

Transcription of 19GS1075

2 Peter 1:1-11

"Keep Adding"

March 13, 2019

It's so good to see you guys tonight. It's so good to be back here at Morningstar. Would you turn with me to 2 Peter 1 tonight? It's been a while since I've been here. Good to see you all. Of course, I don't recognize too many faces - a few of 'em. But I'll tell you I love this church, I love Pastor Jack and Debbie. And of course, you know the history with his involvement there at Calvary Chapel South Bay for so many years. We miss him there. But the crazy thing is Pastor Jeff never leaves the pulpit hardly. I was tellin' Jason that he goes on vacation - he leaves Sunday night, and he comes back on Saturday. And we do cover Thursdays and such, so he's hardly out. So I've got to get Jack out there again. But it's so good to see you guys.

I hope you're ready. Tonight 2 Peter. The title of the message is, "Keep Adding," and I added here a little bit - recipe for revival. Because I've got to tell you I'm excited for Morningstar. Excited for you guys. Two weeks away I hear? You know what two weeks away from, right? Building project. When I first came here - first time I taught here - you guys were in that process. I think you were like two weeks away, and then, of course, (Laughing) we know how that went, huh? But God obviously had a plan to hang right here, but the cool thing is you're gonna put some paint on this old barn and fix the place up a little bit. But the cool thing is revival's gonna take place. New people are gonna be comin', and you're gonna be challenged to grow and to change and accept new things and new people and everything. Are you ready for revival? That's good! Because some of us - you get used to this. They like the paint on the old barn. They like the way things were. When I got saved at the Nazarene Church about thirty years ago, there was this influx of just young people. And the average age of the Nazarene Church, seriously, was about 60 years, and I was 30 years old. And so it was a group that we called the "new breed," and we came in, and it was like revival - of course broke out in our hearts and our lives, and there were about twenty-five of us, and we were kinda crazy. The church didn't know what happened. I mean, we were just all over the place. And the cool thing was we were ready for revival, but some of the folks there weren't. They kinda pushed back a little bit. They kinda didn't like the change. They didn't like the fact that you go out, and you tell people about Jesus, and you bring 'em to church. They liked the idea of the potlucks. Come to church, do the potluck, same old people, same place to sit. How many of you guys got your own

place to sit here? (Laughing) All right? It could be moved! Somebody comes into the church.....you know, you have the grand opening or whatever you're gonna do here, and people come in, it's like, "I'm gonna sit here," and you walk up.....(Pastor Rob acts as if he's standing over people who are sitting in his seat), "Hey, Ron. Could you move these people out of my seat for me, please?" (Laughing) It's real! You gotta be ready. You gotta be ready.

But let me ask you the question - when was the last time you experienced personal revival in your own heart? Maybe it was at a retreat, conference or something, or a great message that you heard. For me, oftentimes, little revivals spark when I get new music. I'm listening to Chris McClarney's new album "Breakthrough." There's a song on there called "I'm Listening." It's so sweet, and I love the way the music can just take your heart and just rejuvenate your relationship with Jesus. But ask the question to yourself - when was the last time? Maybe you need a little revival. Amen?

I was speaking with a friend of mine. Dear, dear friend. Known him for a long, long time. And we were talkin' about his walk and all that's goin' on, and so many cool things are happening in his life right now. And he's on fire. And he told me, he says, "Rob, it's like I've been born again, again." Amen. But that born again, that revival, came at a cost. You see, Peter has a list here of things that we're to be adding to, and my dear brother had quit adding. He had quit adding in the area of moral excellence. He'd quit adding in the area of self-control, even to godliness. And there was a bit of a fall, and the Lord had to take him down. But the cool thing about revival and about God and His love and His mercy and His, "I get to restore always," he got back into adding to his faith. Moral excellence. This idea of cleaning up his life. And self-control and desiring to be pleasing to God. And he's at a whole new place. Brand new place in his walk. And this idea, of course, having revival take place - we've got to be careful (verse 9, we'll get to it). He had lost sight of the great things that God had done in his life. It was like the fire had gone out. And you've got to be careful. And Peter walks us through. But this, to me, passage speaks about revival. And the key, of course, is to continue to add to your faith. How many of you here have been Christians longer than twenty years? Let me see your hands. Yes. This is an older congregation. How 'bout thirty years? Look at that. Is that amazing? Congratulations. I won't go any further than that because I don't want to date you guys. (Laughing) But the idea is you, me, we've been walkin' and doin' this walk for a long time. You gotta continue adding. You can't.....you know, I reached the big 6-0 last year, into that club. Like,

