

Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

An Expositional Journey Through 2Peter

3- Becoming Partakers of the Divine Nature

May 24, 2020

2Peter 1:1-4

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.

To the Glory of God

Every Saturday morning at 6:00am, the Elders and myself gather together, through the Common Grace of the Internet, to remind each other of God's Call on our lives- and to pray for various needs. It is our weekly reminder that, apart from Jesus- we can do nothing.

And as I was in prayer with these dear men, yesterday, I was reminded of what we learned last week from the Apostle Peter in verse 1:

... To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

I have received a Faith of "*of the same kind*" as Peter? Think about that. Peter was a capital "A" Apostle. Jesus had handpicked him as a

disciple. He was the first to confess Jesus to be “the Christ”. He saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain. He walked on water. He was the first Apostle to see the resurrected Jesus. He preached the first evangelistic Sermon at Pentecost. He boldly confronted the Sanhedrin when they questioned him about healing the lame man. He was the first to preach to the Gentiles. Sick people used to line the streets where Peter walked, hoping that his shadow might fall on them and heal them. Peter actually wrote Scripture.

And we, ordinary Christians, have obtained a faith “*of the same kind*” with Peter’s? Absolutely yes! And that means there is nothing “ordinary” about the Faith we’ve received. It has been given to us as a Gift from the Lord Jesus, the very *same* Lord, Who gave Peter *his* Faith.

But with all that happened to him- Peter was under no illusion about who he was. He was an ordinary, sinful man- chosen by an *extraordinary* Savior; to fulfill an *extraordinary* Calling; through the Power of an *extraordinary* Spirit. So, *everything* that had made Peter to be “extraordinary” had come to him as a Gift from the Grace from God. And that means, that, apart from Jesus, Peter was nothing. That’s why, when Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him, Peter quickly pulled him up and said,

The Acts 10:26b

... “**Stand up; I too am just a man**”

Now if you are a Christian this morning, the very *same* amazing Savior has chosen you; cleansed you from all your Sin; given you His perfect Righteousness; and filled you with His Holy Spirit. And so, no matter how sinful you used to be; no matter how wicked your former life was- we now hear the Voice of God tell us,

The Acts 10:15b

... “**What God has cleansed you must not call common.**” (NKJV)

Because of what God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit has done *in* you and *for* you- you are no longer “common” or “unclean” or “unholy”. Jesus has called you by name; appointed you to faithfully steward a particular Calling; has a unique name for you that only He knows; and has prepared a place in his eternal Kingdom- that, according to Peter, **1Peter 1:4b&5**

... is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

... so, it really doesn't matter what you *used* to be; or what you *used* to do. By God's Grace and through the Gift of saving Faith- you are now a child of God. And it is because of all that- that the Apostle now pronounces an "Apostolic Blessing" on you, when he says,

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

Now several years ago, Rhonda and I were at a Restaurant and I noticed a very large framed picture of the man, who was the pope at that time- on the wall behind the cash register. And being the laid back and bashful person that I am, I got up out of my chair; walked over; went behind the counter to the picture so I could look closely at it. And underneath the picture was a statement that the pope at that time had pronounced an "Apostolic Blessing" on that Restaurant. And, not being content with just knowing that- I asked the lady behind the register, "*Where do you get one of these?*" And she said that her father had been given this- *directly from the Vatican-* for a donation of \$10,000.

Now she was very happy and proud about it all- but I was literally stunned to learn that the "selling of indulgences" that Martin Luther had cried out against 500 years ago- was alive and well within the Roman religious system. And so, I will paraphrase something that Luther had told the Romans of his day, "*If the pope has the Power to bestow an 'Apostolic Blessing' on someone or something- would he not rather do it for love than for money?*"

Now I know that the pope is a fraud; and does NOT have that kind of Power today, precisely because the pope is NOT an Apostle. The pope is NOT even the "successor to Peter." But Peter *was* an Apostle. And Peter DID have that kind of Power. But Peter didn't *sell* his Blessings- he gave them out *freely*. So, with Covid-19 running rampant through the world today, doesn't the thought of God's Grace and Peace being *multiplied* to you sound refreshing? Isn't it just what we all need right now- a fresh bathing in God's Grace and Peace?

