

Wherefore the rather, brethren (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 00] This evening with a word that you will find in the second epistle of Peter, the first chapter, reading verses 10 and 11.

The second epistle of Peter, the first chapter, reading verses 10 and 11. Verse 11.

I'll be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen. This word has been with me for some time.

Indeed, it has been with me from the first occasion that I visited our late dear friend, Miss Nellie Tinworth, in St. Mary's Hospital.

[1 : 44] And the Lord knows the exercise that one has carried in these things.

And I had really felt that this would have been the text last Lord's Day.

But the Lord knows all that took place. That we venture now with it this evening.

Those of you that were present here this morning will know that the text was this.

In verse 5, the first three words. And beside this. Now, as we come to the word this evening, may the Lord help me to make this very clear.

[2 : 51] That the Apostle Peter, after speaking, as he does by the Spirit, concerning the whole election of grace, that obtain precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

He then goes on to wish them the blessing of God, grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

He goes on to speak of his divine power, through which we receive all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

He further speaks concerning the exceeding great and precious promises that are given to poor sinners, to speak, as it were, to their very hearts, that they might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And then, as those of you that were here this morning, you will know that we went on. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

[4 : 59] As we mentioned in closing this morning, we believe that the word charity could be spoken of like this, love in action.

And then the apostle says this, And may we listen to it, For if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sin.

Now may we consider this, after all that the apostle had been led to write in this second epistle, concerning that which is so vital, and all that he speaks of, concerning salvation by grace, concerning our need of grace, that we may live our lives as in the light of God's countenance.

And yet, after all that he said, he comes now to this, Wherefore, the rather brethren, as though he would say, After all that I have spoken to you, all the things that you do need, the grace that you need, the graces of the Spirit that you need, and yet after all this, I now speak to you in these words, and surely we could say, that here we have, as it were, the most important thing, that every one of us needs to know, and need to have in our own hearts.

[7 : 03] So, a very solemn and yet a very sacred subject before us. Wherefore, the rather brethren.

He is speaking to the brethren. True brethren, that is, brethren who are one in Christ, that all have one Father.

They all have one Father. There is only one Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And, dear friends, to everyone that does reach heaven, there it will be made known that they are all one in Christ.

That they have been joined together in one stick, that they may be one in mine hand. So, true brethren in Christ, have but one Father.

[8 : 16] But one Father. And they are brought together in Christ. So, the apostle Peter is speaking then, to the brethren.

Wherefore, the rather brethren, although he would say, after all I have said to you, this is the most vital thing, this is the most important thing, that I can bring to your notice.

And he says, later on, Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. Wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. The visit that I have mentioned concerning our late dear friend, Miss Nellie Tinworth, was an occasion that I shall never forget.

[9 : 54] Because the dear lady was found in this word. she was here. This was the very exercise of her soul.

And it was the last occasion that I was able to speak to her, that we could speak one to another in the way that we did.

And this was her exercise. This was her great concern, to be found right. Is it our concern?

Is it something that weighs upon our hearts? Wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. How vital then this is, and I do hope to be able to come to verse 11, because here we have a very blessed promise.

[11 : 06] For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Now the subject then this evening, as the Lord may help us, will take us to heaven. O that we could be taken, as it were, in our very heart's experience experience to heaven.

That we may be given a glimpse of the glory that excelleth. And I think of a hymn that says this, and if this should be conveyed into any of our hearts, and it's this, there thy seat is now prepared, there thy kingdom and reward.

a seat prepared in heaven for you. Oh, we do need the Lord to give us gracious exercise concerning our standing in Christ, concerning our end, for it must come sooner or later.

And I feel that I cannot overemphasize this truth, that we so need to be prepared for the hour and article of death, when it shall come.

[12 : 45] When it comes to a child of God, it is but the porter at the heavenly gate to let the pilgrim in. Death, the hymn writer says, and it's true of everyone that is taken to glory.

Death is no more a frightful foe, since I, with Christ, shall reign. With joy, I leave this world of woe for me to die as gain.

However we may feel this evening, is this the desire of our heart? Is this the kind of religion that we feel to need? Could you say in your very heart, even at this moment, be this religion mine?

Well, the Lord help us then to consider this. Wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. To make your calling and election sure.

[14 : 11] one of the precious truths which is surely believed among us is the doctrine of election.

And that means that everyone that reaches heaven has been loved with an everlasting love. this commenced before the foundation of the world.

Oh, what truth we have before us. Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, before ever we were born.

This is where real salvation began. It commenced before the foundation of the world. It is truth which is beyond our finite minds.

