

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 8 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! (Part 2)

2 Peter 1:10-14

On 18 September 1983, when I was six years old, the most wonderful event in my entire life happened to me. On that day, my parents opened a Bible and explained the Gospel to me. On that day, I realised that I was lost and on my way to hell. However, I also realised that Jesus Christ, God's Son, had taken my sin's curse upon Himself, and had died in my place, so that I might be saved. On that day, I called out to Christ in simple faith, and asked Him to be my Lord and Saviour.

Now, I distinctly remember that after my salvation, I fell in love with the Bible. I also had an insatiable desire to share God's Word with anyone who would listen; and one person who was always ready to listen was my grandmother. She was my "captive audience"! My grandma wasn't saved until later in life; and even by the time I was six years old, she was still catching up on the Bible knowledge that she had never learned when she was growing up. (Before her salvation, she had not so much as touched a Bible, much less read one.) My grandma would often ring our house to talk with my family; and whenever she rang, I was ready to tell her everything that I was learning from the Bible. I still remember sitting on a chair in our kitchen, right by the old rotary phone, with its long, spirally cord, and having long conversations with Grandma. I would quote the Scriptures that I had memorised that week, or explain doctrinal teachings that I was learning. I would tell her about Bible history--everything from the Garden of Eden, to the Flood, to the call of Abraham, to the Israel's crossing of the Red Sea, to the Old Testament Tabernacle, to the judges and the kings of Israel, to Jesus' miracles, to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, to the missionary journeys of Paul. I especially loved to talk about the Rapture, and the Tribulation, and the Second Coming of Christ. Hour after hour, I would talk Grandma's ear off. You'd think that she would have grown weary of it; but she didn't. I found out later that she often told my mom that she learned more about God's Word from me than she did from anyone else.

Now, what was I doing when I had these long conversations with my Grandma? I didn't realise it at the time; but I was making my "***calling and election sure.***" You may remember that in last week's message, we learned about what it means to make your "***calling and election sure.***" In **2 Peter 1:10**, the Apostle Peter exhorted Christians to be "sure" of certain things, and to "remember" them. What were these things that Peter thought were so important? Did he exhort Christians to look after their health? Did he exhort young people to put the pursuit of their careers first? Did he exhort parents to put their savings, their mortgages, and their kids' education first, because it is important to be well-established in life? No. As important as these matters are, they are nothing compared to the things that are important to the *Lord*. What *is* important to the Lord? According to **2 Peter 1:10**, the Lord commands every Christian to "***give diligence to make your calling and election sure.***" This means that the things of God—the things that God has called and elected you to do for Him—are the things that should be top priority in your life. If you know Christ as your Saviour, God has called and elected you to fulfil His will in your life; and He wants you to make "sure" that you are accomplishing His will. To make your "***calling and election sure***" simply means to make sure that you are doing what Christ called and chose you to do. Whenever I

talked with my Grandma about the Scripture, and helped her to grow in the Lord, I was doing what God had called and elected me to do; and the benefits of doing God's will *never* pass away!

Let's face it. When it comes to things of this world, you can't really be sure of anything. You may be diligent in building a career; and that is a good thing. However, it could all be taken away in a moment. You may be diligent in saving up for the future; and you *should* do this. However, it could all be taken away in a moment. You may try to stay in good health; and this is a needful thing. However, for all you know, your very *life* may be over before this hour is up. **On the other hand**, the benefits of doing the things to which God has called and chosen you will never vanish. They will never pass away. Peter is saying, "Be sure, Christian, that you are accomplishing the things to which God called and elected you. Make them sure and steadfast, and remember them."

In this morning's message, we will look at three things that Christians should make steadfast, and remember. The title of this message is ***Be Sure of These Things! (Part 2)***.

Read 2 Peter 1:10-14.

I. Be sure to fulfil the purpose for which you were saved (v. 10)

In last week's message, we looked at **Ephesians 4**. In this Scripture, Paul urged Christians in the church of Ephesus to "*walk worthy*" of their calling. And what is "the calling," exactly? Let's refresh our memories.

Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

According to this Scripture, "the calling" is far more than the calling to be saved from the flames of hell. God has called us to a life of holiness *after* our salvation. The "calling" is all about our *service* to God. It includes *everything* that God would have you to do now that you are in God's family. There are many things that *every* child of God should be doing (or *not* be doing). First, let's first examine some of the things that Christians should *not* be doing.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7.

In this passage, Paul says that "***God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.***" What are some of the "unclean things" that Paul had in mind? Well, for one thing, he says, "***For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.***" God commands you to abstain not only from sexual acts outside the bounds of marriage, but also from lustful thoughts, pornography, filthy television shows, filthy talk and innuendo, and anything that would encourage lust in your heart. He also commands you not to *defraud* your brother. This means to overstep your rightful bounds. It means to rob someone of what belongs to him. In the context of this passage, "*defraud*" specifically means to rob your brother by taking away the purity of his future wife. By the way, that's precisely what fornication is. It's robbery! It is robbing someone else of a pure spouse on his or her wedding day. Christians should have no part in this!

What else does holiness involve? In **Ephesians 4:31**, we are commanded to put away wrath, anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. In **Ephesians 4:29** we are commanded to "***Let no corrupt communication*** (such as lies, slander, badmouthing, gossip, filthy talk, or irreverent talk about God) ***proceed out of your mouth.***" These are just *some* of the things that God commands Christians *not* to do. This is all part of "the calling."

Now, there are also many things that God calls Christians *to do*. For example, He commands us to use our speech to “edify” others (build them up in the Lord). He commands us to exercise love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, virtue, godly knowledge, patience, godliness, and brotherly kindness. He commands us to have our feet shod daily with the ***“preparation of the Gospel of peace.”*** In other words, every Christian should know how to open up a Bible and lead someone to Christ. Every Christian should be on the warpath to track down lost souls and win them to the Lord!

Soul-winning isn’t merely the pastor’s job. Witnessing isn’t the job of Christians who are particularly “talented,” or who are “people persons.” It is *every* Christian’s job! It is also the responsibility of every Christian to teach *younger Christians* God’s Word. This requires that you be studying God’s Word diligently every day. In **Hebrews 5**, the Apostle Paul rebuked some of the Christians in his audience, because, for the amount of time they had been saved, they *should* have been teachers of the Word. Instead, Paul said that ***“Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.”*** In other words, “You still don’t know the ‘ABC’s’ of Bible doctrine! You’re still having to be ‘spoon fed’ God’s Word!” Every Christian should strive to be like Aquila and Priscilla. Remember this Christian couple, whom Paul met in Corinth? Aquila wasn’t called to be a pastor; yet, he and his wife *did* know the Scriptures well enough to teach others. When Paul moved to the city of Ephesus to start a new church, Aquila and Priscilla uprooted from Corinth and travelled with Paul to Ephesus, just so that they could help him win souls and train new Christians. (All the while, they were continuing to do their regular occupation of tent-making.) God used this ordinary couple to teach a young man named **Apollos** in the Scriptures; and Apollos became a mighty evangelist and missionary co-worker with Paul!

No Christian is too young, or too “ordinary,” to teach others. If God used me to teach my grandmother what I knew of God’s Word when I was only seven years old, He can use *any* Christian! This is all part of the “call.”

What else is involved in the “call”? “The call” also involves the practice of righteousness. It includes seeking after truth from God’s Word. It involves the continual, daily exercise of prayer. It involves bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, forbearance, forgiveness, and thanksgiving and praise to God. We are called to exercise grace in our words and actions. We are called to stand fast through tribulations and temptations. We are called to seek after wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the LORD. These are things to which *every* believer is called!

However, the calling involves not only the *general* commands that apply to all Christians, but also the specific, “customised” commands that God gives to individual believers.

Read Exodus 31:1-8.

