

# Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Christ

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2 Peter 3:18

We are taking a break from Romans 13 and will return there after Easter next month. Are you disappointed that we won't be talking about government for a while? Ha ha.

As the proper study of theology is God, and the study of the world is man, so the proper study of the Christian is Christ – Christ who is your all in all.

It is connecting with Him and all that He is – and growing in Him – that is our concern. Jesus said, 'I am the vine, you are the branches,' right? That without him you can do nothing! But that means you can do all things, but only in him who strengthens you.

Life, growth, fruit, strengthening, steadfastness, more fruit, abiding, abiding deeply, discipleship, obeying, all comes from him. What tremendous words are these! "He who abides in Me and I in Him!"

Our first of four messages is taken from the last words of the Apostle Peter – 2 Peter 3:18.

Peter places all real steadfastness and true growth in Jesus. And not just Jesus, but Jesus Christ. And not just Jesus Christ, but the *Lord* Jesus Christ, the *Savior* Jesus Christ – *our* Lord and Savior – building names and titles one upon the other.

And as if that were not enough, it is His *grace* as the Lord Christ and the Savior in which you grow; and as if that were not enough, the *knowledge* of this Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with His grace.

So by the time we get to the second sentence of this one verse, and his glory and being glorified, and fully so, presently and eternally – there is no doubt as to the centrality of Christ to your souls.

So let us stand at this door today and knock for entrance into these riches of an all-glorious Jesus. Let us dig deep into this exclusive soil for true growth for heaven!

Do we realize there is no growth whatsoever and no steadfastness in your life, apart from Him? Have you grown in obedience, in holiness, in truth, in purity, in zeal, in prayer, in worship, in witnessing, in loving others, in seeking first the kingdom of God, in sacrificing for others, in loving the Lord's day, in holy speech, in guarding your eyes, or your hearts from bitterness – whatever it is, it because of Him!

What an amazing Savior! All Christian growth is of Him; it is in Him; it is through Him; and it is even to Him! Growing up into Him who is your head!

We hope to unfold the Glory of Christ, and see that if we serve a little Christ, a dull Christ, a puny Lord, that affects our faith, our hope, our love, and our life progress.

But today we zero in on growing in grace and knowledge. Whose grace – His grace. What knowledge? Knowing Him! How do we understand them?

Let us see that the grace of this Savior is the ocean of God's love found in Him. And the knowledge of our Redeemer is the mountain on which our lives are set. They are inseparable but distinguishable.

God's grace in Christ is first the ocean of God-glorifying love and compassion to his people.

When you hear the word *grace*, you should hear the fullness of salvation found in Christ – that He is all the fullness of the godhead bodily, and is our Immanuel, God for us, God with us, to save us and save us forever.

Christ is your very life! You are hidden in Him! You are submerged in the overwhelming love of God to you through Him! You can breathe only under these waves! Here you praise, “O the depths!”

**O the deep, deep love of Jesus**

Vast unmeasured, boundless, free  
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me  
Underneath me, all around me, is the current  
Of Thy love  
Leading onward, leading homeward to  
Thy glorious rest above

What an ocean of love, of grace, of life, of salvation in Him!

We rightly emphasize here what his waters have do for us!

All the parts of your salvation emerge from his grace.

You were dead and now alive. You were lost but now are found. You were hardened in sin but now converted and repentant. You were judged and guilty but now declared righteous. Your Father says no condemnation! He says no more charges! He says ‘there is no wrath in me – Jesus drank that cup dry!’ In short, you were enemies and now

are beloved children; once on the road to destruction, now you call heaven your home!

And think more that this grace, this ocean – is not just right now but to all eternity! Only there will the fullness of grace in Christ be measured in an eternal kingdom yet to come! Verse 13.

‘Why? then’ asks John Mason; ‘why do we spend so much time on this world which we are soon to leave; and so little on that world into which we are so soon to enter forever?’

How much does eternity fit into your identity in Christ? That your home is above? That you are presently in exile, as Calvin put it?

