

Faith Supplements



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2nd Peter 1:5-7

We're actually going to read through verse 11 this morning, but because of the length and the importance of the content, we're going to divide this into two parts and preach today on verses 5–7.

Scripture

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The first few years that we had the privilege of coming to Hardin and being the pastor, we offered an evangelism training course called Continuing

Witnessing Training (CWT for short) to every church member. We literally trained everyone in this church who wanted to on how to share their faith personally with someone in whatever situation they found themselves. To train folks we would go into homes, and for 13 weeks we would model how to present the gospel to a person. After we made the transition from just talking to the gospel presentation, we would start with this question, "Have you come to a place in your life where you know for certain you have eternal life and that when you die you'll go to Heaven?" Then we would listen to their response. If they said no, we would go into the gospel presentation. If they said yes, we would ask one more question because we wanted to make sure their assurance of salvation was based on the truth. Many people would be shocked when we would ask, "Suppose you were standing before God right now and He were to ask you, why should I let you into my Heaven—what would you say? We would listen to their answer and if we did not feel like we got a satisfactory answer, again we would share the gospel. So this week, as I began to immerse myself in 2nd Peter 1:5–11, I got the same sense from Peter that he wants the folks he's writing to, to know for certain that they have eternal life. That's what this passage is about. So can I ask you this question, "Have you ever come to a place in your life that you know for certain that you have eternal life and that when you die you'll go to Heaven?" Now, if you say yes, I want to ask you this question, "Suppose you were standing before God right now and He were to ask you why should I let you in to my Heaven—what would you say?"

This is Peter's second letter. He's still concerned that some of the ones he's writing to may not really have eternal life. So he starts this second letter, as Kory has already explained to us in verses 3–4, by presenting to us the divine side of salvation. Basically, if I'm understanding what Kory has taught us, this is everything we need to live the Christian life God has provided for us in Jesus Christ...everything. But when we start reading verses 5–11, Peter switches from the divine side of salvation to the human side of salvation. Now, some churches aren't comfortable talking about the divine side of salvation, and some churches aren't comfortable talking about the human side of salvation. They see them as contradictory. Hardin does not. Hardin beliefs completely that Scripture teaches a divine side of

salvation, yet at the same time, also a human side of salvation. From our study of Romans, what we believe is the divine side of salvation never negates, minimalizes, or trivializes the human side of salvation. Neither, when the Bible speaks about the human side of salvation, does it ever negate, minimalize, or trivialize the divine side of salvation. They are both equally true, so this morning I just want to keep this in context. We're only going to teach the first three verses, but the context is there's a human side of salvation that all of us experience. And if we experience this human side of salvation, it gives us the assurance that we've really been called by God and we've been elected to salvation by God, and one day when we die or Jesus comes back, we're going to have a lavish entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God.

Are you ready? "For this very reason..." this is Peter's way of saying *therefore*. You knew I was going to get that in, right? What he's fixing to say in these next verses is based on what he's already said in the first few verses, but especially verse 3 and 4. We know Scripture teaches that we are all made right with God on the basis of faith. We are saved by grace through faith alone. That's the divine side of salvation. There is an eternal election before the foundation of the world, there was a divine call in present time, and God in Christ has provided everything you and I need to live differently and to live out this new life in Christ. Now, what should our response be to what God has provided for us in Christ? Peter's going to tell us. I want to make sure we're clear here—Peter's not going to teach a works-based salvation. Neither is he going to teach a faith *plus* works salvation. Peter's believes like Paul, we are saved through faith alone...but the faith alone that saves does not stay alone once it saves a person. There are works—there is a human response to the divine side of salvation, and if we don't have the proper response, then we just profess faith, we do not actually possess faith. It is really easy to profess faith, but a profession of faith does not save you; the possession of faith saves. So now, we have to get ready for our response to not only what God has done for us but makes available to us in His Son Jesus Christ.