"Are you kidding me?! This is crazy." But there's a part of you, and of course I'm sure there're people here that are retired, and you start thinkin', "Hey, it's about time to maybe start..." (because I'm definitely on the downhill, we call it bein' in the fourth quarter) "I'm in the fourth quarter, man." But it's so cool because the game is coming to an end, and we're gonna be in heaven. But the challenge is - am I going to coast downhill gettin' to heaven, or am I gonna be chargin' uphill? And I'm gonna be like a Caleb. That's what I want to be. The key to continue adding. Because you think about it. Now I know probably a lot of you here have been to a gym, and you've worked out and everything. But you'll never go to a gym and have a trainer tell you, "Hey, if you want to get stronger or bigger, just reduce the weight or reduce the time on the treadmill or the elliptical." No! You have to do what? You gotta continue to increase. You gotta continue to bring resistance. You gotta add weight. And if you're not addin' weight, then you're just wastin' your time because your body is so smart, it'll just start going backwards if you try and stay in even the same place. But if you're adding, you're gonna get stronger, you're gonna get in better shape. But if you stay in the same place, man, goin' up the stairs, all this stuff, you're just gonna go down.

The same with our Christian walks. If I'm not adding, I'm gonna be declining in my Christian walk. Been doin' this now for thirty years, and I've seen that in my own life. Even as a pastor on staff, there're times you just get a little bit lukewarm. Kinda like, "Oh, man. How many times around the block do we gotta run?" Isn't it amazing, though? We're already in March. This is nuts, huh? We're gonna be over this year in no time (Pastor Rob snaps his fingers).

But looking at your life, looking back even at 2018, and looking at how things are going now in 2019 - are you adding? Are you growing? Is your relationship with Jesus getting better? Or is it just the same? Or is it kinda like, "Ah, I used to do this, I used to.....I remember when." If you're saying those kinds of things, you're in danger. No. It's brand new every day. Every morning ask yourself - are you experiencing revival?

Here in our study, these are Peter's last words. He says he's about ready to put off his tent. Significant, important, of course. He's concerned about the walk of the believers here of the church. And he goes into chapter 2 talking about the destructive heresies that are going to be coming in. But his remedy for that, his recipe for survival, so to speak, is to keep adding to your faith, continue adding to your knowledge and your relationship in Jesus Christ. That's the only way. Now, we

all experience warfare, but you think about what's happening in this world and the challenges that are coming towards us as Christians in the church, huge challenge is doubt, disbelief. In light of all the stuff that people are talkin' about, you and me, as Christians, and Christianity alone, you've got to continue adding. If you don't continue to add, you're gonna fall for the false, for the counterfeit. The devil is too smart. You know who the smartest person is in the universe? It's not a trick question, folks. Jesus. Okay? Who's the second smartest person in the universe? (Someone says the devil.) Yep. Way smarter than me and you. But we are protected. When we're standing. Even as Alex and Aubrey sang that song. When we stand in His love, we're protected, we're safe, but we gotta continue to add.

This passage, to me, speaks about spiritual revival, about continuing to keep this fire goin'. Peter gives us three things tonight regarding adding. Number one - the provision for adding (in verses 3 & 4); the plan for adding (verses 5-7); and the purpose for adding (verses 8-11). Let's go ahead and start reading verse 1, and we'll get through this. Jason said I have till 9:00. (Laughing) So we're cool. Amen? All right.

Number one - the provision for adding (verses 3 & 4). But let's start verse 1, "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ," (love the fact that bondservant is first, but of course he's writin' this himself, so who wouldn't do that?) "to those who have obtained like precious faith" (I love that phrase; you and I here, we have obtained like precious faith; we have the real deal, we know the real Jesus) "with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." And he says, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you" (it's always grace first and then peace comes) "in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." And this word "knowledge," "*epignosis*," he uses that word four times in our passage, and we get the understanding that what he's talkin' about, this word "*epignosis*" is full knowledge of Jesus; we'll talk more about that in a bit. Verse 3, though, "as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge" (there it is, again) "of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." So, verses 3 & 4 - the provision for adding. Peter says we've been "given all things that pertain to life and godliness." There's nothing else that needs to be added. We have God's Word plus the Holy Spirit. Amen? Nothin' else needs to be there. We don't need philosophy, we don't need psychology, we don't need self-help books. We don't need all that junk out there.

As Christians, number one, we have the power of God. He says "as His divine power has given to us all things." Spurgeon puts it this way when talking about what this "divine power" is. He says, "What stupendous issues are grasped in that term 'divine power.' It was this which dug the deep foundations of the earth and the sea. 'Divine power' - it is this which guides the marches of the stars of heaven. 'Divine power' - it is this which holds up the pillars of the universe and which one day shall shake them and hurry all things back to their native nothingness." The "divine power," of course, as we know, is the Holy Spirit that God has given to us. We have within us the power of God that created the universe, when we look at it from the scriptural emphasis here. Everything that we need is right here because the Holy Spirit dwells in you and me. Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to" what? "the power that works in us" you guys. It means without excuse. We can't walk around saying, "I just don't have what it takes. I don't have what the pastors have. I don't have what these spiritual giants.....I don't have what Billy Graham had." You do. We all have the same Holy Spirit. We all have that same power. So we have this power - the provision for adding.

