

Heart of Discipleship



3. A Passion for Being Equipped 1 (2 Peter 1:1-11)

Have you ever tried doing a job without the right tools. You get into a complete mess. I remember trying to change the oil filter on a car I once owned. I didn't have the right tool for it so I tried to get it out by pushing a screwdriver through it and twisting it off. It does work sometimes, but not that day. I remember both me and the street ended up covered in oil and the filter still stuck on but bits of it mangled in the pool of oil in the street. I had to clean myself up, go down the road and buy the tool - which is what I should have done to start with. I suppose it was a question of *give me the tools and I'll do the job.*

But not having the right tools can have serious consequences. How many stories have we heard of people lost out on mountains in winter who have died because they were not wearing the right gear. They died because they weren't equipped properly.

We are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to follow. We are called to count the cost. In our first week we saw that as we consider what Jesus did for us on the cross, we desire to turn and walk God's way (repentance) and seek to follow and honour Him wherever He takes us.

Last week we saw the challenge that Jesus laid down for those that follow Him, to love Him above all others, to follow Him in the way that He walked and counting the cost of what it means to follow Jesus. And that cost is committing 100% of what we have to Him. I recalled last week how when we count the cost and follow we find that we have no problem finding the resources to build or to go into battle. In Christ we have all the equipment and resources to finish. Maybe you thought I was pushing Luke 14 to actually saying that, but the Bible has a lovely continuity about it because the passage in 2 Peter says it very well.

3 His 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. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

What a superb set of verses. We get everything that we need for a life of godliness. God equips us completely for a life and godliness. As we shall see later, it means a walk that is honouring to God. As we look at what Jesus expects of us from last week's sermon, these verses should bring us encouragement. They are not unreachable goals but something God equips us for. We know that we can build and know that the resources are there to finish the job.

How does he equip us? Through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through the knowledge of Him - it's the Greek word *gnosis* which is not just knowing about Him but in this case *knowing Him* because He's called us and we've responded to Him. He said that much in the early verses *To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

Look too at John 17:3 *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Or possibly 2 Corinthians 4: 6 *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

The knowledge of God is knowing God. We know Him and we know His glory through Christ. This is what we have entered in to, not by our merit but by faith, as Peter says here , *To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours* It's a faith that we've actually also received and it is all a product of the goodness of God. God has made us what we are and now he equips us to live lives that honour Him. What a wonderful Father we have because He has equipped us fully for the task and through His divine power we succeed in being the sort of people He wants us to be.

But there's more. Let me give you this in the AV because this expresses these words better than the NIV *43 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

A fundamental part of that equipment are the promises of God. They are not just statements that God has made that will one day happen, but they are promises that God delivers on when we rely on Him. In other words they are promises through which we become partakers in the divine nature - in other words that we will share His nature, become more like Him and escape the lust that destroys us and will destroy our work and witness as God's people. God has made promises that we can be like Him rather than like the world. That's the promises of God. Promises. God always delivers on them but so often we don't claim them.

● *John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever -- 17 the Spirit of truth"*

● *John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

● *John 15: 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name*

● *Romans 5: 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God' s wrath through him!*

● *1 Pet 1: 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God' s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time*

That being said, if we have the full battery of equipment to live in a way that reflects God's nature, in a way that honours Him, then what do we need to do? Peter helpfully spells it out.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For 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.

Does it add up?

Add to faith:

GOODNESS



KNOWLEDGE



SELF CONTROL



PERSERVERENCE



GODLINESS



BROTHERLY KINDNESS



LOVE

It's a string of things that add up in a way that *will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Remember that the knowledge is not head knowledge and none of these are head things but are relationship things. They are all qualities that affect the way we live and accordingly affect our relationship with God. Over this week and next week, we are going to explore these.



We need to add to what we started with when we first believed. We started with faith. As I have often said before faith is not something airy-fairy but in the Bible means that we have something that we are so certain about that we are prepared to put our whole trust in it despite not currently being able to see. Hebrews 11: 1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* How do I know I have eternal life? Because God has promised it to me. Faith is about trusting Christ alone for our salvation. And as we have already read this morning, even this has come from our Father.

The problem is that some Christians never make it off the starting blocks. The Bible translator and commentator James Moffatt once said "*The Christian experience is an initial spasm followed by a chronic inertia*".

True isn't it? So many believers fail to reach their potential in Christ? Why? Because they have not added to their faith?

The totally apocryphal and non-Biblical story is told of the way in what all creatures in creation were told to go forth and multiply. Adam was walking in the garden one day when he came across a snake that was crying. He said, "Little snake, why are you crying?" The snake replied "because we have been told to go forth and multiply". So what's the problem with that?" Adam replied. And the snake said., "I'm an Adder".

We have started, now we must finish as I said last week. We have started with faith, now we must add to it and God has given us every ability by His Spirit to do so. God equips us *3 His 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.*

So if we want to become more productive, we need to add. It's rather like that building we had last week. One thing builds on another and for the rest of today and then next Sunday, we are going to examine this list.

But before that I'm going to give you the warning that comes with these because there is always the danger that gain that these are only for the most committed, or for certain people, but not for me. These are aimed at all the people of God, because Peter wants them to be effective and productive believers. God wants to add to our faith as well though so that we will be healthy believers.

But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 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, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As Moffat suggested, Christians often start but never add. But if we don't add, it's not going to be very healthy and are not going to get to know God as well as we could. It's not a case of just effectiveness and productivity. To not add means we will be placing ourselves in a place where we will damage our faith and be like the people who started to build and could not finish, or the king who had to surrender. And there are too many of those in Britain today and it is not my desire to add any more to them! If you don't add then what will happen to you? Let's see.

👁️ Blindness

he is nearsighted and blind If we don't add then we won't see the things of God properly. We will be just as blind to the things of God as the world. And how true that is of many Christians and many churches today. If we are people who know God and know His will and walk with Him then we see the world as He sees it. We see the tragedy of the lost. We see the consequences of sin. We see how we have been rescued from that and we desire Him. We desire His presence, we desire to do His will and we desire to be like Him. Unless we're blind. Add to your faith - or buy a white stick!

👂 Don't appreciate God's grace

and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. If we don't add, there's pretty good evidence that we've forgotten what our faith was all about. Unless our desire is to know God and desire His presence than we'll quickly lose the plot and forget about the basis of their faith. Each time we walk our own way, each time we sin, each time we show unforgiveness, each time we show a lack of grace and love to our brother and sister - we show that we have lost the plot. It's easy to forget. How do we keep on track - by being adders.

👂 Lack Assurance

, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure If we've not sought to add to our faith then we won't know God as we should. If we don't the biggest

problem is that we shall lack assurance. If I were to ask you the question today “If you were to die tonight, would you be sure you were going to heaven?” What would you say? Many Christians lack basic assurance. Why? because their relationship with God has foundered. They’ve not been adders.

📌 **Prone to fall**

. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Even worse, Christians that are prone to fall are not adders. Our Father wants to equip us to grow and be effective for Him. Are we growing? Or do we fear for the future? Do we fear what is going to happen to us? Do we find our sins, our compulsions, our problems are weighing down on us? Do we feel our Christian lives are ineffective or inadequate. The maybe we need to take a reality check.

Are we people who want to add to our faith? Are we wanting to go on with the Lord? Are we wanting to take on His equipment so that we may live lives that are godly and honour Him. If so, the we need to come before Him in repentance and commit our lives afresh to Him. Next week we’ll see how to add to our faith in more detail as we consider all the additions. But for now, let’s desire to know Him who equips us for life and godliness.

Let’s pray

