

Virtue

Intro

➤ The treasure room in *National Treasure*

- There are certain times when you realize there's more...

More

"A greater or additional amount or degree. Further."

2 Peter 1:1-15

- What this audience is facing:
 - *Persecution (3:1-3)*
 - *False teachers (2:1-3)*
 - *People being led astray from the faith (2:19-22)*
 - *The delay of Christ's return (3:4-10)*
 - *Peter is in prison, awaiting martyrdom (1:13-14)*

There is ***More***

What God has Done: The Size of God's Call & Enabling

- God initiates the relationship.

"...to those who have received a faith of equal standing with ours" (v. 1)

"...through the knowledge of him who called us" (v. 3)

- God empowers the growth.

"his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (v. 3)

"you may become partakers of the divine nature" (v. 4)

- God ensures the future.

"...his precious and very great promises" (v. 4)

"...having escaped from the corruption of the world" (v. 4)

"...richly provided for you an entrance into eternal kingdom" (v. 11)

What We Must Do: Make Every Effort to *Add*

"supplement your faith" (v. 5)

➤ *Furnishing the house of faith*

- This is a passage about *MORE*...

"May grace and peace be multiplied to you" (v. 2)

"if these qualities are yours and are increasing" (v. 8)

"be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election" (v. 10)

"make every effort" (v. 5)

- "Apply *zeal* to..." Earnestness, diligence, enthusiasm. This generation is not a stranger to diligence (at least in the areas that interest us and highlight our strengths!).

- Recipe for Christian growth: **God's ability + our responsibility.**

"Grace is not opposed to effort but to earning." (Dallas Willard)

- Where are we getting our expectations for what normal Christian effort should look like?

➤ *Elisha to Joash: "Strike the ground more than three times!" (2 Kings 13:19)*

- We have assumptions about what a pursuit of God should feel like that are not informed by Scripture and church history. We're shaped by a culture that trains us to want easy & immediate.

"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult, and left untried." (G.K. Chesterton)

➤ *We never stand still when we float*

Are You Settling for Less?

“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.” (v. 8-9)

- Ineffective & Unfruitful...
- Nearsighted: Only able to see (and only concerned about) what is right in front of us.
- We don’t experience *more* because we are too easily pleased with what the world (and even the Christian world) trains us to think is normal.
 - “Good is the enemy of great” (*Good to Great* by Jim Collins)
 - *Subway vs. Chick-fil-A*

“As I noted earlier, I am persuaded that the problem with the body of Christ is not that we are dissatisfied with what we do not have, but that we are all too satisfied with what we do have. We are comfortable with a little bit of holiness, a little bit of ministry, a little bit of sacrifice, a little bit of wisdom, a little bit of the satisfying glory that only the grace of Christ is able to give us. I am deeply persuaded that we must resist with all of our might the kind of self-satisfied spirituality that marks the life of so many believers.” –**Paul David Tripp**, *Broken Down House: Living Productively in a World Gone Bad*, Kindle Loc. 1369

- *Shrink Wrap*

“In a fallen world there is a powerful pressure to constrict your life to the shape and size of your life. There is a compelling tendency to forget who you are and what you were made for. There is a tendency to be shortsighted, myopic, and easily distracted. There is a tendency to settle for less when you have been created for more. There is something expansive, glorious, and eternal that is meant to give direction to everything you do. And when you lose sight of it, you have effectively denied your own humanity.”

–**Paul David Tripp**, *A Quest for More: Living for Something Bigger Than You*, 21

- We can be Christians, but not have Christ and his purposes at the center of our lives. We’re still living for our little concerns. We can fret about and fight for such *small* things!

Virtue: When Life Answers to the Excellence of Jesus

“...make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue...” (v. 5)

Virtue

“Moral excellence. Goodness. Conformity of one’s life and conduct to moral and ethical principles.” (Dictionary.com)

“The Cardinal Virtues”

Wisdom... Purity... Honesty... Courage...

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence [virtue], if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8-9)

Living for *More* Than You

- Do you care about things that do not immediately involve you or benefit you?
- We’re able to approach digital life only “following” what interests and adds a sense of significance to us.

➤ *The myth of the smartphone: “You are your world”*

“The primary myth the smartphone tells you every day is that you are the center of the universe. If your phone is your world, and if the settings and apps are tailored to you and your interests, then with you at all times is a world that revolves around you. No wonder we like to be on our phones so much! Nothing else has the same effect of putting us at the center of things. Nothing else makes us feel more in control, more Godlike, more knowledgeable, more connected.” –**Trevin Wax**, *This is Our Time: Everyday Myths in Light of the Gospel*, Kindle Loc. 497

- Virtue implies that your life answers to a higher call. You’re living for something *more* than just your personal preferences. ...Someone else is calling the shots:

“Peter, a servant [slave] of Jesus Christ” (v. 1)

➤ *Virtue vs. the Law of Self*

- From an early age, we try to get everyone around us to submit to our wills. This drives our manipulation and self-pity and complaining. We try to shrink all of reality to fit “Me.”
- Culturally, we have turned virtue on its head. New Moral Code: What I think I need. And everyone else needs to get in line with this. To deny yourself is seen as not only ridiculous but *wrong*.

➤ *Tim Tebow vs. Jason Collins*

“For many people today, to set aside their own path in order to conform to some external authority just doesn’t seem comprehensible as a form of spiritual life. The injunction is, in the words of a speaker at a New Age festival: ‘Only accept what rings true to your own inner Self.’” –**Charles Taylor**, *A Secular Age*

- The false teachers in 2 Peter denied the future judgment of Christ (2:3-10) and opened the door for a sexually permissive lifestyle (2:1-3, 11-16)
- This is a culture that is *after* your imagination. Do you realize: you are often more influenced by the emotions of Disney films and songs at the top charts than by what’s inside your Bible? ...What fixes this?

Awakened to Excellence

“...the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence [virtue]” (v. 3)

✚ Virtue = “the sum of all desirable character qualities”

“When Christ calls people to himself, they perceive the beauty and loveliness of his moral character. His character becomes exceedingly attractive to them, and they trust God for their salvation.” –**Thomas Schreiner**, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 293

- Our virtue comes from a compelling vision of the glory of Christ. He is so lovely and amazing to us that we want to be like him. We long to serve the Master.
- Do you find Jesus to be stunning? ...If you don’t see Jesus in this way, you won’t have any motivation to run toward *more*. Christianity will just feel like rules and ideas. And those rules and ideas will give way to what has really captured your heart.