In this passage, we see that God called a man named Bezaleel to a specific area of service. Bezaleel’s specific calling was to make the furniture and vessels of the Tabernacle. Now, we don’t know whether Bezaleel had any knowledge of metallurgy or jewellery prior to this point. Perhaps he did. However, even if he did have the knowledge of metallurgy beforehand, his knowledge was now greatly *enhanced* and *increased* by the Holy Spirit of God, who had taken

up residence in his body. The Bible says that *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”* God had a specific task for Bezaleel to carry out; and because Bezaleel feared the Lord, God equipped Bezaleel with knowledge for the task that He had called him to do.

God has called all believers to a life of service; and He has given us His Holy Spirit to *empower* us for service. By the way, do you realise how privileged we are to have the Holy Spirit permanently indwelling us? Bezaleel was given the privilege of being *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit; yet, for Old Testament believers, this was a rare and unique privilege. In Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit came upon believers only temporarily, in order to empower them to prophesy, or to do some other important task. Yet, for us believers who live in the New Testament age, there is nothing “rare” about being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We are *all* permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, from the moment of our salvation. The Holy Spirit enables and equips us to do the things that He calls us to do. Every ability that He gives us, He gives it in order that we might use it for His service.

By the way, using our talents to serve the Lord is not an option; it is a *command*. Maybe you haven’t given much thought to what God wants you to do with the abilities that He has given you. If so, I assure you that there are specific things that God wants you to do to serve Him! You need to seek the Lord, and let Him *show* you His will. You have been saved to serve!

Now, let’s go back to **2 Peter 1:10**, and read it once again. (**Read 2 Peter 1:10.**) Take a look at that word “sure.” This word “sure” comes from the Greek word *bebaios*, which means “steadfast,” “stable,” or “firm.” God wants your practice of faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity to be like the Rock of Gibraltar. He wants it to be solid and steadfast. He doesn’t want your service to diminish and die away, and then revive, and then fade again. He wants it to be *always the same!* Let’s look at another verse that talks about this matter of “steadfastness.”

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

In a minute, we’ll take a close look at **verse 58**. First, though, let’s back up a bit, and look at the context. Throughout **chapter 15**, Paul had taught on the doctrine of the resurrection. Then, in **verse 57**, he wrapped up the whole subject of the resurrection with these words: *“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* What is Paul saying? He is saying that on the Resurrection Day, we will have *complete* victory over sin, because God will give us immortal bodies which are completely free of the sin nature. Even now, we have the ability to overcome sin through the resurrection power of Christ; but on the Resurrection Day, sin will have no power over us anymore.

That is why Paul gives us this exhortation here **1 Corinthians 15:58**. (**Read 1 Corinthians 15:58 again.**) *Because* we who are saved have the sure hope of victory over sin, we *“therefore”* have the ability, and the *duty*, to *“be steadfast.”* This word *“steadfast”* is translated from the same Greek word that is translated as *“sure”* in **2 Peter 1:10**. Paul is saying, “Be stable. Be firm. Be sure. Keep your eyes on the Resurrection Day. And in the meantime, keep abounding in the service that God has for you to do!

Are you making your calling and election sure, Christian? Are you doing the things that God has called you and chosen you to do? Is your practice of the things of God a steadfast, immovable feature in your life? If not, you need to ask God to help you make them sure.

II. Remember that there is great reward for your service to God (v. 11).

Remember what Paul said at the end of **1 Corinthians 15:58**? He said, “*Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*” In other words, “Don’t forget that you will receive rewards for your service to God! God will not forget your labour!” In **Hebrews 6:10** God promises, “*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*” God is keeping track, brethren! He sees every genuine, Spirit-filled, love-motivated act of service that you do for Him; and He is keeping perfect records in His books. Rewards *will* be given! That is what Paul is talking about here in **2 Peter 1:11**. (Read **2 Peter 1:11** again.)

Christian, God has chosen you for the purpose of producing spiritual fruit for His glory. Now, make no mistake about it: this *is* hard work! When Christians decide to get serious about serving God, they soon find that there is much toil, heartache, persecution, and sorrow that comes with serving God. They find that they are often misunderstood, maligned, and rejected. They find that they have made themselves an even greater target for Satan’s attacks. However, they also find *great reward*. Let’s see what Christ Himself had to say about it.

