

"Confirming Your Salvation" Part Two

Holiness

2 Peter 1:1-11

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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Bruce: Good morning, men.

Men: Good morning, Bruce.

Bruce: Well men, let's open our Bibles, please, to the book of 2 Peter, continuing our discussion on the divine life that Peter describes for us as part of our study on holiness, looking at verses 1-11. Since it has been a couple of weeks since we were together, I'd like to read it again. May the Lord be pleased to open our eyes that we might behold Him more clearly through the pages of Scripture.

"Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises so that through them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 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. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

"Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Peter has been describing for us, friends, what we are calling the divine life. There is a divine implantation where God in His sovereign grace regenerates us. He changes our nature from the nature that is designed to live according to the flesh now to a nature designed to live according to the Spirit. That is what we have referred to previously in our understanding about the divine implantation. This is where God initiates His salvation to the believers who He has called from before the foundation of the world. We are pointing to that section in our passage as the divine implantation.

And then we noticed next the verses where we began to talk about adding to our faith these seven qualities. That's where we began to realize that there is the human utilization.

Now we don't cooperate with God because that would mean that we would need to bring some resources to the table that would be equal to His. We don't cooperate with Him. We utilize the graces that He gives us. So we are referring to the second part, our human responsibility, as

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the human utilization. The two phases of our salvation are the divine implantation, based upon the sovereignty of God. And then there is the human utilization, based upon the obedience of man. So we begin now to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because it is God who wills and gives us the power to do both of those things for His good pleasure.

So we've talked about those seven character qualities that we added. Notice the beginning, with virtue and knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and brotherly love. Basically, if you recall, what he taught us in that section is that he taught us how to love.

These seven character qualities fit together like the cog of a wheel. The first one leads to the second one. The second one completes the first one. The second one leads to the third one and the third one completes the second one, and so forth. So it goes like the cog of a wheel. And these are in a divinely inspired order.

And so the last result is love. And what Peter is basically saying is that you can teach people how to love. Love can be learned. It's something that can be taught. And it starts with adding virtue to your faith. The divine implantation gives us all the qualities that we need to utilize our resources for God's glory. And it starts with us being responsible to add on to our faith these seven character qualities.

The next portion we looked at in the last couple of weeks was the evidence of our possessing the divine life. He described for us in the next several verses the character qualities of the divine life. Now he starts describing the evidences of possessing the divine life. And the question is do I possess the divine life? And that is where we come to this portion of the Scripture.

There are three things that we need to look at. We need to look at the *confirmation* of the divine life, the *condition* of the divine life, and the *consequences* of the divine life.

Last time we looked at it, we talked about the *confirmation*. That would be the confirmation of our salvation.

Now there are a lot of different theories taught about salvation. But basically, the assurance of your salvation is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It's not a ministry that man gives. We cannot say to somebody else, "You have the assurance of your salvation." We don't know that. You don't know that I'm saved any more than you know that you're saved. You just don't know that. There has got to be some other evidence. That is not a ministry of man.

One weakening of the gospel in the last one hundred and fifty years is the proclamation that after somebody says a prayer, or raises his hand and walks an aisle, that you can say, "you are now a Christian."

Now we don't know that at that moment. It may be. Remember this. Salvation from God's initiation is instantaneous. But righteousness takes some time.

And so when you look at the confirmation of our salvation, there are three evidences in the Scripture that teach us the confirmation of our salvation. The first one would be *Scripture promises*. There are promises in Scripture that would say this. Repent and believe and you'll be saved. Now have you done that? Only you can honestly answer that question. If you have done that, then you know, based upon the Scripture promises, that God has confirmed your salvation upon you. That's one area.

But it is not relegated solely to that. It's not just Scripture promises alone. There are many Scripture promises that affirm your salvation because of your repentance and faith.

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Secondly, it's *the work of the Holy Spirit*. Romans 8:16.

