

2 Peter Chapter 1A

This morning we begin a new journey through the book of 2 Peter. As you read through the text, you will discover that this is a very short book, containing only 61 verses. Within these 61 verses, we find the last recorded words of the Apostle Peter.

- Peter's words were most likely written from Rome where historians tell us that he was martyred, hung upside down on a cross because he said he was unworthy to die in the same way that the Lord Jesus died.

You may remember that Peter wrote his first epistle in an effort to comfort and instruct believers who were facing External threats of persecution during the reign of Nero.

1 Peter 3: 13 *Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (Blessed even when we face persecution)*

In this second letter, Peter addresses an even more deadly threat to the church than External persecution; here he confronts the threat of Internal corruption, false teachers who rose up from among the people to destroy the flock.

2 Peter 2:1 *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

- The last time I taught the books of 2 Peter, 1,2,3, John and Jude, I was shocked, astounded by the sheer number of warnings with regard to false teachers and false prophets that fill these final books of the Bible. I already read 2 Peter 2, look with me at the writings of John:

1 John 4: 1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

2 John 1:10 *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.*

- And there are SO many more. With this in mind I want to ask:

Aren't you glad that we don't face the problem of False teachers and false prophets in the church today? (*Say What!*) Of course we do, in fact the church today is facing what I believe is, "The perfect storm."

- Not only do we have our share of false teachers and false prophets but studies have shown that The Evangelical church in America is for the most part Biblically illiterate. Those who call themselves Christian don't read/know Bible

Listen to these words from John MacArthur's introduction to the book of 2 Peter: "Never has Peter's warning been more timely than it is today. The rapid advancement of mass media, coupled with the church's lack of discernment, has allowed doctrinal error to spread like wildfire. False teachers propagate their heresies via television, radio, the internet, books, magazines and seminars – doing whatever they can for their own self-promotion."

Friends I call this the "perfect storm" because every one of us have been influenced by the politically correct mood of our culture that tells us we can believe anything, as long as we don't claim it to be absolute truth, we can live any kind of lifestyle as long as we don't insist it is the "right way to live." Religiously we are free to believe anything as long as we don't push our beliefs on someone else.

- People who question alternative lifestyles are denounced today as "Haters."
- Those who challenge the logic or legitimacy of a different belief system are called narrow minded.
- Those who teach that God created the world in 6 literal days and ordained the union of marriage between one man and one woman are looked down upon as unenlightened, backward, dangerous, religious fundamentalists.

Well my friends, it is into this pluralistic society of philosophical and moral relativism that God has called us to carry the unchanging truth of His Holy Word.

It is to a church greatly influenced by Mystics and False Prophets that God has called us to speak the Truth in love.

- This book of 2 Peter will help us see the dangerous days in which we live.

Before exposing the darkness of the false teachers Peter focuses our attention on the Gospel. We need to know truth before we confront error. In the first 2 verses we see

1. The Gift of Saving Faith –
2. The Generality of Saving Faith
3. The Ground of Saving Faith
4. The Gain of Saving Faith
 - LET'S look at the first verse

IN accord with the custom of his day, Peter opens his letter, (His Epistle) with a standard salutation in which he identifies both the sender and the recipient of the letter.

- While Peter's opening is certainly customary, I don't think we could call it ordinary.
- The opening words introduce the author with a twofold name and a two-fold description. Let's look at it together

2 Peter 1:1 **Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,**

- Simon is Greek translation of the Hebrew name Simeon, which was one of the most common names in all of Israel. Undoubtedly the name that was given by his parents.

But Simon also identifies himself by the name that was given to him by the Lord Jesus, who called him Peter. “**you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,**”

- Very often in the Bible, the New Birth brought about a new Name: Abram became Abraham, Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter, Saul became Paul.
- When you read through the Gospels, it seems when Peter acted in his flesh Jesus called him Simon, Simon. Like when your parents call you by your full name.
 - When Mom said: Barry Thomas Parsons – I knew I was in trouble!

As believers we look forward to the day when the Lord will give us a new name (Rev. 2:17, 3:12) For now, like our friend Simon Peter we are pilgrims walking toward that Promised Land, wrestling at times with our old fleshly nature.

