

Growing in Our Salvation and Recognizing Truth

DARRELL DELANEY

Do you ever wonder what it takes to not only survive but thrive in your faith; especially when the world around you feels hostile and uncertain? In today's episode of *Groundwork*, we are diving into 2 Peter, where the Apostle speaks to believers facing persecution, urging them to grow in their salvation, stand firm, and resist the pressures of a culture that challenges their faith. Peter's words carry an urgency. He knows his time is short, and he leaves us with a blueprint for living a godly life in the midst of trials. Stay with us as we unpack these powerful truths and discover how they apply to us today, next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are on our series of 1 and 2 Peter, and we have covered all of 1 Peter in the first five episodes. We talked about a living hope in the first episode, where Christians know that they have Christ with them, no matter what; and in the second episode, we talked about the importance of living this holy and set-apart life with Christ and for Christ; and in the third episode, we talked about the importance of suffering, and how that can be redemptive; in the fourth episode, we covered the importance of living counterculturally and not returning evil for evil; and lastly, in the fifth episode, we talked about Peter's final staccato, last instructions before he ended the letter; and we are going into 2 Peter today. That is episode six of our eight-part series.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, when we get to 2 Peter, there are some similar themes, Darrell, but a little bit of a different angle—a little bit of a different tone. There is even, as is often the case, there are some scholars who think maybe Peter didn't write this second one. Most scholars are very sure he wrote the first one. Some think maybe not, but others think the author is still Peter, and I think so, too. Again, he is still addressing Christians around or in the time of Nero, the wicked emperor of the Roman Empire, who really had it in for Christians; and so, Peter is still addressing that situation, but he wants to bring the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to bear; and you know, he does sense, as you hinted at in the opener here, Darrell, I think Peter knows that his days are short. He is going to lose his life for Christ, so his time is short. So, he wants to get in these last reassurances before he goes to be with Jesus.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, lean in because these are the important words that Peter wants to make sure no one misses; and that they would be equipped to stand firm in their faith no matter what happens to them. So, of course, he gives his greeting, where he says grace and peace be onto you, but after that, it reads: ^{1:3}His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these, he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

SCOTT HOEZEE

This is a favorite verse for a lot of people.

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, man; this is so, so good for me. The fact that he gives us everything we need according to our knowledge of him, according to his divine power. It is a verse that has been near and dear to my own walk with Jesus, because earlier in my walk, I felt: Oh, I gotta get it perfect; I gotta get it right; I cannot get it wrong. I used to get so down on myself, saying: Man, it is hard to live this life, because I had this striving. I wanted to prove myself; and the Lord is saying: Wait, wait; remember I have given you everything you need. I am here to help you. I am going to put a community around you that can sharpen you. You don't have to do all this by yourself. It took a load and the pressure off me; and so, if there are people who feel that there is a lot of pressure to walking this walk with Jesus, I want them to know that, number one, God is here to help us. He sends his Spirit and his power to do that; and that was a very comforting thing for me. Hopefully, it is comforting for others.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; so, that godly life is not something we do under our own steam, as you just said, Darrell. God is the one who gives us the power. Everything we need, he said, to lead a godly life; which we have to do; and we lean into the promises. He has given us his great and precious promises so that we participate in the divine nature, which is interesting; that we dwell in Christ, right? I mean, that is Paul's favorite two-word prepositional phrase: We live in Christ. And we need to show that; we need to show that we have escaped the corruption of the world caused by evil desires. So, we should stand out for being people of Christ's promises, people who are empowered by God to lead a godly life; and to resist any and all evil desires that would detract from our union with Christ; detract from our witness to Christ.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and suffice it to say for that, Scott, that Christians who are being persecuted in this time, when he is writing in Rome, God has given them everything they need to: 1) Grow in their salvation; 2) Make their calling and election sure; 3) Resist the false teachings that have been taught, so that they can live in the truth; and that is exactly where we will go for the remainder of this episode. In that very order, we are going to talk about those things.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But first, he has a couple of other things to say here in this opening chapter of 2 Peter. Let's pick it up at verse 5: For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

That is quite a list of virtues there, Darrell, and he keeps building them up.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; it is a beautiful thing. So, not only does he help us understand that we have the divine power from God to understand who God is, and what he has required for our lives, but that very power that helps us participate in the divine nature will help us add these things to our faith. So, faith, Scott, is basically our starting point...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