Read John 15:16.

What does Jesus mean when He says “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*”? He means that **He is the One in charge of your service to God!** *He* is the One with the say. He is the Master. Now, we do choose (and *must* choose) to receive His gift of salvation, and the life of service that follows. However, we must remember that this gift was available only because *He* chose to purchase it for us. Christ was not *obligated* to save anyone in the first place. It was entirely of His mercy and grace that He became a man, died for our sins, and rose again, so that we could be saved, and then have the *privilege* of serving Him. Christ wants Christians to remember that *He* is the One in charge of the “choosing.”

Remember, “choosing” has to do with a Christian’s *service* to God. If you have chosen to receive Christ’s gift of salvation, then you have also submitted to Him as your Master. To put it in modern terms, He is your Employer—the One who gives you your work to do. You don’t go up to your employer at work and say, “All right, boss, here’s what I’m going to do today. I’m going to do this, and this, and this; and I want you to help me with this and this and this. So give me a hand, will you?” No, it’s the other way around! He says to *you*, “*You will do this, and this, and this.* This is what I’ve hired you to do.”

So it is in a Christian’s relationship with Christ. Christ tells you, “You will do this, and this, and this; and I will lead, guide, equip, and empower you to do the work that I have for you. This is what I have chosen you to do. I offered you the gift of salvation; and you received it, and handed your life over to me. So, here’s your work. And, by the way, out of my love and grace, I will give you rewards for your service, if you do it faithfully!”

Now, *in what way* does God reward us for our service? There are several. First of all, **God rewards us by meeting material and physical needs in this life.** God does not guarantee us great *riches* in this lifetime; but He does promise to meet our earthly needs when we serve Him faithfully.

Read Philippians 3:10-19.

The Christians from the church of Philippi had sent material support to Paul; and in doing so, they were really giving to the Lord. Paul guaranteed them that God, in return for their gift of love, would supply their earthly needs. Christian, you can be sure that as you serve God faithfully, He *will* supply every need in His own time and way!

How else does God reward us? **He rewards us with a limitless supply of spiritual riches.**

Read Ephesians 1:3.

Why does God give us spiritual riches? Does He give us these spiritual riches so that we can be happy? In part, yes. However, this spiritual treasury is not merely for our happiness; it is for *His service*. God gives us these spiritual riches so that we might live the holy life that He wants us to live, and thereby serve Him, and produce fruit for Him. In fact, since He is the one equipping and empowering us to *do* His service, it is *He* who is really doing the work *through* us. We have only to surrender to Him, and allow Him to do the work in us! **First Thessalonians 5:24** says, *“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”*

How else does God reward us? **God rewards us with joy--both in this life, and in eternity.**

Read John 15:11.

Christian, God makes it clear that you and I are servants of Jesus Christ. In fact, the word that God often uses to describe Christians is *douloi*, which means “bond-slaves”! Christ owns us body, soul, and spirit; and He has work for us to do. He has sent us to His fields to produce fruit. Yet, even though we are God’s bond-slaves, the Christian life is not one of drudgery. It is one of *joy*. **First Peter 1:8** says that even though we have not yet seen Christ, we *“rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”* There truly is “joy in serving Jesus”!

My friend, if you do not know Christ as Saviour, I am here to tell you that you don’t know what you’re missing! I cannot describe the joy that I have in my heart when the Lord uses me to lead someone else to Jesus Christ. I cannot describe the joy I experience when the Lord uses me to strengthen and edify another believer in Christ. I cannot describe the joy that I have in giving my offering to God at the end of the month, or in picking someone up and taking him to church, or in singing a song of praise to God (even when no one else is around), or in praying, or in helping someone in need, or in going out to knock on doors and tell folks about salvation (even when they slam the door in my face). Serving God does not always bring an overwhelming feeling of ecstasy; it is often mixed with human pain and disappointment. However, it does bring peace to your soul—the satisfaction that “I am doing that for which Christ saved me; and He is pleased.”