Transcriber's Note: Romans 8:16. "*And the Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are children of God.*"

Bruce: The Spirit of God identifies with your spirit to confirm that you are God's child. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

And thirdly, there is *the conduct of the converted*. That would be the righteousness of the person who is investigating his saving faith.

And so there is the conduct of the believer, there is the work of the Holy Spirit, and then there are the Scriptural promises. These are the means by which we can understand that we have the assurance of salvation.

These verses help us to understand what Peter is talking about because now he is going to say what the *conditions* of our salvation are. We have the confirmation of our salvation, but what are the conditions? What are the conditions of our salvation if we understand that we are truly in Christ?

Now do you have any questions about the assurance of your salvation? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Do you understand that? That is not something that you and I can confer upon each other. We can take people to the Scriptures and let the Scripture do the work through the right means of the Holy Spirit to confirm in their spirits that they do have saving faith. Do you understand the difference? Remember these three areas are these—the Scripture promises, the work of the Holy Spirit, and increased righteousness in your own life.

So when you examine yourself, can you honestly say that your conduct is different than it used to be last month, last year, the last five years, the last ten years, whatever that may be? There has got to be some Biblical evidence of the conversion in your life. The conduct of the convert is changed, because you have gone from living a life according to the flesh and now you are living a life according to the Spirit of God. Do you understand that? That is not something that you and I can confer upon somebody. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

We've got to be careful in our evangelism. Just because somebody says a prayer, that may be their conversion. It may be at that moment that God is implanting the divine life in him. But we don't know that at that moment. So don't falsely say, "You are now a Christian because you said the prayer." That may be. But at that point, we just don't know that. We don't know that yet.

And so Peter is very, very cautious about what he is teaching us about the conditions of the divine life. So we've looked at the first part, which would be the confirmation of our salvation. Now we need to take a look at the second element he talks about. And that is going to be the *condition* of our salvation. So let's take a look at that for a moment.

Notice what he says. "If you do these things." Now that is conditional. "If you do these things." Now what are these things? It's those seven character qualities, these seven graces listed in verses 5-9. And notice what he says. "*For this very reason make every effort*" to supplement your faith with these seven character qualities. That's the condition of our working our salvation with fear and trembling. We are working on these things as evidence of confirming our salvation, because I have a desire to work on these things. And he says to make every effort to work on these things, these seven character qualities.

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Now they will not *achieve* your salvation. But God grants that they will confirm that you do possess the divine life. They will not achieve your salvation, but when you're working on these things, it's evidence of the condition that something has happened in your life because your priorities have changed and you're working on something different than you used to. It's a confirmation of the fact that something has happened to you because you now want to work on these things. You see how that follows logically? If you're working on these things, there is something evident that has changed in your life. That is one of the confirmations of your salvation. Peter says that you're working on these, that you want to do it. It doesn't mean that you do it perfectly. It means that you're working out your salvation with fear and trembling—Philippians 2. It's one of the key verses in understanding Peter. You've got to be working at these things.

And that's why he says, "*Make every effort to add to your faith.*" This is where we have the human utilization of the graces of God. And so, are we really working on these seven character qualities?

All seven are qualities of the life of God. You'll notice that all seven of those are characteristics of the life of God. Notice what they are" virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness or patience, godliness, brotherly affection and love. Those seven are all characteristics of the life of God.

And so what Peter is saying is this. One of the conditions that you need to make sure of is are you working on these things? That's the conditional element of our human utilization of the graces of God.

Now we don't merit anything by doing these. We need to understand that. We don't merit anything by doing them. But we don't have anything without doing them. We don't merit anything from them. Yet we have nothing without doing those seven things. It's not what you say but what you do that reveals that you possess salvation and the divine life. And so you have to examine yourselves, men, and say, "am I really going to work on these things?"

