

Our Precious Faith (Part 2)

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 1-4.

Most Christians commentators agree that this is the lengthiest and the most complete discussion of full grown Christian maturity anywhere in the Bible.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 1:1-4 (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; ³ seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

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

Prayer

Last week I asked the question, "If I had a magic lamp through which God would grant just one wish. What would you ask for?"

I commented, "Most of you would be wise enough not to ask for worldly things like a billion dollars. I suspect that most of you would, in one form or another, want assurance that you were going to spend eternity with God in heaven. That your name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

This question yielded some interesting thoughts after the service.

One said, "I think I would take the money". Indicating that her salvation was already sure as Peter assures us that we **CAN** know in this book of II Peter. So why ask for something that is already assured to us, right?

If that were your wish you would need to be mindful of the scriptures that remind you of the dangers of wealth.

Another said, "If I found out that my name was currently written in the Lamb's Book of Life, would that cause me to become indifferent about my salvation thereby jeopardizing my eternity with God?"

Solomon asked for wisdom. That proved to be a good choice.

If you were to ask me for money, I would have to answer like the Wizard of Oz when Dorothy asks him if he can return her to Kansas. When he tried to put them off again, Dorothy said...

Dorothy: "Oh - You're a very bad man!"

Wizard of Oz: "Oh, no my dear. I'm a very good man. I'm just a very bad Wizard."— L. Frank Baum, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

I wouldn't know how to give you a billion dollars. But if you were to ask me for assurance of eternal life in Heaven, I could use the following quote from the Wizard of Oz when Dorothy was talking to Glinda, the good witch of the North.

Dorothy: Oh, will you help me? Can you help me?

Glinda: You don't need to be helped any longer. You've always had the power to go back to Kansas.

Dorothy: I have?

Scarecrow: Then why didn't you tell her before?

Glinda: She wouldn't have believed me. She had to learn it for herself.

Scarecrow: What have you learned, Dorothy?

Dorothy: Well, I—I think that it, that it wasn't enough just to want to see Uncle Henry and Auntie Em — and it's that — if I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard. Because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with! Is that right?

Glinda: That's all it is!

Scarecrow: But that's so easy! I should've thought of it for you -

Tin Man: I should have felt it in my heart -

Glinda: No, she had to find it out for herself. Now those magic slippers will take you home in two seconds!

Dorothy: Oh! Toto too?

Glinda: Toto too.

Dorothy: Now?

Glinda: Whenever you wish....(Are you ready?)

Glinda: Then close your eyes and tap your heels together three times. And think to yourself, 'There's no place like home'.

You see, Peter says that we CAN have assurance of salvation and he is going to spell out in the first eleven verses of chapter one how we can know.

Let me ask you this morning, "Are you playing church, or are you serving Christ"?

Living the Christian life and having an assurance of salvation is more than just attending church, singing songs, taking communion, listening to a sermon. and going home to live your own life and then return the next Sunday and play "church" again. That is not a true faith that leads to salvation.

That doesn't mean that since you are not yet fully committed to your Christian life that you quit coming to church. That is all the more reason that you keep coming. Our job, as fellow believers, is to encourage each other in our faith. That is done by praising God in song and prayer, remembering Christ's death through communion, ministering to each other, and studying and listening to God's Word.

Being a Christian means that we belong to God. We have been bought with a price. We are no longer our own. We are no longer driven by lust or our evil desires for earthly things.

We MUST GRASP the real reason we are on this earth!

The purpose of this life is to glorify God our Creator and prepare for eternity. We glorify God by respecting Him, obeying His Word, and knowing Him intimately.

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?
- Are you listening for and doing God's will in your life?
- Do you know God's Word well enough that 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, and listening to a sermon.

Peter wants to protect the believer. He wants us to KNOW that our faith is real and our salvation is sure. 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.

BODY:

I. SALVATION COMES THROUGH JESUS.

2 Peter 1:1 (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:

Peter along with the apostles and Jesus Christ Himself is concerned that we really have attained a true faith.

In fact if you drop down to verse 10 Peter says,

2 Peter 1:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make **certain** about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

The word "certain" is a word that literally means "receipt".

ILLUSTRATION:

When you walk out of Sam's Club, there is always a person there who wants to look at your receipt to ensure that you purchased everything that you are carrying out of the store.

What Peter is saying is that you must make sure that you have a true faith based upon the inspired Word of God in order to be sure of your salvation. Show the receipt that you have eternal life by what God is producing in your life.