It should be something that we need to use our mustard seed to trust God and believe and repent; but if we just stay there and be at 101 level all of our lives, then there is a problem. We need to be adding these virtues. This virtue list could be its own series; and I know it is not fully exhaustive as a list of virtues. We see them all over in Christian history and in the Bible; but the point is, he wants us to continue to grow in our salvation.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; this list is very, very similar...almost identical...to lists that Paul gives in various places in the New Testament. The Fruit of the Spirit are in here that Paul writes about in Galatians 5. Before this series is done, Darrell, we are going to see that Peter will actually make a reference to Paul's letters. So, we know Peter was familiar with the letters Paul was sending around, too. So, he maybe copied a little bit from Paul here, just making sure they are on the same page, and/or the Holy Spirit inspired them both the same; but yes; all of these things: goodness and knowledge and self-control and perseverance and godliness and mutual affection; and then it climaxes in love. These are the character qualities that exemplify Christ in us. Peter says that will keep you from being ineffective; it will keep you from being unproductive. So, he says, you don't want to be unproductive in your knowledge. If you know Christ—if you know who he is—if you know what his example is, then you have to keep growing in your ability to be like Christ; and, you know, put these virtues into effect.

DARRELL DELANEY

Actually, you cannot practice these qualities and continue in your evil desires. They just don't go together; and the Holy Spirit is the one who gives you the power to do that; and I love the fact that it is not this list of things to become a legalistic: check-my-box; yes, I'm good today; yes, I'm in self-control today. No; that is not why you do it. You do it because you want to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in your life, and you want to resist those things so that you can be that witness and that light.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; if we turn this into a checklist of things that we have to do and we have to accomplish, well then, we are reading it wrong, because Peter is making it clear: Hey, the only way you can do any of this is God is at work in you; God is giving you the ability to do these things. So, just be grateful for that and give all glory to God. But in just a moment, we are going to keep going in 2 Peter Chapter 1, so stay with us.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and we are in 2 Peter. This is our first episode on 2 Peter, but it is our sixth episode overall of an eight-part series on both 1 Peter and 2 Peter; and Darrell, we have been seeing that Peter is helping believers to know that we are not supposed to stay immature in our faith. As you said, faith is the beginning point, and we build and we grow from there.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and it actually echoes the earlier book, 1 Peter, that we did earlier in this series, where he says in Chapter 2 that: ²Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk that you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. And so, Peter is saying that these character traits...these virtues that we mentioned earlier...are the ones that will show up when you are growing up in your faith; and I love the fact that he is talking to, not just one individual, but he is talking to a community of believers, and he wants all of them to work together on these things. I think that is one of the things that I missed when I was starting my walk out with Jesus. I thought it is all on me; I've got to do it; it is by myself; I am going to pull myself up by my own bootstraps and get it done. No; it was always meant that I would allow the church to help me grow...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

And my fellow believers, and he is trying to help them understand to grow up to be fully mature, you need each other.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; no Lone Ranger Christians. We are not in this by ourselves; we are not in it for ourselves; we are here to build one another up in the body of Christ; and the Holy Spirit does that inside of each of us; principally, of course, but the Holy Spirit works through other people, too; and so, we encourage each other; we hold each other accountable, too...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you know, we have preaching in the church to help people grow; we have teaching in the church; we have Bible studies in the church; we have conversations with fellow believers; all of these things are tools of the Holy Spirit to help us become mature, to increase in our knowledge, to increase in all those traits we saw in the previous segment, of goodness and self-control and all of those...godliness and perseverance...

DARRELL DELANEY

Mutual affection...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Mutual affection, and love above all. We help each other do that. None of us could do it out of our own power.

DARRELL DELANEY

And when we do that, we resist the things that were tempting to us, that we were doing when we were in the world.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

We won't be drunk; we won't be partying; we won't be lusting; we won't be contrary, repaying evil for evil; we won't be contentious; we won't be competitive in that way that is destructive; and that, by default, will help us to be distinct, just like Jesus was.

