



2 Peter 1:3-9 “The Silver Spoon” October 7-9, 2017
Pastor Don Sutton – St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, New Ulm, MN

Introduction

(Theme Slide) Many of you recognize the name Lou Holtz. He was a college coach for many years including the University of Minnesota and especially Notre Dame University. Two years ago he delivered the graduation address at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. It was entitled, “I Was Born with a Silver Spoon in My Mouth.”

(Silver Spoon) The concept of the silver spoon seems to come out of Medieval Europe where people ate with wooden spoons, except for the rich, who ate with silver spoons. So to say, “I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth,” is to say, I was born rich.”

Lou Holtz was not born into a family rich in money. Holtz was born in the steel town of Follansbee, W. Virginia. He was born in the basement of a one-bedroom home where his entire family lived for a number of years. The family was poor in a time when there was no welfare and no food-stamps. Yet Holtz says that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth because he his parents taught him that if you make good choices, get a good education, work hard, and overcome difficulties and troubles, in this great country, you can amount to something. This was his silver spoon.

(Theme Slide) Today, based on 2 Peter 1:3-9, we think about **The Silver Spoon**.

1. You Are a Christian Because God Fed His Undeserved Love with a Silver Spoon

(Picture of Baby with Spoon in Mouth) Spiritually speaking, this a picture of you when you came to faith and began your life as a Christian. You were not feeding yourself. God was feeding you with his love and blessing. You were born again with a silver spoon.

That’s what Peter wrote to Christians in Asia Minor who were forgetting their identity in Christ and failing to live like Christians. **(Slide)** ³ **His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.** ⁴ **Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.** Through Peter God was saying to Christians then and now, “You are blessed. You were born again with a silver spoon in your mouth!”

Note blessings to which Peter points. First of all **God called us to be his**. Not because of anything in us. We didn’t choose God. God chose us. As Peter says, **“... by his own glory and goodness.”** Earlier this summer Art Lehne and I decided to get a greater appreciation for God’s creation and we chose a golf course as the best place to do it. Thinking I should stock up my golf bag with balls, I went to one of the buckets of balls I’ve found over the years and started looking for good ones. But by the time I got done, I realized that not one of them was without cuts or scuff or burn marks – they were the ones saved for the kids to hit into the woods. There was none good, not one. That’s what God says through the Apostle Paul about the human race – about you and me – when compared to his law that demands perfection and absolute obedience. We don’t deserve his love. We deserve his condemnation. Yet, purely out of his goodness and to the glory of his name, God called us to be his daughters and sons – to have saving faith.

This happened not by our own power but by God’s power – **His divine power**. In Ephesians 1 St. Paul says that this is the same power that God the Father used to raise Jesus from the dead. He also used it to raise us from spiritual death to life. It’s all God’s doing. We were born again with a silver spoon.

In addition, **“He has given us his very great and precious promises ...”** Think of valuable promises of God. “Your sins are forgiven.” “Whoever believes in me shall not perish but have eternal life.” “I am with you always.” “Nothing in all creation can separate you from my love.”

As a result we have **escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.** We are no longer children of the devil and want to do his will. We are no longer dominated by his power. We are no longer under condemnation. We are children of God, forgiven in Christ Jesus, wearing his holiness, and walking in the ways of the Lord. Our desire is to love the Lord, live for the Lord, and to do his will.

Furthermore, **“...through them you may participate in the divine nature ...”** Through God’s glory and goodness, and the gospel promises they moved God to give you, you are connected to God. You have his image – Christ’s holiness and knowledge of God as a loving God, lost in the Fall. Christ lives in you. You love what he loves and share in his work.

So Peter also points out: **“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us.”** Through the gospel he gives us his Holy Spirit to bring us to faith and keep us in it. Through faith he gave us the holiness of Jesus. With it came the power of his love that enables us to love him and want to do his will. That power lives in us every day. In his law he gives us the guidance we need to pursue a godly life. Neither the Christians of Peter’s day nor Christians today should think, “I’m not very blessed.” Or, “I have no reason to live for God.” Or, “I can’t live for God.”

(Slide) Truth: You are a Christian because God fed you his undeserved love with a silver spoon. You are privileged, blessed.

