

# VIRTUE

## 2 PETER 1

Text: 2 Peter 1:3, 5

### **2 Peter 1:3**

<sup>3</sup> According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

### **2 Peter 1:5**

<sup>5</sup> And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

### Introduction:

Basically every Christian falls into one of three categories. Some are...

#### 1) Babes In Christ

There are two ways to be a babe in Christ. One way is to have been recently born into the family of God. That is the way it is supposed to be.

Others are babes in Christ because they are stunted in their development and growth as a believer.

Some Christians are....

#### 2) Backsliders From Christ

A backslider, we don't like that word, but a backslider is one who is saved, but they are not living close to the Lord. You don't stand still in your relationship to the Lord. You are going forward or backward.

I read this week that when Billy Sunday (he was a professional baseball player who became an evangelist) was converted, a saintly man told him ... he said, "Billy, if you never want to backslide, you do three things every day. You read the Bible and let God speak to you through His Word fifteen minutes every day. You talk to Him in prayer fifteen minutes every day. And you spend fifteen minutes every day telling somebody about Jesus Christ."

He said, "Billy, you'll never have backslider written after your name."

Billy Sunday said, "You know, I've been sliding into a lot of bases. I've been sliding into a lot of bases a long time. I don't plan to slide out of any."

And some believers are...

#### 3) Builders For Christ

They are diligently going about the business of adding to their faith.

I want to encourage you to be a builder.

We are to add to our faith... Virtue.

Now if we are going to do that, we must clearly understand what Peter is talking about when he speaks of virtue.

In defining virtue let me emphasize two things.

First...

## **1. VIRTUE IS AN ATTITUDE WE NEED TO HAVE**

The attitude we approach things with certainly makes a difference in what we achieve doesn't it?

In reference to attitude, someone made this observation. "If a man

has limburger cheese on his upper lip, he thinks the whole world smells." (1001 Humorous Illustrations, p.38)

Virtue is an attitude we need to have.

The term "virtue" as used in this verse refers to the courageous pursuit of moral excellence. The outward expression of "virtue" begins with an inner attitude or mindset that says, I want to do what is right.

So Peter basically is saying we need to add to our faith a desire, or the attitude... to do what is right.

Let me show you a biblical illustration of this attitude.

Turn with me to Luke 19:1-10.

Here we have the story of Zacchaeus. Let's walk thru this story together.

First in verses 1-3 we have...

#### 1) The Description of Zacchaeus

He... lived in Jericho, made his living as a chief publican, he was rich and short of stature. Then note... ( v.3 )

#### 2) The Desire of Zacchaeus

He wanted to see Jesus.. who he was. He apparently had heard about this man named Jesus, and he wanted to size Him up for himself.

He had a problem... the crowd got in the way. But he didn't give up.

Look at verse 4 and see...

#### 3) The Determination of Zacchaeus

He exerted himself just to see Jesus.

And then notice what it lead to. It lead to...

#### 4) The Decision of Zacchaeus

Look at verses 5-10. Now don't miss this. Old Zack was no more. He was a new man after he met Jesus.

Verse 8 is really important. It tells us of the new attitude Zacchaeus had. He had a desire to make restitution for what he had stolen. That is virtue... he had the desire to do the right thing.

And when he gave testimony of his intentions to Jesus, notice how Jesus responded in verse 9. Jesus confirmed the salvation of Zacchaeus.

Listen... Virtue is an attitude we must have if we are going to be Highly Effective Servants of Jesus.

But then secondly let me emphasize that...

## **2. VIRTUE IS AN ACTION THAT WE MUST TAKE**

Inwardly, virtue is an attitude that we need. Outwardly, virtue is an action that we must take.

Remember that "virtue" is the pursuit of moral excellence.

Inwardly, we desire to what is right. Outwardly, we demonstrate what is right. It is being holy in an unholy world.

A little girl was spending some time with her grandma, and while she was sitting on her lap she said, " Grandma, I love

you so much.

You're so pretty!" The thin and wrinkled grandma laughed and said, "Honey, that's sweet of you to say, but I'm not pretty."

The little girl responded, "Oh yes you are. You're pretty on the inside."

God wants you and me to be pretty on the inside. So pretty that it shows up on the outside.

Listen you and I cannot grow spiritually if we play around with sin. Sin always stops spiritual progress.

I heard about a lamb. This lamb and its mother passed the pig pen every day on their way to the pasture. The lamb looked longingly at the pigs wallowing in the mire, and he asked his mother if he could go and play in the mud. His mother scolded him and reminded him that, "sheep don't wallow."

Oh but he wanted to play in the mud. It looked like so much fun. On hot days the mud looked so cool.

One day, as he and his mother were making their way to the pasture, he let his mother get ahead of him. He took off for the pig pen. He jumped over the fence and started playing in the mud. The cool mud felt good on that hot day around his ankles, so he went in a little deeper. He got in up to his belly and was cooling down.

Wool and mud, however, don't mix well. It began to cake on his wool and eventually he realized he was stuck. He couldn't move, he couldn't get out. What he thought would bring him pleasure became his prison.

After crying for help, the farmer rescued him. His mother reminded him, "Sheep don't wallow!"

That's good counsel for Christian sheep too. We must not play with sin.

It may look appealing, but remember where it leads. It

traps, it addicts, it enslaves, it destroys.

Oh let's have a passion for virtue.