

2 Peter 3:17-18

Stand & Grow

08/27/17

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (Pastor prays)

We have reached the end of 2 Peter and in God's providence, we are starting a new school year and season in life. It seems like a good time to focus on survival and stability and growing. Peter punctuates the end of his letter with a doxology. A statement of purpose and a call to all of those who are in Christ. In fact, there are two bookends in verses 17-18 and these two bookends hold us together and it would be good for you to hear them both on the front and end of this sermon. The first bookend is this:

You are Loved

Verse 17 says, "You therefore, Beloved." Remember that word? *Agape toi?* It is the covenant-keeping, lifesaving, peculiar, specific, atoning, purchasing love that God has for you in Christ. (It's) Not a general love. It's the love of God shown to redeemed sinners at the cross, shown most pointedly in the suffering of Jesus. The suffering of Jesus is the Love of God. Isaiah 53:6 tells us, *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

The blood of Jesus at the cross drowns out the voice of the accuser. The suffering of Jesus at the cross shows the ultimate love for you if you are in Christ. It's what we celebrate today with The Lord's Supper. The suffering of Christ justifies the sinner, silences the accuser, purges the conscience of guilt and opens the way to Heaven. We need to meditate on the death of Jesus. I looked at the website of a new church this week and it kept saying, "fun and games" and "entertaining." People are going to laugh themselves right into perdition!

When you study the death of Christ:

- Your Spirit is more humble.
- Your conscience is more clean.
- Your heart is more settled.
- Your mind is more clear.
- Your body is more controlled and
- You start to grasp the fact that you are loved by God in Christ supremely and lavishly and everlastingly.

So, one bookend that holds us together is the fact that we are loved. *Beloved*. Let me take you down to the very end of the letter in verse 18. There is another bookend. *To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity*.

Live for God's Glory

That's your life purpose: to live your life for the glory of God. Live so that your love and aspirations and heartaches are done for the glory of God. It should be reflected in your marriage, your study, your work, how you treat your employees or your boss, what you do on Sundays. *Eat* to the glory of God. *Exercise* to the glory of God. *Sleep*. *Date*. You were created to reflect His glory. So here we have the bookends; or, if you prefer, the outer shells of an Oreo.

Beloved. The Love of God.

Glory. The Glory of God.

The Love of God Makes Us Live for the Glory of God

But in order for that to happen, Peter has given us two commands in these two verses, Two commands that are especially significant for students in today's schools and the parents who love them.

Be Careful

To see where I get this, let's read the whole verse, understanding that, in the context, he's talking about false teachers but the broad application goes for who you spend your time with. *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow*

in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

The command in the verse is the phrase “take care.” It means “be on guard, watch out.” What are you watching out for? Read it. *that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.*

Let’s look at two things in this verse.

The first is being *carried away*. We live in a mob society. It’s not just Charlottesville. It happens at frat parties or on football teams or with a group that gets caught in a cultural current. In crowds, it is so easy to get carried away. People do things in crowds that they would not individually do. A raging flood of immorality threatens to sweep kids too close to the bank and right into the filth. It’s why Peter says you are loved by God in Christ. You are created for the glory of God and, as a believer, be careful. I’ve heard it said, we become what we behold, what we look at and enjoy and are engaged in. If you are in Christ, you are loved with an everlasting love. You are loved like that to live for God’s Glory. Be careful. *Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.* Don’t get swept away with the crowd and lose your stability.

Peter knew a little about that. It’s worth pausing here to discuss this. The word “stability” is the translation of the Greek word that is used only twice in the New Testament, and both times are connected with Peter. Remember in Luke at the end when Peter says he would never deny Jesus and Jesus tells him, “Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat but I have prayed for you. When you return, strengthen your brothers.” And it’s as if Peter here is saying, “I know what it is like to be close to the edge and almost lose it all, and, believe me, you don’t want any part of that.” So, take care, be on guard, watch out. That’s the first command. Be careful.

Be Committed

Do you see it there in verse 18? It’s the first phrase. *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* Look at those two. The first is grace. What does it mean to grow in grace? First, we need to understand what grace is. Grace is the foundation for our lives and is entirely a gift from God. In fact, besides the name of Jesus, there is no better word in all the Bible than grace. Grace is: the wealth of God’s kindness, the riches of His mercy, the soothing ointment of His forgiveness and the free hope of eternal life. Grace is what we need to stand before God. Grace is what we crave when it’s time to die. Grace is what we hunger for when hope is lost. Grace is the cross

where sin is punished and sinners forgiven. The higher your view of Grace, the freer your soul becomes.

(And we need) Not just Grace but knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, knowledge of Jesus, a fuller grasp of Christ, a fuller apprehension of His deity, a clearer picture of His majesty, a more thorough view of His immensity.

All things were made through Him and for Him...Lordship...A deeper view of His blood shed on the cross. His blood is the infinite value, and when He bled and died on the cross, full satisfaction of Divine Justice was made. The penalty for repentant sinners is paid, and that's what we celebrate in The Lord's Supper: The body of Jesus, the blood of Jesus... shed at the cross.

Those who receive The Lord's Supper, do so with thankful and repentant hearts for what Christ has done for you.

(Pastor explains The Lord's Supper and prays)