

Faith Training

II Peter 1:5-11

INTRODUCTION:

If you would open your Bibles this morning, in a few minutes, we will be reading from II Peter Chapter 1 verses 5-11. Mark those verses and also turn to I Corinthians 9.

Today is the closing ceremonies of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It wraps up two weeks of Olympic competition in many sports. The participants all have one thing in common. They have all been willing to devote every day of their lives for most of their life to train, develop their body, and perfect their skills so they could be "world class" athletes and compete against the rest of the world for the chance of being the best in their sport and winning a gold medal.

The Bible compares our Christian lives to a competition in a race or a boxing match.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

In each Olympic event, the participants are competing against each other. And in the rare occurrence of a tie, only one person receives the gold medal. As Christians, we are only racing against one person. It is against Satan and his worldly ways. Each of us will either win or lose. Paul says to "**Run in such a way that you may win!**"

This is a quote from **Mary Lou Retton**, American gymnast and 1984 gold medalist.

"As simple as it sounds, we all must try to be the best person we can: by making the best choices, by making the most of the talents we've been given."

This is true, both for the Olympians and for the Christian.

Peter, in our passage this morning, is going to teach us how to "**Run in such a way that you may win!**" Peter wants to protect the believer. He wants us to KNOW that our faith is real and our salvation is sure. He does not want our lives to be in vain and LOSE THE RACE!

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 1:5-11 (NASB)

⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer

Prayer

Living the Christian life and having an assurance of salvation is more than just attending church, singing songs, taking communion, listening to a sermon. and going home to live your own life and then return the next Sunday and play "church" again. That is not a true faith that leads to salvation.

We MUST GRASP the real reason we are on this earth!

The purpose of this life is to glorify God our Creator and prepare for eternity. We glorify God by respecting Him, obeying His Word, and knowing Him intimately.

Let's look at the steps that Peter lays out for us to attain a sure salvation and WIN THE RACE!

BODY:

I. QUALIFICATION.

2 Peter 1:1b (NASB)

1 ...To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

In order for the Olympians to qualify for the Rio Summer Olympics each person had to qualify in their own country.

In order for you to qualify for the race to salvation, you must meet some qualifications also. This starts when you believe in Christ, repent of your sins, and are baptized for the remission of those sins. This is how you receive the true gift of faith through Christ that Peter is talking about.

2 Peter 1:4 (NASB)

⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

When we receive the gift of faith, Peter tells us that our old self of sin will go away and we will become a new man in Christ and take on His divine nature.

Peter then tells us of the base characteristic that we must have before we can mature in our faith. This is found in the first part of verse 5.

2 Peter 1:5a (NASB)

⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all **diligence**,

Diligence is defined as an earnest and persistent effort at whatever you are doing. However, the Greek meaning of the word is not so much diligence as haste.

It is the same word used to describe the eager swiftness (or haste) with which the Virgin Mary went to Elizabeth after the angel came to her and told her that Elizabeth had also conceived of a son. (Luke 1:39)

So Peter is telling us that if we have a saving faith we will spend every moment with continuous effort, and let nothing entangle the feet while running the race.

He over and over again exhorts us that the **ONE** means to the attainment of all Christian graces and of all the blessings of the Christian life is **DILIGENCE!**

Peter practiced what he preached.

2 Peter 1:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

No man becomes a vigorous Christian by any other course than ‘**giving all diligence.**’

The late Muhammed Ali (Cassius Clay) Ali, American boxer and 1960 gold medalist, once said, “The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses—behind the lines, in the gym, not out there on the road. Long before I dance under the lights, you get(learn) to want to win, more than you want to avoid pain.”

Bobby Knight, American basketball coach of the 1984 gold medal-winning men's team.

“The key is not the will to win. Everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important.”

Peter would word it much like this...

"The key is not the **will** to go to Heaven. Everybody has that. It is the will to give all diligence in your faith that is important."

It won't always be easy. In fact we are told to expect problems. We will not always do things correctly, but neither do the athletes when they are in training. It is only through many, many attempts that near perfection is achieved.

Michael Jordan, American basketball player and 1984 and 1992 gold medalist.

