

Good morning everyone! I hope you're doing well. Thank you for joining us online or in person. I know that over the last number of months, there are many who have recently joined our church. People both online and in person. Thank you for being a part of our community! For those who don't know me. My name is Justin Morris I am the youth pastor here at Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church. Pastor Tom is away today so I get to bring the message, and today we are continuing along in the addiction series. As Pastor Tom has said before in his messages it is a hard series. It's humbling to stand up here and talk about addiction because there are so many different types of addictions and every situation is so different. Everybody comes from a different background; everybody's circumstances are nuanced and varied.

So for me to stand up here and give you some general advice or thoughts on addiction or solutions, may very well come across this trite and condescending - and that is certainly not how I feel. Therefore, approaching today's message, it really all comes down to God's word. God's word is true and provides wisdom that we can then apply to a whole lot of different circumstances, so I pray two things: I pray that we would just be centered on the word of God, because that is where truth lies. And second I pray that the Holy Spirit would open the eyes of your heart to understand His word and how it might apply to your situation. Whether you, or a loved one, are dealing with an addiction, or perhaps you don't even know that you're addicted to something. Whatever it is, I just pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to understand His word is truth and the light in your situation. You know what let's pray for that right now.

## PRAYER

In my own experience I have People close to me who have struggled with addiction. But even in my own life when I look at just my own world my own life. I have struggled with various things. I was even thinking about our cellphones.

And there was a time where I remember it was very frustrating to me if I was watching something on my phone, or reading an article, and somebody would come up to me and start talking to me while I was very obviously reading something or watching something, and interrupt me. And I would find it so rude, because I was obviously reading something or watching something and they were just clearly interrupting me. And I would get really frustrated. And I remember it was an email I read, about marriage, and the writer said that when somebody comes up to us, we need to respond by- turning towards that person. And not only turning physically towards them, but turning all of our attention to that person because they are the most important thing in the room. If we turn towards them with all of our attention, that helps express love to them and it helps them know that

they're more important than the show or watching the article reading or task we were doing. I remember reading that and realizing how much of a problem I really had and starting to try to correct that because I realized my phone was becoming more important than the relationships of my life. I don't know what it is for you. I don't know what's going on in your world, or the things you have to work on, but I'm assuming that we all have stuff.

And over the past weeks Pastor Tom has been walking us through this addiction series and helping us understand addiction from a spiritual perspective. From a perspective that is holistically Christian. That is Christ's centered. And He has brought us to this point of understanding that addiction, at its root, is an issue of idol worship. That when we invest into sin or sinful behavior more than we are trusting in the way that God has asked us to live, we are idolizing those things, or ourselves, more than we are trusting God. Of course you know there is a physiological component to addiction. But our hearts are treating those things as more important than God. So we have this heart problem where we are raising something or a behavior up as more important - just like I was doing with my phone.

Earlier this month, someone shared a TED talk of Johann Hari called Everything We Know about Addiction is Wrong or everything, you know about addiction is wrong. And in this TED talk he is making an argument based on newer research around addictions, that it's not just simply the physiological component some drugs being more addictive, or the but rather, he argues that the larger issue with addictions comes down to our environment and connection with others. It's a very interesting approach and different than what I've heard before in terms of addictions. He's held this position for the last four years and updated his websites since the TED Talk with some corrections, but to think about addictions really being about a lack of connection with others has a lot of implications. And it's fascinating when you see stuff like this come up that lines up so clearly with the word of God and you're like man God had this figured out before we ever did. Today's passage is kind of like that.

You can turn there in your Bibles now to 2 Peter 1:3.

In these verses we are going to read, we learn that when you know Jesus, - and by know, I mean fully trust and believe in him - God's divine power will give you everything that you need for life and Godliness. **When you know Jesus, God's divine power will give you everything that you need for life and Godliness.**

So let's read together.

And remember this is not just a passage regarding addiction, this is the passage for every Christian that is intensely practical for every stage of the Christians' life:

**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. 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. 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.**

What a beautiful passage. This passage is just so intensely practical. Like a step by step recipe. This is one of those passages that you can preach on every single one of these an entire sermon! Unfortunately this morning we are only going to be able to skim the surface, but please go back to this passage later and digest it bit by bit through your own life.

