

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity, October 26, 2025

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)
Hymns: 412, 334:1, 409, 532, 416.
Lessons: Exodus 32:1-14, Acts 5:16-26, Matthew 5:13-16.
Sermon Text: 2 Peter 1:5-12.
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltritt

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Two weeks ago you heard a sermon on the first verses of this second letter of the Apostle Peter assuring you that God has given you everything you need.

Today our text begins with these words: ***“For this very reason....”*** What reason? God has ***“called us by his own glory and goodness”*** so that you and every believer in Christ ***“may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”*** Even while we are on earth we can share in Christ’s nature, living God-pleasing lives, and working at avoiding the wickedness caused by the sinfulness of the world.

Therefore, because God has done all these great things for you, ***“make every effort”***, strive, work hard to add to your faith all the things Peter lists. You will notice how one good thing leads to another.

The Apostle Peter gives us a list of what the Christian should strive to do with his or her life. These are things Scripture speaks of as fruits of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote about them in this way: ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*** (Galatians 5:22–25, NIV84)

Today we look at answers to the question

HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN BE EFFECTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE?

1. It starts with your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. It grows out of the faith that the Holy Ghost has worked in you,
3. And it strengthens us on the road to life in heaven.

You know that ***“faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*** (Romans 10:17, NIV84) That faith is a precious gift from God. We know that faith saves. But just as your physical life on earth is changing and you are growing in many ways, so should your spiritual life be growing. None of us stopped learning at the end of the last day of schooling we had. We were always continuing to learn and grow in knowledge. You, the child of God, should also be growing spiritually, as Peter encourages us in the last words of this letter: ***“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*** (2 Peter 3:18, NIV84)

When you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you should ask now, what’s next in my life? What does God want me to do now? Look at the things that should be added to your faith. ***“Goodness ... knowledge ... self-control ... perseverance ... godliness ... brotherly kindness and ... love.”***

When these things are part of the life of the Christian, part of your life, your faith will result in an effective, productive life and your life will touch others, too. Of course, we realize we can’t do it by ourselves. It must be with God’s help. You learn from the Word of God about the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have been given faith. Now add ***goodness***. So what does that word mean? Virtue, moral excellence. This virtue, this moral goodness starts in the heart and mind. Remember, it is out of the heart that sin comes and grows. It is also out of the Christian heart, the heart and mind of the New Man guided and led by the Holy Spirit

through the teaching of the Word of God, that anyone is able to follow a virtuous course of thought, feeling and action. The Apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Philippi ***“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*** (Philippians 4:8–9, NIV84)

The Christian will choose to let God define for us what is right and good, how to treat people, and what is valuable, seeking to live like Jesus.

Remember who you are. In his first letter Peter told you that ***“you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*** (1 Peter 2:9, NIV84)

And add knowledge to your goodness. Understanding. Wisdom. And that must come from God’s Word. ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*** (Proverbs 9:10, NIV84) This knowledge is especially the depth of insight you gain into God’s ways by choosing to read the Bible, joining in a Bible study, joining in worship regularly and listening to or reading a biblical sermon.

And add self-control to knowledge. How do you show self-control? Examples are speaking and acting patiently and carefully. Examining the facts. Holding back on the sinful impulses Satan and the wickedness of others who are tempting us to think and speak and act like the unbelieving world. Self-control is showing real brotherly kindness and love, which are also on this list.

Add perseverance to your self-control. It takes patience and endurance to run the race as a Christian. Perseverance has been defined as the ability to make a promise to God and keep it, to deny yourself in the short term in order to benefit in the long term, to daily fight Satan now, knowing that his fury will soon be ended, trusting that God’s future blessings are much greater than our light and temporary sufferings.

Add godliness to your perseverance. Godliness includes an attitude of respect toward God’s will and ways and Word. This is an attitude of worship to God for his greatness and goodness, an awareness of God in everything we do. It is living like you are a child of God! And it shows in your life!

Christians must fight their sinful appetites. The culture in which Christians live in the 21st century glorifies and worships self-indulgence and doing whatever **I** want to do, regardless of others and what God says. If I take the path of least resistance today and cave in to sin, I will be even weaker tomorrow. Fighting to say no to Satan today makes me stronger to say no tomorrow.

To godliness add brotherly kindness. Non-Christians know well that talk is cheap. Skeptics have a built-in meter that measures religious hypocrisy. You can’t fake brotherly kindness. Jesus’ words to his disciples on Maundy Thursday are still true: ***“All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”*** (John 13:35). Genuine affection demonstrated publicly may be the most powerful evangelism magnet possible for people whose lives have been crushed by the selfishness and meanness of others.

And the last word is love, which is added to brotherly kindness. This is the Greek word “Agape” (uh `ga-pay), the Greek word for true love, the highest form of love, the way God loved us in sending his only-begotten Son.

After listing these qualities the Christian is striving to live, Peter writes ***“if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** If you lack these seven qualities, if you don’t fight to practice and do them each day, you will be ineffective and unproductive as a child of God living in and witnessing to the world.

Remember that God gives them. No person does them automatically, without God! That is why we pray daily!

Peter writes that anyone lacking these qualities is so nearsighted as to be almost blind. He is not looking ahead, he is not seeing ahead, not seeing the goal. He is not looking into the distance, the future. He is not really looking toward heaven!.

Paul writes in Philippians: ***“For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his***

control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (Philippians 3:18–21, NIV84)

When he or she is not living and showing these characteristics, the believer has forgotten he has been made clean. We must remember that Jesus Christ has lived a perfect life in our place and died on the cross for our sins. We have been redeemed and that is a gift from God.

These fruits of faith will help you stand strong and firm.

“Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

James tells us that ***“faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”*** (James 2:17, NIV84) You have been given faith. Now you daily have opportunity to show your faith by living these qualities. You will receive a rich reward, a reward of grace. It will be given to you. You do not earn it by your good life and doing these things, which are really fruits of faith. They grow out of faith.

By doing these things again and again, you become stronger in doing them. Keep on practicing and living ***“Goodness ... knowledge ... self-control ... perseverance ... godliness ... brotherly kindness and ... love.”*** We could use the example of playing piano or shooting a free throw on a basketball court. By practicing piano, by playing it again and again, or by shooting a free throw again and again and again you learn to do it better.

To get something right and do it better, you do it repeatedly.

But, on the other hand, ***“if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”***

Remember the forgiveness of your sins.

Peter closes our text with the words ***“So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.”***

His words, written by the inspiration of God, have been with mankind for nearly 2000 years. Even now in this sermon he is reminding you of these things!

And so we close today with this admonition and encouragement: May you be firmly established in the truth, and make it part of your daily life. May the Word of God always be your guide as you grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.