But also, as Christians, we have a relationship with God. Let me say that again. We have a relationship with God, folks. When was the last time you got excited about the fact that you know Jesus? Through the full knowledge, here it is, this word, "**epignosis**" means a full knowledge. Now in this idea, what he's talking about is he speaks of the personal; not religious experience or traditions or rituals and such. In January I had the opportunity to go to a Catholic baptism and a Catholic funeral all within one week. And to be honest with you, I walked away very, very sad of what I experienced with this baptism, seeing all the ritualism, seeing all the sit-up, stand-up, all this stuff and.....whatever, and then to go to the funeral. And you know, the sad thing is it looked like the people were really tryin', but you know, if you've been to a Catholic church lately, you walk in, you do somethin' at the aisle here, then you gotta do all this stand-up, sit-down stuff and the incense and the priests, and the people were saying responsive stuff. I mean, they had religion goin', but you know what? I walked away sad because I don't think - I'm not tryin' to be judgmental but just in what I saw, they don't have "**epignosis**." They don't have a full knowledge. And to me, it's kind of like the idea of a husband and wife. Okay? They get married. There's a knowledge of each other. They get married, but the crazy thing is, in this marriage, they never touch each other. They're never intimate. That is not "**epignosis**," and that, to me, is what I see in people who don't have this "**epignosis**" that we have. They don't have full knowledge. They

have no relationship. There is no intimacy. We have that intimacy, you guys. We know Jesus. And to be excited about this and this knowledge, for us, guys, is the greatest blessing - to walk through this earth with the fact that you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, personal, intimate, within you, by you, always around you, always speaking, always there for us. I mean, we gotta be excited about that because that's what's lacking in the world today. And when people see you and me, and they see that there's somethin' different - and they do see somethin' different, right? But a lot of times they look at you like you're crazy. So, "You're talking to this thing, this Spirit, this whatever?" And we say, "Yes!" Now, I don't say that He is talking to me audibly, but He's talking to me all the time in His Word and in my heart. Amen? So, as Christians, we have this relationship.

But thirdly, as Christians, we have the promises of God - all the promises, "great and precious promises." I was listening to Joe Focht from Calvary Philadelphia. He said there were 7,474 promises in the Bible. Do you know 'em all? (Pastor Rob laughs). It doesn't matter. They're there for me and you. "Great and precious." And the promises, of course, that lead to salvation and the promises that speak of His Word, you guys, right in your hands. Right there. You have the promises of God that teach us about the divine nature, that teach us about Him, that teach us about our walk, that teach us when we're wrong. And because we have these promises, we have His Word, number one - we are partakers of the divine nature. And Barnes put it this way - Albert Barnes put it his way - he says, "Divine nature refers to the moral nature of God that they who are born again become participants of the same moral nature, that is, of the same views, feelings, thoughts, purposes, principles of action. Their nature when they are born is sinful and prone to evil. Their nature, as they are born again, though, becomes like that of God - a divine nature." And when you read God's Word, that's what it does in you. It begins to turn you more and more into Jesus. And because of these promises, also, he says, that "we have escaped the corruption that is in the world." And it speaks to that, because of the outcome of believing the gospel and because of the changes that have come, we are saved from the corruption that is in the world that came in by way of Adam and Eve and their sin. And of course this corruption brought in what? It brought in death. And the wages of sin is, of course, death (Romans 6:23). We've escaped that. We've escaped the corruption because our new nature is now a "divine nature." And we look around the world - corruption is everywhere. You know, it's kind of silly. We used to make fun of other countries and the corruption. I won't mention any other countries, I don't want to be offensive here. It's not probably politically correct to mention Mexico

or the Philippines, but we know that they're really bad, they're really corrupt out there. United States - I think we've topped the list with this huge college admissions scandal that is goin' on. Is that the.....what has happened to this country?! We're outta control! For me, it's either revival or rapture. There's no in-between. But we've escaped that. Our new nature isn't to do those things that are wrong. And so we have the provision for adding, we have the power, we have the relationship, and we have the promises of God.

Now, we have the plan for adding (verses 5-7). I love this passage right here. "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue," (and I'm going to use moral excellence for that word "virtue," and I know some of your translations have moral excellence) "to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." These things, he says, we are to be adding. For this very reason, or in view of the things - because we have the power of God, the relationship, the promises, Peter says now it's our responsibility to make every effort to respond to what God has given to us, folks. And he lays out this plan for adding, and some kind of refer to it as a ladder or even a pyramid with the Word being the foundation - your faith, of course. And it's interesting - many of us have plans; we've got plans. You've got plans, probably, tonight after service to go get an ice cream or somethin', right? Maybe, maybe not. You got financial plans. Anybody got vacation plans comin' up? Everybody - we got plans. Plans to do things. Plans to remodel the house. Plans for jobs. Whatever. But when it comes to your spiritual growth, do you have a plan? Or are you just kind of like, "Well, I'll just let it happen the way it happens." That's not what Peter's saying here. If you let it happen just the way it happens, the enemy's gonna deter and steer you off course. He's too smart. What Peter's sayin' is that human effort in growth in adding is indispensable; I've got to have a plan. I must continue in my faith in order to overcome the false lies of the enemy.