We cannot grasp it. We shall only understand it and be favoured to enter into it by faith. And yet it's true.

[15 : 27] Well, may we just think then like this, that everyone that does reach heaven has been loved with and everlasting love. Their names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Their name, if it is true of you and I, our name is already in that book. It has been written there by God, whose names are in his book.

Now, this is the foundation of the doctrine of election. And so, the Lord Jesus, when speaking of every one for whom he would die and give his life a ransom for many, he declared this, and I have declared it on many occasions through the years, but this is what the Lord said.

and it's very sacred. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast down.

Now, that precious truth, in the true sense of its meaning, will not leave one of us out in this chapel this evening.

[16 : 59] What I mean is this, if we are among the Lord's beloved people, the time will come, it must come, in our life, when we shall be called by grace.

And that call will bring us to Jesus. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

You see, there is the danger of those that have not yet been called by grace of having such thoughts as these.

If my name is not written in the Lamb's book of life, if I am not among the election of grace, then what is the point of my praying, what is the use?

Now the Lord help us to consider this precious truth in this way, that not one for whom Christ died, but that they will come, they must come, to the Lord himself.

[18 : 24] The appointed time rolls on apace, not to propose but call by grace, to change the heart, renew the will, and turn the feet to Zion's hill.

And everyone that is called by grace will certainly have their feet turned to Zion's hill. It may not be in the literal sense, but they will certainly have this made known and brought to pass in their life.

I just think of the dear girl that was brought up as a Hindu and was cast out.

And yet, you see, the Holy Spirit commenced to work in that girl's heart. And as the Lord was pleased to work in her life and to make the way known and his will known, the time came when she was brought to Christ, brought to know him for herself.

You see, friends, we look at these things with our finite minds, but there's not one soul, there has not been one soul that will not yet be one soul, wherever they're born, whatever they're brought up in, in a natural way, but if they belong to Christ, they will be brought to him, they must be, they will be called by grace.

[20 : 02] grace. What then is it to be called by grace? Wherefore, the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

Now, to be favoured, to know our election to be sure, will be made known by effectual calling.

The two are linked together in the purposes of grace. Everyone that is found in the election of grace, and this is scriptural wording, it's found in the word of God.

The apostle Paul in writing to the Romans, he speaks of it. The election hath obtained it, and so everyone that has been elected before the foundation of the world to eternal life in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and will reach heaven at last, they will certainly know their election by being called by grace.

What could the apostle Paul declare concerning this in his own life? In writing to the Galatians he says this, that I certify you brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

[21 : 59] For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion.

Now the word conversation here takes in much more than our conversation one to another. It really means our whole way of life, how we've lived.

For ye have heard of the way that I lived in time past in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it, and profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Now think of it. Here we have Saul of Tarsus as he was known before his conversion. Here he speaks of how he lived.

he could say and profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

[23 : 31] He had a good deal of religion in his head. Oh dear friends we need to beware of having religion in our heads.

It's solemnly possible to be able to speak about the doctrines of grace the word of God and yet if it is only in our head it will never save our souls.

Oh beware of this. May we ever beware of a religion that is in our head only and that that we have been brought up in that we have learned and heard of from our very childhood.

Now do not misunderstand me I would not discourage any of you from coming to the house of God but may we never rest upon this. May we never rest upon our upbringing the fact that we have been to the house of God the fact that we have heard many sermons the fact that we have read the Bible and all that we might think of it does remind me of a time when I was asked to visit an old lady and that in connection with going into the aged pilgrim's home home.

Many years have passed since then and I went with our dear friend Mr. Ernest Myles. We were asked to go by the society and in being asked to go we were asked to go to this end that we might as it were see deserve whether there was life in this lady or not.

[25 : 43] And what did we find? We found this that her father was a clergyman. We found that she was resting upon this fact that her father had been a clergyman.

She had been brought up in what we might speak of as a Christian home. And yet this and this alone she was resting on for salvation.

She could not speak of being called by grace. She could not speak of what the Lord had done for her own soul. She was resting upon tradition.

She was resting upon her upbringing. She was resting upon her father's religion. friends that will never get us to heaven. Oh may we beware of such a religion as this.

The apostle Paul had such a religion. He could say and profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation being more exceedingly zealous of the tradition of my fathers.

[26 : 59] But then what does he say? but this little word but that is so full of meaning but when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace.

grace. And then what does he tell us? What was the effect of this call by grace?

To what end was he called by grace? It was to this end to reveal his son in man.

to reveal his son in man. Here we have in very simple but very profound words what real calling is to be called by grace.

We know that the Lord called him by his grace on the Damascus road. How was it brought to pass? Well we are told you may say but I've never had such a call as he had.