I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career ... I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

It is when you work with haste, with earnestness, and strength, that your faith will generate the qualities of character which Peter is about to describe

II. THE RACE.

2 Peter 1:5-7 (NASB)

⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

For the Olympians, the purpose for the training is so they can compete at a high level at the Olympic games and hopefully win a gold medal.

As qualified Christians, we are in a race that we MUST win. It is a race between you and Satan and the allurements of worldly things.

If we are winning in this race of salvation, Peter provides a list of virtues that should be growing in the life of the believer. They are best translated by referring to

- Moral Excellence,
- Biblical Knowledge,
- Self-Control,
- Perseverance,
- Godliness,
- Brotherly Kindness
- and Christian Love.

Notice that this is a step by step process. You must start with **diligence** as the base.

We are to start by adding

MORAL EXCELLENCE to our faith.

We are a new man in Christ.

Romans 6:4-7 (NASB)

⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

We seek moral excellence in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin we strive to be like Christ and forsake worldly ways.

BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE.

As I stated last week, there are several different Greek words that have to do with knowledge. In verse 3 Peter is referring to a complete knowledge, or intimate knowledge that we receive by having a close relationship with Christ.

This knowledge is referring to a knowledge of the scriptures.

So as we strive for moral excellence, we study God's Word and learn what He expects from us.

SELF CONTROL.

As we learn more from God's Word, we are to apply that knowledge to our lives. We must not only have a book knowledge, but we must put that knowledge into action. Both by doing what is commanded of us and by avoiding what is sinful.

If we have put our faith into action, we will produce fruit.

John 15:4-8 (NASB)

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

PERSEVERENCE.

Once we become active in our faith, we are to add perseverance.

Paul gave the same instruction to Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Timothy's perseverance would be the proof that his faith was genuine. His perseverance would also guarantee that his ministry to others would be fruitful.

Here is an example of perseverance.

It is another quote from Muhammed Ali concerning his confidence in his ability to win. "I want fifteen referees to be at this fight because there ain't no one man who can keep up with the pace I'm gonna set except me. There's not a man alive who can whup me. I'm too fast. I'm too smart. I'm too pretty. I should be a postage stamp. That's the only way I'll ever get licked."

Ali fought 61 fights in his professional career. He lost five times. He refought Joe Frazier, Ken Norton, and Leon Sprinks and won each of them. He lost his last two fights after suffering from a muscular problem and retired.

That's perseverance, isn't it?

GODLINESS.

The Goal of every True Believer is to Conform into the Image of Jesus Christ— and to be like Jesus Christ. This is pleasing to God and Glorifies Him. As we persevere in our faith, we will be more like Christ.

BROTHERLY KINDNESS.

As we become more like Christ, we will learn to love our brothers and sisters in Christ better because we now understand more fully how Christ loved us.

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

The highest level that can be achieved is true love. It is the first and greatest commandment.

Luke 10:25-28 (NASB)

²⁵ And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, **“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”** ²⁶ And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” ²⁷ And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” ²⁸ And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; **DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.**”

III. AWARDS CEREMONY.

2 Peter 1:8 (NASB)

⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If we seek these qualities we will not be apathetic concerning our salvation, our faith will be genuine, and God will make us fruitful. Our salvation will be assured.

Hebrews 6:10-12 (NASB)

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make **certain** about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

We cannot know, for now, the names written in the Book of Life. These are mysteries above us. But if you want to be sure that you are one of the called and chosen, diligently **work** and you will get the assurance.

1 Corinthians 9:25 (NASB)

25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

If we win the race of salvation, this will be **OUR gold medal...**We will be able to hear from Christ on Judgment Day " Well done My good and faithful servant;...enter into the joy of your Master!"

CONCLUSION:

This is one of my favorite poems.

"This is the beginning of a new day.
God has given me this day to use as I will.
I can waste it or use it for good.
What I do today is important, because
I am exchanging a day of my life for it.
When tomorrow comes,
this day will be gone forever,
leaving in its place something I have traded for it.
I want it to be gain, not loss; good, not evil;
success, not failure; in order that I
shall not regret the price that I paid for it."

Author unknown.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.