So the first thing we see here is that we are to purpose in our hearts to grow. "Giving all diligence" means zeal and effort, every ounce of determination to have as a distinct object and goal your spiritual growth, your relationship with Jesus. Kind of like what Daniel did in Daniel 1:8 where he said he "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's delicacies." He wasn't going to do it. Same with you. But the question is - do you want it? Because you've got to want it. If you don't want it, if you don't want to grow spiritually, nobody can make you. It's like takin' a horse to water. You can't make him drink. No one can force

this upon you. This has to come from your heart, has to be in your heart. You've got to want it, but also you gotta fight for it. You gotta fight for it. You make a decision tonight, "You know what? I'm bringin' revival into my life, and I'm changin'. I'm gonna begin adding to my faith." Do you think the devil's just gonna sit back and go, "Oh, that is so good, I'm proud of you. Good job, Christian"? Not at all. He's gonna resist you every step of the way. But also you've gotta plan for it and make the conscious effort. So, we purpose in our heart to grow.

But then we set goals to grow. Peter says, "Add to your faith." It means to supply generously, to choreograph. It speaks of being in cooperation with God. It's kind of like a marathon. A person decides that (it's a little late to do the L.A. Marathon, obviously).....but say you want to run next year's L.A. Marathon or Orange County. We're in Orange County, right? Orange County Marathon. And you can do this. So you go out, and you get your shoes, you get the shorts, you get the watch, you get the shirt, you get the AirPod things. You're all ready to go. You're ready to do your marathon. You go online. You get Hal Higdon's whatever. He's got a whole marathon training plan there. And you're ready to go. But what do you gotta do? You gotta start runnin'. You can't sit there and go, "Man, I look like Usain Bolt, man. I look so good, it's like....." (Laughing) You gotta start running! You gotta start moving! That's what he's talkin' about. You can't just stand there! You can't just stand there. As a Christian, you can't just stand there. And the crazy thing about when you're trainin' for a marathon is that you have - and the whole plan is you increase your distance as time goes by. You continue to add. You continue to add, and if you don't make it to the 20-mile run before the marathon, you might as well just give it up because you're gonna hit the wall, and it's gonna be horrible. It's key. You gotta do the 20 in order to do the whole thing. You gotta add.

And then thirdly, we add these Christian graces that Peter's talkin' about here. Add to your faith seven characteristics. "Add to your faith virtue" (or moral excellence). I love that word "moral excellence." It speaks of right behavior in line with a holy God, speaks of striving with all you have to be separate from the world and its influences, and do what is right all the time; no matter how bad you want your kids to get into that college. And what it is - it's living in line with God's moral will. What is God's moral will? I mean, we know it's holiness, it's perfection. I'll tell you what it isn't - Galatians 5:19-21 (and you probably know the list) - that's the works of the flesh. It goes on for three verses, and it starts with "adultery, fornication, and lewdness and uncleanness," and it just gets from bad to worse. That's not moral excellence. When you think about this idea of moral excellence

and this adding, probably some of you men here (maybe you ladies) ran track in high school and maybe some of you did the pole vault. I tried to do the pole vault; it didn't work for me. I was not a pole vaulter. But you know that in 1912, the world record for pole vault was 13'2½". That's not bad! Must have been bamboo poles or somethin' - to even get 13'. But the world record set in 2014 is now 20'2½" which, honestly, I thought the record would be lower then and obviously higher now - it's amazing that you can go that high, but of course the poles they have now are just like "bing," they shoot you right across the sanctuary here. But you think about it. From 1912 to 2014, how is it that they kept getting higher and higher and higher? Not another trick question here. They kept raising the bar. They kept raising the standard. They kept lifting it up. They kept striving for the next. "Well, this guy's got 15'. Let's go 15'1". Let's try. Let's see what happens." That's what he's talkin' about when he's talkin' about adding. Adding is in this area of moral excellence, guys. We need to raise the bar in our lives. We need to attempt to reach the moral standard set by Jesus. How high is that? It's too high. But just because it's too high doesn't let me off the hook to at least try to reach the moral standards that Jesus has, the moral excellence. And really, ultimately, it just comes to the question of me cleaning up my life. And in preparation for this message, I've been thinking about it, and the cool thing is it's like the Lord's bringing it to me. It's like, "Is that moral excellence? Was that thought moral excellence? Was that look moral excellence? How 'bout that word? How 'bout that attitude? How 'bout that little snide remark to your wife? Was that moral excellence?" And I'm tellin' you what - it's a good test for you.