Well, Peter says right here that it's available to you. So, don't just rush

by this Blessing from a genuine Apostle so fast to get to something more juicy. Linger here for a moment and ponder the thought that the *more* we know about God- the more *familiar* we become with His Promises. The *more* we understand and are amazed at all of God's pristine Attributes- along with what God has promised to believers- the *more* our thinking will be *shaped* and *saturated* by the Words of the Lord Jesus. And the *more* our thinking is shaped and saturated by what came out of Jesus' Mouth- the *more* Grace and Peace will be *multiplied* to us. Because that's what Peter said. Look again. Peter didn't simply say, "*Grace and Peace to you*". He said,

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

So, the Bible in your hands; and in your car; and in your home- contains the Source of the *multiplied* Grace and Peace that you need every day. And this is in accord with what Jesus Himself taught. Because the Lord Jesus never intended for saved folks to merely *read* the Bible- periodically. Jesus never told us to put verses from the Bible on the bumpers of our cars or on our ball caps. No, Jesus means for His Words to "dwell inside" of us; to become a "part" of us; to "live continually with us and never leave"; or to "abide" in us- because they are the Words of Life. Look at what Jesus said in **John 15:7-10**:

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Peter, who had personally experienced unprecedented Signs, Wonders, and Empowerments of the Holy Spirit, knew that people experienced the Grace of God through the *Message* of the Gospel. Jesus said it was the Truth that would "make" us to be "free" (**John 8:32**). And Peter also knew that real Peace was NOT merely the "*absence* of conflict or war"- and that it didn't come to anyone by them witnessing supernatural phenomena. Peter knew that true and lasting Peace came ONLY from

believing what Jesus said. He remembered Jesus' Words from **John 16:33**:

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

This is why I preach the Bible- *expositionally*. And I call it, "Expositional Worship". Because Jesus is NOT satisfied that we merely nod our heads to Him; or periodically peruse what He said; or examine what He did. No, Jesus intends for His Gospel to be *heralded* by men who have been smitten with His Love! In the "Great Commission" Jesus instructed His disciples to go to the nations and "**preach the Gospel to all creation**". (**Mark 16:15**). So, in *some* way; in *some* form; every single genuine believer is to either herald the glorious Gospel to the peoples of this world *themselves*; or support those who do.

And this is why we *cannot* be content with the so-called "Social Gospel". Building houses for the homeless; and feeding the hungry; and clothing the naked is great; and we *should* be a part of that. But, all of that is in vain- if those people are not saved. And *nobody* is saved through being given a new home; or a meal; or clothes to wear. Nobody. God has clearly and repeatedly told us that He has chosen one single method to save those who believe:

1Corinthians 1:21

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

The Apostles obeyed Jesus by *disobeying* the law of the land (that forbade the preaching of Jesus) and they literally "*filled* Jerusalem with the Teaching of Jesus" (**The Acts 5:28**). But, not being content with that- they then risked everything to "upset the entire world" (**The Acts 17:6**) with their Teaching.

And, ever since I first read that- I have believed that the Call of God on me and on this Church- is that we must be a part of "upsetting the world" in our generation. So, we have developed a "Holy Discontentment"- which is the attitude of mind and heart whereby we are so very grateful for all that God has done *in* us and *for* us- but we are entirely *discontented* with our *response* to what God has done. And so we press in to God; we run hard

after God; we pray without ceasing; we weep between the porch and the altar; we grab the horns of the altar; and cry out to God for *more* opportunities to herald this glorious Gospel to *more* people- using every means available.

One way I would like to encourage you personally this week- is to point you to what Peter says right here in verses 1-4. So, as I *exposit* what God the Holy Spirit carried the Apostle along to write; and as I *worship* the Jesus that Peter is pointing us to- that you too can

2Peter 1:4b

... become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

So, we should all be encouraged this morning! Why? Because this Passage says that we have obtained, from the Lord, a Faith "*of the same kind*" as that of one of the greatest Apostles! And we have been given the very *same* Promises by the Lord Jesus!

Now there is a correlation between what we do all week long and our level of both Joy and Peace. Many hundreds of years ago, the Leaders of the Church measured a believer's relationship with Jesus by the level of Joy and Peace they had. And this is back when Christianity was a persecuted and illegal religion. So, Suffering was the order of the day. But today, in a land of plenty- a land where for the last 230+ years- Christianity has been the *favored* religion- far too many Leaders of the modern Church measure a believer's relationship with Jesus by how much Faith they have; or how much money or material goods they possess.

But the biblical Principles remain the same. Show me a "weak person"- a person who is *easily* deceived by the lusts of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; and the boastful pride of life- and I will show you someone who is NOT praying as they should; and someone who is NOT abiding in the Words of Jesus. You simply CANNOT be worldly and be in prayer and in the Word at the same time. It is "either- or".