Now one of the ways in which you can do this is to go and ask yourself. Which one of those are you lacking? Am I lacking in virtue—moral excellence? Am I lacking in knowledge? Am I lacking in self-control? Am I lacking in patience? Am I lacking in godliness, brotherly affection or love? Which one of those seven things am I lacking? And begin to work on that one. And when you begin to work on that one, that's what Peter is saying. Make every effort to work on these things. That's a very good barometer for us, just to go in and say, "which one of these is lacking in my life? I need to work on that one."

And that may change over time. That's going to change over time. I've been studying this passage for years. And every year I go back and analyze myself and say, "which one of these am I lacking this year? Can I work on that particular one?" And it's interesting how it changes year by year. But there is always something for us to do. We're always lacking in one of those things.

But Peter's point is this. One of the conditions of confirming your salvation is the desire to work on these things. Do you see what I mean? It's the desire to work on these things. And where do you get the desire to do that?

Participant: The Holy Spirit.

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Bruce: From the Holy Spirit. That's evidence of the divine life. You see, if you didn't want to work on these things, there would be lack of evidence. So it's very, very natural for the believer to say, "Look. I'm lacking one of these things. I want to work on it." And that's evidence of our salvation because it's the condition which Peter says confirms us in the participation in the divine life.

As long as a person is diligently occupied with the stress of his effort in adding to his character the graces that are listed, he will be standing in and revealing a life of divine righteousness.

Now let me give you that again. One of my favorite Puritans states it this way. "As long as a person is diligently occupied with the stress of his effort."

Now notice what the Word says. "*Make every effort.*" There's a lot of work in this. There's a lot of effort in this. This is the divine implantation being manifested by the human utilization of the graces of God. We have to work at this.

You know, there is a stream of theology rampant in the church today which says that the Christian life is easy. (*Laughter.*) The Christian life is a fight. We've got to fight the good fight. It's warfare. That's why there are so many military manifestations in the Scripture, because life in Christ is pictured as a war. It's warfare. It's something we're battling with. That's where you get the idea of making every effort. So there is stress involved in this. But these are things we need to be working on

"As long as a person is diligently occupied with the stress of his effort in adding to his character the graces that are listed, " (the seven things we see in 2 Peter), "he will be standing in and revealing a life of divine righteousness." Remember this. Salvation is instantaneous from God's point of view. But righteousness takes some time. And that's what Peter is saying. You've got to be working on these things. Make every effort to add to your faith these seven character qualities.

Then he begins to list a couple of *consequences*. We have the confirmation of our salvation. We have the condition of our working on our salvation with fear and trembling. And now he talks about the consequences. Notice that there is a short range and a long range consequence. Let's look at the last verses of what he says.

Verse 10. "*Therefore brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you practice these things, you will never fall.*" Now there is the short range one. The short range consequence is that you will never fall.

The long range consequence is next, in verse 11. "*For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*"

Two consequences of our adding diligently to our faith as an evidence of our salvation and God's implementation of the divine life. There are two consequences. One is short range and one is long range. The short range one is that you will never fall. That's immediate.

The words *never fall* are interesting words. He is basically saying that if you forget your election and calling, you're going to fall. But when you do not forget your election and your calling, you will never fall.

It's like the idea of the old ancient philosopher who was thinking so long that he ended up falling over the cliff because he wasn't watching where he was going. Now what Peter is saying

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is this. If you take care of your calling and election by adding these seven things to your faith and working diligently, you're never going to fall.

The word *fall* means this—to fall into misery or become wretched. It doesn't mean that you're not going to be successful. Oftentimes the world takes this word that I am never going to fall to mean that I'm going to be successful and be excellent in everything I do. That is not necessarily what it means. The word literally means this. You will not fall into misery in your life, for you will not fall into becoming wretched in your life. You will not be exposed to misery and wretchedness if you are working on these seven things short range.

Now certainly, we all do stumble. But Peter says that a person who is confirmed in his salvation will be spared a life of disastrously coming to grief. The word *fall* can literally be translated as this—disastrous falling into grief. You will not fall into grief.