So we add to our faith virtue or moral excellence. But then now we "add knowledge." Now this word "*gnosis*," means general intelligence and understanding of Christianity; it means knowledge that is increasing and not stagnant, though. And for me, the best way that I add knowledge is a continual, consistent, daily intake of God's Word. And for me, reading through the Bible has worked the best in my life. Anybody here reading through the Bible on a yearly basis? Need to see more hands than that, folks. Reading through the Bible is revolutionary, it's revival. It's so cool when you can complete reading through the.....anybody? Now I know a lot of people have read through the whole Bible. I'm going to tell you - if you haven't read through the Bible, go for it! It's not that big of a deal. You may think so. It's like, "No way in the world I could do that!" Yes you can. And yet when you do it, and you accomplish that, there's a motivation to continually keep doin' it year after year after year. I've lost track how many times I've read through the Bible. Now, do I know the whole Bible? No! Do I come to passages

that?.....I don't remember that. This is so cool! You know, you read that last year, but it is so cool because I just read it again. Add to it. See, when I read, I learn more about who He is, of course. "**Epignosis.**" But also I learn more of His love for me. Anybody need to know that God loves them? Amen. But also I learn when I'm getting off track, and for me, mostly that's what happens when you're reading God's Word. God speaks to you. I just love it when He speaks, but sometimes it's tough. Sometimes, oh.....and then you gotta go back sometimes and say the right thing to the person that you said the wrong thing to. Amen? So that's the knowledge he's talkin' about.

But now we "add to knowledge self-control." Oh, don't you love that word "self-control"? We all have no problem with self-control. Right? The word refers to mastery over all our evil inclinations and appetites. This would include, of course, all evil passions and desires. And really, ultimately, we're to allow none of these to have mastery over our lives. It's the strength of character to turn from temptation, and I make a choice not to do something. That is self-control. And really, this is moral excellence. It's moral excellence making the right choice. Because here's what happens when I don't exercise self-control. Now you think about it. You can play fun with this, but even in eating and food, if I'm not exercising self-control, we know what happens. And there's so much condemnation that comes a lot of times when people are bummed and upset about their weight and how they look and such. That's just the playground for the devil. But ultimately, when we're talkin' about this, if I am not exercising self-control, most of the time when I don't, it results in what? Sin. You understand that. If I'm not exercising self-control - turning, stopping, thinking before I speak, not doing something that I know is wrong - most of the time I'm stepping into a sinful situation. And what happens, of course, in a lack of self-control is that it hinders my fellowship with the Lord because I step into sin; and fellowship is broken when I sin. God says, "I ain't havin' nothin' to do with this. Now, you come back, confess, we'll talk, and we're all good." But fellowship is broken. Don't want that to happen. That's what the result is from lack of self-control

Number four, though, we're to "add perseverance" or patience. Now this word means steadfastness, constancy, endurance. Here it is - it's the ability to maintain self-control no matter how long the temptation is present that wants me to fulfill the flesh. Exercising self-control. I'm persevering in the midst of this trial that I'm enduring. It reminds me of the story of Moses (Numbers 20), there at Kadesh. Bless Moses' heart. Thirty-eight years. He and Aaron puttin' up with the children

of Israel, time and time and time again. Miriam has just died, and there's no water. So what do you think the children of Israel do? Of course, we know what they do. They start whinin' like babies, cryin', "There's no water!" and they actually start sayin' again, "We wish we would have died in Egypt. We want to go back." Moses and Aaron, of course, fall on their knees before the LORD, "What do we do now?" God simply says, "Take the rod, but speak to the rock, and I'll bring water out." No big deal. Easy. And we know the story. What does Moses do? He and Aaron. They'd had it. See the problem is they didn't persevere, they didn't exercise self-control; they lost self-control. He'd had enough; lost his patience, and it cost him dearly. Because we know what happened. He didn't speak to the rock. He took the rod, hit the rock twice - totally destroying the type, dishonoring God, not believing God could do it. And before the people, God said, "You know what? Back when Nadab and Abihu were smoked (Leviticus 10), He said, 'Those who come before Me, I must be honored. And those who are representing Me, I must be glorified.' " They didn't do it, and we know the end of the story. Moses and Aaron didn't get in the Promised Land; next chapter, Aaron dies. Boom, boom. So this idea of persevering and not giving up, you guys. We don't give up on God, we don't give up on people, but we don't give in to the enemy, either. And you might be in a situation where you're just like....you're this close. You may be ready to throw the towel in on a relationship or job or even your Christian walk. Don't do it. Persevere. We gotta endure to the end. Amen?

