Grow in Grace and Knowledge, #4

2 Peter 3:14-18

Introduction:

1. How do we grow in grace?–the first time grace is mentioned in the Bible.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8).

* 1. Noah was warned of danger (grace).
  2. God told Noah how to escape the danger (knowledge).
  3. Noah had to use the knowledge God gave him to enjoy the grace that was available (he grew in grace and knowledge).

1. Let us notice Peter growing in grace and knowledge–let us see him as he being transformed into a Rock.

And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone). (John 1:42).

1. ASKING FOR GREAT BLESSINGS, FAILING, ASKING FOR HELP DESPERATELY.
   1. The disciples were afraid and learned that Jesus was with them.  Mark 6:47-51
   2. Peter wanted to walk on the water, failed, asked for Jesus’ help. Matthew 14:28-33
   3. What was the gift?
      1. Jesus’ presence and protection.
      2. Jesus’ willingness to give another opportunity to someone who fails.
   4. What did you learn from that?
      1. The disciples confess for the first time that Jesus is the Son of God.

Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God” (Matthew 14:33).

* + - 1. The devil had questioned that fact.

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down.  For it is written:

‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and,

‘In their hands they shall bear you up,

Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ “ (Matthew 4:3, 5,   
 6).

* + - 1. Two demon-possessed men had confessed the truth.

And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God?  Have You come here to torment us before the time?”  (Matthew 8:29).

* + 1. The wind will not always be in the right direction.
       1. An Old Irish Blessing:

May the road rise to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields

And, until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

* + - 1. The wind was contrary, against the disciples.

But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary (Matthew 14:24).

* + 1. People do not always recognize Jesus–even when He is close.

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.  And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!”  And they cried out for fear (Matthew 14:25,26).

* + 1. Disciples do not always believe Jesus when He speaks.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”  And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (Matthew 14:27, 28).

* + 1. People who have problems with faith aren’t always walking away from Jesus.

So He said, “Come.”  And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.  But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”  And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”  (Matthew 14:29-31).

* + 1. The fact that you have only a little faith doesn’t mean that life is over and hope is lost–if you are willing to grow in grace and knowledge.

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”  (Matthew 14:31).

1. MAKING A BOLD DEFINITIVE STATEMENT WHEN OTHERS ARE MISINFORMED, CONFUSED, OR UNCOMMITTED.
   1. People thought Jesus was a good man, but were unaware of His identity.

Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?”  So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets” (Mark 8:27,28).

* 1. Peter knew the truth–he had grown in grace and knowledge.

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”  Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”  Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him (Mark 8:29,30).

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”  Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”  Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:15-17).

* 1. What was the gift?
     1. The opportunity to hear the ideas of others.
     2. The knowledge of the truth of Jesus.
  2. What did you learn from that?
     1. Good opinions aren’t necessarily the truth.
     2. Truth originates with and comes from God.

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20,21).

1. ACCEPTING A STERN REBUKE AND LEARNING FROM IT.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.  He spoke this word openly.  And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.  But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (Mark 8:31-33).

Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”  (Matthew 16:22).

* 1. What was the gift?
     1. The disciples had a friend Who was willing to prepare them for painful truth.
     2. They needed to get ready for Jesus’ torture and death.
     3. They needed to know their future in order to continue to make the choice to follow Jesus.
        1. Not only would this happen to Jesus, but possibly to His followers.

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.   For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.  For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?  Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?  (Mark 8:34-37).

* + - 1. Anyone ashamed of Jesus, Jesus will be ashamed of him.

“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

* 1. What did you learn from that?
     1. The Son of God knows what He is talking about.
        1. Peter had just confessed the divinity of Jesus.
        2. Then he tells Jesus He doesn’t know what he is talking about.
     2. A strong rebuke given in truth and love does not dissolve a relationship.

Open rebuke is better

Than love carefully concealed.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend,

But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful (Proverbs 27:5, 6).

Conclusion:

1. Knowing is doing.

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.  He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

1. What do you need to do to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Portia Nelson has written a piece titled: “Autobiography in Five Short Chapters.” It reads:

Chapter I

I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I fall in.

I am lost...I am helpless.

It isn’t my fault.

It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend I don’t see it.

I fall in again.

I can’t believe I am in the same place, but it isn’t my fault.

It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I see it is there.

I still fall in...it’s a habit.

My eyes are open.

I know where I am.

It IS my fault.

I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I w alk around it.

Chapter V

I walk down another street.

— Peter A. Alwinson, (*Leadership*, Winter 1990, page 50)