Scott, another thing I need to say is that when we start practicing these qualities and these traits that we grow up in, then as a byproduct, we will be confirming our election and calling. He says in verse 10:

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm you calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Calling it an election is really interesting to talk about. If you think about it, it can be very comforting for believers.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; you know, a lot of people think that John Calvin made up *divine election*, because, you know, that acronym, TULIP, that sums up the five points of Calvinism, the U of TULIP is *unconditional* election. But Calvin didn't make it up, it is in the Bible. It is right here, it's in Ephesians 1. It is all over the place in the Bible, and Augustine taught it from the earliest, earliest days of the Church. We are elect. God chose us. We didn't choose God, God chose us. It is also important, Darrell, that in the Reformed confession called the *Canons of Dort*, which is where those five points of Calvinism—total depravity, and unconditional election,

limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints—there it is very, very clear that God didn't elect us because he had foreknowledge that we were going to choose him...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

No; he elected us, and that *alone* enabled us, on the human side of things, to apparently choose God, but it is only because that choice had been preactivated in us by the grace of election.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; there are no conditions by which God chose us. He chose us because he chose us. It reminds me of this analogy where there is this door, and there is a person standing there, and on the front of the door it says: Salvation. And they say: Oh, I think I will walk through that door. I would like to have salvation. So, they walk through the door, and when they look on the back side of the door, it says: Elected. If you think about it this way, God is the one who offers salvation, so he initiates the conversation, and then the person responds to that and says: Yes, I want that. And then, when they go in, they realize that they were elected all along, and they didn't know that, but God in his foreknowledge and predetermination made sure that he called and elected us; but when we walk these qualities, we are demonstrating that we are elected and called. That is why Peter says you can make it sure by living according to the way Christ told you to live.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You have been elected by God's grace, then you have been transformed by that same grace, and that ought to show up. So, you don't live like you did before you were a Christian, if you have a before-and-after testimony to give, anyway. You don't live like the rest of society outside of the Church; and if we do that, God is glorified, but the other thing, Darrell, that Peter says here is that we won't damage our own testimony. Peter talked a lot about this in 1 Peter, that we saw earlier in this series. You don't want to give ammunition to the people who are just looking to accuse Christians of being hypocrites. Don't give them opportunity to slander you because you are really behaving badly. Live such good lives that nobody can even say anything bad about you; and if they do, everybody will know it is a lie. So, that is how you show that you have been elected.

DARRELL DELANEY

And when you live those qualities, that is the byproduct of what would happen. It is not that we are going around trying to prove that we are elected to folks. We are trying to live like Christ, and he is the one who makes that sure thing happen in our hearts and in our lives.

But another thing we want to talk about before we close this segment, Scott, is the fact that believers everywhere are given the ability to resist false teachings of Christ in the world, because they have the testimony from Peter.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; well, in verse 12 he says: I wanted to remind you of these things, right? And then he says: You know, I may no longer live in the tent of this body for long. I know I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. Peter knows he is going to die. So, these are perhaps his last words; and he says: ^{verse 15}I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." ¹⁸We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

So, we know what Peter is referring to here, right Darrell?

DARRELL DELANEY

The transfiguration...all day, all day, every day. He was there, and the fact that he is an eyewitness gives gravitas to what he is telling them. He is not giving you a secondhand thing, but he is giving you the firsthand knowledge that he was there; and so, because he was there and he heard and he had Jesus' teachings in mind, he wants to make sure that he is passing it right to them from Jesus.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; no middle man here. No mediation. Peter is the real deal. He, along with James and John, were the only three who saw that transfiguration; and so, he is saying: Look, these are my credentials, and they are pretty solid; so remember these things, and even after I die, I am writing this down so you continue to remember them.

But we have a few more encouraging words here in 2 Peter 1. We will get to them in just a minute, so stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Scott, we are in part six of our eight-part series on 1 and 2 Peter; and Peter is doing the best he can to encourage believers to stay true to their faith, even though it is getting really hard while they are being persecuted in the world that they live in right now; and he wants them to hold fast, and Peter himself has been an eyewitness of what Christ has been through, and he knows what he is talking about; but not only does he use his own testimony to prove that it is worth it, but he also talks about scripture testifying to its own powerful witness.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, let's go to 2 Peter 1:19: We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter waxing pretty eloquent here: light shining in a dark place; the day dawns; the morning star rises in your hearts. That is pretty poetic there, Peter.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, that is some good stuff; and he wants us to know that the Holy Spirit is the divine author who inspired these people to write these prophetic messages; and so, even in Peter's day, people were questioning: Was this Word reliable? I mean, they had a lot of weird origin stories from different pagan gods and foreign gods that came along in fantastical ways, but he is trying to let them know that, no, the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and lives in me, is the one who oversaw this process. I like to call him the divine author. He is making sure he comes through the personality and the style of the writer, but he is the one who is really penning the thing. So, he is a ghost writer, if you will.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; one of the things that we have always said, particularly in the Reformed tradition in our doctrine of scripture is that scripture is a little bit like Jesus himself. Jesus is fully divine and fully human. Scripture is too. Scripture is fully divine, and yet, fully human in the sense that God used human authors to get it written down. It wasn't dictation—they weren't taking dictation. They didn't all write in the exact same style, right? I mean, Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa and Hebrew scholars know that his Hebrew is a little more rustic. He is a country boy. Other authors were a little more polished and educated. So, the Holy Spirit didn't bulldoze through the personality of the human authors, but Peter wants to make clear here they did get it right, though. They didn't make it up. They weren't just giving you their own thoughts. But the Holy Spirit inspired everything they said, even if it wasn't dictation; every thought, every teaching, every doctrine, comes from God alone; and so, Peter says you will do well to pay attention to it, because it is the Word of

God, not the word of people.