So to perseverance, though, now - number five - we "add godliness." And of course, godliness, what is it? It's God-like behavior. It's the imitation of Christ and His characteristics. Now, if someone asks you, "What is Jesus like?" I'd encourage you to take them to Colossians 3:12-15. It's a great picture of who Jesus is in a representation of Him. It says, "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering." Does that sound like Jesus to you? "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." Then he says, "But above all these things put on" what? "love, which is the bond of perfection." And so we put on this godliness, and it reminds me of the story of the priests when Moses was gettin' the instructions from God, there in Exodus 28. And he's designing the priestly garments. And it's so cool - when he gets to the turban, the hat, so to speak, He says, "I want you now to make a signet ring but on a gold plate, and I want you to sew that plate to the turban, and on that plate" - does anybody remember what it said? (this is a little bit of a test) "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." That's us, you guys. It's a call to holiness. As a

Christian man or woman, it's a call to holiness. Peter, even in 1 Peter 1:15-16, talks about "be holy as He is holy." Jesus said, "Be holy as your Father in heaven is holy" (Matthew 5:48). So we have to add to this perseverance; we have to add godliness. And this is where we have to, again, continue to raise the bar in our lives, you guys. So, perseverance, patience, godliness.

Now we go to number six - "brotherly kindness." This is, of course, the word "*philadelphia.*" It means a love for brothers and sisters, which Christians cherish as believers which you experience here even tonight. And this brotherly kindness is something that, in the world, should be something that people see in me and you as they see us fellowshiping together. And that's such a cool thing. I do the men's ministry at the church there, and it's so cool to see these big - and we've got a lot of longshoremen that attend the church there, down on the docks there, not the place to work - but there're guys that're maintaining their Christian walk even workin' in a place like that, and they're all rough, tough and everything. And they come, and they're singin', they're praising God, crying, holdin' hands, huggin', huggin' each other, tellin' each other that we love each other. That's brotherly kindness. We've got to continue to add brotherly kindness because it's gonna help me endure when others don't practice it towards me. Because oftentimes I may be lovin' you the way I think you're supposed to be loved, but you might not be lovin' me back. And so I'm just going to pick up my toys and go home kind of a thing. Nope. I continue to love you with brotherly kindness.

But then, of course, number seven - "add to brotherly kindness love," the big one, "*agape.*" Unconditional. Unchanging. Above all, put on love. And this means loving - though, here it is - without expecting love back. That's what makes it so different. People in the world don't usually love without expecting something in return. But as Christians, true "*agape*" love is....I love you, I love my wife, I love my kids, I love family, I love people, but I don't love with a motive. I love because it's the love of God that is coming down from heaven and flowing through me as a channel, and it's supposed to go straight out to everybody else. I mean, thank God that Jesus, on the cross, didn't love expecting the people to love Him back because He wouldn't have stayed up there. He'd have been mad. It's like, "You guys treat Me this way? Forget it! I'm jumpin' off the cross! You're all done." No. He stayed on that cross. He loved, expecting nothing in return. And I show this type of love to others continually by dying to myself. Remember, if we're living according to Scripture, we have died. Right? Galatians 2:20, "For we died. It is Christ who lives in me. The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God. It's no longer I

who live. I've been crucified with Christ." Colossians 3:1 says, "If then you have been raised with Christ," you have been raised from the dead! Do you act like that? I love by dying to myself. Oh, yes, we love dying to ourselves, though, don't we? But also denying my flesh and not giving in to its desires. I exercise self-control. I push those.....nope.....by the power of God's Holy Spirit, it's not gonna happen. But also I show this type of love to others by despising or rejecting the influences of the world and the devil. And, of course, by this all will know that we are what? His disciples (John 13:35). So we have the plan for adding.

But now, number three - as we head towards the home stretch - the purpose for adding (verses 8-11). He goes on to say, "For if these things" (that we just spoke about) "are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent," he says, "to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble." Anybody hate it when you stumble? Hate when you fall down, you skin your knee and such? No! It's not gonna happen. "For so" (verse 11 says) "an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The purpose for adding is for us, of course, to continue to keep this relationship growing. "For if these things are yours and abound," it means to exist in abundance, to super-abound. So the purpose is to keep that relationship with Jesus growing. Has it gotten stagnant? Is it stale? When's the last time He spoke to you through His Word? When's the last time you got a great revelation from Him? He says "you will be neither barren nor unfruitful," and "barren" speaks of idleness, going nowhere; "unfruitful" - no evidence of a growing relationship, no fruit of the Spirit. So if I'm adding, my relationship with the Lord should be growing. It doesn't have to stay in the same place. I mean, think about those who are married here. The marriages that get in trouble are the marriages that stop growing. You stop learning more and more about your husband or your wife, there's no excitement, there's no passion. It's just like the same old lady and the same old man kind of a thing. It can't be that way. You can't do it. You gotta keep growing, keep adding to your relationship there.

