

**Theme:** Faith in Exile – I Peter 1:17-19

**Title:** Conclusions – II Peter 1:5-15

**Aim:** Spiritual math leads to positive or negative conclusions.

**Intro:** A conclusion is defined as “the end or finish of an event or process; or the summing up of an argument or text; or a judgment or decision reached by reasoning.” It’s always good to come to conclusions, especially the ones you’re hoping for. When it comes to math, the conclusion is the answer reached – the sum of the matter, the result of the process, correct or not. Last week we considered what I called spiritual math, specifically addition. In II Peter 1:3-4 we read that God has given us everything we need to live the Christian life. Those things include saving faith & daily grace, forgiveness & continually new mercies, justification, the Holy Spirit w/in, doing the work of sanctification, the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit uses in His sanctifying work, the privilege & power of prayer, the Church, etc. Since God has indeed given us all things pertaining to life & godliness, Peter urged those Christian exiles in Asia Minor/us to supplement our faith, cooperating w/God the Holy Spirit. According to vs5-7, we’re to intentionally give effort & thought to supplement our faith w/virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection & love. Peter then came to several imp conclusions in regard to this spiritual additions, which we’ll consider today. Our text today is the same as last week – II Peter 1:5-15, as we continue our theme of Faith in Exile [READ]. If we do the math it should all add up. The 1<sup>st</sup> conclusion to which came we actually mentioned last week & is delineated in vs8. I) **If you have been adding these qualities & growing in them, your faith in Christ will be evident.** Jesus will show through. Others will be able to see that you know Jesus as your Savior/Lord. Your knowledge of Christ will bear fruit & be effective. Is the beauty of Jesus being seen in you? That’s a conclusion we want because our lives &

actions will point others to Jesus, win the right to share the gospel & our faith story, enabling us to be about our Father's business. As said last week, that's why we're here. II) **If we lack these qualities & yet claim to belong to Christ, there are a couple of different possible conclusions** – vs9. Either A) Spiritually blind & forgetful or B) Not who we think we are. This is extremely important! If we're not growing in our Christian life - & that's what Peter's list is all about; if we say we are believers & yet are not growing, as slowly as that process can be, then we've lost sight of who we are in Christ & what God has done for us in Christ. We've ceased responding w/our lives, in thanksgiving to God for what He has done for us, or we've failed to respond to God's goodness. G. Campbell Morgan wrote, "That is to say, he (who lacks these qualities) has failed to respond to all the enlargement of life & vision which came to him when he received the cleansing of his nature at the very beginning of his Christian life." David Gudzik added: "Perhaps he has forgotten how bad he was & how much he needed this cleansing. Perhaps he's forgotten the great cost of this purging of sin's dirty stains (the life blood of Christ). Perhaps he's forgotten how great & complete the cleansing is, making a once guilty sinner now as pure & white as snow (Is.1:18) (the believer's standing in Christ)." I've been nearsighted since before I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. At school I had to sit right up next to the chalkboard so I could see what the teacher wrote. I am so nearsighted that I am blind w/out my contacts/glasses. You would only be a blur; I couldn't tell who you were. Peter is saying that we're blind to God's goodness & saving grace or forgetting how much we've been forgiven, if we are not supplementing our faith w/Christ-likeness, if our knowing Jesus isn't evident in our lives. The only other possible conclusion is that we're not who say we are – not followers of Jesus, not children of God. If we're not growing, then our relationship w/God is called into question. Please don't misunderstand: none of us are

**growing as fast or consistently as we would like or should. Most of us** are up & down, sometimes stagnant, sometimes flourishing; but we ought to be growing, little by little, line upon line. Again, we need to be intentional about spiritual growth, about cooperating w/the Holy Spirit. We'll stumble again & again, but we ought to be growing, responding to God, seeking to be in step w/the Spirit, loving each other, helping each other grow, working together. So we should examine ourselves. Do we believe in Christ, having we committed our lives to Him, are we endeavoring to follow Jesus, are we studying God's word, are we thankful & living like it? Another imp conclusion Peter made was that

III) **Our calling & election needs to be confirmed** – vs10. As said couple of Sunday's ago, there is a general call of God which goes out to all mankind – the call to repentance, to believe in Christ. Then there is the call of God which goes out to the elect & is that specific/special/divine invitation from God to embrace salvation by believing/receiving Christ by faith. Jesus said, ***“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him”*** (John 6:44). We would not embrace Christ by faith nor even begin to follow Him unless God has drawn us to Him. That's His calling on our lives. Election is God's decree made from choice by which He determined to bless certain persons through Christ by grace alone” (Strong's). They're both acts of God, so how can we confirm them, or make them sure? Peter tells us: practice these things. If we intentionally practice these qualities, which as Gudzik wrote, are “matters of the heart,” we will be able to see that God is carrying out His purpose to make us like Christ (Rom.8:20). Yes, unbelievers can do moral & religious acts, & do, but (Gudzik wrote) these things “should be evident in anyone born again. If we are called, if we are elect, then we are born again, & if we are born again, it shows in the way we live.”

Now, it's not for us to judge this in others, tho we can be fruit inspectors; rather it is for us to examine ourselves. Intentionally

pursuing these qualities will keep us from falling in our walk, tho we will not do it perfectly. We will trip up some times, but if we're pursuing Christ-likeness in attitude & action, we will grow. Besides the truth of Scripture, the best source of blessed assurance for the believer is growth/progress in Christ. And the best argument & warning to those who profess Christ but show no evidence in their lives is their lack of growth & effort. Are you sure of your calling/election? Do you have that blessed assurance? Another conclusion Peter came to was that

IV) **Those who truly believe & thus practice these qualities are assured a place in Christ's Kingdom** – vs11. Obviously we can't earn a place in God's eternal kingdom, so living out these qualities won't secure a place for us in the Father's house. So what did Peter mean? Simply this: if you are in Christ, you will grow spiritually & be transformed. You will become more & more like Christ as the Holy Spirit works w/in you. Again, your life will be evidence of your true knowledge of Christ. We need the Holy Spirit's working in us, for sure. We can be assured of salvation & secure in our eternal destiny. We will receive a great reward & be welcomed into Christ's kingdom w/opened arms & ushered in gloriously. F.B. Meyer wrote that this "richly provided entrance" will be a "choral entrance," "w/the idea being of a Roman conqueror coming into his city, welcomed by singers & musicians who would join him in a glorious, happy procession into the city." Think of King David & the dancers/singers/musicians bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the city of Jerusalem after it had been away for years. There will be a grand reception for the children of God when Jesus comes again & ushers in His kingdom where we will reign w/Him forever! The final conclusion Peter came to was that V) **These truths were worth a constant reminder** – vs12-15. Peter said, "You know these things & are established in the truth, but I'm still going to remind you as often as I can. Peter knew his life was short from this point on.

He was in prison in Rome & would be martyred soon. He remembered Jesus' words in John 21:18 – ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself & walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, & another will dress you & carry you where you do not want to go.”*** Vs19 continues: ***“This He said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.”*** Yet, stirring up those exiles was his driving passion. He wanted them to flourish & grow & carry the gospel to that region & beyond. So we need to be reminded again & again of our need to grow & be in the work of the gospel. That's Pastor Derek's & my responsibility – to remind you week after week of what God has done for us in Christ, who we are in Christ, what we are called to do in Christ, the hope we have in Christ, etc. Don't lose sight of or forget the grace & salvation of God. Be sure of your calling & election by practicing Christ-like qualities. Look forward to what awaits us in Christ. In the kingdom of God we will no longer be exiles. We'll be at home! Until then we live by faith – faith in exile.