

I. Introduction

- A. I've done a little flying recently. I always feel a little jealous when I walk past the first class seats to the cheap seats in back. They're already enjoying a nice drink and a nice cloth napkin. Plus they don't have their knees up in their face and they don't have to fight their neighbor for the arm rest.
- B. A while back I flew to Africa to go visit a hospital our church helped build way out in the middle of the jungle. We flew from Sacramento to Chicago and from Chicago to Paris. That airplane was huge.
- C. The first class seats had another level of first class seat... If you combine a personal cubicle with a Lazyboy recliner and a large screen TV, you get the picture. This was luxury class, and Josh and I walked right past it to the cheap seats.
- D. Once we got settled in, we had to deal with smell coming from somewhere... well, it smelled like a diaper.
- E. Those first class seats call out to me.
- F. Let's say there were three kinds of people. First class, economy class, and not on the plane.
- G. I'll come back to this.
- H. I'd like to read some Bible verses and then talk about them.

II. Scripture

- A. *For if these things 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 to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things 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.* (2 Peter 1:8-11)
- B. These words were written by a church leader named Peter. Peter, one of the original leaders appointed by Jesus himself, was writing a letter to all the churches. He was worried that they were being attacked by false teachers.
- C. So Peter is very logical.
 - 1. *First he talks about the faith that saves them.* If you're going to avoid all these false teachings, all this deception, all this heartbreaking unreality, the first thing you need is salvation.
 - a) By the way, have you received God's salvation? Have you looked into your own heart and flipped the switch on the faith that saves you?
 - b) I think God brought you here today because he wants you to do exactly that. He loves you and wants the best for you.
 - (1) He wants you to know him.
 - (2) He wants you in relationship with him.
 - (3) He wants you walking the most wholesome, loving, life-giving way of life ever seen on planet earth.
 - (4) And all of these things and more are wrapped up in the salvation package... and if you have never received Jesus and the gift he brings... I want to help you do that at the end of my talk today.
 - (5) Don't worry, it won't be weird.
 - c) So Peter writes to these Christians and to us about the faith that saves them.
 - 2. Then Peter writes about the spiritual growth that matures them. This is the second thing you need to avoid the mental traps and mind games of false teachers.
- D. That second part sets the stage for our Bible verses today. He is talking about people who have already turned their lives to Jesus.
- E. They have the faith that saves them, and now it's time for the spiritual growth that matures them.
- F. Peter describes that spiritual growth, and then he adds the verses we are reading today.
- G. He says...

III. *For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter 1:8)

- A. He writes "these things."
 - 1. What things? The character qualities of a believer in Jesus who is growing and maturing in their faith. Those are the previous verses and we talked about them last time. You can go back and check out the recording on YouTube if you want.
 - 2. If these things are yours and abound... if you are saved, and if you are really doing what in the spiritual growth department... then here's God's guarantee.
 - a) You will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Picture a fruit tree. We have awesome peach trees in our back yard. Barren means no leaves. Unfruitful means no fruit. The leaves and the fruit are signs of life. They are signs of health. They are signs that the tree is doing what a tree is meant to do. It is fulfilling its destiny. So it is with you and with me.
4. Look deep within your heart. What are your dreams? What are your truest passions? Your deepest desires? When dig past all the shallow stuff, what are you here for? Your truest identity... your most noble self... you fulfilling your design and destiny.
5. Scripture is making an astounding claim here.
6. The secret of fulfilling your destiny and of becoming all you were meant to be is as simply as having the faith that saves you and then adding the spiritual growth that matures you.
7. The leaves will grow. The blossoms will bud. The fruit will be there.
8. And your life will truly have the one quality that everyone the world over is looking for... you will be satisfied. You will experience the secret of a God-blessed life.
9. That is the idea. One heaping scoop of salvation plus one heaping scoop of post-salvation spiritual growth yields a satisfied, abundant, fruitful, God-blessed life.
10. Is that something you want in your life? You can have it.
 - a) And let me remind you it starts with salvation, which I know is a weird religious word to so many today. But that's where it starts. And when you receive Jesus he brings with him a salvation so incredible and generous and wonderful it will take your breath away.
 - b) And you can take hold of that salvation today.
 - c) I'm going to show you how and walk you through it.
11. But now we have to talk about the huge spiritual malfunction that weighed so heavily on Peter's heart when he wrote this letter.
12. What happens when a person has the faith that saves them, but does NOT add the spiritual growth that matures them?
13. Peter answers that question in verse 9.