This is by far the larger part of the grace of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Before moving on, just notice how this produces growth. This breaks us away from the dirt of time and the weeds that might choke us. The concerns of this world are to kept where they belong – beneath our feet and not in our hearts.

So there is the ocean of grace – the depths of salvation in Christ, past, present and future. “Christ is an ocean of love in which every drop is infinite compassion.” – Henry Law.

Now, knowledge is the towering mountain over all the hills of this lower world. “This is eternal life – to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent!”

Christ the Word, the Truth, the Way, the Wisdom of God, the Revelation of the Father. To have seen him is to have seen the Father! He is the infallible author of the Scriptures, the giver of the Holy

Spirit, and the Centerpiece of the Bible. As John so beautifully put it in the next verses of the next book!

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3)

In Him is treasured up all the riches of wisdom and knowledge. What an eternal mountain is Christ to all his creation! He is the perfect Word from heaven.

Is not everything about Jesus instructive?

In his incarnation, Christ is the **Wonder** of wonders. His incarnation speaks without words that God spared nothing for your salvation! His very name is “Wonderful”! When Sarah laughed in Gen 18, the Lord asked – is anything too difficult for the Lord? That word ‘difficult’ is the word “wonderful”! So the knowledge of his incarnation is that God is the God of the impossible, of the stupendous, of the miraculous, of that which is beyond man himself!

In his incarnation, He is Wonderful.

In his lowly birth, He is your **Friend**. Jesus joined our race – bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. He stooped to us – and not to the highest or the middle, but to the lowest, to the poorest. Look at him leaving

the glories of heaven to reach you – to be a friend who is closer to you than a brother! You have a friend in Jesus!

He is **wonderful**, he is your **friend**!

Third, He is your **example**! He has shown the world how to live! His obedience to the law, His faith in the Father, His humility, His love for others in service and sacrifice. Who can debate that Jesus is not the best of our human race? Ralph Waldo Emerson said ‘the name of Jesus is not so much *written* as *ploughed* into the history of the world.’

He is **wonderful** in his person and miracles; your **friend** and brother born for adversity; your **example** – to set before you.

Then his death on the cross is a **sacrifice**, an **atonement** for sin, bearing the wrath of God; what wrath? For the sins of the world. ‘Man asks God how much do you love me, and God responds by His Son – this much!’ Here is the free offer to all sinners everywhere! Here is the fountain of life opened for a whole world in sin!

Now how much more for us believers? My sins are paid for! My sins put him on that cross! He went willingly, freely, lovingly, perfectly. I see there my Savior, shedding his blood for unworthy me.

The knowledge of your Lord includes your pardon and title to heaven! Nothing can be added or subtracted to Him!

And then his resurrection – you see your **conqueror**, Christ the victor, Christ arising with the grave and hell beneath his feet, and Satan’s head in his bag!

Do these things seen and found only in Him – do they move you? Do they move you to worship him, like Thomas! “My Lord and my God!”

But they should move you to steadfastness and growth in grace and the knowledge of such a one!

And what more should we say of Christ's ascension – as he is made king over all the universe and all the angels bow before him? Or what of his being seated at the right hand of God – interceding as your priestly king? Upholding you daily, moment by moment? And what about his second coming?

That is a big point here in 2 Peter. Why does He return? He returns to sum up all things in himself! He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End!

How Jesus is your root, your soil, your water, and here, the sunshine toward which your life grows, miraculously!

As I close, two things:

1. If you are not living for him, to him, by him – what is it that you could possibly put in his place? How those in hell right now – who had been offered the Lord in this life – are most wretched because they spurned such a Savior who brought glory.

This passage makes me wonder how much the loss of Christ and heaven makes for the hell of hell, with the torments of sin. Hell knows that there was such a Savior who would have rescued them from coming there!

2. Know that a growing Christian is the safest Christian. Being stagnant is not a picture of health. M'Cheyne said, "I am persuaded that nothing is thriving in my soul unless it is growing."

Oh, how can we not grow, dear ones, with such a Savior? Thomas Brooks said “Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely.”

How can our lives not match then? God help us!