See, Peter believes you and I already have the ability to live the life God has ordained for us to live. All the resources we need are in Christ...so for

this reason, he says, "make every effort." See, we're going to respond to what God has done for us in Christ, and our response should be a 100% response, not a 90%. The life I'm living is a 100% response to what God has done for me in Christ. Have any of you ever seen people respond to something that you thought was really good and they respond lazily? Have you ever watched somebody do something you think is really important, but you see they're kind of doing it halfheartedly? I mean, I have no clue how you can interview the losing team in a Super Bowl or the losing team in the NBA finals and hear the coaches and players say, "Well, we just weren't..." Are you kidding me? You're playing for the Super Bowl, you're playing to be crowned world champion in basketball, and you walked out on the floor and gave a half-hearted effort, you didn't put 100% into it; that blows my mind! I've actually paid money before to go to a sporting event, and within the first quarter, you knew your team might as well have stayed in the locker room. Physically they are on the court, physically they are on the field, but where their mind is we have no clue. What blew Peter's mind is how can you claim to possess faith and be lazy. How can you do this halfheartedly? How can you not give your all? Did not God give His all when He gave His Son Jesus on that cross? Based on that, Peter says make every effort; give 100%.

Then, Peter tells us what he wants to give 100% to, "...to supplement your faith." Whoa! Now when we read the whole letter, this is not teaching salvation by faith plus works. Let me say this again...if you are saved by faith alone, the faith alone that saved you will not stay alone in your life. There are some things that you personally will do that supplements your faith. So this morning, we're going to look at faith supplements. Just imagine a person who's going to get in shape. They're going to start working out and they're going to start eating right. Once they start eating right, they want to add a little muscle so they start taking some supplements to supplement the basic food diet. So what we're going to do is make this commitment to live the life of faith God wants us to live—and if we're going to do that, we have to supplement our faith.

This word, supplement, is an interesting word. Now, you have to remember that at the time of the writing of the New Testament, Rome ruled the

world. They had conquered the Greeks and they were in power, but Roman society never got out from under Greek culture and Greek life. So even though Rome is ruling the world, Greek culture, Greek influence is ruling Rome. So many of our words in the New Testament are not Roman words; they're words that come out of Greek society. So some translations are going to say that we need to "add to our faith," and some translations will say we need to "equip our faith." The ESV says we need to "supplement our faith." It's a word that came out of Greek theater. When the Greek playwrights got ready to introduce a play, they concentrated on the actors and the actresses who made up the chorus, and they would ask patrons to equip the choruses. So there would be a person in the community who had a lot of money and they would pay all of the expenses for the people who were going to be the choir in the performance. Now, if someone came to you to ask you if you would supplement or equip the choir, you didn't ask how much it cost. You didn't want to know what the basic fee was because this was an opportunity for you to lavishly give of your resources to make sure that choir was the best choir that ever performed in a Greek play. They were so lavish in giving that a new word was created that talked about being the patron of the choir who lavishly equipped the choir. That's the word that's used here.

I want to make sure we understand here. Faith in this passage is the personal faith you put in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Faith here is not used as a body of Christian belief; it's your personal faith. With every effort you have, with 100% of your being, you need to be lavishly supplementing your faith. We're adding to our faith; we're equipping our faith. For justification, it's faith alone. For living the Christian life, it's not faith alone. Got it? There's a human side that we are responsible for. We are responding to what God has done for us and what God's made available to us so we're going to add these faith supplements. It equips us to be and do what God wants us to do. It lets us be fruitful; it lets us be a witness in the community. The reason some of us are not a witness in the community is because we're lazy. You know it. You're coasting. You are just doing what you're doing out of habit, and this is a wakeup call this morning.

When I was in Brazil, a boat was provided for me to run the Amazon River. Praise the Lord, most of my trips was on the tributaries of the Amazon River. Tributaries are about five times wider than Kentucky Lake. Awesome. Now, I was told before I went that I had better bring certain things so if you saw a picture of me in that boat, which was a glorified fishing boat, I had my long sleeve Fast Eddie's fishing shirt on. That was the first time you've ever seen me in a long sleeve shirt in the summertime! You think it's been hot in Kentucky, the pastors told me in Brazil it was hotter than it's ever been in their life! I was in a boat sometimes four to six hours at a time, and I was so thankful I had that long sleeve shirt on. I also had what's called a gator tail, this thing that comes up over my nose and went over my ears, and then I had this floppy fishing hat on. I don't wear hats or caps. We were going so fast down the river I had to pull the chinstrap right up under my chin to keep it on. I had sunscreen I used three times a day. I had a thermos...well actually, if I'm going to be honest with you, I had two thermos. I had one blue thermos and had another thermos that was black and I kept both of these in my bag. I would take a sip from the blue one, which was water. But my black one—I mean if you're going to be all day long on a boat you have to have more than water, so I had homemade maracuja in my black one. You should have seen my team when I'd pull out the black one, because I'm the only one who had the maracuja on the boat! Then in the middle of our boat, there was this cooler full of ice and water. I'm telling you, I could not have done what I was there to do if I had a boat only; I had to have supplements.

