

CHRISTIAN MATURITY AND THE SECOND COMING

BECOMING SPIRITUALLY MATURE

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:1-11:

¹ 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.

⁵ 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.

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.

¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

¹¹ For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Aim: To see some of the areas of growth needed to help us mature as Christians.

INTRODUCTION: Peter's second letter is his final word of instructions to his beloved family of believers. In light of his soon death and the imminent return of Christ, Peter wants to leave behind a message that will last and be an instrument for teaching and instruction long after he has gone.

This brief letter has a double purpose:

- i. to warn the readers about the coming of false teachers, and**
- ii. to assure them of the Second Coming of Christ, which the false teachers would deny.**

This has been a neglected book by many Christians, but it has such a remarkable message that it demands attention from serious students of the Bible. The epistle was probably written between 64 and 74 A.D., not long before his death.

Peter desires that his brothers in the Christian faith grow in a deepening and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He acknowledges Gods power as providing everything that is needed for spiritual growth, even participation in the divine nature. He challenges Christians to build upon the foundation of their faith, and become mature, zealous followers of Christ.

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1. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

Notice in the above scriptures **2 Peter 1:1-2:**

Peter begins on a very basic level and moves to great spiritual heights in this epistle. At the beginning of this chapter, he begins on a down-to-earth level with his readers. It is interesting to note here in the 1st verse that Peter uses four names to identify himself.

1. **Simon:** This was his given name by which he was known to his friends and family. This Hebrew name identified him with the Jews. It is a contraction of the name Simeon, which means *hearing*.
2. **Peter:** This was the new name given to him by Jesus in **Mathew 16** and **John 1:42**. It characterizes the firmness of this faith. It is this firmness of conviction and strength of God-given character that provides Peter with the resources needed to provide leadership to the Christian Church in its early days.

Matthew 16:13-19:

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?

14 And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; [Elijah] and others, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

John 1:42: And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.



3. **Servant or bond slave.** Three very important truths are emphasized in these words by Peter.

A. Every Christian is a bond servant of Jesus Christ. As believers we are slaves or servants, rather than just privileged characters. It is important to realize that Peter called himself a servant or bond slave before he called himself an Apostle. It is also interesting to note other great men of God are referred to as servants, such as Paul in most of the epistles:

Moses:

Psalms 105:26: He sent Moses His servant; and Aaron whom He had chosen.

David:

Psalms 119:125: I am Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies.

B. Because we are His bond slaves, we are the possessions of God. We were purchased by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ:

1 Peter 1:18-19:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot:

C. As bond slaves or servants, we are expected to obey Jesus in all areas of our lives. Our one question should be “What will you have me to do Lord?”



4. **Apostle:** This word indicates a special appointment to serve. He was named, along with eleven others, by Jesus for the special work of sharing. The word actually means “*one sent forth*”. He became the chief leader of the early group of believers, and was used mightily by God in the early days of the church as recorded in the first chapters of the book of **Acts**.

Spiritual Equality

2 Peter 1:1: 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:

In **verse 1**, Peter identifies the recipients of his letter in a somewhat different way from those in his first letter. He calls attention to the fact that every Christian’s faith is of equal value in God’s sight, “***to those who have obtained*** (received) ***like precious faith with us through the Righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***”

It is to be noted that these recipients are not just within a certain geographic location, but are related spiritually to each other. Every Christian, before the Lord, is equal as far as his faith is concerned in value, honor, and privilege. What makes us equal? It is this faith that we have received. We have been given or allotted faith by God. Here the word ***faith*** is used as a synonym for ***salvation***.

How have we been given faith or salvation? The answer is **“through the righteousness of Jesus.”** Remember that our own righteousness is as filthy rags, and would only lead us to judgment. But, Praise God, when we receive of His righteousness, we have salvation.

What does Peter mean by **“with us”**? It could be translated “a faith of the same kind as ours.” But whose faith? Could it be that this is a reference to Jewish Christians? If so, the readers who obtained this faith of equal standing were likely Gentiles. However, it is probably referring to his faith and that of the other apostles — James and John, Paul. Just think, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we become equal before God in value, honor, and privilege like the apostles.

