

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 1 November 2020. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## **Be Sure of These Things!**

### **2 Peter 1:10-14**

Anyone who has known me for long knows that I tend to be a cautious person. I am constantly double-checking and triple-checking to be sure that I have not forgotten to do something important. I'm continually checking off written and mental "to do" lists. My family can testify that there have been many times when we were in the car, and driving down the road, when I suddenly became less than absolutely sure that we had turned off that hob switch, or turned off that light, or locked that door, or grabbed that material for church. Even when I am 99.9 % sure that we did do that thing, we still turn around and go back to the house, or check the boot, just to be doubly sure. Of course, every once in a great while, I actually *do* forget to do something important. For example, there have been a few Sunday mornings when I have had to drive back to the house from the church building, at top speed, because I had forgotten my sermon. Thus, I always feel that I have a good reason to "be extra sure." As I'm sure you can imagine, any letter, lesson, or sermon that I write is checked at least three times to be sure that every last typo or punctuation error has been weeded out, and that the text is absolutely perfect. To this day, I still have dreams that I am back at college, and that I suddenly realise, on the morning of a big test, that I had completely forgotten to study for it--or, that I had forgotten to do a big project.

Now, maybe you think that I'm a little too diligent about making sure that I'm not forgetting things. Perhaps I am. However, there is something about which you can *never* be too diligent. When it comes to the things of God, a Christian can never be "too sure" that he is doing all that God requires. We can't be reminded too often to be spiritually fruitful for God, or to do His will. We must be reminded again and again. Hundreds of times in the Bible, God commanded His people not to forget His laws and precepts--or, He simply repeated what He had just said, in a slightly different way.

That is what the Apostle Peter is doing in the section of Scripture that we will be reading this morning. Peter is urging his readers not to forget some things. He had just finished exhorting his readers to "add" eight spiritual qualities to their lives (namely, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity); but now Peter is saying, "*Don't forget to keep adding these things to your life! This is extremely important!*"

It has been almost 2,000 years since Peter wrote this letter; but this letter is still stirring Christians to *remember* certain things. Every child of God needs to be reminded of the things that God wants to accomplish in our lives. I've entitled this morning's message *Be Sure of These Things*.

#### **Read 2 Peter 1:10-14.**

This morning, I would like to focus our attention on **verse 10**. It is very important that you understand what Peter is saying here. Peter is urging Christians to make their "***calling and election sure***." What does this mean, exactly? Many Christians look at this verse and say, "Oh, Peter must be saying that you need to be sure that you have really been called and elected to be *saved*." In other words, many people think that Peter is saying, "Be sure that you are really *saved*."

Is that what Peter is saying? Well, the answer is “No.” Peter is *not* challenging his readers to be sure that they were really saved. How do I know? Because Peter was writing to people who were *already* saved. In **verse 1** Peter opened his letter by saying, “***Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***” Clearly, Peter is writing with the assumption that his readers are already saved.

What, then, *was* Peter saying to these saved people? In a few minutes, we will get to that question. But first, I’m going to hit the “pause” button, and ask an extremely important question:

### I. “Are you saved?”

I ask this question because I *know* that there are some of you under the sound of my voice who are *not* saved, and who either don’t want to admit it, or are putting off dealing with it. Friends, there is *nothing* more important than being saved! There is nothing more important than being sure that you have truly come to God for salvation on *His terms*. The consequence of *not* coming to God *His way* is terrible! The punishment for your sin is eternal torment in the Lake of Fire; and if you have not been saved, then your sins are still being held against you, and you are only a heartbeat away from passing into an eternity of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, in the Lake that burns with fire and brimstone! **Revelation 20:15** says, “***And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.***”

How can you avoid this awful penalty? Can you be good enough, or clean up your life enough, to earn salvation? Can you go to church enough, or read your Bible enough, or pray enough, or pass out tracts enough? No, you can’t! **Titus 3:5** says, “***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.***” Not even one good work that you have ever done can erase even one sin that you have ever done.

