

Farsighted

2 Peter 1:1-15

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

- To our youth: your gifts may not have matured, and the days you've walked this planet are fewer in number, yet your faith in Jesus puts you on equal standing with every man and woman who has walked the earth. In other words, you are equally valuable. Not you WILL BE, but ARE NOW. I also want you to know that my heart has been personally warmed by you. David probably wasn't even 20 when he challenged Goliath (Numbers 1:3). He was 30 years old (like Jesus - Luke 3:23) when he began to reign as King (2 Samuel 5:4). He reigned for 40 years and died, putting his age around 70. (I'm personally 42 at the time of this sermon, and I can already confirm - time really does fly by).

2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

- To know Jesus, His life, and teaching, is to experience the power of God. It is to be thoroughly equipped in life where it matters. It comes with great promises because we were heading for hell when he pointed us towards heaven. This, brethren, you can take to the bank. We have once and for all left the world behind us, putting our hand to the plow without looking back.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

- For our youth: this is something you do NOW, not LATER. God is equipping you, a young soldier in Christ, and will bless you with experience as the years go by. You will fight the devil with greater skill, walk by God more closely, and serve those in need with deeper love.

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- Having said that, we want to remind ourselves of the meaning of near-sighted and far-sighted. Near-sided individuals are those who can read a book, but not the whiteboard, right? You can see what's right in front of you, but not 10 feet away. In biblical terms, the nearsighted individual lacks wisdom because they don't consider life in the future. They

don't consider where they are headed (eternally). They make decisions that affect them immediately.

12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

- Sunday after services, I was thinking about doing a sermon for our youth. Jordan was excited about the idea, and we began to discuss ideas. We found ourselves leaning toward more broad principles. Eventually, this passage came to mind, and it was fitting since we discussed Peter last week. Consider Peter's point of view when he penned this letter. He was now older and you sense the urgency behind the letter.
- Here's the single point I'd like to stress to our youth: God really does allow you to either suffer the consequences of nearsighted decisions or reap the benefits of farsighted choices. "I'll invest in biblical teachings later" has its consequences. "They'll grow up after we're married" isn't a stellar approach. "This job will be fun or make lots of money" may come with a price tag you're not considering long-term. Preaching is a unique labor of love because you see horror stories. You see how much could have been avoided. We hate to hear it because it's so unapologetic, but it doesn't change the reality. You see people who live lives they asked for, but were unwilling to acknowledge it at the time (though they were old enough to see). You also see people who planned accordingly, and the peace they experience and the heartache they dodged is undeniable. You see, those who turn to the Lord much later or after the fact, but it doesn't take away the earthly consequences they may have to deal with. We need to be sober-minded about it, because it's the foolish thinking that gets us into a mess. Just look back at Peter's clear warnings. "IF" is an important word in vs. 10. He's the one who brings up being nearsighted in vs. 9. He's the one who gave the recipe for success in vs. 8. If you want to increase and be effective and bear fruit, he's given the answer. If you want to be ineffective and fall backwards, just ignore it and tell yourself, "this is too heavy handed. It always works out." No, it doesn't always work out. Can God make good out of the bad? Of course, but He does that for those who repent, and that never comes with the promise that He can undo the consequences. It may be too late for that.
- Finally, for those of us who are well into adulthood, let's take note of Peter's approach. Let's make EVERY EFFORT to help our loved ones, so that when we depart, they may be able to recall these fundamental truths.