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Heavenly Father, You know my heart, You know that I want to speak words of life and love to my friends here, to my family here. And so God, I ask that You will bless and guide the words that I've spoken and that I'm going to speak, that they will hear them with Your spiritual ears, that we will learn what it is that You are saying to us here today. In the name of Your Son Jesus, Amen. Last week I spoke on the season of faith. We talked about how that through our worry and our concern for this church that God has brought us close to Him, but now He wants to take us on, take us out further from that. And in order to do so we have to now let go of our worry. We have to hand it off to God and allow Him to take care of our worries and we just need to be faithful to obeying the commands to love and serve that He has given us, to find our new identities in Christ, to step out in faith, behaving in a manner that believes the promises that He has given us, even if we don't yet see the fulfillment of those promises. That is the season of faith. Today we're going, the name of my message is "Add to Your Faith." And that comes from a verse in 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 5, 6, and 7. "For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness and knowledge and to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness love." So we're going to talk about that today. Add to your faith. Last week we talked about the season of faith. Today we're going to talk about add to your faith. This I believe is a very important verse for us to study and for us to dig into. And I make that claim because for a little bit of a spoiler Peter goes on in the next few verses and tells us why this set of instructions is so important. In verse 8 he says, "If you possess these qualities in increasing measure they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Well that sounds fantastic to me. I don't want to be ineffective or unproductive in my knowledge of the Lord Jesus. You know I want to I want to be fruitful. I want to be powerful. I want to make positive impact and positive change in people's lives. I want to make a difference that brings the light of God into people's hearts and the kingdom of God into this world. And so Peter says that if we possess these things we're about to talk about an increasing measure that that's the kind of life we will live. And in verse 9 he warns us he says, "If anyone does not have these things he is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins." So here he's saying if you don't have them, if you don't have these things we're about to discuss, you're nearsighted, you're blind. You've forgotten that you've been cleansed from your past sins. And there have been times you know I remember I was in third grade here when I first made a commitment to follow Jesus, to make him my Lord. And there have been times since then where I have walked in blindness. There's been times when I've forgotten that I've been cleansed from my past sins and I continued to walk in those sins. And that was at an unpleasant unfortunate time of my life and I don't want to go back there again. And so Peter encourages me by saying, "Hang on to these things. Hang on to what we're about to talk about because then you won't be nearsighted, you won't be blind, you will remember that you've been cleansed from your past sins, you will have this new life, you will be a new creation." And then finally is if that wasn't enough encouragement he drives it home in verse 10, "Therefore my brothers be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never fall." Fantastic. I'm tired of falling. I don't know about you guys. Amen. So I am ready. I am ready to be fruitful and productive and to not be blind. I'm ready to live like I've been cleansed from my past sins and I'm ready to stop falling and stumbling in my walk. So how do we do that? Well, let's let's dig into these verses now. Starting in verse 5, "For this very reason..." Okay, stop. So apparently this is the continuation of something he was just talking about. So let's first clear up what this very reason that he is telling us. He starts up there in verse 3, "His God divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through those promises you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." So the reason he wants us to pursue these things that we're about to talking about is because we've been given great and precious promises by God and these promises, the purpose of these promises is that we may partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world. Now you may remember back in the book of Genesis when it talks about God creating man, he says he created him in his own image. And you may remember later on we have Jesus and Jesus says anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. You see these little these little clues show us that that yes we are to partake in the divine nature of God. We are to be godlike. That's where we get the word godliness and it's why we're called to be godly is because we are supposed to partake of his nature. His nature is supposed to be our nature. We're supposed to be godly people. We were created to be godly people in the garden. We sinned and we fell and we were corrupted as it said, corrupted by corruption in the world caused by evil desires. So we lost our godliness. We were corrupted but then Jesus came back to restore us not not just to restore our relationship but to restore our new our nature to restore our godliness. And he says look at me if you see me you've seen the Father. This is godliness and this is what he's come back to do for us. And so in verse 5 Peter says for this reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness. So to begin with Peter is saying Peter saying