Now, what is the last kind of reward that God gives? God will reward His servants with places of authority in His future 1,000-year Kingdom, and in the eternal Kingdom to follow.

Read Luke 19:11-27.

This is not “pie in the sky,” folks. This is a real promise of real positions of power and authority on earth when Christ returns to set up His Kingdom! This is what Peter is talking about in **2 Peter 1:11**. (**Read 2 Peter 1:11 again.**) The issue that Peter is talking about here is not *salvation*; the issue is *reward* for faithful service to God. When Peter says, “***For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom,***” he isn’t talking about whether Christians *will* actually end up entering into Christ’s Kingdom. (Scripture makes it clear that every soul that has truly been saved *will* assuredly enter the Kingdom!) What he’s talking is *how* you will enter into the Kingdom. Will you enter into it richly and “***abundantly***”? Will you abound with rewards that the Lord has given you for your faithful service to Him in this lifetime? Or will you have very little reward, because you were not a very faithful steward in this life, and you didn’t bring forth much fruit for God?

Perhaps you’re wondering, “Why would God give rewards, anyway? Wouldn’t that engender pride and jealousy?” No, it won’t. There will be no pride or jealousy among God’s saints in His Kingdom, because we will no longer have a sin nature. God’s holy angels have differing levels of power and authority: yet, they are not jealous of each other. Likewise, resurrected saints will have differing levels of power and authority, based on what they did for the Lord in this lifetime; yet, there will be no jealousy, because we know that every good thing we did was only through the grace of Christ. We will cast our crowns at His feet, and will give *Him* all the glory. There will be no “hurt pride” in heaven, because there will no longer be any pride! However, there certainly will be a sense of shame and sadness at the realisation that we don’t have more crowns to give back to our Saviour. Christian, are *you* laying up much reward? God wants to reward you, and *will* reward you, if you will serve Him with all your heart.

III. Keep reminding yourself of these things (vv. 12-14).

(**Read 2 Peter 1:12-14 again.**) In these last verses, Peter gives his readers a revelation. The Lord had revealed to him that he would soon “***put off***” his “***tabernacle,***” or “tent.” In other words, his spirit would soon depart his mortal body, and go to be with the Lord in heaven. Yet, while he was still in his earthly “tent,” Peter had a passionate desire. He wanted to “***stir up***” God’s people. When a fire is dying down, what do you do to revive the heat? You take a poker and stir up the coals! In the same way, Peter wanted to stir up Christians’ hearts, so that they would stay “hot” in their zeal for the Lord.

Now, please look closely at what Peter says. In **verse 12**, Peter says that he would have his readers to be “***always in remembrance.***” It’s important to realise that Peter’s readers *already knew* about the truths that he had just stated. It was no new revelation to them. Peter himself acknowledged that they were already “***established***” in these truths. They knew very well that they needed to keep growing in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. Yet, Peter seemed to be *afraid* that they might forget. Why? Because they *were* capable of forgetting! Christians *can* gradually “cool off” toward God, and become carnal and selfish in their thinking, without even realising it! Remember what Peter said back in **verse 9**? He said, “***He that lacketh these things*** (the eight spiritual qualities) ***is***

blind, and cannot see afar off (is dim in his spiritual vision), *and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*” Christian, don’t let that be true of you! Don’t forget these things! Remind yourself of these truths daily by reading God’s Word, and heeding it!

Conclusion: Are you heeding Peter’s admonitions, Christian? Are you “making your calling and election sure”? Are you fulfilling the purpose for which you were saved? Are you remembering the rewards that Christ has promised to give you for your service to Him? Are you continually reminding yourself of these things? Now, **perhaps you are unsaved.** Perhaps you have never really repented of your sin and placed your faith in Jesus Christ. If so, I urge you to do so today! God wants to save you from sin, death, and hell; and He wants to use your life for His service! Won’t you let Him come into your heart today?