

"Making Sure of it All" **(2 Peter 1:1-11)**

Introduction:-

*In life, we often like to "make sure" of things, so that as a result, we can rest with peace of mind and security about the matter in question. As we begin a short series from the Book of 2 Peter, Peter begins his second letter in this way, so that his readers may be fully equipped to face the particular challenges before them, especially as this will now relate to the issue of "knowledge" and false teachers from **within** the church (2:1; 3:3-4). The message of this book is presented in **four** parts (1:1-11; 1:12-21; 2:1-22; 3:1-18). We will now begin with the first part, under the heading, "Making Sure of it All" (1:1-11). In this passage Peter makes three points.*

1. First, we have all that we Need (verses 1-4)

*Unlike Peter's introduction at 1 Peter 1:1, here Peter also introduces himself as "Simon" Peter, a "servant" and apostle of Jesus Christ. And so to this opening greeting are added the words "Simon" and "servant." The addition of "Simon" is especially interesting, for if this reflects Acts 15:14, then this was the occasion when Peter was God's instrument in throwing open the doors to the Gentiles, and so on this occasion as well, the Gentiles are being granted, by the grace of God, all the privileges and promises of equal citizenship in the kingdom of God together with the Jews and apostles (verse 1). Further, if the use of "Simon" also reflects Matthew 16:16-20, then Peter is also being credited with full revelation of the Father's purposes in Christ, as well as holding the keys to the kingdom of Heaven, including authority over all evil forces that would oppose God's purposes in Christ. And so, the same "Simon Peter", as "servant" of the living Christ, is now able to reveal the secrets of the kingdom of heaven to his readers, so that they will be able to grow in godliness, and as a result, escape the corruption that is in the world, caused by evil desires. The section then begins at verse 2 with the greeting of "grace and peace" as at 1 Peter 1:2, but now with the added word that such "grace" and "peace" can only abound in the believer's life through the "full knowledge" of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. These words were deliberately chosen by Peter as an answer to the claims of the false teachers who exalted their own brand of knowledge as being superior to faith in Christ. And so in reply, Christians needed to acquire "full knowledge" in order to combat this heresy. And this was only possible from a personal relationship with, and experience of, God in Jesus Christ as Lord. Peter had already mentioned in verse 1 that this "precious faith" was only made possible through the "righteousness" of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ (John 17:3; Ephesians 2:8-9). In other words, the ability to make all people equal and accepted in the sight of God, was also the gift of God, made possible through personal saving faith, and not from any form of human works or knowledge. **Finally, in verses 3-4 Peter reminds his readers that God has given Christians all they need to become spiritually mature.** Progress is made possible and practical by two factors: the power of God, and the promises or "full knowledge" of God, who has called us by his own "glory and goodness." This last phrase is interesting, because it may reflect Moses' desire to see God's glory at Exodus 33:18-19, when God's glory and goodness (= character) was finally revealed to Moses (cf. 1 Peter 2:9 where "praises/goodness" may reflect the total impact of Jesus on anyone coming to faith). Through these "great and precious promises" we are then able to become **partakers of the divine nature**, as we increasingly grow more like Jesus through the study of the "full knowledge" of his word (verse 4). In the end, this also proves to be God's **way of escape** from the magnetic pull of the world and its evil desires. It also gives us a clue as to how we go about "working out our*

salvation" at Philippians 2:12-13, as we increasingly become partakers of the divine nature. Often today people will want to "add" missing ingredients to our Christian lives (e.g. Christ **plus** an "overwhelming experience" or anything else that is on offer), but this text tells us that by simply being Christians, we have access to everything we need to live a life that is pleasing to God. Do you find this truth liberating today?

2. Secondly, we are called to provide an Environment for Spiritual Growth (verses 5-9)

Just as we do with our gardens, Peter urges us in this middle section of our passage with the importance ("make every effort") of the goal (growth to be like Jesus), and spells out the steps toward this end with **seven virtues**, which are to be added to faith in verses 5-7. Our "faith" in Christ is foundational, for without it, our salvation would not be possible (1 Peter 1:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 11:6). Finally, Peter concludes this list with "love", the supreme virtue, that binds all the rest together (1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:14). But the interesting question is whether the other virtues listed, beginning with "goodness", are in sequential order. It has been plausibly suggested that this "programme for progress" has been carefully edited in order to expose the manifest failures of the false teachers, beginning with "goodness", and concluding with "love." The command to "add" to faith the following virtues in verse 5 has the idea of lavish provision, so that sharing the "life of God" should lead to producing the finest and most attractive character for him. Perhaps this is why the list begins with **goodness** as reflecting the glory and character of God himself through excellent deeds, thus deepening our **knowledge** of God. Then knowing him will deepen our knowledge of ourselves, where we need to exercise **self-control** (for many of the false teachers knowledge made self-control unnecessary). This in turn calls for **perseverance**, which is developed by keeping in view the worthwhile goal of verses 3-4 - **godliness** (participation in the divine nature). This attitude then facilitates a new openness to our fellow-Christians - **brotherly kindness**, and all this in turn is made possible by, and blossoms into, unreserved and unrestricted **love** (Colossians 3:14). Finally, notice the great importance of verses 8-9 - Christians face two staggering possibilities. On the one hand we can work to develop these qualities in simultaneous and increasing measure in our lives, and thus find a deepening experience of the Lord leading to a fruitful Christian life, or we can ignore these instructions at our own peril, as both short-sighted and blind people, who have been cleansed from past sins.

3. Thirdly, we must be all the more eager to make our Calling and Election Sure (verses 10-11)

Finally we are reminded that the conscious and deliberate effort to make our calling and election sure is authenticated through the development of our Christian lives in the path already outlined (cf. Philippians 2:12-13 = "work out your salvation"). The practice of these disciplines will not only keep our feet from falling (verse 10), but as a repeat of the words of verse 5, and especially of the word "add" and its meaning there, those who do these things will in turn receive a "rich welcome" into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (verse 11). God's lavish reward is a spur to lavish living for him. May these words bless us today in a lavish way!!

Conclusion:-

If we already have everything we need for living the authentic Christian life, what is it that Peter is asking us to do in the light of this truth? May the Holy Spirit help us to make our call and election "sure" through the knowledge of his Word today. Amen.