

Audio Transcript of Sermon
January 11, 2020
The Need for Diligence

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. With the start of 2020, we've been looking at a passage from second Peter. That's where we'll start today. Let's look at second Peter one verse one.

2 Peter 1:1-10

- 1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:**
- 2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,**
- 3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:**
- 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**
- 5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;**
- 6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;**
- 7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.**
- 8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.**
- 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:**

Last week going back to verse five, we looked at faith and how faith is the underlaying element of everything that we need to do spiritually. Let's go back and take a look what Peter wrote for us, what's recorded in verse five. It begins with, "*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith...*" So, let's look at this word diligence. We know that the foundation of what we do is faith, and to faith

we will add virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, but we have to do this in diligence. What did Peter mean with the word diligence?

The word diligence that is used in verse five comes from the Greek word, which is transliterated as *spoude*, s-p-o-u-d-e. In the Strong's Concordance, that's Strong's Greek word 4710. And what the simply means is it is something done with speed, with eagerness, with haste, with diligence. So, we know in our life of faith we are going to do things eagerly, with haste, with diligence. Let's take a look at how that passage in first Peter ended in verse ten. In verse ten it said, "*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*" Diligence is important and in verse ten the word that is used for diligence is a variation of the word that is used in verse five. In verse ten, the Greek word would be transliterated as *spoudazo*, and that's s-p-o-u-d-a-z-o. That would be Strong's Greek word in the concordance 4711 and it again implies to use speed or to make effort.

Because diligence is an important part and aspect of our faith in everything we do, I thought it would be worthwhile for us to take a look at how the Greek words for diligence, *spoude* and *spoudazo*, are used in the New Testament. We'll find out that there are spiritual and physical applications with the use of these words. We'll begin by taking a look at two physical applications of these words beginning with a story of Mary and Elisabeth in Luke chapter one beginning with verse twenty-seven, Luke chapter one verse twenty-seven.

Luke 1:26-42

26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

- 31. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.**
- 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:**
- 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.**
- 34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?**
- 35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**
- 36. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.**
- 37. For with God nothing shall be impossible.**
- 38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.**
- 39. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste,**

And the word *haste* there is the word *spoude*. Mary went with *spoude*, with speed, with eagerness, with haste, with diligence to see Elisabeth. Going back to verse thirty-nine, “*And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with spoude*”,

into a city of Juda;

- 40. And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.**
- 41. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:**
- 42. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.**

A story of the conception of Jesus Christ that involves the element of *spoude* that we are studying, this diligence that we must have as part of our Christian faith. Looking at a negative story about *spoude* being used in the Bible, we can take a look many years later at the beheading of John the Baptist. Let’s look at Mark six, beginning with verse seventeen, Mark six, beginning with verse seventeen.

Mark 6:17-29

17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

Like most people who are told they can't do something, Herodias became very angry.

19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Herod had respect for John because he knew John was a just and righteous person. Let's see how the plot thickens in verse twenty-one.

21. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

22. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

23. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Herodias hated John the Baptist and would have taken any opportunity to have him dead. Verse twenty-five.

25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

When this damsel came with haste in verse twenty-five, she came with *spoude*. She came with diligence, she came with haste and eagerness. *Spoude* is something that can be used for good; it is something that can be used for evil and

as Christians, it's important that we use *spoude* for good. Continuing with the story in verse twenty-six,

26. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

Spoude, this diligence can be used for incredible good; it can be used for incredible evil. It's important for us to make sure we are diligently doing what is good in the sight of God.

Let's continue our study by taking a look at Romans. Let's take a look at Romans chapter twelve, beginning with verse three. Here, Paul is writing to the Romans and beginning with verse three, he writes,

Romans 12:3-21

3. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

So, even though there is one Church and all the members are part of that one Church of God, not all members do the same thing or have the same level of responsibility. Here's what's important to keep in mind. There's not one particular office that is any more important than any other office. There are no unimportant members within the Church of God. People do different things because of the gifts and abilities that God has given them. That's it, that's what sets us apart. Look at verse six.

