**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 Peters “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 – (*ἐπιχορηγεώ*) 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.
   5. Perseverance/Patience – Christian steadfastness. Patient endurance in doing right.
   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