a) All you must do is appropriate what you need from his resources.
 3. (3) **His divine power** – Christ’s power is the **source** of the believers sufficiency & perseverance.
 4. (3) **Given** – As a gift, to grant, to bestow. [perfect tense emphasizes the continuing nature of that which is given]
 - a) The spiritual resources God gives to believers are **continually available** to them as reliable sources of strength & growth.
 - b) Living the Christian life **does not** depend on **one’s own strength & resources.**
 - (1) **God provides everything believers need for spiritual life & godly living.**
 5. **Godliness** – true religion. To live reverently, loyally, & obediently toward God.
 6. (4) **Exceedingly great & precious promises** –
 - a) **Promises** – **Are any of his promises counterfeit?** – Like a **life vest** that is for show only on a mannequin in a store. **It may look good in the store, but it’s of no use out at sea.**

- (1) You could swim back & forth to Hawaii a 100 times in **His life vest** of promises, **w/o** fear of ever sinking!
 - (2) His promises can be **tried & tested!**
- b) These promises impact us so we might both **Partake & Escape!**
- (1) **Partake of the Divine nature** – Not 1 day to be gods, **but** 1 day to *partake in His glory* that shall be revealed to us.
 - (a) **He became what we are, to make us what He is!**¹
 - (2) **Having Escaped the corruption that is in the world** – “**To escape completely!**” – [Not sudden destruction, **but** a slow disintegration, an internal decay, *i.e. rottenness!*]
 - (a) “At the time of salvation we are freed from the power that the rottenness in the world has over us because of our fallen, sinful nature.”
 - (b) “So long as we live in this world sin will never completely lose its **fascination** for us; **but in the presence of Christ** we have our defense against that fascination!”²

F. **OUR PART!** (5-11) **Show #7**

- G. **Faith** doesn't stand alone; real faith in God results in a changed life which can be seen or identified in these ascending virtues.
1. **Show #8 Ladder.** Some Christians step up on the bottom rung(**faith**). Content to be saved & comfortable being the closest to the world from which they came.
 - a) The more we climb up the ladder of virtues is to come ever nearer to knowing J.C.
 - b) Also, **the further we climb, the further we are able to climb!**
 2. Moffatt quotes a saying, “**The Christian life must not be an initial spasm followed by a chronic inertia**(inaction).”
 3. **Giving all diligence** – The Christian must be **totally dedicated** & make a **maximum effort** to live for God!
 4. **Add to your faith** – (*επιχορηγεω*) we get our word *choreography* from this word
 - a) It means, “to equip the chorus w/additional supplies”. **To supply lavishly!**
 - b) So Peter urges his people to **equip** their lives w/**every virtue**.
 - c) As we add to our faith these virtues it is like dressing up a cake with the best looking frosting they've ever seen(*Bundt*). **It's making Christianity Irresistible!**
 - (1) **At Kelly's dad's wedding a little boy was staring at the cake**(only inches away from it) - **Kelly's dad walked up & said, “that frosting looks good doesn't it?”** (he nodded) **“Here take a swipe!”** (he did; then they tried to hide it)

¹ William Barclay; pg.298

² William Barclay; pg.297

H. Show #9 8 Rungs of the Virtue Ladder!

1. **Show #10 Faith** – saving faith in God.
2. **Virtue** – Moral excellence.
3. **Knowledge** – Practical understanding of the truth.
4. **Self-Control** – Self-Mastering, self-restraint, self-discipline, control of one's appetites. "The ability to take a grip of oneself."
5. **Perseverance/Patience** – Christian steadfastness. Patient endurance in doing right.
6. **Godliness** – Devotion to God. The Quality of being like God in daily life.
7. **Brotherly kindness** – Brotherly love. Love for fellow believers.
8. **Love** – Christian love(Agape) self-giving for the good of others.
 - a) The ladder of Christian virtue must end in Christian love!
 - b) The Christian must show to all men the love which God has shown to him!
9. **God has done His part: See that you do yours!**
10. **Show #11 blank**

- I. (8) Own these(if these things are yours) & increase(& you abound) in them!
 1. If a person is growing in these qualities, he/she is a **useful** tool in God's hand.
 - a) Instead of "useless & fruitless"!
- J. (9) If we don't climb the ladder Christians, what happens? [3 things:]
 1. **We grow shortsighted** – We can become very shortsighted in life.
 - a) We see things as they appear *at the moment* & are unable to see the **long view** of things.
 - b) This can also mean "to blink" or "shut the eyes half way" – Here is where we shut our eyes to what we do not wish to see.
 2. **We grow blind** – To walk w/o Christ is to walk in the **dark** & not to be able to **see the way**. - We are thus left w/o his guiding light to shine our way.
 - a) **Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.**
 3. **We grow forgetful** – This is to close your eyes to the fact that you've been cleansed from your sins & have returned to a dirty way of life.
- K. (10) The **genuineness** of your profession of faith will be demonstrated as we express these virtues.
 1. The **holy life** is the guarantee demonstrating the **calling & election** to others.
 2. **Sure** – God is "sure" who is elect; **but** the Christian might not always have assurance, **unless** he or she pursues the spiritual qualities cited by Peter.

3. **Never stumble** – “Never in any wise!” (LKGNT)

- a) If you go down those lines, no reason to stumble!
- b) Won't stumble into fear & doubt as a result of an *unproductive* life!

L. (11) If you live this sort of life, you'll receive a **rich welcome** into, *not the Magic Kingdom* but...the **eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. This to me is “licking the mixer beaters!” - Isn't that the best part of cake making? [I remember my “**rich welcome**” into mom's kitchen. Pull the stool up to the sink, & there sitting in the bowl were the 2 mixer beaters calling my name!]
2. **Q: Saints, what will this welcome be like?** We're not going to make it to the gates & find every body busy (“Hey guys I'm here!”)
 - a) Now, some might say, “**Wow, you made it?**”...but the rest will be awaiting your arrival!

M. **Show #12** What best describes how **you** will enter heaven?

1. 1 man said on his death bed, “**I shall be satisfied if I can but creep into heaven on my hands and knees.**” Now, we know what he meant (humility) but *Is that the way **you** want to enter?*
2. How about taking the tape? - How about boldly entering in? **Show #13**

N. End: **Show #14**