ILLUSTRATION:

Remember when you were in grade school and the teacher had you put a seed in a cup with your name on it? You would water it, take care of it and watch it grow. After several days, if you took care of it, some sprouting would start taking place.

There inevitably would be someone who did not take care of their seed and it would die. The teacher would come by and say, "I am afraid that your seed is dead".

He will say, I remember planting it. I know I put it there. She would say, there is no plant, it is dead.

That is one of the lessons that James wants to teach us that a saving faith has works.

Peter is admonishing us in that way as well. We must be sure that we have a saving faith.

In fact this is our Lords concern back in Matthew.

Matthew 7:22-25 (NASB)

²² Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Jesus is saying you are living as if I have no laws. I do not know you.

None of us want to live our life on earth only to hear these words from Christ at judgment! So what is the key to having a true faith?

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, (there is fruit in his life) may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

We must all look at our lives and ask "Is there anything sprouting out of my cup?"

Peter says "be all the more diligent to make **certain** about His calling and choosing you".

You need to have a "receipt of proof" that something is happening in your life.

II. CHRISTIAN GROWTH COMES THROUGH JESUS.

2 Peter 1:2 (NASB)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

Peter says that we will have Christian growth through Jesus Christ. How does that take place?

Peter says you can experience multiplied grace. Grace is defined as unmerited favor. It is blessings that God gives to you despite the fact that we do not deserve them. But it is going to come through an increased knowledge of Jesus Christ.

He also says that we will experience multiplied peace. You no longer have to be afraid of the future. You do not have to be defeated by sin. You will no longer fear death. But it is going to come through an increased knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This is Peter's theme of this epistle, the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.

There are several different Greek words that have to do with knowledge.

- One is that I know something as an expert.
- Another is that I know something accurately like a scientific fact.
- The one that Peter uses here is that I know by an intensified experience.

We all need more grace and peace in our life. How are we going to get multiplied grace in our lives? Through an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:3 (NASB)

3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Peter continues to say that it is not just grace and peace that is multiplied unto us. He says that Christ has granted to us everything that you need for eternal life and everything that you need for godliness in this life. But once again, all of these things come through an intense knowledge of Jesus Christ.

What that means is that if everything that pertains to our spiritual life is going to come through an increased intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, then anything keeps us from that increased knowledge and intimacy with Jesus Christ is our enemy.

Peter is going to warn us in chapters 2 & 3 about false teaching.

Basically, worldliness is a false teaching. It is a teaching coming from the world that says that you can have an abundant life. You can have what you need without Jesus Christ. Your life can be abundant

- as long as you have fame,
- as long as you have money,
- as long as you have prestige,
- as long as you have friends,
- etc. etc.

The world says these are the things that are going to bring you fulfillment.

Our lives desire an intimate relationship. If our lives are not having an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ than our flesh will offer to us a counterfeit intimacy with worldliness and lust.

To have a saving faith, we must have Christian growth. It comes by experiencing an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ in our lives. We will be fruitful in our life.

III. GOD'S PROMISES COME THROUGH JESUS.

2 Peter 1:4 (NASB)

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

How do you get to know God? You do the things He has commanded you to do with the promises He has made and in the process, you learn to know God.

I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about these promises of Christ.

The promises of God are statements about how He operates in this world.

When He says "I will never leave you or forsake you". That is a promise from God. It is a statement on how life works on planet earth under the dominion of Jesus Christ.

Here is another promise.

Matthew 16:24-25 (NASB)

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

Sometimes we think that if we turn our lives over to God He will really mess it up. But, if God was intent on messing up our lives, He wouldn't need us to turn to Him to do it.

Here is the promise.

25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

This is a promise! We must commit our lives to Jesus Christ and claim that promise.

God also promises if you seek me you WILL find me.

God is not playing Hide and Seek. But He will only reveal Himself to someone who is earnestly seeking Him.

These are only just a few of God's promises. You must live by these promises. That is how you develop a knowledge of God. This is how we become "**partakers of the divine nature**".

But this has a dual purpose. Not only does it make us more like Christ, it also widens the gap between us and the lusts of the world.

CONCLUSION:

2 Peter 1:8 (NASB)

8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If we seek these qualities we will not be apathetic concerning our salvation and God will make us fruitful. Our salvation will be assured.

We will be able to hear from Christ on Judgment Day " Well done My good and faithful servant;...enter into the joy of your Master!"

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.