6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
7. Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
8. Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.
9. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

So, when we rule going back in verse eight, we are to rule with diligence, the *spoude*. Continuing in verse ten,

10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;
11. Not slothful in business;

And again this term *business* is *spoude*. And so we are not to be slothful; instead, we are to be diligent, so we are not to be slothful in our diligence. We are rather to be,

- fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;
13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.
14. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.
15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
16. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.
17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

And all of this we are to do with *spoude*, with diligence.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

And as we overcome evil with good, we are to do that with *spoude*, with diligence. When we work with *spoude*, this diligence, it does not mean we have a Christian faith that is so fast and furious that we are reckless with our faith. Rather with *spoude* and diligence that would give us cause to reflectively be even more careful to guard this incredible gift we have been given. Let's take a look at what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in the second epistle, second Corinthians chapter seven, verse eight, second Corinthians chapter seven, verse eight.

2 Corinthians 7:8-12

8. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

In his first letter, Paul had to correct the Corinthians, and here he is saying that he did that, and that he's OK with it because it caused them to change for a while. Verse nine.

9. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Looking closely at verse ten, when somebody dies that's a cause for extreme sorrow. When there is a need for repentance in our faith, that is a reason ultimately to celebrate because it leads us closer toward salvation. And, when we make that change in the direction towards salvation, that is not ever a change we should undo. That's what verse ten is talking about. Let's look at verse eleven.

11. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you,

The word carefulness in verse ten is this *spoude*, this diligence, and diligence again is not something that causes us to do anything with haste that is in a reckless manner. We can do haste in a carefully calculated controlled manner, but

we don't do haste in a reckless manner because that brings no good for anybody. And so the key in working with *spoude* when we do something in haste it is in haste with carefulness, never with recklessness. So going back in verse eleven, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness (or *spoude*) it wrought in you,"

yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care

Or spoude,

for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

The epistles were written in part with the idea of *spoude* to show this fervent diligence, and again it is done with carefulness, not recklessness. Paul was not the only author of a book in the New Testament who wrote from the sense of *spoude*, or diligence. Jude did so as well. Let's look at Jude beginning with verse three. There's only one chapter in Jude, so it's Jude verse three.

Jude 1:3-10

3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence

Or spoude

to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

So we not only work out of a sense of diligence, but carefulness as well, and here is the reason why we work with our faith out of a sense of not only diligence but carefulness. Verse four.

4. For there are certain men crept in unawares,

People have snuck into the church who are seeking to corrupt the church,

who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse four, people were saying it's OK to sin as much as you want because God allowed Jesus Christ to die and that covers all of your sins. We have to do much different than that in our life. Verse five.

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt and then that first generation died in the wilderness because of their unbelief. Verse six.

6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Angels who reject God have this condemnation awaiting them. We think of those angels today as the demons. Verse seven.

7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

God consumed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sexual sins. Verse eight.

8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

The verses described for us in the Book of Jude describe much of the problematic things we see in the world today. We must use *spoude*, diligence, with carefulness in protecting our faith that was once delivered to us so that we can earnestly contend for it. Let's take a look at what Paul wrote in second Corinthians beginning in chapter eight verse one, second Corinthians eight verse one.

2 Corinthians 8:1-16

- 1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;**
- 2. How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.**
- 3. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;**
- 4. Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.**
- 5. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.**
- 6. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.**
- 7. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence,**

Or spoude,

and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

- 8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness**

Or spoude,

of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

Our diligence, our *spoude*, causes other people to have diligence, or *spoude*. There's an old saying that a rolling stone gathers no moss, and similarly, as we live a life filled with *spoude*, with diligence, there is no spiritual inertia in our life, we

will continue to grow. That's one of the benefits of *spoude*. Continuing with verse nine,

9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

13. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

14. But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

15. As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

16. But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care

Or spoude,

into the heart of Titus for you.