But also to keep you from being lukewarm. That's what verse 9 is all about, see? Peter's speaking of those who had forgotten what God had done for them. Do you remember the day of your salvation? Even if you've been a Christian thirty years, do you remember that day? Have you reflected upon it lately? Do you remember

how it was? Oh, I love, I cherish going back to the Nazarene Church there - the day we dedicated our boys to the Lord. Not even saved yet. We'd been there about eight months. I had a head knowledge. I had "*gnosis*." I didn't have "*epignosis*." And yet we dedicated our boys, and I'm sittin' there, just goin', "This is so trippy, man." I mean, six, seven, eight months ago - partyin', crazy, out of control, drinkin', drugs, whatever. I'm sittin' in church with my kids and my wife. And I just.....like "I'm gonna cry. What is goin' on here? This is getting really weird." I actually had the feeling like, "I gotta get outta here," a little panic attack kind of thing, "I gotta get outta here!" And yet, I'm listening to the message, but then I'm not even listening to the message. I'm lookin' around at the people. I'm just goin', "This is too unreal. I'm in church. God's done.....my kids....." It was amazing. We start singing a song at the end. "I will serve thee because I love thee. You have given life to me. I was nothing when You found me. You have given life to me. Heartache, broken pieces, ruined lives are why You died on Calvary." We started singing that song, we stood up. I thought I was off the hook. It was like, "Oh, great." Just out of control. My wife looks over at me. She's like, "He's havin' a nervous breakdown. I mean, somethin' is seriously wrong here." And I told my wife, "I gotta go forward." She goes, "You can't go forward. We've been here eight months. You've gotta already be saved." (Laughing) I'm serious!! She didn't say it exactly like that, but that's what she was thinkin' because nobody had gone forward. No one was movin'. My family was there. Friends. Everybody. And the pastor's at the pulpit, and the assistant pastor and the youth pastor were up there. Sang that song through one more time, and it was like.....almost like levitation.....I can't even describe it. Just, "Excuse me. Get out of my way." I passed my wife and my sister and brother-in-law. Head down there. I'm the only one goin' forward. And I'll tell you what. The pastor.....everybody knew what was goin' on except for me. All I knew was, "Man, I'm gonna hug that altar," and I just remember cryin' out to the Lord, "This is it. This is what I've been lookin' for. This is what I've been searchin' for."

And they had lost that. They had lost the thrill of that. They'd forgotten what God had done in their lives! The excitement for spiritual things had grown cold. They had quit growin', you guys. It means to neglect to cultivate. And this, of course, will lead to a lukewarm state that could eventually lead to deception, doubt and disbelief, you guys. And this, sad to say, is where many in the church are today. And of course, what will the state of the church be in the last days? The church of what? Laodicea. The lukewarm church. Is that you here tonight? Or are you ready for revival? Are you experiencing revival? This is what it's all about,

folks. Jesus could come back tonight, and I pray that He does. Oh, my gosh. I'm praying for revival. But He may not. But the cool thing is you guys get to experience a little mini-revival here at Morningstar. You're gonna remodel this church! It's gonna change. Things are gonna happen. It's exciting! You guys gotta be excited about that.

But Peter's sayin' they had become lukewarm. They had lost sight of the glories of God. It was one of those things where "I used to" go to church, "I used to" believe, "I used to" do the things of God. The purpose for adding is to keep that from happening.

And then third, and lastly, the purpose for adding is to give you the assurance of heaven. Verses 10-11, "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things" (see, you gotta do somethin') "you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This will give you the assurance of heaven. Let me ask you a question. How do you know that you're saved tonight? Now wouldn't it be nice.....when you got baptized, didn't you get a little certificate in the mail? Wouldn't it be cool, you get saved and about a week and a half later, you get a little letter from Jesus? and it's signed, "Rob Stoffel is now saved. I was there. I caused it. He's good." There's a little stamp. Man! I got my certificate! I'm saved! Well, of course we know we have the Holy Spirit. But how do you know that you know you know? How do you know you're saved? When I'm adding and abounding in these things, it's an evidence that the Spirit of God dwells in me. And the fruit of the Spirit, which is love and joy and peace and patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control - when those things are evident in your life, guess what? I'm saved. I'm not perfect. I'm still a sinner. I don't practice all those things perfectly, but I certainly don't do the things that I used to do. That's what he's talkin' about. You're adding. You've changed. This speaks of assurance. How can I know I'm saved? Man, when there's fruit. Adding does not bring salvation; adding is a result of salvation.

So, are you saved tonight? Between you and the Lord. And the cool thing is when you know that you know, and you are saved, and you walk and you're adding, and you end up putting off your tent, this is what verse 11 says - this leads to the grand entrance, the grand entrance. What he's talking about is like when a general in the army would come back from a war, and they were bringing the spoils and those they had captured, and they were coming into the city, and the parade route was there,

and the people were cheering, cheering, cheering. Kind of like those lame New England Patriot guys who won the Super Bowl again (Laughing). They had the parade there. And get this. Thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of people. And the funny thing is that Gronkowski and some other guy were there, and of course they're all drunk and such. Did you hear that Gronkowski got chucked in the head by a beer can? (Pastor Rob laughs.) That's pretty bad. That's pretty bold. I mean, that dude is bad. He coulda jumped out of that truck and just pounded somebody, but he gets hit in the side of the head by a beer can! Cut his head! Hilarious. (Laughing) But, that's kinda.....I wish it'd been Brady. I'm sorry if you're a New England Patriot fan. (Laughing) I'm sorry. Just had enough! Like everybody else.