[28 : 22] Well I'm sure that very few people that have lived upon the face of the earth have had shall I say a clearer call by grace than Saul of Tarsus.

And yet the Lord just help me to expound it before you to see whether we know something of this call by grace. What happened?

he says a light shone from heaven above the brightness of the sun. And this sacred light from heaven it shone right into that man's heart.

What did it do for him? It brought him down to the earth. He fell to the earth. He was brought into the dust.

Now when the Lord calls a poor sinner by his grace, light from heaven will shine into their hearts and they will commence to know and to feel that they are sinners.

[29 : 31] They will commence to know and to feel their need of mercy. They will commence to be brought down. Friends, when the Lord calls sinners by his grace, he brings them down.

He brings them into the dust. And what does he do for them? He makes them tremble. He makes them pray. He makes them cry for mercy.

And so it was with Saul. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will thou have me to do? he was brought at once into the dust of self-abasement and shown what a sinner he was in the sight of God.

And he commenced to feel his need, his need of mercy, his need of salvation. And this was granted to him.

He was granted this revelation, and as I've just read it to you, this God who called me by his grace and revealed his son in me.

[30 : 45] Wherefore, the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

You see, do we see how vital this is? Now, I'm just going to speak of two instances in the word of God, desiring that this may be used to reveal to us what real calling is, to be called by grace.

I think, first of all, of the dear woman that Jesus met with at Jacob's well. Now, the Lord must need go through Samaria to meet with her, to find her.

Do we know something of this in our life? Has the Lord found us? Has he come to us by the Holy Spirit?

We know in this instance he went himself, but under the gospel dispensation, it is the Holy Spirit's work to call by grace, to change the heart and to turn the feet to Zion's hill.

[32 : 07] Now, the Lord found that woman, has the Lord found us? Now, he called her by his grace. How did he do this in her case?

He began to show her what she was and how she had lived. And he spoke to her like this.

He said, Go, call thy husband. Immediately, the divine light of truth entered her heart. And what did she say to Jesus?

I have no husband. I have no husband. God. Now, this was what the Lord does for his people.

When he calls them by grace, he convinces them of sin. He brings it home upon their hearts. And I just read what happened here.

[33 : 14] Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband.

Dear friends, if we have been called by grace, we shall have been made very honest before God concerning our very life.

We shall be shown our sins in measure. And it's something that will go on until we die. Now, here the Lord convinced her of her sins.

And this is what the Lord said to her. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband.

Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband, in that saidst thou truly.

[34 : 16] Now, what did the woman answer? The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. As the Lord shown to us what we are, this is to be called by grace.

She was brought to his feet. She was made aware that he knew everything about her. And this brought her into that concern and exercise.

And what I desire just to convey tonight particularly is this, to make your calling and election sure. How did the Lord make her calling and election sure?

He did it like this. He revealed himself to her. God and this is just what we need. This is just what we need.

If we are to be favoured to make our calling and our election sure, we need this. We need Christ to be revealed to our hearts as our hope of glory, as our Jesus.

[35 : 30] So we need revelation. Oh, we do need revelation. revelation. Jesus, reveal myself to me. Is that your prayer this evening?

It will be your prayer. And then just one more thought. I think of the man that was born blind. The Lord found him.

The Lord touched his eyes that he might see. And yet there was something else that was needed that he might know this to make your calling and election sure.

And when the Pharisees and others came to him and asked him concerning Jesus, this is what he said, can you go as far as this this evening?

One thing I know that whereas I was blind, now I see. Do you understand that? You will know that you've been blind.

[36 : 39] You'll know that if you've been called by grace that now you've commenced to see things in the light of God's holy word. You've commenced to understand that you're a sinner, that you need mercy, that you need Christ.

But the Lord didn't leave him there. When he heard that they had cast him out of the temple, he found him, and this is what he said to him.

And I just read it to you this evening, hoping that the Lord may use it, may understanding accompany the word of God to us.

When Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

[37 : 49] And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. So that in both those instances, the woman that Jesus met with at Jacob's well, this man that was born blind, in both their cases, they knew that their election was sure, because of this the Lord called them by his grace, and then he revealed himself to them.

Now this is what we need. Oh, we need revelation of Christ to our souls. Oh, may the Lord help us to seek this, to seek this above everything else, to make our calling and our election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

Well, the time is gone. I had hoped and thought that I might be favoured to enter a little at least into verse 11, that the Lord knows what his will is.

But if we are favoured in this, wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I just leave you with this, with thee, it shall go well. May it be our blessed portion.

[39 : 43] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.