I'm talking to Christians. No matter who you are no matter where you are in your walk if you call yourself a Christian the very bare minimum thing that you have in common with all other Christians is you have faith. Not just belief that Jesus is the Son of God but trust in him. You have faith in God. You have faith in Jesus. You have put your hope in him and you're standing on the rock of Jesus. He says so no matter what else you have no matter who else you are as a Christian bare minimum you have faith that is our starting point for everyone. And he says if you're still at that starting point now it's time to add to your faith goodness. You see your faith is an inward thing. That faith that you begin where you start by trusting in God inwardly. But he says the very next thing you need to do is start working it outward. That goodness on your inside needs to start to come out. So he says if you have faith if you have nothing else but faith begin to take that that faith and work it out through your life. Other translations say virtue goodness virtue. In other words work out the goodness that the faith that is in you work it out in your life in your behavior. And he says add to your goodness knowledge. You see it's it's one thing to run around just trying to do good all the time but a person who's like that who just who just immediately just says I'm gonna be a good person and just starts running and doing everything they think is good is gonna make a lot of mistakes they're gonna waste a lot of effort. And and so the next thing that Peter tells us is add to your to that goodness add knowledge. Knowledge comes from here it comes from the Bible. He says basically he's saying that that knowledge understanding of God and his nature understanding of his commands towards us is going to be the lens that focuses your goodness. It's going to be the filter that helps you produce a more refined pure goodness with your life. So you've had this faith you worked it out into a goodness but now add knowledge to focus and refine your goodness to make yourself able to more carefully represent the godliness of God. Add to your knowledge self-control add to your knowledge self-control. This is this is similar to something we talked about last week. Little children are so innocent right and that's because they don't know anything. They don't know how to get in trouble they don't know how to get away with stuff. They're innocent because they lack in knowledge. You remember again going back to Genesis what is the tree the fruit that Adam and Eve ate from it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was it's through knowledge that that you gain the power to do good or to do evil. With knowledge comes power and to throw out some movie references with great power comes great responsibility but you've also heard knowledge is power. So the law of transitive Bible verses and movie quotes tells us that with great knowledge comes great responsibility. You see the more knowledge you increase the more you learn about what is good and what is evil the more of a responsibility you have to choose good and to stay away from evil. So he says increase your knowledge your your increased knowledge will allow you to focus and refine and purify your goodness but with that knowledge comes responsibility. So add to that knowledge add self-control use your knowledge wisely with self-control. Now to this self-control he says add perseverance add perseverance to your self-control as you begin to live a life of self-control as you begin to say yes to what's good and no to what's evil you will look around and you will see a world full of people who choose evil you will see people who are unrighteous and who appear to gain and profit and get away with their unrighteousness and this is going to discourage you and this is why Peter says to your self-control as you are learning to walk the line add perseverance you're going to need perseverance because you're living in a world where people don't have self-control and you're going to be tempted to throw in a towel you're going to be tempted to say I'm not doing this anymore they can get away with it I can get away with it. He says hang in there stick to it. God's promises are true he says that there there there is a day coming when every righteous deed will be rewarded and every unrighteous deed will be punished and he says but you may not see that today hang in there because that day is coming stick to righteousness persevere don't don't get to that day and say I gave up don't give up to perseverance add godliness so you've looked around you've seen the the sin of this world the unrighteousness but you've decided I'm committed I'm going to stick to it I'm going to persevere. Well Peter here is saying don't just finish the race finish the race well it is so tempting to say okay I'm stuck to it I'm going to do it I'm going to stick it out to the end but in doing so you become frustrated and disillusioned with all of all of the people who aren't persevering with all the people who are living in righteousness and it's easy even though you're sticking through it to the end you become bitter and you develop a bad attitude you're persevering in your faith but you use phrases like I hate people all right that's not that's not what a Christian is supposed to look like you're not supposed to look like someone who does good all while muttering under his breath and that's not he says persevere but do so in a godly manner lift up your eyes he says yes accept it there's going to be people in this world who do things the wrong way don't let that bring you down don't let that don't let that change your character you keep your eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith faith our great example he ran the race well and so Peter here is telling us run the