Now wouldn't that be something that would be wonderful for us to realize, that we don't fall into grief and pain and agony? And the reason we do that is because we are making sure of our calling and our election by working on these seven things. The way that you are evidencing the fact that you understand your calling and your election is the way that you're working on these seven things. That's our human utilization of the divine graces of God.

So the short range one is this. You will never fall into a wretched life of misery. Now how is that to be interpreted? I can't answer that for you. I don't know what that would mean for your own life individually. Wretchedness and misery in your own life may be different from one person to another. But the promise of the Scripture is this, that when you're working on these seven things, you're not going to fall in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Notice this. *"For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these things you will never fall."* Short range, you'll never fall into a life of misery.

Long range. Let's take a look at that one. The long range one is this. It's eternal. Short range is immediate. Long range is eternal. You receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom. The second result of working on these things, of living a life of obedience, is this. You will reach your destination. That's what it's going to mean. It means that you're going to reach your destination.

What is that destination?

Participant: Heaven.

Bruce: Heaven. He is basically saying this. When you're working on these seven things, confirming your salvation, using the divine implantation of the graces of God, the human utilization of working on these things, you're going to avoid a life of misery. And secondly, you're going to reach your destination. Your destination is to get to heaven. Now we get to heaven not because of our efforts. We get to heaven because of the divine grace of God.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: But he is saying that this will *confirm* that for you.

One of the great things I've always enjoyed about the Puritan writers I spent those years reading while I was in London is that they had such a great anticipation of heaven. Now they were not so heavenly minded that they were no earthly good. That's not what I'm saying. All I'm saying is this. They understood that in the midst of all of their persecution, all the opposition

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of this world, they never lost sight of the destination. And that destination was to be in the presence of God.

Now we are certainly in the presence of God during our immediate lives, during our physical lives. But he is talking about our eternal destination. So that's when we go back to this. The confirmation of our destination is by our understanding of the divine implantation and our working on these seven character qualities. So the long range is that we receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom. We reach our destination.

Now this may allude to some of the honors that were given to the Olympic athletes during the time of the Greeks, because what they would do is that every time an athlete would reach his destination of winning the prize at the Olympics, whenever they would go back to the village they would make this arc. The athlete would walk through the arc coming into his home town in celebration. That was the imagery that Peter was playing off of here in this illustration of the divine entrance. This was called the divine entrance into my community. Back into the hall, the athlete would walk into this arc way that the individual town would build to honor their athletes when they came back from the Olympic games.

Peter is basically saying this. There is going to be an arc again where you will be introduced into the kingdom of heaven. It's your entrance into home. It's your final destination.

So we don't merit these activities. But they are evidence of the fact that you have been given the grace of God because of all of His merits. While no man merits assurance by his obedience, yet God usually crowns obedience with assurance.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Do you understand what I mean when I say that we don't merit anything? You don't get credit for it, because where do you get credit?

Participant: Christ.

Bruce: Christ. It's in justification by faith alone. Remember, justification is receiving alien righteousness. It's a righteousness that's foreign to us. God gives us credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. There is no merit in what we do. What we are doing is that we are expressing the merit that we've already received in the Person and work of Christ.

Look at Romans chapter 5. Now that we are justified by faith in Christ alone, we now have access to God in the grace in which we stand. You see, it's through the understanding of justification that you receive all the merits of the Person and work of Christ. Justification, basically, is God declaring that He views you differently. God views you differently now because you are now wrapped in the robes of Christ. And He gives you credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. That's justification by faith alone.

So in our obedience, men, I want to make sure that we understand in all of our effort—and I'm driving home the idea here that we need to be obedient and work hard at this stuff—that we're not gaining any merits by that. What you're doing is that you're utilizing the divine implantation of the graces of God that He gave you. And that's evidence of your salvation, the evidence of something that has transformed your life that was radically different from your old way of living. It's now evidence of something that has happened in your life. That's why righteousness takes some time. From God's point of view, the divine implantation of salvation is instantaneous. But righteousness takes some time. And we need to work at that.