These verses in addition to talking about diligence also point out the need to as much as we are able to share what we have with others, to simply not hoard what we have, but to be kind and generous in the blessings that God has given us. Peter also wrote of diligence. Let's take a look at second Peter three verse ten, second Peter three verse ten.

2 Peter 3:10-16

10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Knowing that everything is going to be destroyed we ought to be very careful of how we handle ourselves, that's what Peter is saying in verse eleven.

12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

So, we know that even though this physical world will be destroyed, there is this new heaven and this new earth that will be the home of righteousness. Verse fourteen.

14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things,

,this new heaven and this new earth,

be diligent

Or spoudazo,

that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

It is with diligence and careful consideration that we take a look at this future time of the new heavens and the new earth, the New Jerusalem, when God will be here on earth, this future time of incredible happiness.

Other words are used in the Bible to talk about this diligence, and sometimes it is easy to overlook those words. Paul had one of his words translated differently. Let's take a look at Ephesians four verse one, Ephesians four verse one.

Ephesians 4:1-6

- 1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,**
- 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;**
- 3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

And the word for endeavoring in verse three is *spoudazo*. It requires diligence and careful consideration to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace within the people of God. Verse four.

- 4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**
- 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**
- 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

Spoudazo, this diligence, this carefulness, is what we need to be using to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Within the Church of God we have shattered and scattered congregations throughout this world. That is because we do not understand the *spoudazo* and the *spoude*, this diligence, to the degree that we need to. Paul also wrote about this diligence that got translated in other words when he wrote to Timothy. Let's take a look at his second letter to Timothy in second Timothy two verse fifteen, second Timothy two verse fifteen. He tells Timothy here to,

2 Timothy 2:15-19

- 15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

Study in verse fifteen is *spoudazo*. We have to take a very diligent and careful look at the words that we read in the Bible, not because of and by ourselves we are stupid people, but he gives a very good reason why we need to have that diligence and careful consideration. Verse sixteen.

- 16. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.**

Be careful of people who are always speculating on this or that in the Bible because those speculations might be fun to listen to, but they can take you way off course if you are unaware of what is in the Bible. That's why Paul tells Timothy to shun those profane and vain babblings. Verse seventeen.

17. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

The resurrection for us is in the future. Yet there are many who believe we are already saved. That's what verse eighteen is talking about. Verse nineteen.

19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

We are people living in a world that is evil. We are not yet saved, we must still depart from iniquity, and one way that we can show this *spoudazo* is to study the Bible through diligence and careful consideration so that we are not duped or taken advantage of by people who have these false teachings.

Let's take a look at the Book of Hebrews, Hebrews four verse one, Hebrews four verse one.

Hebrews 4:1-11

1. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

That's one of the reasons why we observe the seventh day Sabbath. Verse five.

5. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

The ultimate rest is not the seventh day Sabbath, but this Kingdom of God, this future time, this New Jerusalem, this New Heaven and this New Earth. The children of Israel weren't able to enter the physical manifestation of the Kingdom of God, through the Kingdom of Israel because of their unbelief. Verse seven.

7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Verse eleven.

11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

And the word for labor in verse eleven is *spoudazo*. We have to diligently and careful consideration work to achieve salvation. Let's look at Hebrews six verse four, Hebrews six verse four.

Hebrews 6:4-12

4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

8. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence

(spoude)

to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

As Christians, we know that faith is the bedrock of our relationship with Jesus Christ, that it is what nurtures and feeds the Holy Spirit, as we add to our faith virtue and knowledge and temperance and patience and godliness and brotherly kindness and charity. We know that as we grow it must be done with diligence. That means it's something we do with speed, with eagerness, with incredible effort. It's also something we do with careful consideration. Growing in faith and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ requires diligence, but it does not require this risk-taking that could cost us our salvation. Everything is done with careful consideration. Everything is done through study that is done diligently so that we are not deceived or duped by people who either through evil intent or their own stupidity might take our salvation away from us. Next week we will continue our study of second Peter one, the first few verses one through ten. We've looked at faith, we've looked at diligence. Next week we'll consider virtue.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.