

Our Precious Faith (Part 1)

II Peter 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION:

If you would open your Bibles this morning, in a few minutes, we will be reading from II Peter Chapter 1 verses 1-2. This morning, we are going to look at an overview of the book of II Peter.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 1:1-2 (NASB)

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer

Prayer

Peter wants to protect the believer. He wants the church to be able to defend itself against the onslaught of false teaching. His concern is that people not turn prey or victim to the dangerous attack of false teachers.

There are three defenses that we need.

1. **Know** your salvation. II Peter 1:1-11.

Be sure you are saved. That is our major line of defense.

2. **Know** your scripture. II Peter 1:12-21 and 3:1-2.

The emphasis is about the scripture which is from the Holy Spirit. We don't follow cleverly devised tales. Peter says they were eyewitnesses and moved by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we have written God's word for all to read and learn.

Be sure to follow God's truth instead of the destructive heresies of sensual false prophets.

3. **Know** your spiritual condition. II Peter 3:3-18.

Peter tells us that Christ **IS** coming again. In light of that we must **know** our spiritual condition. We must be prepared for His return and have a valid assurance of our salvation.

2 Peter 3:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2 Peter 3:17-18a (NASB)

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, ¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

These three things are protection 1, 2, and 3. The part that was left out was chapter 2 where Peter also tells us that we must **know** our adversary. We must know how to recognize these people.

The word knowledge is very prominent in these three chapters. So it is what we **know** that protects us. We have to...

- Know our salvation.
- We have to know scripture.
- We have to know our sanctification or the condition of our spiritual life.

LISTEN CAREFULLY!

In each of those three cases, protection against false teachers involves knowing something. And if there was a key word in II Peter, it would be the word "**knowledge**".

You must **KNOW** your **salvation**, you must **KNOW scripture**, and you must **KNOW** the **condition of your spiritual life** in order to **KNOW** how to identify these false prophets and teachers.

Confidence in our salvation, the true knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, and the assurance of our sanctification is our first line of defense.

When Satan comes at you wielding his sword of false doctrine, you can defend yourself by the Word of God and knowing you are saved.

With this in view, Peter begins his epistle on the subject of salvation in verses 1-11. He wants to remove any doubt or confusion that a believer may have about his salvation. An insecure, confused, and doubting Christian will become easy prey for false teachers.

The tone for this discussion of salvation comes right off the bat in the greeting. This is what we are going to look at today.

BODY:

I. GREETINGS FROM PETER.

2 Peter 1:1 (NASB)

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

Notice Peter identifies himself first as a bond servant and then as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Here is an equal balance of humility and authority.

A bond servant means to be a slave. Peter says he is first of all a slave for Jesus Christ. That puts him in a place of submission, duty, obedience, humility, and puts him on the level (HEAR THIS) of all other believers who serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Although Peter was the greatest of the twelve, and their spokesman, and the leader at Jerusalem, he was a slave to Jesus Christ.

To call a Christian a slave of God, means that he must be constantly in the service of God. Being a slave means that you have no time of your own, no holidays, no time off, and no leisure. All of his time belonged to the master. "You are not your own? 20 ...you have been bought with a price". Jesus died on the cross for our sins. That was the price God had to pay in order to free us of our sins and make us righteous. We have been purchased by God. Our life no longer belongs to us. We are His.

As a slave, Peter was bound by duty to do whatever his master told him no matter what the cost. That was Peter.

John 21:15-19 (NASB)

¹⁵ So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs." ¹⁶ He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." ¹⁷ He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep.

¹⁸ Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹ Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, "Follow Me!"

This is in essence what Jesus expected from Peter. If you love me. Follow Me. Feed my sheep! It will cost you your life but obey me.

Then he says he is also an apostle of Jesus Christ. So, while on the one hand he says he humbles himself as an equal to all believers in service, on the other hand, he says he is an apostle. The word apostle means one who is officially sent forth.

This is the modal of spiritual leadership. The submissive, sacrificial obedience of a slave to his master joined with the strength, boldness, and courage of an apostle.