IV. *For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*
(2 Peter 1:9)

- A. People ask me all the time, Bill, can a Christian lose their salvation.
- B. I ask them back, can I make myself someone else's son? No. Not biologically. No. No Christian can lose their salvation. Because your salvation doesn't depend on you, it depends on Christ.
- C. People say, yes but what if a person lets go of Christ? I say it doesn't matter, because Christ won't let go of you.
- D. They object, yes but what if a person sins?
 1. I say didn't the death of Jesus on the cross pay the price for every sin? Isn't it inconceivable that he left even one sin out?
 2. This teaching is called Eternal Security, and it is all over the Bible.
 - a) Eternal Security: God himself bears all the burden not only to save you, but to keep you saved forever and to bring you safely home to heaven.
- E. People say, yes but what if they don't bear fruit?
 1. And I want to say, wait, are we talking about you? Or are you busy inspecting other people's fruit. In Christian love, mind your own business.
 2. But what if they don't bear fruit?
 3. Peter answers that objection right here.
 - a) He who lacks these things... what things? Leaves and fruit!
 4. Does he say that someone who lacks fruit in their lives, someone who claims to be a Christian but doesn't act like a Christian or grow like a Christian or live like a Christian... does Peter say that they are not saved?
 5. No. He doesn't say that.
 6. He says they are blind... One of the best professors and greatest scholars I've ever known if named S. Lewis Johnson. A scholar's scholar. He looks at the original Greek of this verse and says it means "he is blind because he shuts his eyes."
 - a) There are things that are real, but this person can't see them because of their own dumb choice.
 - b) Yes they are saved. Yes they belong to Christ. Yes they have God's presence and promises and power in their lives.

- c) But they shut their eyes to these rock-solid realities and make themselves blind to who they are and what they have.
- d) And the next line seals the argument.
- 7. They have forgotten that they have been cleansed from the old sins.
 - a) Does it say they have been un-cleansed? No.
 - b) Does it say that God reaching into the depths of the sea where he has buried their sins, collected all the filth, and dumped it back on their own heads? No.
 - c) This is not about losing salvation, but about *forgetting* the salvation you already have.
 - (1) You have been cleansed from your sins once for all.
 - (2) You have been forgiven once for all.
 - (3) You have been saved once for all and forever...
 - (a) Because you have a Savior who died once for all and forever.
 - (b) What good is a salvation that rescues someone from drowning but throws them overboard before the boat gets back to shore?
 - (c) What good is eternal life that doesn't last forever? Can you even call it eternal? Can you even call it everlasting?
- F. I was saved as a little boy. But I was so afraid that it didn't work that I got saved over and over again.
 - 1. Now I know that it worked the first time and it sticks forever.
 - 2. I also know that to doubt that is to doubt not only the Word of God, but it is to call into question the perfections and efficacy of the Cross of Christ where Jesus died.
 - a) Did he not do enough?
 - b) Did he not do it all?
 - c) Was his shed blood in some way so weak that you, having been saved by that blood, could somehow shrug it off and lose its infinite benefits?
 - d) Can the Savior who declares there is no condemnation turn that around and condemn you?
 - (1) Never. Impossible.
 - (2) Don't you love the mercy and kindness of God? Aren't you thankful for his grace.
- G. I would say to you that if you were saved a long time ago, you are still saved today and will be tomorrow and will be as all the ages of eternity roll on in the joys and celebrations of heaven.
- H. And I would say exactly the same thing for that adult child you worry about, and that prodigal sister of yours, and your parents who claim to have let go of Christ.
- I. They may have let go of Christ, but will not and cannot ever let go of them.
- J. They might rededicate their lives to Christ, and we hope they do. But they cannot ever be born again again, and they don't need to be.
 - 1. Eternal security is one of the great wonders of the world.
 - 2. All the yes-buts and arguments against this astonishing truth have been washed away in the flood of Calvary's love.
 - 3. Either you are saved by grace through faith, or God's Word is a liar.
- K. Once saved always saved. Some people hate this teaching. But that's okay, God loves them too. They'll come around.
- L. The argument might come, so Bill are you saying that there are no consequences if a person is saved but never grows and never walks with the Lord?
- M. No. I am not saying that. There are consequences, and here they are:
- V. *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.* (2 Peter 1:10)
 - A. I mentioned eternal security... which is the objective reality that you are saved forever.
 - B. This is the flip side of that... It is called Assurance. Assurance: the internal confidence that you are saved forever.
 - C. Remember you start with the faith that saves you and then add the spiritual growth that matures you.
 - D. And Peter says to make sure to do the second part, because that is the only way to feel assurance about the fact of salvation. Get it?
 - 1. Your confidence will not stumble.
 - 2. Your Christian life will not stumble.
 - 3. Your godliness and sense of well being will not stumble.
 - 4. You will not stumble because you are completely assured that you are saved forever.

