

Title: **2 PETER**
Grow in Grace and Knowledge

Text: 2 Peter 1:1-4

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Tape # Y-36a

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Introduction:

(2 Peter 1:1-4) “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.”

The apostle Peter wrote his first epistle to God’s saints who were suffering the horrible trial of persecution under the Roman Emperor, Nero. His second epistle was written shortly afterward, just before his death (1:14), and is addressed to the same suffering saints. Their circumstances had not changed.

The first epistle dealt with the hard, hard trial of persecution, of suffering for Christ’s sake. In that epistle Peter urges us to persevere in the faith, assuring us of

God's great grace in Christ and urging us to follow the example our Savior set before us (1 Pet. 2:21-24).

(1 Peter 2:21-24) “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

In 2nd Peter the inspired apostle deals with a trial even more difficult to endure, and urges us to remain steadfast in faith in the face of the ever-increasing onslaught of false religion. In these three chapters Peter urges us to remain steadfast and persevere in the faith, assuring us again of God's great grace to us in Christ and urging us to “*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (3:18). In 1st Peter we are taught to rejoice in hope in the face of great trials. Here, in 2nd Peter, we are taught to remain faithful to the truth in the midst of great falsehood.

PRECIOUS THINGS

In these two epistles the apostle Peter reminds us of the many blessings of grace our God has given us in Christ. In fact, he tells us that the Lord God has, according to

his divine power, “*given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*” (1:3). Among these many gifts of grace, Peter names six that he calls “*precious.*”

1. He tells us that the trial of our faith is more precious than gold that perishes, because the trials of our faith in this world will make heaven more glorious than it could otherwise have been (1 Pet. 1:7).
2. In 1 Peter 1:19 he tells us that the blood of Christ, by which we have been redeemed, is “*the precious blood of Christ,*” because it is the effectual, sin-atoning blood of the Lamb of God, who was foreordained as our Redeemer.
3. He tells us (1 Pet. 2:6) that we who God’s spiritual temple are living stones in the house of God, built upon Christ, the precious Corner Stone and Foundation Stone laid in Zion.
4. Then, he says, “*Unto you therefore which believe he is precious*” (1 Pet. 2:7). — Truly, Christ is precious to all who believe! Everything about him, all that he is, all that he has done and is doing is precious!
5. Peter begins this second epistle by telling us that the great gift and grace of faith that we have obtained from the Lord is “*precious faith*” (1:1). It is that which we have obtained “*through the righteousness of God and (even) our Savior Jesus Christ.*”
6. Then, in 2 Peter 1:4, he tells us that the promises of God given to us in Christ are “*precious promise,*”

precious because they are “*yea and amen in him,*” because they are unalterable and sure.

As I read these three chapters again this morning, I thought to myself, “Bro. Peter, you could not have written anything more suited to the needs of God’s saints in this present day.” It is as though Peter knew, way back then, what we would need today. That is because this Book, the Word of God, is written by divine inspiration and is written specifically for God’s saints in every place, circumstance, and time. Its message is God’s message for you and me, right now. Every word in these three chapters is pertinent to us and filled with instruction for us. It is specifically addressed “*to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” May God give us grace to receive and obey his message to us.

GROW IN GRACE

In chapter 1 Peter’s admonition to us is to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. He knew that the secret to spiritual strength is Christ, knowing Christ and that the source of spiritual strength and knowledge is the grace of God.

If we would be strong in faith, we must have an ever-increasing knowledge of our utter weakness in ourselves. A knowledge that our only acceptance with God is Christ, and that our only hope of salvation is the

grace of God feely bestowed upon us and given to us in Christ. — “*When I am weak, then am I strong.*” If we would be strong in faith, if we would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, “*He must increase, and I must decrease.*”

THE SAME GIFTS

Peter begins this epistle by assuring us that all believers have the same gifts of grace. We do not all possess the same gifts of ministry and service; but all believers do possess the same gifts of grace (Eph. 1:3-6). We tend to think of the apostles and prophets as men who had greater grace than we have; but that was not the case. They were all, just like us, sinners saved by grace. Peter tells us in verse one that he is writing to people just like himself, who “*have obtained like precious faith with us*” and have obtained it in exactly the same way, through the merit, virtue, and efficacy of Christ.

Then, in verse 3, he tells us that God has “*given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.*” Someone once said, “**Even the weakest believer holds in his hands all that the mightiest saint ever possessed.**” That is exactly what Peter tells us here. All that we need to live forever before God is ours in Christ. And all that we need to live in this world in godliness is ours in Christ, too. In other words, Peter is telling us that God has given us in Christ everything needed to handle whatever comes up in life, and to handle it with grace.