How, then, can anyone be saved? Well, as **Titus 3:5** says, it is by His **mercy** (His giving you what you don’t deserve). God showed His mercy toward you by sending His sinless Son to die on the cross, and to take your punishment of your sin in your place. All God’s wrath and anger against your sin was poured out on His Son during those hours when He hung on the cross. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, took your sin, and the *curse* of your sin, upon Himself as He hung on that cross. Jesus took God’s wrath on Himself so that you wouldn’t have to endure God’s wrath for eternity in the Lake of Fire! The Apostle Peter wrote, “***For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit***” (**1 Peter 3:18**). The Apostle Paul wrote that Christ was “***made a curse for us***” (**Galatians 3:13**). Let’s look at that Scripture.

### Read Galatians 3:10-13.

Can you be sure that you are saved? Yes, you can; and it is so simple! There is no checklist of good works that you must be able to tick off before you can be saved. In fact, if you think that you are saved because you are keeping a checklist of good works, you are *not* saved! There is just one condition on your part for being saved. Christ has already paid the price of your sin in your place; but what must you do? The Bible says that must simply **repent** (which means to be truly sorry for your sin, broken over your sin, and willing to turn from your sin, and turn over the control of your life over to Jesus). The Bible also says that you must **believe** that Christ already did everything necessary to pay for your sin (by dying for your sin in your place, and rising again). True faith and true repentance cannot be separated. If you have truly

believed on Him, then you have also turned from your sin, and to Christ. If you will truly repent in your heart, and place your complete faith and trust in Jesus, He will save you completely, once and forever! **Romans 10:9-13** says, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* My friend, if you be not saved, the Father is drawing you toward Him right now. He is saying, “Stop trusting in your own righteousness. Your righteousness isn’t good enough. Just believe on Jesus, who died for you!”

**Read John 6:37-47.**

Should you not be sure of your salvation, do not leave this morning without repenting and believing on Jesus! You may be the most “religious,” church-going person on earth; but if you have not been born again by simple repentance and faith in Christ, you are still lost and on your way to hell.

Allow me to give you an example. My mother grew up in the Roman Catholic Church; and she was what people would consider a “good person.” However, when she was in her late teens, someone challenged her to read the Bible for herself. This was something that she had never done before; and so, she did it. She began to read her own Catholic Bible, which her aunt and uncle had only recently given to her as a graduation gift from secondary school; and as she read it, she began to find that most of the key doctrines that she had been taught as a Catholic were false. She found out that Mary was a sinner like everyone else. Even though Mary was a chaste virgin at the time when Gabriel appeared to her, and even though she bore Jesus in her womb by a miracle, she still had to be saved like everyone else. As my mum read the Scripture, she discovered that Mary has no power to hear prayers, to be a mediator, or to forgive anyone. She found out that Mary was *not* a virgin for the rest of her life. After Jesus’ birth, Mary had four sons named James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, and at least two daughters, through her married relationship with her husband, Joseph. (This *really* shook my mum!) She found out that there is no such office as “pope” mentioned in the Bible. She found out that Peter, the so-called “first pope,” was married, and not celibate (as were *all* the Apostles). She found out that pastors are, in fact, *required* to be married (or, at least, to have had the *experience* of the marriage relationship, if they are now widowers). She found out that there is no such place as purgatory, and that there are no such things as indulgences, masses, or prayers for the dead. She found out that praying to statues (even statues of Jesus), is idolatry, and an abomination. She found out that Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man, and that prayers to the saints are open doors to demonic deception. She found out that the Lord’s Supper is simply a *symbol* of Christ’s body and blood, and not a repeat of Christ’s sacrifice. She found out that Christ will one day *appear in the clouds of heaven*, to rapture Christians out of this world--and that after a seven-year period of horrible judgments upon earth, Christ will come again to earth, with all His saints, to set up a glorious Kingdom for 1,000 years. She had *never* heard of Christ’s second coming at all, in any of its aspects; and this made her feel very deceived and betrayed. As she found these truths in the Bible, she readily accepted all of them. She even went forward at the end of a church service at the Baptist church that she was now attending. However, there was no one there at the altar to deal with her, and to open the

Bible, and to show her how to be saved. So, she prayed a prayer by herself (she didn't know what about); and she figured that somehow, she must now be "saved."