Now, let me tell you about my favorite supplements in Brazil. I had the privilege of going to where our pastors live so I got to go to some of the remote parts of the river. Rice is the basic staple on the Amazon River, and praise the Lord, I like rice. Now, when you're a poor culture you learn to supplement your diet, so every time they would bring me rice, I could also supplement my rice with this thing called farinha. Farinha is actually comes from a root, and they process this root by grinding it up into flour, or farinha. They make farinha by toasting farinha in oil, and it makes it really crunchy. You put it on top of your rice and it makes your rice crunchy. I've been going to Brazil a long time and I know you don't eat rice by itself; you supplement it with farinha, so I had this for every meal. But all of a sudden

in week number two, somebody said to me, "Do you want farofa?" "I don't know, what's farofa?" They had not only learned to supplement rice with farinha, they had learned to supplement farinha with farofa—it has chunks of pork in it, oil, and seasonings—and you put it over your rice. Wow, it's heavenly!

That's the picture of what Peter's saying...for this very reason, make every effort to supplement your saving faith. What are we supplementing it with? Seven things...the first is virtue. Now, this word virtue is hard to translate. If you read other translations of the Bible, all different words are used to translate virtue. It's a rare New Testament word. It's a word that was used among the philosophers of Greece. This word basically means efficient excellencies. So, we're going to add efficient excellencies to our faith. How many of you have a clue what we're adding? It's a word picture. It's the picture of fertile soil. In that society, producing a crop emits soil that's not fertile, and you can tell a difference.

In a couple of weeks, farmers are going to take their combines and get into the fields. Let me tell you what you're going to hear. You're going to hear a farmer tell you about a yield. When he starts telling you about that yield and it's really outrageous, you make sure you ask him if it's all making that much. See, the farmer's not going to tell you what it's *all* making; he's just going to tell you what his *best* field is making because he wants to have the best corn in the county, but it's just going to be one field. And if you really want him to get honest with you, you have to ask him if that the whole field or if that was just the strip down the middle.

Did you get that? So, the word virtue literally means we're going to add to our faith, excellency. We're not going to be mediocre in what we do. We're going to give our faith our best. What is our best? Our best is being dedicated, doing what God wants us to do. This word also means we do it with courage. There are no secret disciples. We courageously live the life God wants us to live where He's planted us so that others around us can see us rise to the level that the things we do are excellent because we're not doing them for ourselves, we're doing it for Him, and we're courageous when we do it. Then the third meaning of this word means to praise. As we courageously do what God has called us to do excellently, it ultimately

means praise to Him, not to us. So, what we're adding to our faith is we are now living the life we're supposed to live, but we're not living it selfishly, we're living it for Him and we're living it for others.

Secondly, to our excellencies we add knowledge. The early church was influenced heavily by Judaism and by Jewish believers. The Greek society prided wisdom, theoretical understanding. You went to school your whole life, you had a doctorate, you knew everything about that thing, but you had never experienced it personally. Peter wants us to have knowledge. The word for knowledge here literally means practical application of wisdom. It's that ability to know how to take what you know to be true, and what you know about, and make right decisions in life. Does that make sense? On the farm, we call this common sense. Some of you need to add some common sense to your faith. Can I be honest with you? There are times I hear about what some of us have done, and I just want to say what in the world were you thinking? Just tell me again, "You were in this situation, you had this choice but you could have done this, and you did that? What planet are you living on?" There was no way that was ever going to turn out good, no matter what short term glorification it brought to you! See, as a Christian we add knowledge to our faith, we add common sense, meaning we have that ability to take what we know to be true, and then when a choice comes, we make the right choice. When an action's required, we do the right thing. We don't do that other thing, because it's the opposite of knowledge.