Moving on we see that Simon, Peter’s two-fold name is followed by a two-fold description of his identity, he is both “**A servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.**”

- The word translated Servant is “DULOS” means slave. This title, “Slave” is an expression of deep humility. You see, In those days, Slaves were no better than animals or tools. They had no will of their own, in fact they were considered mere possessions, belonging to their owner, like a donkey or a cow.
 - As a slave, Peter lived his life for the will of Christ, his master. After all, He was bought and purchased by a price the precious blood of Christ.
 - As a slave Peter owes unequivocal obedience to his master.
 - It is worth noting as you read through your Bible, that Moses, Joshua, David, Paul and James all bear the same humble position of “Slave.”

As I said Peter has two names and two titles, What was the second title? Again: “**Simon Peter A Servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ.**”

- As an Apostle, Peter was one of the Twelve who were chosen and sent forth by the Lord himself. He was with Jesus from the very beginning and served as an eyewitness to the resurrection. So, He was divinely commissioned to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Mark 3:14 **And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach**

By presenting Peter in these terms, I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit is setting a pattern for all spiritual leadership within the church. Leaders in the Body of Christ share in the submissive, sacrificial service of a slave, all the while bearing the dignity and authority of one who is commissioned by the Lord Jesus to carry the life changing Gospel.

Now that we are familiar with the Author let’s take a look at His target Audience.

- The way that Peter describes his audience is truly unique and theologically RICH. In His address, He immediately points his readers to the divine source of their salvation. THIS is our first point: “The Gift of Saving Faith.”

Peter describes His Readers as **those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours. by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:**

- I pray that you will find this description to be both inspiring and encouraging.
- Peter's Audience is described as **"Those who have obtained a faith"**
- Those who have gained by the sovereign will of God; literally, those who have been given by divine allotment the same gift of faith that Peter and everyone else who believes has been given.
 - The words that Peter uses here tell us that Saving Faith does not originate within US, it is not earned nor obtained by human effort, it comes solely from God, as a free and gracious gift.

So we see that this faith, which is necessary for salvation is a divine gift. It cannot be produced by the will of man but rather must be received as a gift from God.

What exactly IS this gift of faith that God has given to his people?

- IN this context, Peter is speaking of faith, subjectively, which simply means that God gives his people the power to believe the Gospel for salvation.
- The Bible clearly teaches that God graciously provides men and women of his own choosing the power and the ability to believe unto salvation.

Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

Romans 12: 3 **For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.**

- So we understand that saving faith is a gift of God that cannot be earned; Now Peter goes on to tell us that because God is not a respecter of persons, ALL of the elect of God receive the same gift of saving faith.

2. The Generality of Saving Faith

2 Peter 1:1, **Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours**

- Faith of equal standing, KJV – Like precious faith,

Peter want's his readers to know that the gift of faith that they have received from God is the SAME faith that was given to every other believer, throughout all time, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, slave or free.

- You should know that Many of the False Teachers of Our day Act as if they have some kind of secret knowledge, a unique spiritual connection with Christ or some greater gift of faith than all the rest of us common folk.

- Nothing could be further from the truth, There is no secret knowledge, there is no spiritually elite or special class of Believers within the Body of Christ every one of us receive the same gift of saving faith.

This is the same gift of faith whereby Abraham was declared “Righteous.” We read about this in Romans 4:3, **For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."**

This is the Same “Life giving faith” by which WE who believe have been justified declared righteous before God.

Romans 1:17 **For in it (in the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

- What an encouragement this is, especially to those of you who feel as if you are second-class citizens in the Body of Christ. There is no such thing.
- If you are in Christ God has given you the same saving faith that He gave to every one of those “Heroes of Faith” that you read about in the book of Hebrews.
- Faith that conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

OK Now that we know that Saving faith is a gift from God that He gives indiscriminately to all of His Elect we move on to consider the Ground or the Substance of Saving faith.

3. The Ground of Saving Faith

At the end of verse one we come to a prepositional phrase, **“By the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

- What this is saying is that the gift of faith, we have received is rooted and grounded in the righteousness of Christ.
- The preposition **“By”** can carry the idea of “through” or “IN” like “Grounded IN, or “Rooted IN”
- It is important to know that FAITH is only as good as the Object upon which that faith is established or grounded.

The Ground or substance on which this saving faith is established is the perfect righteousness of Christ.

