

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”

Lesson #15 “Grow in the Lord”

2 Peter 3:1-18

Scripture: 2 Peter 3:17-18 “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of Unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

Introduction:

Have you ever been to Sequoia National Park in California? This park was our second national park established after Yellowstone, and is home to 5 of the largest trees in the world.

One of the most well know trees is named “General Sherman” named after a civil war general. This tree towers at a height of 275 Feet tall. Folks that is some where in the neighborhood of 27 stories tall. Incredible....! Question how do those leaves 275 feet above the ground get moisture to live and grow?

Transpirational pull is the main phenomenon driving the flow of water in the xylem tissues of large plants. Transpirational pull results ultimately from the evaporation of water from the surfaces of cells in the interior of the leaves. This evaporation causes the surface of the water to pull back into the pores of the cell wall. Inside the pores, the water forms a concave meniscus. The high surface tension of water pulls the concavity outwards, generating enough force to lift water as high as a hundred meters from ground level to a tree's highest branches.

Transitional Statement:

Church, God is kind of like a leaf in a tree, in that, He is pulling us from up above. He wants us to grow to new heights. And He has given us His word, which He has always been faithful to, to help us grow. Today God wants us to be on guard against things that would stifle growth.

Lesson:

I. Stirring up the mind by way of God’s Word

2 Peter 3:1-2

1 “This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder”

- A. Here Peter says that he has written and now writes to stir them up.
- B. Stir means to arouse, or wake fully

1. Now when my wife wakes up in the morning, she can at that very instant began a full detailed conversation and she used to expect me to fully engage that conversation and would ask me what was wrong if I didn't jump in and start talking. Well, if you're like me when you first wake up, your body might be awake but it takes a while for your brain to fully engage. You know until I have my first cup of coffee sort of thing.
2. The intent here is specifically to Stir up their Minds
 1. Move to deep thought
 2. By implication, to exercise thinking

2 *“that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles”.*

C. By a reminder of God's word

1. Words of the Prophets.....
 - Old Testament is important too
2. And the Commands of the Lord....New Testament
3. You see, God wants us to reflect, meditate, discuss, and absorb His Word.

-Deuteronomy 6:6-9

6 " These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 " You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 " You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 " You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

-Psalms 1:2

2 "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night."

-Psalms 119:105

"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."

D. But, Sometimes Christians get spiritually sleepy

1. Sometimes, Christians don't make time to be in God's word
 - With all kinds of excuses
2. Sometimes, we get satisfied with where we are spiritually

- 3. Sometimes, we buy into the idea that we are doing our best
-When we are not.
- 4. And many times the weight of this world weighs us down.
-We might feel like we are in a rut
- * But God's Word is like spiritual coffee meant to wake us up fully and get us engaged.

II. Mockers will try to discredit God's Word / Jesus.

2 Peter 3:3-4

3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, " Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

A. In the final time

B. Mockers / False teachers will come

- Including Jewish holdouts
- Focused on their own desires

-That is every inclination of their hearts are set on what they can get out of something.

C. They will say "Where is the promise of His coming?"

- Not a real question
- But it is a judgment against Jesus.

-i.e. see all these years have passed and Jesus hasn't come back

....Jesus isn't the Messiah!

....His own received Him not (John 1:11)

D. Not only is God's word wrong but we have the right answers

-Listen to us

E. Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked..."

III. Mockers are willing ignorant

2 Peter 3:5-7

5 "For when they maintain this..."

A. "When they maintain this"

-That is when they take this position against God's word

“... it escapes their notice...”

B. “Escapes their notice...”

-KJV along with the Greek says “willingly ignorant” and in my estimation this means dumb on purpose.

“...that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago...”

C. The Word of God is so true and powerful that by it the heavens were created.

D. Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

1. They turn a blind eye to the obvious
2. They sleep through class so to speak.
3. Slackers / Sluggards.....etc.

“...and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.”

E. The earth was formed out of the water

-But, the water was ultimately used to destroy the earth during the flood.

7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

F. Maybe the point here is, that which has been formed (us), can also be destroyed by that which formed us (God).

- i.e. God is the sovereign judge of His creation

-Not any mockers.

IV. God is patient, because he doesn't want any to perish

2 Peter 3:8-9

8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

A. God is not slow about His promises

....But, He is patient.....Thanks God for this !

....Not wishing any to perish, but all to repent.

B. Church, God loves everyone on the surface of this planet.

-The murderer, the liar, the cheater, and any other sin that might be hidden in the hearts of men.

-He wants all of them to be saved.

C. Question: How could a gracious, merciful God be quick to judgment?

V. The day of the Lord will come

2 Peter 3:10

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

A. Will come ...you can bank on it.....not a gamble

-No Rapture / 2nd chance / No earthly Kingdom

B. At an unexpected hour.

-Like a thief

-So we must live ready each moment

C. At which time the Sky, earth, and all that is temporal with all their strivings and efforts will perish.

-Judged....

-Marked futile

VI. We are to live in view of the Judgment

2 Peter 3:11-13

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

A. Since judgment is coming, what sort of people should you be?

-Holy conduct

-Godliness

B. A people looking for coming of Christ

-Heads pointed toward the sky

-Living as strangers on this earth Heb. 11:13

-Understanding that our citizenship is in heaven Phil. 3:20

13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

C. A spiritual home, void of the temporal

- Prepared by Christ John 14:2
- For the righteous

VII. Therefore, make sure you are found in Him

2 Peter 3:14-16

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

A. If we live with the understanding that God will judge the world and the ungodly will be destroyed.

B. We must be diligent (earnest / make every effort) to be found in Him.

- John 14:6 A place prepared for us
- Paul also preached the same thing

C. Because, these false teachers will distort the truth

-NOTE: They are:

- Untaught...Ignorant, or not knowing
- Unstable ...vacillating back and forth
- Distort....Wrench, torque or pervert.....Slowly !

II. Be on Guard and Grow

2 Peter 3:17-18a

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

A. Be on guard so you are not carried away

- So you won't fall away
- Recognizing that falling away is possible.

B. But Grow in:

- Grace / Favor
- Knowledge of our Lord

Conclusion:

Are you allowing God to pull you up?

Are you growing toward new heights?

Is something in the way of your spiritual growth today.

Maybe your ready for an *Inspirational* pull from above.