Grow in Grace and Knowledge, #9

2 Peter 3:14-18

Introduction:

1. This is a journey we started January 30.
2. We have discussed a process that begins with conversion, the new birth and continues until we die.
3. When Clyde Thompson was seventeen years old, he was sentenced to die in the electric chair.  He was the youngest man in Texas to be sentenced to death.  He had killed eight men.

Six hours before his scheduled date with death, word came that the governor had commuted his sentence to life imprisonment.  He heard a sermon on a prison guard’s radio.  He was baptized and spent the last twenty-eight years behind bars preaching Christ to his fellow prisoners.  He led many of them to the new life in Christ.

He was later released but had a problem wearing the clothes he was given when he left prison.  Several prisoners were released on the same day he was able to walk through the doors he had tried unsuccessfully to break through for so many years.  Some of those being released with him had no friends or loved ones to meet them.  They wore the simple garments the state furnished them.  But the woman who had corresponded with him so faithfully and who was soon to become his wife had sent him a new suit, a shirt with french cuffs, cuff links, a tie, shoes, socks.  Some of these items he had never worn before.

“I had to have help to put on my new clothes,” he said.  “You see, I didn’t know how to wear freedom’s garments.” - Cline R. Paden (book about Clyde Thompson, *The Meanest Man in Texas*, by Don Umphrey)

1. That is our challenge for us to grow in grace and knowledge.

That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24).

1. HOW CAN I GROW IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE?
   1. Accept the gift and learn the lesson.

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (James 1:12).

Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation.  But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:28).

* + 1. Some gifts are hard to recognize as gifts.  Hebrews 12:3-11
    2. If it’s from God, it’s good.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1:17).

* 1. Be thankful for the gift and apply the lesson.

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20).

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.  Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:3-5).

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.  But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.  If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him (James 1:2-5).

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves (James 1:22).

1. PETER, HOW DID YOU GROW IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE?  I LEARNED FROM MY MISTAKES.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.  For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-8).

* 1. Faith–often little or no faith–a life-long process.

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).

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen (Mark 16:14).

* 1. Virtue–moral excellence, courage, energy to do right–failed in Gethsemane, and in the courtyard of the high priest the night of Jesus’ trial. Mark 14:32-72
  2. Knowledge–didn’t know what I was talking about on the Mount of Transfiguration–but I learned. Mark 9:2-7
  3. Self control–often spoke and acted without thinking.

And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear (Mark 14:47).

* 1. Godliness–I failed in rebuking and denying Jesus.
  2. Brotherly kindness–I participated in the perennial fusses about who was going to be the greatest.  Matthew 20; Mark 9; Luke 9: Luke 22
  3. Love–a hard lesson to learn.

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?”  He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”  He said to him, “Feed My lambs.”  He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?”  He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”  He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”  He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?”  Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?”  And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”  Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep” (John 21:15-17).

* 1. Perseverance–I did this well; that is the difference between me and Judas.
     1. Judas quit.

Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”  And they said, “What is that to us? You see to it!”  Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

* + 1. I kept coming back–the opportunity to do that is grace!

“But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you” (Mark 16:7).

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

If You’re Like Me

If you’re like me, you’ve had your lows.

You’ve been knocked down and suffered blows.

You’ve asked yourself if you’ve been cursed;

And though it’s bad, could it be worse?

But if you’re like me despite your doubts;

You’ve hunkered down and stuck it out.

You’ve chose to see the light, not dark

Which puts a warmth inside your heart.

You’ve put your faith in God above

And realized how much you’re loved.

Now, if you’re like me you’ve found a peace

That’s only felt from prayer on knees–

If you’re like me (Donald Alan Ketchum © 11 March 2000).

Conclusion:

1. A righteous man is not one who never sins but the one who keeps getting up after he sins.

For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again,

But the wicked stumble in time of calamity (Proverbs 24:16).

1. Is it worth it?
2. It is essential.

For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.  For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.  Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:8-11).

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  To Him be the glory both now and forever.  Amen (2 Peter 3:18).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5).