Praise God for people with common sense. My dad didn't have much of a formal education, but I'm telling you...on the farm he could just see something and know how to fix it. He just an amazing ability in the moment to know the right thing to do based on what just happened. I love the Amazon River, but I'd never been out on the main channel of the river in a glorified Jon Boat before. One day I left early in the morning and I was on the Amazon River for about four and a half hours. Where we were at, this river is three to four miles wide. It was windy, it was hot, and waves were probably three, four foot tall, white capping the whole way. Have you ever been on a lake in one of those boats that's just long enough to hit every wave but not long enough to get on top of the waves? I was in that

boat. Can I repeat...four and a half hours! I was sitting in the middle of the boat, which is the front of the boat, and my driver, Nay, is in front of me. I can't tell you how many times I praised the Lord for Nay because he had common sense. I was so thankful! Nay had been on that river a lot, so I could watch him and know when I should be afraid. There were a few times I was afraid because I would see Nay get afraid. I would see him maneuver that boat and we would hit a wave and ooh! At that moment, I didn't want the engineer of the boat, and I didn't want the maintenance man on the motor; I wanted Nay because he had the practical application to take that boat and navigate that river. That is what the world needs in us! Yes, there are truths we have to know about God's Word, but there are times when we don't quote the Word of God, we show the Word of God by making right decisions at the right time because we've supplemented our faith with virtue, and we've supplemented our virtue with knowledge. Where does this knowledge come from? It comes from the Word of God. We have to buy into this. If God created life, it makes sense to me He knows more about it than we do. He sent His Son to live the life we couldn't live, so let's read what He says about life and live our life the way He lived His Life.

To our knowledge, we're going to add self-control. We've got this expression in Dexter where sometimes we're with somebody, something is going on, and we just look at them in the face and say, "Get a grip." I thought that was a Dexter phrase. I thought we originated that phrase; I really did. Did you know that's the word, self-control? If I looked up self-control in my Greek dictionary, here's what it says, literally: to get a grip on yourself. That's the basic meaning of the word, to grip yourself. Have you ever seen that person where a situation is happening and they're losing it? Have you ever had to say to one of your kids, "You're going to have to learn to control yourself," because the behavior that they're having is not good. Yes, there's something going on, and yes, we should be passionate about what's going on, but we can't be *that* passionate. That's this word. In in Greek philosophy, this was the word that was the perfect balance between reason and passion. See, there are some in the church who have gone to the point that they don't believe we should have any passion. That's just wrong. We Christians ought to be the most passionate people

on the planet, but our passion has to be controlled. Controlled with what? With reason. So our mind controls our passion. This is saying we have the ability to have the mind of Christ. And because we have the mind of Christ, we have godly thoughts. And because we have godly thoughts, we have godly beliefs. And because we have godly beliefs, we have godly behaviors. So in that moment when life's out of control, we are in control. Why? Because we have a grip on ourselves.

Then to self-control, we add steadfastness. Steadfastness is that picture of the weightlifter who reaches down and grabs the weight, lifts it up, gets it to his shoulders, and then he presses it above his head. He locks his legs, he locks his elbows, and he stands, depending on what level of the competition, usually from two to three seconds. If he's swaying, if he's moving, it's not a lift. It's not a lift until he remains under in a locked position. That's the picture of this word. To our self-control, we add steadfastness—we're not running away from life; we're remaining under the load that God's ordained for us. This is an interesting word, an important word. James uses it. Paul uses it. Remember how the book of James opens, count it all joy brothers, when your faith gets tested. Why? Because the testing of your faith produces suffering, and suffering produces what? Steadfastness. God has ordained suffering because suffering produces steadfastness in us, the ability to remain under life's loads and life's burdens. According to Paul, steadfastness produces hope...character, and then hope. God shapes who you and I are by our ability to remain under and not always running away from. Wow. Paul said the same thing, rejoice in suffering because suffering produces patience, and it's the word for steadfastness because that produces character and that produces hope. James says when we remain under we don't lack anything. Now, can I remind you what the writer of Hebrews said about Jesus? Hebrew 12:2 says, "Jesus...who for the joy set before Him steadfastly endured the cross, despising the shame." How many of you are thankful that Jesus was steadfast that day He went to the cross and didn't flee it? Do you know why He did it? For the joy set before Him. You know who that was, right? Now, here's where we mess up as Christians. We lock in and we have a miserable time because our thought is on what's happening to us and we're just bearing it...*Oh God!* And we whine and we

bellyache. No. You're bearing it for what it's going to bring to you, you're bearing it looking ahead—you're bearing it knowing at this very moment that if you remain under this you're getting spiritually stronger.