2. Now He Wants You to Work with Him to Grow Your Faith

(Slide of Adults Eating) Now he wants you to work with him to grow your faith. God wants you to take the silver spoon of the gospel and feed yourselves, letting God’s Holy Spirit work in you.

(Slide) For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

While our coming to faith is all God’s doing, our staying in faith and growing in faith is a partnership between the Holy Spirit and us. We use God’s Word, receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, and recall the meaning and blessings of our baptism, and the Holy Spirit works to increase our knowledge of Christ, grow our faith, and give us godly qualities. God, through Peter, tells us to make **every effort** to have these qualities. Peter lists some of those qualities in the following:

(Slide) Goodness = This is the concept of virtue and excellence. Goodness lets God define what is right. It moves us to strive to be like Jesus.

(Slide) Knowledge = The knowledge mentioned in verse 3 is the knowledge of Christ that is ours through coming to faith in him. Here is verse 5 knowledge is insight gained through Bible study. The more we study God’s word, the more spiritual knowledge we will have. The stronger our faith will be. The better equipped for life we will be.

(Slide) Self-control = This is having the wisdom and strength saying no to Satan and control our sinful nature. It’s avoiding what is sinful and practicing moderation when appropriate.

(Slide) Perseverance = This is trusting God and his promises and as a result patiently enduring the tests and troubles of life and not giving up the faith.

(Slide) Godliness = This is an attitude of worship of God for his greatness and goodness. It includes a continual awareness of God in everything we do and that we do everything to God’s glory.

(Slide) Mutual Affection = Literally this is brotherly love. It's love for one another. It's love for people even when they are so lovable.

(Slide) Love = This brings us to the last quality Peter encourages us to add to our faith – love. This is agape, the love God has for us. This is committed, unconditional, and sacrificial love.

(Slide) Truth: God gave you faith; now he wants you to work with him to grow your faith. You do that as you take time in your life for worship and hearing God's word through it. You do that as you take time in your personal life for private time with God's word. You do that when you participate in Bible study.

The question is: "Do you take time." Do you know that the majority of our members **do not** attend worship weekly? I don't know what goes on in everyone's private life but if we don't take time for God's word in weekly worship, I suspect a lot of us don't take time for personal devotion. And I know that only about 10% to 15% go to Bible study.

Yet God tells us not to forsake assembling onto the Lord (Hebrews 11:25). God tells us, "**Worship the Lord with gladness** (Ps. 100:2)." He tells us to let his word dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16). And here in 2 Peter 1 he says, "**Make every effort to add to your faith...**" God is saying, "Grow!" "Don't be satisfied to plateau in your faith."

While God never says, "You have to attend a Bible class," Bible classes are one of the best ways to grow in your faith. Whether it's through the presentation and explanation of a well-trained Bible study leader or through the discussion of a group of Christians using well-crafted Bible study materials, or simply a group of believers reading Scripture and discussing what God is saying following good principles of Bible study, Bible studies are an excellent way to grow in faith and Christian character.

Each week, St. Paul's offers 15 or so Bible studies. Take advantage of them. It would be good for each of us every five to ten years to go through a Bible information class to be renewed in Christian doctrine. The sermon summary cards are intended to stimulate personal Bible study and review of the sermon. At the same time can be a tool for a hand full of Christians to get together to grow. If you want to gather a group but need some guidance, let us ministers know. We want to help you grow.

God through Peter says there are negative consequences to not growing, and blessings in growing. ⁸ **For 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.** ⁹ **But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins."**

People not growing in faith become ineffective and unproductive in glorifying God and loving others. They rob themselves of inner peace and make themselves vulnerable to the devil and his schemes.

On the other hand, those who are growing in faith, will enjoy God's peace and power to an ever greater extent and be better equipped to live for God and love one another.

(Slide of Silver Spoon) God, in his grace has given you the silver spoon. **(Picture of Baby with Spoon in Mouth)** Initially he fed you with it bringing you to faith. **(Slide of Adults Eating)** Now he says, "Use it to feed your faith. Take in my word. As you do, my Holy Spirit will help you to grow. Now grow!"