DARRELL DELANEY

And that is encouraging for a people who were going through some things where the persecution can make a lot of your certainties unravel in a lot of ways. You can rely on this; you can bank your faith on this; you can really trust that special revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ coming through in the letters that are being sent and circulated.

So, Scott, as we wrap up this episode, we want to get into a few takeaways, and the first one here is that faith in Jesus is great, and it is a gift, but it is only a starting point.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is not the end prize; it is not the finish line. Faith gets us going in our ongoing union with Christ, and we need to know, Darrell, that God expects us to grow; God expects us to be hungry, to learn more about Jesus than we know right now; and it will never be done, we will never get to the bottom of it, right? So, having faith leads to knowledge, and knowledge leads you to be hungry for more knowledge. You want to understand more; this great, great mystery. You know, you will never get it cased, right? I mean, maybe when we get to heaven, we will get close to knowing everything there is to know, but certainly for this life, we will never get to the bottom of it. So, don't ever stop growing; don't ever stop pondering; don't ever stop discussing these things. Again, like we said earlier, that is why we have preaching in the church...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is why we have Bible studies; that is why we have teaching, because we want to always, always, always be growing.

DARRELL DELANEY

This is why we have this podcast, Scott...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly, yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

Because, I mean, just like a farmer who plants a seed expects it to grow, God plants a seed of faith in us and expects it to grow. That is really important; and then secondly, we understand that when we live how Christ says to live, we are a testimony to this world; and that, as a byproduct, will make our calling and election sure. You mentioned, too, earlier that P is perseverance of the saints. A lot of people like to think perseverance means I gotta sweat and I gotta work hard and I gotta continue this steady course of action; and you do. However, the P means that God is the one who is preserving us. Think preservatives: When you put them in a jar they are saved, and that is what God does. He keeps us going; he gives us the strength, he gives us what we need to endure, even in hard times; and so, when we do that, we not only make our calling and election sure, but we are a testimony to this world.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; preservation of the saints is really the better sense of the *Canons of Dort*.

Then a third and maybe final thing, just for now in this first chapter of 2 Peter: We live in a world with all kinds of different ideas, all kinds of different thoughts, teachings, rumors; we live in an age, Darrell, with, unfortunately, a lot of conspiracy theories. So, there is a lot of stuff floating around out there in the culture and in the world; but in and through all of that noise, Peter wants his readers to know that the clarion Word of God that was inspired by the Holy Spirit...that has to be the loudest word...the loudest voice...in your head. Grab ahold of that, because in a world of lies and deception and acute confusion, here is what you can be certain of.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; the way we get to know who God is...it is the way we understand how he wants us to live; and it shows us the truth about the world we are living in; and all we've got to do is read it, just like the old spaghetti sauce, Prego; it is in there, Scott. You just gotta read it; and then God will show you that. In light of Peter's teachings, we are called to persevere in spiritual growth, and when we add these virtues—this knowledge, this love, this mutual affection and these things—then we are going to make our calling and election sure, Scott; and we can do that when we have our lives marked out by these things, but we need to make sure that we hold this truth of scripture as near and dear to our hearts. It is the Sword of the Spirit; it is the Word of Life in a dark world; and we can actually learn what it means to love Christ in this way, tangibly.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and we provide a counter example to everything that is going on around us. If we go along to get along, if we just go with the flow with our wider culture, it is not going to count; but when we live with the expectation of Christ's return; when we live with the knowledge that he lives in us, then we know that we are giving all glory to him.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; it is a beautiful thing for us to understand that, and may we continue to live this way and encourage one another to do the same thing, as Peter wanted us to do and Christ wanted us to do. Thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we continue our study of 2 Peter in Chapter 2.

Meanwhile, connect with us at our website: groundworkonline.com. Share what *Groundwork* means to you; make suggestions for future *Groundwork* programs.

DARRELL DELANEY

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