

### **DILIGENTLY SEEKING THE TRUTH IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (2 PETER 1-3)**

Two weeks ago we looked at the gifts and callings given to us by the Holy Spirit, by God, through Christ Jesus in **1 Corinthians 12**. And as the Apostle Paul stated "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all." (**1 Corinthians 12:7**) And as the Apostle Paul explained to the church at Ephesus, he said our gifts and callings are "for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ, till we all come to the **unity** of the faith and of the **knowledge** of the Son of God, to a perfect man [as He is working His perfection in each of us], to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that **we should no longer be children**, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth **in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself **in love**." (**Ephesians 4:12-16**)

So then, as the Apostle Paul explained, all of the gifts and callings by God through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit within God's people, is for the edifying, building up of one another in Christ, as it IS the will of God, God's intended purpose for us as His children, so to speak, or more aptly, as men and women of God. He ended **1 Corinthians 12** by saying to "earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way." (**1 Corinthians 12:31**) That more excellent way leads us to **1 Corinthians 13**, "The Love Chapter", that we looked at last week. In summation, it doesn't matter how much you know the Scriptures, how much you even preach that Word, or how much you give to others, if it is not done in love, the love of God. Paul tells us, "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**) He then concludes the chapter for us by saying, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as **I also am known**. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (**1 Corinthians 13:11-13**) Meaning then, to those who have believed on Christ Jesus and received Him, it is time for us to grow up in Christ Jesus, as God intends to work in us His perfection, as He is perfect in all of His Ways (**2 Samuel 22:31**) and His Works (**Deuteronomy 32:4**). And we are His workmanship. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God

prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) That more excellent way is in the love of God as GOD IS LOVE. The Apostle John said that in his first epistle, “**Beloved**, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and **knows God**. He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, **that we might live through Him.**” (**1 John 4:7-10**)

Then, no matter what comes against us, as we are living contrary to the ways of the world and the spiritual forces of darkness that are all around us, we have been told by Jesus Himself to, “**Strive** [agonizomai (agonize): strive, struggle, fight, labor fervently] **to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’**” Iniquity: Greek “adikia” (ad-ee-kee-ah), meaning: a-(not) dikia (justice): not justice. Matthew recorded Jesus as using the term “lawlessness” anomia, a-(not) nomia (law): not law. The Apostle John further helps us in that by saying, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” (**1 John 3:4**) Now we know that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate **His righteousness**, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were **previously committed**, to demonstrate at the present time **His righteousness**, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (**Romans 3:23-26**) Hence, it is written, “Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” (goes back to their life of sin, not continuing in the seeking of His righteousness; **Matt. 6:33**)

So then, whom Jesus is rejecting is those who go back to practicing lawlessness/iniquity, sinning against God vs. the practicing of righteousness. “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.” (**1 John 3:10**) To go along with that it can be said that the children/men/women of God are made known by living according to the character of God, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (**Galatians 5:22-23**) The Apostle Peter goes through all that for us in his second epistle.

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**[2 Peter 1:1-4 (Greeting the Faithful)]**

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like [the same] precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to **life and godliness**, through the **knowledge of Him** [really, even those of the world have knowledge OF Christ, but we as His people KNOW HIM, we have a personal relationship with Him], who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." [The Apostle Paul spoke of some of those promises saying, in **Romans 8**, that we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be **glorified together**" (**Romans 8:17**). Also as the Apostle Paul told Timothy (and us) "if we endure [in Christ], we shall also reign with Him". (**2 Timothy 2:12**)]

**[2 Peter 1:5-11 (Fruitful Growth in the Faith)]**

"But also for this very reason, **giving all diligence** [spoudé, diligence, earnestness, zeal, effort (sound familiar? agonizomai), add to your faith virtue [areté, moral excellence], to virtue knowledge [of the WORD!], to knowledge self-control [fruit of the Spirit], to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness [be like Christ], 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 shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent [spoudazo: be diligent, to make every effort, to hasten, to be eager] 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." [As the Apostle Paul told the Colossians, "To this end I also labor, striving [agonizomai] according to His working which works in me mightily." (**Colossians 1:29**)]

**[2 Peter 1:12-21 (Peter's Approaching Death)]**

"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. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." [Christ Jesus alone is "THE MORNING STAR" as HE IS, the "Light of the World" as God is the "Father of lights" as James said, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (James 1:17) And then also, Jesus said, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." (Revelation 22:16)]

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**[2 Peter 2:1-3 (Destructive Doctrines)]**

"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, **even denying the Lord who bought them** ["For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20)], and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By **covetousness** they will exploit you with deceptive words [sounds like the prosperity message being preached]; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."

**[2 Peter 2:4-11 (Doom of False Teachers)]**

"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a **preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would **live ungodly**; and delivered **righteous Lot**, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that **righteous man**, dwelling among them, tormented his **righteous soul** from day to day by seeing and hearing their **lawless deeds**)— then the Lord knows how to deliver **the godly** [those practicing righteousness, living in and according to His righteousness] out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord."

**[2 Peter 2:12-17 (Depravity of False Teachers)]**

But these, like natural brute beasts [a-logos zoa; "not reason" or not of the Word", animals, beasts] made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly

perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. [book of Numbers] These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." [Those who may claim to be of Christ yet they have not the Love of God]

**[2 Peter 2:18-22 (Deceptions of False Teachers)]**

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. [As Peter said in his first epistle, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you **out of darkness into His marvelous light**; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10)] For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

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**[2 Peter 3:1-9 (God's Promise Is Not Slack)]**

"**Beloved**, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they willfully forget: that **by the word of God the heavens were of old**, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But **the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word**, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. [As we are told in **Hebrews 1:2-4**, God "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom

also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."] But, **beloved**, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is **longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**"

**[2 Peter 3:10-13 (The Day of the Lord)]**

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. [**Revelation 21:1** tells us, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."] Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which **righteousness dwells.**" [Right now, it is upon us, the kingdom of God, asking us and calling to us, "do you want the Righteousness of God", in Christ Jesus?" Do you want to be with your Lord, God, and Savior, in His glory and holiness? Our actions speak much, much louder to God than our words!]

**[2 Peter 3:14-18 (Be Steadfast)]**

"Therefore, **beloved**, looking forward to these things, be diligent [spoudazo, be diligent, to make every effort, to hasten, to be eager] to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, **beloved**, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."

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We are called by Glory, the glory of God, to His glory; from glory to glory (**2 Cor. 3:18**) and faith to faith (**Romans 1:17**). "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs **with Christ**, if indeed we suffer **with Him**, that we may also be **glorified together**. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us.**"