

The Provisions for the Christ-Centered Life

Lesson for Sunday, August 10, 2025

INTRODUCTION: *This week's introduction is used to set-up the entire lesson. You will also return to it near the end...*

- ⇒ Let's suppose your phone rings this week and an attorney informs you that a distant relative has left you in their will a fully functioning farm. (Did I mention that this was your dream come true?)
- ⇒ What would you do first? Allow for some feedback from the class...
- ⇒ Supposing this was your dream come true, the first thing a thinking person would do is to travel and explore the farm.
 - Is the farm operational? Is it in good shape? Are you going to have to mend fences and paint barns? Does the machinery work or will you have to buy more?
- ⇒ To your surprise everything is there and fully functional! Now there is only one thing for you to do: You have to work the farm.
 - Crops don't do well when they are unattended. Farm animals need attention, too!
 - While God is the only one that can make corn and wheat grow, He has also set up the world that *we must do something with what He has provided*, while simultaneously depending on Him to give us what we need to do what He asks us to do.
- ⇒ Our text for this series is 2 Peter 1:5-7. In these verses, Peter is going to tell us to work the farm – to give diligent effort to cultivate the essential virtues.
- ⇒ But before he does that, he tells us in verses 1-4 that we must explore the farm first – we must examine the provisions that God has made available to us to do the work.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Provision #1: The Person of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1-2)
 - a. God's first provision is His own Son. Notice that Peter mentions Jesus specifically three times in the first two verses.
 - b. In verse 2, Peter makes the point that he repeats often in his epistle that the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ is central in our Christian growth.
 - c. The word "knowledge" means "to know by experience." It describes a deeper and more intimate knowledge and acquaintance.
 - d. Peter is telling us in these verses that multiplied grace and peace come through a deeper, more intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - e. If we were to read the entire first chapter, we would learn that Peter presents this deep relationship with Jesus as the antidote to both worldliness and false teaching.
 - f. Paul teaches the same idea in Philippians 3:7-8. We must see that this intimate, personal knowledge of Jesus is central to everything truly important in our Christian lives.
2. Provision #2: The Promises of God (vs. 3-4)
 - a. What is your favorite promise of God? Allow for some discussion...
 - b. What makes God's promises important?
 - i. First, they reveal God's intentions for us. The promises tell us what God wants to do on our behalf.

- ii. Second, God's promises show us God's disposition toward us. If He did not care for us, He would not bother to help us.
 - c. In verses 3-4, Peter teaches us that through Jesus, God has given us "exceeding great and precious promises." There are two purposes:
 - i. First, to make us "partakers of the divine nature." This is a reference to our salvation.
 - ii. Second, to assure us that we are escapers of the "corruption that is in the world through lust."
 - d. These two purposes are flip sides of the same coin. The salvation that God promises is designed to have certain sanctifying effects on our lives.
 - e. Genuine saving faith moves us away from the world with its lusts and toward the likeness to Christ.
3. The Promises at Work
- a. The promises of God are not magic bullets that unlock some mystical power. They work hand in glove with God's commands. Consider verses 5-7 that we will be unpacking in coming weeks...
 - b. Promises for cultivating virtue.
 - i. This is a command to pursue the likeness of Christ in our lives.
 - ii. Are there any promises of God that can motivate us in that pursuit?
 - iii. Consider: Luke 9:23-24; John 12:24-26; 2 Peter 1:11
 - c. Promises for cultivating knowledge.
 - i. Consider: Jeremiah 29:13; Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 119:105, 130
 - d. As we "work our farm" in cultivating the essential virtues, we can trust the promises of God that He will do His part as we obey.

APPLICATION: *What are we to do?*

- 1. Working the Farm
 - a. The key is in verse 5 and the word "diligence." Notice Peter writes that we are to "give all diligence."
 - b. Peter's point: We cannot be causal about our spiritual growth.
 - c. Peter is calling his readers to single-minded, wholehearted commitment to loving and becoming like Christ.
 - d. Can you say that you are giving all diligence to your Christlikeness?
- 2. Cultivating the Conditions
 - a. Consider the big picture of these intro verses. Peter is making the point that our pursuit of Christlikeness is a joint venture.
 - i. Verses 1-4: God has given us everything we need to be Godly.
 - ii. Verses 5-7: We are responsible to "add" certain things to what God has done.
 - b. We do not produce the fruit of sanctification ourselves, but we are to earnestly and wholeheartedly cultivate the conditions whereby God can and will work out these qualities in our lives.