- a) Let us grow to the point where we have made our calling and election sure.
- b) Be confidence in Christ.
- c) Be bold in Christ.
- d) Be complete in Christ...

(1) This is your birthright. This is your great heritage in the gospel.

- E. If you have said yes to the faith that saves you, and if you keep on adding the spiritual growth that matures you, then you will never stumble.
- F. This is where you hit your stride. This is where love people with virtue love, and where you bring the gospel to a lost and dying world.
- G. Verse eleven is where I want to go back to first class seats.
- VI. *For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter 1:11)
 - A. First class. Economy class. Not on the plane.
 - B. Every Christian, every single saved person, will receive an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You get to go to heaven.
 - C. But not every Christian, not every single saved person, will receive an *abundant* entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - D. It turns out that heaven has first class seats AND economy class seats.
 - E. Now I have to say that even the cheapest seat in heaven is a thousand times more glorious and happy than any first class seat on earth.
 - F. Everyone in heaven is happy. Everyone in heaven is full.
 - G. Economy class IS heaven... no denial off that. There will be plenty of people in heaven who were happy to be saved and not much more. Happy to be saved, but God isn't really a factor. Yes, God loves all his children, even the ones
 - H. But, it turns out that
 - 1. There are tremendous differentials among God's people in heaven.
 - I. Some there will have more abundance than others. More rewards. More powers. More glories.
 - 1. Jesus said some will rule over ten cities, or five cities, or none (Luke 19:15, ff).
 - 2. To some he will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." (Matthew 25:21)
 - 3. There is a crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8), a crown of life (James 1:12), and a crown of glory (1 Pet 5:4).
 - 4. Paul tells us some will receive rewards equivalent to gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor 3:12).
 - a) In heaven, you will go golfing with your friend. Your drive will go a mile and a half. That's pretty awesome.
 - b) Then your friend steps up to the tee, and their drive goes fifteen miles. That's awesome squared.
 - (1) First class. Economy class. Which will you prefer... forever?
 - J. Let me be super-clear. Heaven is not a reward for good behavior. Heaven is a free gift, paid in full.
 - K. BUT... for those who receive the gift, there will be rewards in heaven.
 - L. And what will the be based on?
 - 1. First, there's the faith that saves you. Then there's the spiritual growth that matures you.
 - 2. It is that maturity, that high level faith, that walk with God that expands your capacity for blessings in heaven.
 - M. This is me speaking to every person who has received Jesus as their Savior... Oh please don't settle for economy class. God loves you. He'll take care of you. But there's so much more.
 - 1. Be in the Word. Have a prayer life. Be in a small group. Care ministries. Don't check out of your walk with God.
 - 2. Shed the immaturity as Christian. Grow up. Put muscle on your faith. Stand strong against the darkness as a Christian in complete armor.
 - N. I pray and labor that the Pathway Church battalion in heaven will be first class all the way.
 - O. So there's first class, economy class...
 - P. But there's also not on the plane.
 - Q. Let's fix that right now.

VII. Invitation

- A. ADMIT
- B. BELIEVE
- C. CHOOSE