And then, what's God doing? He's preparing me for what's next, and I won't be ready for what's next unless I add to my faith steadfastness...and to my steadfastness, I add godliness. Even in Brazil, there was about three times where I had to make a choice. There was just a few times when I was really getting aggravated. Have any of you ever been there? Be honest. In Brazil, in a laid back culture...and there were just a few moments when, whew! Here was my choice—do the flesh thing or do the Spirit thing. I could be ungodly or I could be godly, and I *knew* the difference between godly and ungodly. What we have to add to faith is godliness.

Now, most of us really work on being in a right relationship with God but we're also supposed to be in right relationship with others, and that demands godliness. We do the right thing. Are you godly? I've got this picture of God; His name's Jesus. He's the fullness of God. He's the image of the invisible God. I have read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John so much that I just know Jesus and I know what he would do in every situation, and you do too. Are you like Him? Not occasionally, not on Sunday—do you have 100% concentration? In every moment of the day, you realize you want to be like Him and you're adding this to your faith.

I want to stop here just for a moment. I primarily preach to adults now, but I just want to remind you of how kids are. Have you ever asked a kid how old they were? A kid will never tell you how old they are; they'll always tell you how old they're going to be their next birthday. You ask a nine year old how old they are and they will say, "I'm going to be ten." I heard about a guy who (true story) asked this little boy how old he was, and the little boy said, "I'm twelve but I'm going on thirteen soon to be fourteen." That was a new one on me. Kids, by nature, do not want to stay where they are; they want to grow! Adults want to stay where we are, and that bleeds over into our Christian life. Peter's painting a picture of us growing. We're not picking which one of these we like, all of these are

evident in our life, and they're abounding more and more in our life because we're making a choice.

I got home to Redbud Road Friday and saw my three youngest grandkids. My oldest grandchild wasn't there and I didn't see him until yesterday morning. He walked in, and I'm not lying, he looked like he'd grown two inches in the seventeen days I had been gone! For the first time, as he came in and stood about ten feet away from me, it dawned on me, wow...we were looking eye to eye with each other! I just said, "Man Crider, you've grown some more." He said, "Really Papaw?" I said, "Yeah." So here's what we did...we just stood back to back, and Papaw was really stretching out, and because I stretched out just a little bit (don't tell him I said that☺) I was just a hair taller. Memish had to tell him I was still a hair taller and you could see he was disappointed. We looked at each other and the first question out of his mouth was this, "Papaw, how much taller is Dad than you?" I could see his little mind working. Memish began to tell him how short my papaw was, then how short my dad was, and then how short I am and how much taller Kory is. You could just see in his little eyes that he's not wanting to be as tall as his dad; he's wanting be taller than his dad. He's wanting to grow. Is that you? You want to be godly; you want to be like Jesus. We can choose that.

To godliness, we add brotherly affection. That's the love for the family. Hey guys, we have the same DNA. We have the same Dad, we have the same Brother, and we got the same Holy Spirit living inside us. We should love one another. Now, we're going to get aggravated each other from time to time, but we are still family. It blows my mind how somebody can claim to have faith in Jesus and not love the family. You can't.

To brotherly affection, we add love. This is the big one—this is agape. Notice this begins with faith and ends with love. There are some of us that like our own kind so we like family. But because of what God has done for us in Christ, He wants us to be loving those outside the family. This is a love where we don't love them for what they give to us; we love them strictly for what we can give to them. There's no strings attached. We're not getting anything from this. We're making a choice; we're choosing to love them. We're not falling in love with them; we're choosing to love

them. We're evaluating the need they have because the very reason we're choosing to love them is because they have a need. Then, we elevate that need to a place of priority in our life, and then we give our own resources to meet that need. Why are we doing this? Because of the potential that we have to live the life right now that Christ lived. Somebody needs to see that life being lived. It's somebody in your family. It's somebody where you work. It's somebody in your school. It's somebody that's on your ball team. It's somebody on that golf course. It's somebody at the lake this weekend. Are you lazy? Are you doing this halfheartedly? Are you making every effort?