However, she *wasn't* saved. Sadly, no one in the church that morning went up to talk with her, or to ask her what was on her heart. Someone *could* have opened up a Bible, and shown her the way of salvation that morning; but apparently, no one was courageous enough, or confident enough in soul-winning, to deal with her. Now, others in the church heard that my mom had gone forward to be "saved," and they all *assumed* that she was saved; but she still didn't understand that Jesus died to pay a price that she couldn't pay! Though she had changed her mind about a number of important Bible doctrines, she still didn't understand salvation. She was still on her way to hell. She was still religious, but lost.

Well, my mum was baptised shortly after this experience, and was thus put on the membership role of the church. In time, she married my dad (who *was* genuinely saved, and a member of that church); and she willingly went through the humiliation of being disowned by all her Catholic relatives. Surely *that* was proof that she was saved, right? Wrong! It wasn't until six years into my parents' marriage that my mom finally understood what she had heard a thousand times in the church, and what she herself had read in the Bible. She finally understood that salvation is *not* through our own good works! She had accepted, *intellectually*, all kinds of right, Biblical teaching, and had even left the Catholic Church; but in her heart, she was still proudly thinking that *she* was a "good person," and that she had *always been* a basically "good person." She still thought that she had always been a "Christian"; and she figured that by going forward during the invitation in the Baptist church, and by praying a prayer (she didn't know what about), she had somehow added even more "insurance policy" to her salvation. But then, one Sunday, after hearing a simple Gospel message, my mum finally realised that her sin had separated her from God; that she was *already* condemned by her sin, and on her way to hell; and that, in fact, she had been part of Satan's family all along! She realised that she had never truly turned in her heart to Jesus in simple faith, admitted that she needed His forgiveness, and asked Him for it. That morning she *truly* let go of her self-righteousness, *truly* turned from her sin, *truly* asked Jesus to save her from all her sins, and *truly believed* on Him; and her life was never the same again! She now *knew* that she was really saved; and she never doubted it from that moment onward. She didn't have an amazing, mystical religious "experience"; she simply came to Jesus in faith, and placed her complete trust in Him, and in what He did for her on the cross.

Now, there may be some of you who don't really have any worries about whether you are saved, because you *feel* as though you are "O.K." with God; and you are satisfied with that. However, if you have never been broken about your sin, repented, and believed on Jesus alone, then you are not saved! If this be you, I urge you to believe on Christ today, and be saved. **Acts 16:31** says, "***Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.***"

Now, I am going to take off the "pause" button, and address those of you who are saved—because *you* are the ones whom Peter is addressing here in **2 Peter 1:10**. The second part of this message is for you, Christian. My question to you is:

## **II. Are you fulfilling the purpose for which you were saved?**

(Read verse 10 again.) What does Peter mean when he says, “*Make your calling and election sure*”? Well, to answer that question, we need to know the meaning of the words “*calling*” and “*election*.” First, let’s start with the meaning of “*calling*.”

#### Read Matthew 22:1-14.

In this parable, Jesus is giving us an illustration of God’s offer of salvation. The “marriage feast” is a picture of the future marriage supper of the Lamb, which will be held in Christ’s Kingdom one day for all who are saved. The people who were *invited* to this feast at *first* are a picture of the nation of Israel. Sadly, these people rejected the king’s offer (just as most of the nation of Israel rejected God’s Son, Jesus Christ). So, the king commanded his servants (a picture of the Apostles, and all other Christians) to go out and invite *everyone* to the feast. This is a picture of how God offered salvation to the whole world (not just to the Jews). As the messengers went out, some people responded to the invitation, and some didn’t respond. However, there was *one condition* for being accepted into the marriage feast. The condition was that the attendees had to be wearing a special wedding garment. This “wedding garment” is a picture of Christ’s perfect righteousness, which the sinner must “put on,” like a garment.