Do we understand that? Very few do. Multitudes there are who are always looking for something more than Christ and the grace of God in him. They want something new, something different, some new experience, some new revelation, something greater than grace! — Something greater than Christ! May God save us from such folly. If Christ is all (and he is), then Christ is enough!

This is what that means in the context of 2nd Peter. — **If we have everything in Christ, we only need to know more of him**, and we will have all that it takes to handle the problems we deal with in this world. I don't need tranquilizers. I need grace. I don't need drugs. I need Christ. I don't need a psychologist or a psychic. I need Christ. And having Christ, I have all I need for "*life and godliness.*" I don't need something to make me feel good. I need grace to grow in faith, to grow in the knowledge of Christ.

Faith in Christ is the gift of God's grace; and the faith we have obtained of God through the righteousness of God, and the grace and peace that sustains us in life come to us "*through the knowledge of God and (even) of Jesus our Lord*" (v. 2). And, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, God has given us "*exceeding great and precious promises: that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*" (v. 4). In other words, Peter tells us that being born of God, believing on Christ, we have

(past tense) escaped everything in the world that once held us in corruption through our lust.

THE INFLUENCE OF GRACE

In verses 5-11 Peter calls for us to grow in grace, and faith, and the knowledge of Christ. He calls us to give diligence in making our calling and election sure, as Paul puts it, working out our own salvation, because it is God who works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure. The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us how we are to live in this world (Tit. 2:10-14). John Gill wrote...

“The Gospel, and the precious promises, being graciously bestowed and powerfully applied, have an influence on purity of heart and conversation, and teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; such are the powerful effects of Gospel promises, under divine influence, as to make men inwardly partakers of the divine nature, and outwardly to abstain from and avoid the prevailing corruptions and vices of the times.”

(2 Peter 1:5-8) “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.”

If we are born of God we have all this in Christ, but we must diligently work at discovering it and applying it in our lives. The secret to living in this world in the enjoyment of peace is faith in and obedience to God our Savior.

“Trust and obey, for there’s no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

The knowledge God’s grace and promises in Christ, and the application of them to our lives will keep us from being barren and unfruitful. There is a knowledge of Christ that is barren and unfruitful. As James tells us, “*Faith without works is dead.*” And those who have a dead faith are spiritually dead. That is what Peter tells us in verse 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*” (v. 9). Their professed faith is just that, a profession of faith that has cleaned up their lives outwardly; but they are still spiritually blind.

MAKE SURE

“*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall*” (v. 10). — We do not make our

calling and election sure to ourselves by these evidences of grace. It is God the Holy Spirit who makes our calling and election sure to us by giving us faith in Christ (Heb. 11:1). As James speaks of us justifying our profession of faith before men by our works, Peter here tells us that we make our faith in Christ manifest and sure before one another in the same way. — *“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* (v. 11). If you and I have that faith which is made manifest and shows itself by love, these graces: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (vv. 5-7) shall be added to us abundantly as we leave this world and enter into heavenly glory.

THE BASIS OF FAITH

In verses 12-21 Peter directs our hearts to the source of and basis of our faith — The Word of God. If we would grow in faith and in the knowledge of Christ, we must ever be established in the revealed truth of God, ever remembering that which God reveals to us in his Word. The apostle reminds us that the gospel we have received is the testimony of men who were eye-witnesses of Christ’s divine majesty (vv. 16-18).

(2 Peter 1:16-18) “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (17) For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such

a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (18) And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

- Peter, James, and John saw the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (John 1:14).
- They heard the testimony of God the Father from heaven.

Yet, we have an even more sure Word than the mere eye-witness account of those faithful men. In fact, Peter says in verses 19-21 that the basis of his faith in Christ was something far more sure and dependable than his own experience upon the Mount of Transfiguration. The basis of all true faith, the authority for all that we believe as the children of God, is not our experience, but the written Word of Inspiration.

(2 Peter 1:19-21) “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: (20) Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (21) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”

This is Peter’s doctrine in verses 19-21. — We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, in whom alone God is well-pleased and in and by whom

alone God is well-pleased with us, because he has perfectly fulfilled everything written in the Old Testament.

FALSE PROPHETS

In chapter 2 Peter identifies false prophets and warns us of their subtlety. He is not talking here about atheists and agnostics. He is talking about wolves in sheep's clothing. He is talking about men who claim to be the servants of God and preachers of the gospel, who profess to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Watch how he describes them (vv. 1-3).

(2 Peter 2:1-3) “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

- They are sneaky, deceitful men.
- They bring in damnable heresies.
- They deny the Lord Jesus Christ, by denying the efficacy of his work and his dominion as Lord.