This passage highlights our responsibility as well as Gods work and power in our lives. Look at how it starts out: **His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.** His divine power. He gives us his divine power. Which means everything we need to fight against sin in our life, is within the scope and realm of what he is given to us. This is through the Holy Spirit in us, his Word, the Bible, and through the family of believers - All of these flow from God's divine power. He alone is responsible for this power, and you will not 'find the power within yourself to be able to overcome' It is through God's power that we have all that we need for life and godliness.

But there is also clearly a calling on us to put in decided effort here too. Peter charges believers to “add to their faith” these qualities. That means the effort lies on us. Not alone – we are to rely on God’s divine power, but we have to lean into these things. He says if we do, it will keep us from being ineffective and unfruitful in knowing Jesus. Anyone who does not do these things is short-sighted and blind – forgetting that they have been forgiven of their sins. So these are part of how God’s power helps provide us what we need for life and godliness.

But these are not easy, and they cannot really be done without the Holy Spirit, God’s word, and other people. These add to our foundation of faith which is on the Solid rock of Jesus. So to even begin, you must know Jesus as your savior. This does not mean to know about Jesus. It’s not even enough to believe that he was the son of God who died for the sins of humanity. – James says that even the demons believe that and know it to be true. No, true belief in Jesus requires trust and obedience. Imagine you are on a large ship in the ocean, but it is sinking. You have heard instructions that there are smaller life boats on the sides. You have heard about the boats. You believe the life boats are real, and that they can really save lives. But the ship is sinking. It does not matter that you trust it’s real. You must put your whole self into the boat. You can’t just put a hand on it. Not just a foot. Likewise, with Jesus, you can’t just know about him – you must trust him fully. Pray in his name, get to know him, and obey his words. This is the foundation of faith to which we add all of these elements.

So let’s consider each of these elements together.

Verse 5 says: **“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue...”** Adding virtue, means excessive goodness, or excellence in being good. And virtue is something that we have to add to our faith. So just because you accept Jesus doesn't mean your instantly good or virtuous in behavior, it is something you have to work on. Virtue is not just a simple avoidance of sin. A simple example would be: imagine you're in a restaurant and the man at the table next to you gets up to leave, and his wallet falls on the floor. You notice it has a lot of money in it. Avoiding the temptation to take the wallet and steal the money is good. But the virtuous thing to do – the excessive goodness, would be to let the man know that he dropped his wallet. Avoiding sin is good, but to be virtuous is to find ways to be good beyond expectations. Helping a neighbor shovel their driveway. Using your skills to bless someone. Being generous. With your time or money. And so on. We want to add to our faith virtue, moral excellence.

Then to virtue, we are to add knowledge. Now this isn't it knowledge in the sense of just filling your brain with useless information that doesn't apply or add to your faith.

Knowledge is referring to your understanding and knowledge of this God who created you and why he created you. This is about learning the scriptures. A lack of knowledge about God causes major friction in a person's life. People who don't have a knowledge of God say things like God in the Old testament is angry and wrathful, and then in the New Testament He's all about love. Or they will get angry at God and walk away from their faith when difficult things happening their life because they believe that Suffering has no part in the Christian's life. Or they believe God is their chill hommie, and they feel they have a licence to keep on sinning because God will forgive them.

Rather, having a healthy understanding of who God is will give us a reverent fear and understanding of the true God, who can destroy body and soul in hell, and who calls us to a radical type of love, and who refines us through suffering. We learn that he calls us into community with other believers so that we have accountability love and support. We have a lot to learn about God, but as we learn more, we can better live life and process the challenges that we face.

On top of knowledge it says self-control. Self-control or temperance is being aware of ourselves and not being overcome with the temptation to sin. This applies to many different areas. Our heart our mind our reaction to the world around us has to be tempered. There's a lot of temptation that's out there, but 1 Cor 10:13 says that God will not allow us to be tempted more than we can bear. He will always give us a way out. Always. So in those moments of temptation these are times where we extract exercise self-control. When I was on my phone and I was getting annoyed that people were interrupting me. This is where I get to practice some self-control put my phone down or away and turn towards the person that was talking to me. And the Lord knows I have much growing to do in this area! Sometimes this can feel tiresome or draining, and that's probably why to self-control, we are told to add patience!

The original Greek word for patience here is interesting. It's hupomone (hoop-om-on-ay), and it means a steadfast consistency with endurance. So not just a short term patience, but an enduring patience. One definition I looked at called it "a characteristic of a person who is not swerved from their deliberate purpose and their loyalty to faith and piety."