#### Read Revelation 19:7-8.

The Bible makes it clear that none of us is righteous. However, when you believe on Christ, Christ’s righteousness is *imputed* to you, as though it is actually *yours*. It’s like taking off your dirty clothes and putting on a clean, white garment. *This* is the one condition for being saved. We must simply let go of our own so-called “righteousness” (which is like filthy rags), and receive Christ’s imputed righteousness, by faith. Tragically, there are many people who will not receive that robe of Christ’s righteousness, because they *think* they are righteous, and that they don’t need it. Such people are like the man who showed up for the feast without a wedding garment. This man in Jesus’ parable is a picture of a religious, but lost man. And what happened to this man? At the end of the parable, the man was bound and cast into “*outer darkness*,” where there is “*weeping and gnashing of teeth*.” This, of course, is hell.

With this in mind, we now come down to **verse 14**. Jesus ended His parable with these words: “*For many are called, but few are chosen.*” Now, I have a simple question for you. In the parable, who was “*called*” to the feast? Everyone was! No matter who they were, *everyone* was invited! What, then, is the spiritual truth that Jesus is teaching? Jesus is saying that *everyone* is invited to God’s wedding feast! *Everyone* is invited to be saved! The call is to *all*! No one is excluded from the invitation. *No one* is excluded from the “calling.”

So, if *everyone* have been “called,” why would Peter urge us to make our “calling” *sure*? Is he saying, “Be sure that you are *called* to salvation”? No! *Everyone* has been called to receive God’s offer of salvation! We don’t need to make sure that we have been called to salvation, because *everyone* has been called!

What does Peter mean, then? We will answer that question in a minute. First, though, let’s look at that other word--the word “*election*.” (Remember, Peter urged his readers to make their “*calling and election sure*.”) What does “election” mean? “Election” simply means “choosing.” Now, does that word “choose” ring a bell? What did Jesus say in **Matthew 22:14**? Let’s read it again. (Read Matthew 22:14 again.)

Jesus said, “**Many are called, but few are chosen.**” That word “chosen” is the same as the word “elected.” With this in mind, let’s put Jesus’ whole statement together. Jesus says that “many” people (in other words, the whole human family) are called; but only a few are “chosen” (or elected). Only a small, chosen group (those who are saved) will actually be present at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Now, the question is: “*Why* are those who are saved ‘chosen’?” *Why* did God choose them? Did God say, before He created man, “I choose these people to be saved, and I choose these people *not* to be saved; and they have no choice in the matter”? Incredibly, that is what a lot of people believe! (It’s a belief called “Calvinism.”) However, that is not what the Bible teaches! Every man, woman, boy, and girl *does* have the choice and the *responsibility* to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone *must* choose. Now, most people--though they have been *called*, and the offer has been made--still choose to reject Jesus. **But**, there are a few--a precious few--who *do* choose to believe on Jesus; and those who *do* choose Jesus are the ones whom *He* chooses! *Everyone* is *called* to God’s marriage supper; but only those who *choose* to come to God on His terms (by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving His robe of righteousness) are the ones whom *God* chooses (or elects).

With this in mind, let’s go back to **2 Peter 1:10**. (**Read 2 Peter 1:10 again.**) As we saw in Jesus’ parable in Matthew, *everyone* has been called to God’s marriage supper. Therefore, when Peter says, “**Make your calling sure,**” he is *not* saying, “Be sure that you have been called.” Why would you have to be sure you are called, when God makes it very clear that *everyone* has been called? This statement “make your calling sure” does *not* mean “be sure you are called”; and it does not mean “be sure that you are saved”!

Now, what about the second part of the statement (“make your *election* sure”)? What does *this* mean? Well, you’ll remember that Peter was writing this letter to people who were *already* saved. Why would Peter tell saved people, “Be sure you’re saved”? He *wouldn’t* need to tell them this!

So, what *is* Peter saying to these saved people? What does “**make your calling and election sure**” mean? In order to understand this, there is something you need to understand about your calling and election, Christian. **You need to understand the purpose of your calling and election.** *To what* did God “call” and “elect” you? What was His *purpose* in calling and electing you? Did He call and elect you to be *saved*? Well, let’s see. First, let’s look at the “calling.”