- The ways (Pro. 14:12; 16:25) they preach are pernicious ways to hell.
- They speak evil of the Way, the Way of Truth — Christ and his finished work.
- They are motivated by covetousness.
- They make merchandise of men’s souls.
- They shall be damned.

Because there are many (following the very men of whom Peter here speaks) who point to this passage as a “proof text” to deny Christ’s effectual atonement for the sins of God’s elect and his effectual redemption of his people, and to prove the blasphemy of universal atonement and universal redemption, I must call your attention to the language Peter uses here.

The word used for “Lord” in verse 1 is δεσποτην (despotes). The word translated “bought” is αγοραζω (agoradzo). Peter is not suggesting that there is some sense in which Christ made atonement for or died to make salvation possible for reprobate men. He is telling us that as a man, as the God-man our Mediator Christ bought the right to rule over and dispose of all things for the salvation of his own elect (John 17:2; Rom. 14:9; Phil. 2:9-11). As our Mediator, our Savior bought the field of the world that he might redeem and save the treasure of his elect hidden in the field (Matt. 13:44).

Remember, these are men who profess to believe, love, worship and preach the Lord Jesus Christ in all

his fulness. But they deny him in the very message they preach.

- Those who preach conditional grace deny his effectual grace.
- Those who preach conditional election deny his effectual election.
- Those who preach conditional atonement deny his effectual atonement.
- Those who preach conditional salvation deny his effectual salvation.
- Those who preach salvation by man's works deny his redeeming work.
- Those who preach salvation by man's will deny his sovereign will.
- And those who deny the efficacy of his work and accomplishments as the sinners' Substitute deny him altogether, no matter how loudly they profess to love him.

In verses 10-21 Peter gives us **a more detailed description of these false prophets.** He tells us that all such men are presumptuous, self-willed, and ignorant men who speak evil of God's true servants and of the gospel of his grace that his servants preach, because these are "*things they understand not.*" They are men with eyes full of adultery, who cease not from sin, ever "*sporting themselves with their own deceivings.*" Like Balaam, they "*have forsaken the right way*" because they love "*the wages of unrighteousness.*" Be warned! All preachers of free-will/works religion are a curse to

your children, beguiling unstable souls. They promise liberty, but bring bondage, the bondage of corruption. **If you follow them, you will follow them to hell.**

(2 Peter 2:18-21) “For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. (19) While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. (20) For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. (21) For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

WORD OF COMFORT

Yet, even as he describes the horrible perversity of false religion and warns us that those who follow the false prophets will perish with them, Peter assures us that trusting Christ, following him, God’s saints need not be alarmed (2:4-9). God knows exactly what he is doing. He is saving his own elect. His purpose is sure. He spared not the angels that fell; but he saved his elect angels. He spared not the old world; but he saved Noah and his family. He spared not Sodom and Gomorrah; but he saved Lot. And though he will destroy all who

“stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pet. 2:9), *“the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.”*

CHRIST’S COMING

In chapter 3 Peter concludes his epistle by assuring us of the certainty of Christ’s coming and the certain salvation of God’s elect before Christ comes again in his glory, urging us to live in anticipation of eternal glory.

In the opening verses of this chapter he reminds us again of false prophets, *“walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?”* He tells us that these scoffers are willingly ignorant of the Scriptures (v. 5). Then he explains to us that the reason Christ has not yet returned to the earth is just this — God has not yet saved all his elect (vv. 9 and 15).

(2 Peter 3:9) *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

(2 Peter 3:15) *“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.”*

The elect family is not all in the Ark. God’s Lots have not all yet been brought out of Sodom. But they will

be! Then, Christ will come and make all things new (vv. 8-14). Be patient. God does not judge time like we do. He is not in a hurry.

(2 Peter 3:8-14) “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (9) The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (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, (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. (14) Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Final Admonition

Peter’s final admonition is found in verses 17-18 of chapter 3. It is twofold:

1. First, he urges us to be steadfast in the faith of the gospel. — “*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness*” (v. 17).

We must ever guard against the influence of false prophets. The surest way to avoid the subtle influence of false doctrine is to cling to plainly revealed truth, refusing to even give an ear to anything new.

2. Second, he urges us to “*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (v. 18).

As we cling tenaciously to that which we know, let us constantly seek grace to grow in grace, in the gifts of grace (faith, hope, love, etc.) and in the exercise of grace. We grow in grace only as we grow “*in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*” Learn everything you can about Christ. Look for him in his Word (John 5:39). Seek not only to know all you can about him, but also to know him (Phil. 3:10), growing continually in the knowledge of your need of him and the bounteous grace of God that is yours in him, ever seeking his glory. — “*To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*”