So no matter what suffering or trials we face, you are called to patiently endure them in your faith. It a similar way as when we make a decision to eat healthier or to get out of

debt, or to exercise - you can't just do it for a short amount of time. Rather you need to continue on, even when it's hard to do so. This can feel hard, but it is a choice what we make to stand, even after all that we have done.

Next in the list we are told to add godliness. It's funny, I still remember when I first read this list, feeling like I'm barely getting a grasp as a young Christian. Then I'm told to just add godliness. You know, just add some perfection to all of this. But as it turns out, the word godliness does not really mean to be perfect like God, but rather it means to be aware of God.

The word in Greek is Eusebeia and literally means to have a reverence or respect towards God with an earnest desire to please God and fulfill his commands. So the opposite of this would be like the individual who professes to be religious but refuses to believe in various parts of the gospel. They refuse to apply the principles and commands and scripture to their life. So God wants us to increase our genuine trust in him and his word. To work at being holy BECAUSE HE is holy. As we add godliness to our faith, we find that our priorities in life shift. We obey what he says because we know who he is. We trust in what he has said. Our priorities in life shift, and our worship shifts, because we really understand that God is not just some genie that we call on when life is hard, but rather the creator and sustainer of all things, who loves us, who conquered sin, and will some day judge and destroy evil, Satan, and all those who choose to reject God. This results in Carving out times of learning and worship and prayer as priorities. It means that we share the good news of the Gospel, because we want his Kingdom to come to all who will call on his name. It means that we take seriously when God says we are part of a new family, the church. Choosing to love others selflessly. These become priority when we have a desire to please God and fulfill His commands.

Then to godliness we are told to add brotherly affection. With brotherly kindness we are encouraged to show other believers favor and to encourage and support one another. This could be in a ton of different ways. In our businesses, walking through life with other believers as if they were family, cooking meals, developing a friendships, praying together, being part of a small group, supporting missionaries, and on and on. This is where we are called to be the church! Over the past year, it has been outstanding to see the way that this church has shown brotherly affection, to love and support those who have had needs. When others see the church loving each other, this is the proof to the world that Jesus is real! We don't love one another to be seen, or to get attention, but our authentic love for one another is proof to the world that Jesus is real!

This is why it is so important for us to remain connected through a time like this pandemic. To look for ways to serve one another, to join in with the many that are giving time, talents and resources to help one another make it through these times. To join in a small group with others to learn together and to spur one another on is so important. This is not about kindness to strangers, but love to our brothers and sisters around us. If all the believers are showing brotherly affection to one another, we become unified, supporting one another. And others see this great love and catch a glimpse of the kingdom of God.

On a little side note, we are launching a handful of new small groups in addition to the ones already meeting. In a time like this, it is more important than ever to be connected. I really really encourage you to step out and connect with one of these new small groups if you are not already in a group. There are groups meeting in person and online. To get more information, head to our website and the red banner across the top has a link to the small group information.

The final element that Peter challenges us to add to our faith is love. This is of course the overarching way of the Spirit that must permeate all areas of our life. The two greatest commandments – to love the Lord God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength – with every fiber of our being – and the command to love our neighbour as we love our self. We must love God, and love others. These two commands should help the believer to navigate every situation in our live. Loving God, by understanding his Holiness, his awesome power, and his great love for us, as well as overflowing God's great love to others, as we ourselves live in that great love. That is how the church will change the world. And it happens together. We cannot love without others to love. It happens in community.

This time of being separated does not interrupt the church. It does not slow us down. It does not stop us. But we adjust and we adapt. The church has not been thwarted by this pandemic. Though we meet differently for a time, we don't grind to a halt.

We adapt and we move forward. We press on to the goal. We press on with this deep love for one another. We press on with the gospel. Because as the church adapts to difficult circumstances, it thrives as it moves forward. Through a time like this. When we come out the other side of this pandemic, we won't come out of it like we were just struggling or limping through. No! We're going to thrive and come out on the other side driving forward with the mission that we are called to and the gates of hell will not stop the church.

Brothers and sisters. **God's divine power has given us all things for life and godliness.** That power comes through knowing Jesus. Let us spur one another on, to add these things to our faith. So that together we can be the church we are called to be, loving each other and supporting one another through the darkest of times. And showing the world that our savior is alive.

**Let's pray.**

### **Benediction**

Knowing Jesus is life changing. So I'll leave us with the words of Peter from the start of the chapter.

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

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

Amen