Likewise, you show me a person, who is not *actively* engaged in the saving of souls- either by praying for them; or by preaching the Gospel to them; or both- and I will show you a person, who has gotten caught up in the cares of this life; the deceitfulness of riches; and the lust of other things. And has forgotten how he was saved.

So, when you see a person, who has lost his Joy and Peace- you

know that this individual is no longer growing in

... the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

Peter says here that NOT learning and being absolutely stunned at the knowledge of God and of Jesus- will *diminish* the Joy and Peace that Salvation brings to the believer. Because the two are connected. As we continue to grow in the Knowledge of God and Jesus- the more we are captured by the absolute Sovereignty of God. And the Knowledge that we are in the safest and most secure place in all the Universe- the Hands of a sovereign God, Who loves us- will allow us to also know that our Trials and Sufferings are NOT arbitrary. Our Tests and Afflictions have Purpose and Meaning! And our sovereign Lord has *purposefully* allowed us to burn and to hurt- NOT to destroy us- but to burn away the hay, wood, and stubble- so we may share in God's Holiness! (**Hebrews 12:10**) And so, BECAUSE of our Trials- God will bring us forth- looking more like Jesus! And that Knowledge is the *catalyst* for the Joy and Peace that Peter talks about here. Now look again at verse 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.

Now, Peter uses an interesting Greek word to begin this thought. This word, (*hoos*; Strongs #5613) was only used two other times in the entire New Testament- once by John (**The Revelation 22:12**) and once by Paul (**Romans 12:3**). And, in the Greek, this word means: *like as*; or *even as*; or *in the same manner as*.

Now what that means is that you simply can't read verse 3 by itself. It has to be read in conjunction with what Peter just said in verse 2. So, the correct way to understand the first part of verse 3 is like this:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; in the same manner as His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness...

So, both Grace and Peace is *multiplied* to us in (by) the Knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord- *in the same manner* as His Divine Power has

granted to us EVERYTHING pertaining to Life and Godliness. In other words, the Grace and Peace that God gave us in the Miracle of the New Birth will be *multiplied* “in”, “by”, and “through” the Knowledge of God and Jesus- IN THE SAME WAY that God’s Divine Power has granted us *everything* pertaining to Life and Godliness.

So, we can rest comfortably knowing that as we yield ourselves to the Will of God; and we continue to grow in our Knowledge of God and Jesus- both the Grace and Peace that we already have will be *multiplied- in the same way* as everything that pertains to Life and Godliness has been granted to us by God’s Divine Power.

Now I have pondered this Statement for many years. I understand that God has given us everything pertaining to Godliness, but what about Life? There are aspects about this Life that *doesn’t* seem to be taught in the Bible. Like how to build a bridge; or how to split the atom; or how to build a car; or how to use the Internet. Those things are *not* taught in the Bible. In fact, there are *many, many* things about this Life that are NOT taught in the Bible. So, how could Peter say that God’s Divine Power has granted us EVERYTHING that pertains to Life and Godliness? I think the way to understand this Statement is to put Life and Godliness together to say, “Godliness in this Life” or “this Life of Godliness”. So, God’s Divine Power has granted to us- *everything* pertaining to a Life of Godliness or Godliness in this Life.

And by connecting verse 2 with verse 3- we see that IN THE SAME WAY AS our Grace and Peace is multiplied in, by, and through the Knowledge of God and Jesus- EVERYTHING pertaining to our Godliness in this Life is ALSO granted to us- in, by, and through God’s Divine Power!

But now look again at the last part of verse 3:

... through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Now there are two phrases that are too similar to be an accident. We have one phrase in verse 2 that says:

... in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

... and then we have the phrase in verse 3:

... through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Now, many times in the Bible, the words, “in” and “by” and “through” are *similar*- as they all come from the same root word. So, Peter is telling his first Century audience- and us- that two things happen “in”, “by”, or “through” our Knowledge of God- growing:

- The Grace and Peace that God gave us in Salvation- is *multiplied*
- Everything pertaining to a Life of Godliness- is *granted*

And this tells me that believers- growing in the Knowledge of God and Jesus- is *mandatory*- if we hope to have those two things happen in our lives. And, to look at it negatively- if I don't sense that God's Grace and Peace is being multiplied in my life; and I sense that some things pertaining to a life of Godliness are NOT being granted to me- it ISN'T because God doesn't love me. It's NOT because God is mean or doesn't want me anymore. No, those two things are not happening in my life- because I am NOT growing in the Knowledge of God and Jesus!