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7.**

**Read Ephesians 4:1-3.**

Look closely at what Paul said in these verses. Did Paul say, “You have been called to be *saved*?” No. He said, “You have been called to *holiness*.” Yes, God did call you to receive His Son, and be saved; but in so doing, He was calling you to enter into a life of holiness *after* your salvation. Now that you are saved, He wants you to avoid fornication, lust, and dishonesty, and to embrace lowliness of mind, longsuffering, forbearance, and love. In other

words, He wants you to be holy. The whole reason He called you to *be* saved was that, *after* your salvation, He might enable you to live this kind of life. He called you to *holiness*.

Now, let's talk about our election. To *what*, exactly, did God elect you, Christian?

**Read Ephesians 1:4.**

**Read 1 Peter 1:1-2.**

Please look carefully at these verses. Do these Scriptures say, "You were chosen to be *saved*"? No! They say, "You were chosen to live a life of *holiness* and *sanctification*." As Peter said there in **1 Peter 1:2**, God "foreknew," before the foundation of the world, who was going to receive Him; and knowing this, He already had "chosen" (*planned*, or *purposed*) for them to live lives of *holiness* after their salvation.

Here's the bottom line. When Peter says, "***Make your calling and election sure***," he is saying: "Be sure you are *fulfilling the responsibilities* that God has given to you as a Christian. Be sure you are fulfilling the *purpose* for which Christ called you and chose you." Before you were saved, God *called* you to be saved, so that you could live a life of holiness; and that calling still stands. After you were saved, He *chose* you to fulfil a life of service, and holiness; and that election still stands. Therefore, we need to make this calling and election sure. We need to be holy and obedient. This is the whole reason Christ called and chose you, Christian!

Now, before we close this morning, let's look at the last part of **verse 10**. Peter says, "***For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall***." What "***things***" is Peter talking about? He's talking about those eight spiritual qualities in **verses 5-7** (faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity). Peter is saying, "If you keep growing in your faith, and in all these other spiritual virtues, you will have a stable Christian life." Peter is *not* saying, "Keep doing these things so that you will *stay* saved." The Bible teaches that those who are saved are saved forever! Peter *is* saying, "Remember to keep practicing these spiritual qualities, so that you will have a solid, stable, spiritual, productive Christian life."

Christian, God doesn't want you to go through life spiritually anaemic and weak-kneed, always stumbling and falling into sin, and getting hurt and banged up, and damaging your testimony for Him. He doesn't want you to fluctuate up and down like a roller coaster in your Christian life because you are following your emotions instead of God's Word. He wants you to have strong, unwavering faith in His Word, so that you can add on all the spiritual qualities that He has planned for you. He wants you to walk "worthy of your calling." He wants you to fulfil the purpose for which He called and chose you. Are you fulfilling that purpose?

**Conclusion:** In next week's message, we will delve into **verses 11-14**, which we only briefly touched on this morning. There are some other things that Peter wanted his readers to remember. But for now, we have plenty to think about. I would ask, first of all, whether you are absolutely sure that you are saved. Has there been a time in your life when you were truly broken about your sin, and knew that you needed Jesus, and really repented of your sin and believed on Him? I'm not asking if you had an amazing religious experience, or a near-death encounter, from which God delivered you: I'm asking if you have ever admitted that you were a hell-bound sinner, and cast your complete confidence on Jesus, and in what He did for you on the cross. If not, don't put it off! Ask Jesus to save you today!

If you are saved, I would ask again: “Are you fulfilling the purpose for which He saved you?” Are you living a life of holiness--or do you love the world? Do you love the world’s ungodly movies, music, entertainment, pleasure-seeking, and self-centred attitudes and lifestyles? Do you really obey God when He commands you to do something? Or do you balk at His will, and insist on your own way? Are you growing in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love? Or is your Christian life unstable, because you are not practicing these things very much? If so, won’t you talk to the Lord this morning, and ask Him to help you “add” these things, so that you can live a steadfast Christian life?