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So the answer to the question that we started with a couple weeks ago is this. Am I or am I not saved? It is not to be answered by citing something you did in the past, but by recognizing what God is doing in the present.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Do you understand that? How do I know I'm a Christian? It's not because of something I have done in the past. It may be that you did raise your hand. And that may be the point of your entrance into the Kingdom. It may be that you did sign the card. It may be that you did say the prayer. It may be that this might be the point of the divine implantation of the grace of God. But you don't look back upon that and say, "Oh, I put the stake in the ground twenty years ago, the day that I was converted." Now certainly that is a point of remembrance for you. But that's not the basis of your salvation. The basis of your salvation is what is going on in the present. Do you realize that all of the verses dealing with the assurance of salvation are in the present tense?

Let's take a look at the book of 1 John. Now notice. Here is one of the tests. There are seven tests and seven traits of a person who has been born of God—seven tests of saving faith and seven tests of a person who has been truly born of God.

Notice chapter 1 verse 6. Here is one of the tests of true saving faith. "*If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth.*" What are the verb tenses?

Participant: Present.

Bruce: Present tense. You don't look back and say, "I'm a Christian because of something I did in the past." You look at your present life and say, "This is what's happening to me now. That's the evidence."

Here is just one of the tests. "*If we say*"—present tense—"that we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not recognize the truth."

How about verse 8? "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us*"—present tense reality. That's a test. So you can read the seven tests in all of Scripture and you'll notice that they're all present tense verbs.

So the point is this. The whole drift of Biblical teaching enjoins us to consider the objective evidence of God's work in our hearts—present tense. And on that basis we can conclude whether or not we are true children of God. It is only when we are willing to lay our lives alongside the objective standard of God's description of a true Christian that we can obey God's command or God's word to examine ourselves and prove ourselves whether we are in the faith. Look at 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Transcriber's Note: 2 Corinthians 13:5. "*Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.*"

Bruce: Men, I don't think we really spend enough time examining ourselves to really answer the question, "do I have saving faith?" Peter gives us some wonderful instructions on how to do that.

First of all, he gives us the confirmation of our saving faith. He gives us the condition of our saving faith, and then thirdly the consequences of our saving faith. Yes, Tom?

Tom: Is this what Paul is referring to when he says in Philippians to work out your faith with fear and trembling?

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Bruce: Yes, very much so. Let's look at that. Look at Philippians chapter 2. *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* The next key part is this. *"For it is God who works in you."*

Who gives you the resources to want to work at it?

Participant: God.

Bruce: God does that. Those are the graces that Peter is talking about. You can't do this on your own. You don't have the strength to do this on your own. You don't have the resources. That's why we don't cooperate with God. He gives us the resources because—read the rest of this verse. *"For it is God who works in you"*—now notice this—*"both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: What's the end result of our obedience?

Participant: His good pleasure.

Bruce: His good pleasure! That's the will that you have. He gives you the will to be willing to work at it. He gives you the will to be working at this.

It is critical for us to understand this verse as it relates to what Peter is teaching us. There's no merit in this because God is the One who gives you the grace to do it. He gives you the will to be willing to work on these things. And the end result is this—His good pleasure.

That's why the Westminster Shorter Catechism says that the number one point is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Just love God and enjoy Him forever, because the end result is always the glory of God. It's the glory of God. He gives you the will to do it and the power to do it for His good pleasure. Yes, please?

Participant: A verse that has been coming to mind for me as you're teaching us this great stuff is Nehemiah 8:10 which says, *"The joy of the LORD is my strength."*

Bruce: Mm-hmm.

Participant: God's joy is where I get my strength to keep going, because he sure didn't have an easy life in Jerusalem.

Bruce: That's right.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: That's right. Any questions on any of this, men? Yes, Sig?