Isn't that a grand thought! **Imagine that God has given us the privilege of sharing in the faith and ministry of the apostles and saints who have preceded us by hundreds and thousands of years.** We do not stand alone as isolated individuals, but are a part of a dynamic stream of people God has chosen to represent His Word and to show His love to a needy, uncertain world.

WOW!

There is also another dimension to this same truth. The common equal privilege that we share in Christ makes us brothers and sisters of equal importance to God. Think of it, the black people of Africa who recently received Christ in the African Crusade are of equal importance and value to God even as we are. Thus, we are heirs of God together. This makes us true brothers in the Lord. Praise the Lord. Our differences become very insignificant when we consider our likeness in the Lord.

PRAYER FOR GRACE AND PEACE

2 Peter 1:2: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord . . .

Just glancing at these words, one might simply say: “This is a customary apostolic prayer”. It is that, but it deserves our examination. It is a brief prayer packed with mighty power.

GRACE means God's unmerited favor. We do not deserve any favor from God, but rather punishment. However, we do need His favor, or we stand condemned. God offers to each of us peace with Himself through His grace of extended mercy. God thought in terms of what we needed rather than what we deserved. Thus, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on Calvary to pay our sin debt. When we

receive Him by faith as our Lord and Saviour, we have a peace with God established.

Having made peace with God, we also have access to the peace of God. This is peace which gives us a sense of satisfaction and a warm inner feeling of contentment. It comes as we allow the Holy Spirit to completely control our lives. If we fail to allow His complete control, we lose this peace of God from our lives.



Philippians 4:6-7:

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

There are many unhappy, grouchy Christians today who are miserable and who cause all those around them to be miserable. What is the reason for this? It is very simple. They are not allowing the Holy Spirit to control their lives, which includes thoughts that lead to actions.

Peter's prayer is that this grace and peace be multiplied through the full, personal, precise, and correct knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is a full knowledge of God that comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to reveal God the Father, and the more we know of Jesus, the more we will know of God the Father. The more we know of God, the more of His grace and peace we will have. The question arises then, "How can this grace and peace be multiplied in my life?" It is simple: Spend time with the Word of God and you will have these multiplied in your life. The more we get into the Word of God, the greater is our knowledge of Jesus Christ and our relationship to Him.

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SOME THINGS JESUS REVEALS ABOUT GOD.

There was much agnostic teaching in Peter's day which said that God could not really be known. However, Peter here plainly reveals some of the ways in which Jesus Christ reveals or makes known God to us. Dr. Harold Fickett gives seven truths that Jesus reveals about God:

1. **Jesus Christ is the God of Power.**

2 Peter 1:3: 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:

This word **power** comes from the Greek word from which we get the English word “dynamite”. Thus, Christ, the God of power, has the spiritual dynamite to explode sin from the life of a person, and the dynamite to make his life worth living.

2. **Jesus is the generous God.**

In **verse 3 — He has given us all things** — He supplies all that we have need of. These spirited gifts are more than a minimal ration. They are an extravagant display of God’s generous love for us. He supplies the resources for “Godliness”. Godliness implies the practical outworking of one’s relationship with himself, family, neighbors, etc. It means bringing a Godly quality to all of life.

3. **Jesus as the God of Glory.**

In **verse 3 — called as to glory** — Peter perhaps had a flashback to the glorious transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. We, too, will see Him in such glory at the Rapture.



4. **Jesus is the God of Excellence.**

In **verse 3** — the word **virtue** can be translated *excellence or uprightness*. In Him there is no sin. Thus, He is qualified to be our sacrifice.

5. **Jesus is the God of Promises.**

In verse 4 — the word translated **precious** also means *valuable*. An interesting study for a Christian to make is the great promises of God through Christ. Take time to read a few of them:

Hebrews 4:14-16:

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

1 John 3:2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

Acts 16:31: And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Isaiah 26:3: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.

**PERFECT
PEACE**

Philippians 4:19: But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

James 4:7: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Hebrews 13:5: Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

John 14:1-3:

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

15 For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.



6. Jesus is the God Who makes every believer a sharer in the Divine Nature.

This divine nature of God is ours through the regeneration by the Holy Spirit:

2 Peter 1:4: 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.

7. Jesus is the God Who delivers the believer from the corruption that is in the world.

In **verse 4** we see that by nature, we are bent toward sinning. When we surrender ourselves to Him, we are enabled to overcome the temptations which lead to corruption.

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