race that's persevere but run the way race well has really hard to say run the race well with godliness add to your godliness brotherly kindness it's interesting the word there is many other places in the bible that were brotherly kindness is translated love but as you can see the very next thing we're going to talk about is love and it would sound really weird to say add to your godliness love and add to your love love that sounds weird but in the greek we're talking about two different words for love here so he's what he's really saying is add to your godliness philadelphia which is brotherly love which is why philadelphia is the city of brotherly love as you are growing in godliness as you are saying i i'm not going to be you know bitter and moody i'm going to i'm going to persevere the right way i'm going to be a stand-up example model of a christian haters gonna hate i'm going to do the right thing it's easy to focus so much on yourself that you lose sight of the brothers and sisters around you who need to be cared for it's easy to focus so much on how good you're doing that your heart grows cold for people who are struggling and who are weak around you and so what he says is focus on godliness it's true set set for yourself that example of role model christian try to be a role model christian but but in doing so don't don't forget to love the people who are struggling to hold it together don't forget to show brotherly love to those people around you who who may not have it as figured out as you do don't think of yourself as so much better than them show brotherly love show philadelphia to those around you and then finally to your philadelphia to your brotherly love add agape love add agape this is the indescribable immensely deep love of god agape is the great unfathomable love that caused the son of god to go to the cross and suffer for our sins such great love oftentimes i think we come around other christians and we're real good at slapping them on the back and shaking the hand and say hey how you doing but but god says now don't just stop there that's not that's not enough love he says you need to you need to go all the way up you need to begin to learn how to dive into people's lives and pour yourself out you need to risk what you have to show love to others it is the great love of god and it is the kind of love that you need the holy spirit recharging you and energizing you with that love every day you need to start every day getting recharged in the presence of god in order to attain this level of agape love so if you look at yourself if you look at your interactions of this church and you say yeah i'm nice to everyone and i shake everyone's hand and but you're really not looking for ways to pour your life out for these people for the people at your job and your community you haven't yet achieved the agape love of god so add to your brotherly kindness add agape love for if you possess these qualities in increasing measure they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge if anyone does not have them he is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten that he is cleansed from his past sins therefore my brothers be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure for if you do these things you will not fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our lord and savior jesus christ here peter lays out for us this path the path that begins at just our simple faith trusting in jesus and not knowing much else and and adding to it virtue adding to your virtue knowledge and self-control and perseverance and godliness and brotherly kindness and agape love until you reach that point where you are no longer ineffective as a christian where you're no longer unproductive where you're no longer short-sighted and blind and caught up in your past sins but where you now live a life where you do not stumble where you are fruitful and productive and you are welcomed a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our lord and savior jesus christ and as we go into our time of open worship now i pray that you examine your own heart examine your life and ask yourself where am i on this spectrum am i brand new to all this do i just say i have faith but i have no outward working of that faith is my outward working of it unfocused and misdirected could i be could i study my bible more to learn how to be more effective and more targeted in my acts of goodness and virtue has my have i run away with the temptations of this world do i need to add self-control to my life has my self-control has my christian walk caused me to look around and see all the people in this world who don't do it and is that causing me to give up and lose hope and just throw in a towel have i decided i'm going to run to the end but i had become bitter and cynical have i decided that i'm going to walk in godliness but i've forgotten to care for my brothers and sisters and to show grace and mercy to those who aren't where i am at and finally have i added to all that the great agape love of god let's take some time now and examine our hearts and allow the holy spirit to speak to us heavenly father we praise you and we thank you for what you are describing here your destiny for us god is beautiful and it is glorious and we thank you so much that it is what you have in store for us but we know god that we cannot do this on our own we need you changing our hearts directing our thoughts and so god we ask for your holy spirit to fill each one of us we ask you to speak to us in our quiet times in our bible times we ask you god to draw our hearts and minds back to you throughout the day and as we meditate on you to transform us into these new creatures into these beautiful godly representatives of you here on this earth we humbly ask this in the name of your son Jesus amen