Sig: Bruce, when I'm reading the 2 Peter part, you know, about perseverance and godliness and brotherly love, I can just hear some people in my church or friends who talk about other people and comment about their lives, and maybe they're not living up to the standards. And then when you got to 1 John 1:6, I felt relieved because he said that if he is without sin, he's a liar. And I kept thinking. I wanted to ask you who's perspective we are living up to—the men and women of our church, or Christ's perspective, because I feel that the bar is pretty high. Not that we shouldn't try to go for that, but I always look at it like the eyes of my brothers and sisters are more critical and don't put into consideration what's going on behind the scenes of the details or the struggles. Unless you get to know someone closely, you don't really get a sense of what it takes to persevere, or what it takes to do it day in and day out.

Bruce: Yes. Our standard should be comparing ourselves to the work of Christ, not to the neighbors in our church.

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Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Don't compare yourself to somebody else. Remember what happens when you have comparisons? Two things happen with comparisons and neither are good for you. The first one is this. It's going to produce pride because you're always going to find somebody who doesn't do it as well as you do. Pride is not good for you.

Secondly, there is discouragement. You're always going to find somebody who does it better than you. That produces discouragement. Comparison is something we need to avoid. We stack ourselves up against the standard of Scripture, not against the standard of what we think people should do. We are not slaves of the righteousness of other people. We're slaves of righteousness for the work of God and His cause.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Did somebody else have a question? Yes, please?

Participant: I was just thinking that, in regard to what Sig said, that I was thinking about in regard to encouraging one another in the body of Christ and spurring one another on in the body of Christ and just thinking that prayer and coming in humility is the only way that will occur.

Bruce: Mm-hmm. Jesus said this. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*"

It's interesting. In the Sermon on the Mount, what was the first word of Jesus that came out of His mouth, according to Matthew chapter 5?

Participant: Blessed.

Bruce: Blessed. What does the word blessed mean? It literally means this in the Greek—happy in spite of circumstances. The first word, which is the summary of the entire Sermon on the Mount, is the word *blessed*.

The word *blessed* also means this. It's referring to our spiritual prosperity. It's referring to one who has spiritual prosperity. When we talk about prosperity, we think about our wallets. (*Laughter*) When God thinks of prosperity, He thinks about our hearts.

Now Jesus is basically saying this. The first word was *blessed*. And everything else in the Sermon on the Mount describes this. He's putting us in a position to understand that the nature of the Kingdom of God is such that you will have a spiritually prosperous life and be happy in spite of circumstances.

Now that is radically different from and contrary to human nature. But He's addressing a group of people who have a new nature. We don't live by the old nature anymore; we live by the new nature. And so the word *blessed* is so important for us to understand. And part of that means that "*blessed are the poor in spirit*" starts with humility, realizing that we are spiritually bankrupt. There is nothing I can bring to the table because I am spiritually bankrupt. I'm absolutely dependent upon the graces of God. That's the humility that we count on that puts us in a position to work on these seven things.

That's what Peter means when he says, "Don't forget your calling and election." If you've forgotten that, you've forgotten everything, because essentially you've forgotten the divine implantation of the life of God in you. When you forget your calling and forget your election, you've essentially forgotten the divine implantation in your life. And Peter says that we need to avoid doing that. And here is the way you do that. You work on these seven things.

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Remember this. There is no merit in our obedience. But generally speaking, God crowns assurance of salvation with our obedience. He generally crowns it with that. Any questions, men?

Let's pray. Father, You've given us much in these weeks about the divine life. Father, may we never, ever take for granted or forget Your calling us into saving faith and Your choosing us before the foundation of the world, our election. May we never forget, Father, that without the doctrine of election You would have no mercy, because You chose us before the foundation of the world when I was dead in my trespasses and sins. And that was not something I could change myself. Father, give us the grace never to take for granted or forget our calling and our election. And give us the will and the power to work on these seven attributes, these attributes of the life of God, so that it will confirm our salvation and demonstrate to a lost world the benefits of grace. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen." (*Applause.*)