There's gonna be an entrance so glorious. There's gonna be great joy and celebration when we all get to heaven. And here's an analogy here to give you an idea of what we're talkin' about here. Imagine the celebration that took place when Billy Graham passed from this life to the next. Now of course, Billy Graham - a sinner just like all of us but the work that he did for the kingdom of God.....I mean, there's only gonna be maybe what? Twenty people like that? In heaven? For all the years, the thousands of years, when you think of what he did. Now compare his entrance, even though he's in heaven, to the entrance that, maybe, the thief on the cross got. They both went to Paradise. But the thief on the cross, man, he had, like, hours.....hours of salvation under his belt. When he got there, it might have been like, "Hey, yay, yay, yay. Good job. I'm glad you're here." (Pastor Rob makes the sound of one person clapping) "Hey, your room's over there. You get your little mansion over there." But when Billy Graham got there, oh, my gosh. That's what Peter's talkin' about. What kind of entrance do you want to have? You want a thief-on-the-cross entrance? You're in, but you got in through fire. You're a little bit smokin' like that Scripture says. Psssh. Kind of.....(Laughing) all your works are....."Okay, I made it. Thank God I made it." And praise God we're gonna make it! (Laughing) But I'm tellin' you what. I'd rather have an entrance like Billy Graham's. Not so much for me but just for the fact that I served Jesus, I kept adding to my faith. I kept adding to my faith.

And so when we think about this, closing up here, of the seven things that we're to add here, tonight, which ones are lacking? Which ones are evident in your life? And all the seven - adding to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and perseverance and godliness and brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. Of those things there, which ones are lacking, which

ones need work? Or maybe all of 'em. And the question, really, to ask yourself is not so much for you but ask someone who knows you real well, someone who'll be really honest with you. But also, are you lookin' for a little bit of a revival in your life? Well we've got it right here. We've got the recipe right here for you. Tomorrow morning when you wake up, and you get into God's Word, begin to add to your faith. Start this process, practicing these Christian graces outlined by Peter. And would to God that revival would spread because, folks, if we don't see that there's a need for revival in this state, in this country, in this world.....for me it's like it's now or never.....it's like, man, Lord, it's so bad. We understand that.

But also, number three, though, remember the enemy is going to use anything to try and trip us up and to cause us to stumble. But from my experience, where I've seen most of those stumbles happen or the characteristic of a stumble when we think of what takes place in a person's heart, has to do with the area of moral excellence and a lack of self-control, obviously. See, you quit adding to moral excellence, and then there's going to be some type of moral failure. Generally when pastors fall, people in the church fall, there's something to do with the moral failure there. You may have heard of James MacDonald, the pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel there in Chicago. I mean, huge church. Big-time guy. You guys know who he is. The moral failure wasn't so much maybe in a sexual nature, but the moral failure was in the way he treated people, the way he was acting, the way he was not exercising self-control, the way he was abusing his authority. And sad to say, God took him down; his board fired him. We don't want that to happen. But then this area of moral excellence - you need to take a look at this and ponder. Like I said, puttin' this study together, it was really kind of cool because thinkin' about it and praying about it and everything, and then it would be like a little, "Well, check that out. Is that moral excellence, Rob? Hmmm. How 'bout the thought. Is that a morally-excellent thought, Rob? How 'bout the word that just came out of your mouth?" And I shared that a little bit earlier. Something to take home and think about because, really, when you think about this ladder, so to speak, adding to our faith virtue or moral excellence - it starts right there. Because if there's no moral excellence in your life, you're not goin' anywhere with God. You're gonna stay exactly where you're at until those issues, those situations, those characteristics, the stuff is taken care of, it's cleaned up; that you begin to raise the bar. So think about that, and maybe jot that down as somethin' to pray about for yourself because only you and God know this.

But of course, for us here tonight, let's keep adding. Let's keep adding to our faith with the hope and prayer that revival comes not just to our own hearts and our own lives but spreads to everybody that we know and, of course, across this world because, truly, the United States is ripe for revival. When you look at the revivals that took place starting in the late 1800's and 1900's and all the way, really the last big revival that we saw, that some of you experienced, was when? Jesus people. 1970? How many years ago was that? Didn't it seem like it was yesterday? And yet we haven't had anything so to speak. Now, around the world I'm sure there're things taking place. We know that. But not here in the United States. Certainly not in California with the new tall governor we've got. (Laughing) I didn't mention his name.....for you.

Let's pray.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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