- Our faith is NOT based upon our performance or piety. It is not based on our ability to live by the Law of Moses, on the contrary, it is grounded in, and firmly established on the perfect righteousness of Christ.

- Take note, in this verse, Jesus is called “**Our God and Savior**” the Greek Grammar in this sentence can only mean one thing, Jesus Christ IS God and Savior Remember this verse when the J.W.’s come knocking at your door.

You could place your faith in a False Prophet like Charles Taze Russel founder of the Jehovah Witnesses and find yourself suffering in the very hell that you were taught doesn’t exist.

Our faith is grounded in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. As the God / Man He kept the Law of Moses with perfection.

- He never made any graven images, He obeyed his parents perfectly, He never coveted another man’s possessions. He perfectly obeyed the whole Law.
- When the time came for him to bear the punishment of our sins on the cross He responded to the Father saying, “**My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.**”

And here is the really Good News: On the Cross All of Our Sin and every transgression of God’s perfect Law was laid on Christ and He bore the just and eternal punishment that our sins deserved.

- Because God is perfectly Just, sin must be punished, payment must be made.
- Well, the Sky turned dark and Jesus cried “**My God, My God Why have you forsaken me!**”
- It was there on the cross where Jesus drank the cup of God’s wrath for all of God’s precious chosen people, not even one drop remains.
- But wait, there is more: The Apostle Paul Says:

2 Corinthians 5:21 **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

- There on the cross All of our sin was imputed, laid upon the Lord Jesus and All of his perfect righteousness was credited to us.
- Because of this holy exchange we can boldly say along with the Apostle Paul:

Romans 8: 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

- Even now as we continue to wrestle with sin on a daily basis, by the grace of God through Faith in Jesus Christ, HE is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, when we repent and believe.

YOU don’t need to be cast down under the weight of condemnation, Listen to the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 103: 10 **He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.** 11 **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;** 12 **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

- The Grounds of this Amazing Grace that we have received through faith is the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- So we have seen:

The Gift of Saving Faith – The Generality of Saving Faith - The Ground of Saving Faith
NOW we move on to The Gain of Saving Faith

4 The Gain of Saving Faith

2 Peter 1: 2 **May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**

Here in Vs 2, Peter prays that the blessings of grace and peace would be multiplied to his readers through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord.

- This knowledge of God is intimate, it is personal and relational, but it also involves intellectual content and understanding. Throughout the Bible a growing knowledge of God NEVER separates the head from the heart or the heart from the head.
- Grace and peace abound in ever increasing measures when believers come to know more about God and come to know Him in a deeper way through the crucible of experience.
- WE come to know His glorious attributes as we study the revelation of God in Scripture and then we experience those same attributes of mercy, of goodness, faithfulness and loving-kindness when He sovereignly intervenes in the circumstances of our daily lives.
- SO the grace and Peace of God are multiplied as we study His Word and Walk with Him Day by Day.
- This is why teaching and worship are coupled together, that we might grow in understanding and from that understanding worship God with heartfelt praise.
- Paul viewed the increasing knowledge of Christ as the greatest pursuit in life.

Philippians 3: 8 **Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith**

10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Through the gift of faith, grounded on the righteousness of Christ we have come to know Christ, and as we continue to grow in that knowledge, we gain boundless grace and a deep abiding peace.

- Is this your experience today????

- Have you received the Gift of faith that God provides through the proclamation of the Gospel?
- Is your faith grounded on the righteousness of Christ? OR are you still trying to earn favor with God through your own works of righteousness?
- Are you growing in Grace and Peace?

It is with renewed understanding of the gift of faith, and the righteousness of Christ that we approach the Table of the Lord this morning. Giving thanks to God for the grace of Christ that has obtained peace with God. It is through the work of Christ alone that we approach the table of the Lord this morning.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper is for those who have been saved from the wrath of God for sin. It is a remembrance of the price that was paid and an act of faith and obedience to the one who redeemed us.

- Jesus Christ, the bread of life came down from heaven and lived a perfect, sinless life and offered himself on the cross as the only atoning sacrifice for our sin.
- His shed blood has purchased salvation for all those who repent and believe on Him.

As the deacons distribute the elements and Luke comes back to lead us in worship, you should take the advice of the Psalmist and pray:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts, And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”