So, the fix is to engage in some type of Study that focuses on me growing in my Knowledge of God. Another way of looking at this is what the writer of **Hebrews** told us:

Hebrews 12:1b-3

... let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

So, when we are overtaken by the Trials and Cares of this Life; When we sense that we are becoming stagnant and not growing in Godliness; and when the World and all its glitter seem to be a *better* Treasure than Jesus- we need to do the two things that this writer recommends:

- Fix our eyes on Jesus

- Consider Him

... or in the words of the Apostle Peter, we should grow and gain in

... the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

... or ...

... the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

...and this is *why*, in **2Peter 3:18a**- Peter said,

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

So, for the sake of both Grace and Peace being multiplied in us; and for the sake of everything pertaining to a Life of Godliness being granted to us- we all need to focus our eyes on Jesus. We need to see Him! *Behold* Him! *Admire* Him! *Desire* Him! *Enjoy* Him! *Delight* ourselves in Him! We need to look- *full faced*- at Jesus until our hard hearts are softened; and our blind eyes are opened. And the Promise from a God, Who cannot lie is- that we will then be changed!

2Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

... and in this particular case- how does the Apostle Paul define the “Glory of the Lord”? In two ways:

- **the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4b)**
- **the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)**

... which I would suggest is Jesus. The writer of **Hebrews** put it this way:

Hebrews 1:3

He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [God's] glory

So, as we “fix our eyes” on Jesus and “consider” Him- we will “see” or “behold” the Glory of the Lord. And as we “see” Jesus- we will come to “know” Him. And as we grow in our Knowledge of Jesus- in His magnificent Glory- we will *appreciate*; and *marvel at*; and *value*; and *admire*; and *treasure* God’s Glory- to the very *same* degree that God Himself does. And when that happens- we will be *transformed* into what we see. And the Grace and Peace of God will be *multiplied* in us; and *everything* we need for a Life of Godliness will be granted to us!

Now look again at the end of verse 3:

... who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Now most of the time that anyone talks about being “called by God”- we usually don’t word it like this. Most people talk about God calling them “by His Mercy” or “by His Grace” or even “by His Love”. And the reason we talk like that is because the Qualities of God’s Mercy, Grace, and Love- are all about *us*. But here, Peter says that we have been called to Salvation by God’s very Own- “Glory and Excellence.” And those two Qualities are all about God- and NOT us.

So, why did Peter talk like this? Was Peter *against* God’s Mercy, Grace, and Love? No. But we must remember who Peter was; and what Peter was doing. Peter was one of only a handful of men, in the history of the world, who were called to be Apostles. And the number one main Goal of the Office of the Apostles- was to *establish* Christianity on the earth.

So, Peter was NOT doing in this Epistle what I am doing this morning. I am *heralding* the already established Gospel for three reasons:

- So those of you who are lost will become a part of the already established One; Holy; Catholic; and Apostolic Christian Church
- So, that those of you, who are already saved, may grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jesus
- So, that I may grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jesus

So, I am using the unique Gifts; and the Anointings; and the Office that God has graced me with- to *propagate* the *already established* Church to more and more people. But Peter wasn’t doing that. Peter was actually

establishing the Church by what he teaches here. So, I think that Peter was equating what he teaches here with the Old Testament Prophecies about the New Covenant. So, let's see if that is true. Let's turn to read **Ezekiel 36:22&23**:

... Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

So, Israel had broken God's Covenant and had profaned God's Reputation (Name) among the pagan nations of the world. And the way they had profaned God's Reputation was in NOT delighting themselves in God. And so, the pagan gods and worldly entertainments had captured their hearts and God was sitting over in the corner- alone and forgotten and neglected.

Only God will NOT *allow* Himself to be humiliated like that. God will NOT *tolerate* being ignored- while the people He chose for Himself are enamored by the sights and sounds and colors of a fallen world. God gave them their land; and their language; and their Government; and their religion; and their law- so they would be *unique* (holy) among the nations of the world. And God did this- so that the world would come to Israel to see this great God. So, *everything* about the First or the Old Covenant was a "come and see" Covenant.

So, God says here that He is going to "vindicate the Holiness of His Own great Name". In other words, God is going to "adjudicate the damage done to His Own pristine Reputation". And why is God going to do this?

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God,

Then the entire world will understand; see; behold; comprehend; know- what? That God is the Lord! How will the nations of the world know this?