II. RECIPIENTS OF THE TRUE FAITH.

2 Peter 1:1b (NASB)

...To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

Peter wrote "To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours".

Who are "Those"?

2 Peter 3:1 (NASB)

3 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

These were the same people that he wrote to in the first letter.

1 Peter 1:1 (NASB)

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

In other words the elect church scattered in that Gentile world. Predominantly Gentiles, but there were some Jews in the group also.

The letter was probably written in Rome. Nero died in 68 AD. Tradition tells us that Peter died under Nero's persecution. Peter had to write this before 68 AD, so this was probably written around 66 AD. It was a prison epistle.

Peter had been told that he would die for his faith. He mentions it in

2 Peter 1:13-14 (NASB)

¹³I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

Tradition says that Peter was hung upside down on the cross because he refused to die in the same manner as Christ.

III. THE SOURCE OF OUR FAITH AND SALVATION.

Notice the phrase "To those who have **received** a faith of the same kind as ours". It is gift, isn't it. We received it. The word "received" is a marvelous word in the Greek. It is not a common word. This verb means to obtain by lot.

Remember in the book of Acts when the disciples cast lots to choose who would replace Judas? It was a way in which the eleven disciples could allow God to reveal His will in a crystal clear manner. The faith we received came to us by allotment. It was not attained by personal effort, or skill, or worthiness. This faith was obtained purely by the divine will of God.

Peter is writing to people who received their faith because God willed to give it to them. This is marvelous!

What does Peter mean when Peter says they received "a faith"?

Does it mean something objective like Christianity, its doctrines, and its teaching? Or is it something subjective like the power to believe?

Let me answer it for you. I think the best way to understand this is subjective. That is to say Peter is talking about the power to believe.

Peter is saying that saving faith is from God.

Back in I Peter 1-2, Peter says that we were "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father".

Peter starts out the first epistle talking about God's side. He elected us.

Peter starts the second epistle talking about our side. We believed. But again it is a faith that is received from God.

Faith is the capacity to believe. It is the ability to trust God. And it is gift from God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through (What?) faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the (Pause) gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Salvation, including the faith to believe is the gift of God.

According to...

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (NASB)

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world (Who is the God of this world? Satan!) The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

As sinful humans, our minds are blinded so that the light of the glorious gospel cannot be believed.

Before we receive the gift of faith from God, we are held captive by the course of this world.

- We are dead in our trespasses and sins. Eph. 2:1-2.
- We are servants of the god of this world.
- We are children of disobedience.
- We are blind in darkness and cannot see.

If we believe, it is because God has granted to us an allotment of faith. So He gets all the glory! You cannot believe until God gives you faith.

Now listen carefully!

Human faith exists. You have the power to believe some things, RIGHT? So do I! The faith that we have as a human being is not a faith that redeems anybody.

- We can have faith that when we get into our car that it will take us to our destination.
- We can have faith that when we go into a restaurant, that the cook will try to prepare a safe and delicious meal.
- We can have faith that when we go to the emergency room with a physical problem, that the doctors will do their best to heal you.

This is not a saving faith. Nor is it a guaranteed faith. The car, or cook, or doctor may fail you.

The faith that comes from God is a saving faith. It is a gift from God that can give you an assurance of salvation.

We will continue next week.

CONCLUSION:

If I had approached you this morning when you came in and told you that I had a magic lamp through which God would grant just one wish. What would you have asked for?

Most of you would be wise enough not to ask for worldly things. I suspect that most of you would in one form or another would want assurance that we were going to spend eternity with God in heaven.

The scriptures tell us how to have that assurance. Have you truly surrendered yourself to Christ? Are you spending time in God's word? Do you have a personal relationship with God? Do you talk and pray to Him on a regular basis? Would you be able to identify false teaching? This is what our Christian life is really about. It is not just attending church, singing songs, taking communion, listening to a sermon. and going home to live our own life and return next Sunday and do it again. That is not a true faith that leads to salvation

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.