"when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

When I verify; prove; validate; confirm Myself to be unique; set apart; different; and holy... AMONG MY PEOPLE (you)- in the very sight of the unbelieving pagans! So, when God begins to look glorious; and valuable; and important; and beautiful; and worthy AMONG THE PEOPLE HE HAS CALLED TO BE HIS PEOPLE- in the sight of the pagan world- then God's Holiness that has been profaned by the first people- will be vindicated or adjudicated!

Now this has got to be something *big*-something *powerful* and *earthshaking!* How is God going to "vindicate the Holiness of His Own Name that has been profaned by the very people that He chose to be His people under the Old Covenant?" By creating another Galaxy? By destroying the earth again by flood? By causing white suns to explode into a supernova and become a black hole? By creating a virus to encircle the globe? No. So, how will God do what needs to be done so that His Own pristine Reputation is made to look glorious among His Own people- *in the sight of the unbelievers?* Look at verses 24-27:

Ezekiel 36:24b-31

... I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.

So, here is a Promise- about a *new* Covenant- NOT between Man and God- because Man CANNOT keep his part of the Covenant. No, here God promises a *New* Covenant- that will be entered into between God the Father; and God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. And this New Covenant

will NOT contain more Commandments- but that God will sovereignly give His people a new heart and a new spirit. And God has promised that in this New Covenant- He alone will wash us with clean water; and He alone will put His Spirit within us. And God the Father has covenanted with the other two Persons of the Trinity to work in unity to CAUSE His people to walk in His Statutes. And what will be the result of God doing all of that- sovereignly?

... you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

... so, because God has entered into an infinitely *superior* Covenant with Jesus and the Holy Spirit- God will have Himself a people- out from every nation, tribe, and tongue- who will love the Lord and who will delight themselves in God. Because everything about this new Covenant- is a “Go and tell” Covenant. And just in case they forgot- God says again:

Ezekiel 36:32

I am not doing *this* for your sake," declares the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

So, the primary reason that the New Covenant is so great and such Good News- is because it is NOT about us. It isn't about our Performance; or our Works; or our Labor; or our Abilities. No, this Covenant is about God and His Glory! And so, in *this* Covenant- God's Glory will be manifest in two ways:

- The “**Glory of God's Grace**” will be seen (and marveled at) in the radical transformation of unworthy sinners- by what God alone does for them in Christ- so they will love Jesus and delight themselves in Him- even as they suffer
- The “**Glory of God's Justice**” will be seen (and trembled at) in the Damnation of unrepentant rebels- who *refuse* to love Jesus and delight themselves in Him- but find the fullness of *their* Joy in the shiny trinkets of a fallen and damned world

So, in essence, the New Covenant- is God doing *for* us- what we CANNOT do for ourselves: to so completely change us- that we genuinely

love Jesus and, as we see Him more and more clearly- we are progressively *changed* into *enjoying* Him- *forever!*

And this is *why* Peter says here that God has called us to Salvation, NOT merely “by” God’s Grace (which He has); and NOT merely “through the Gift of Saving Faith (which He has)- but ALSO...

... by His own glory and excellence

... which is simply another way of understanding that the *Origination*; and the *Focus*; and *End Result*; of the entire Christian Faith is...

God and His Glory

... and NOT us. We are merely privileged to be caught up in God’s Own white hot Determination to “get Himself Glory” by saving an unworthy people- by what God alone does for them- in all three Persons of the Trinity. In other words, we are the creatures on which God has chosen to demonstrate; or show; or reveal; or manifest; the *indescribable* Beauty and Wonder and Majesty of the Glory of His Grace! Or as the Apostle Paul put it:

Ephesians 1:5&6a

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace...

Now please look again at verse 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.

Now the old fisherman doesn’t have long to live. History teaches us that, in just a few years from the time Peter was “carried along” by God the Holy Spirit to pen down this 2nd Epistle- he was, once again, imprisoned- this time in Rome. But this time- God would NOT deliver him. But there is evidence to suggest that, this time, Peter was imprisoned along with Paul. And what a fellowship they must have had! What talks! What prayers!

What testimonies of God's Grace! And when it was time- either Paul watched the guards, through the bars of the window, take Peter out and crucify him upside down; or else Peter watched them take Paul and cut his head off.

But however it was- by the time that Nero committed suicide (June 9, 68AD), both Peter and Paul were in Glory with Jesus. And what they talked about; and what they had prayed about; and what they had written so much about; and told so many about; and what glimpse both Peter and Paul had seen on earth- they now knew in fullness!

But now is the time to write this all down. Peter was "compelled"- some would say, "driven"- to tell us that "**by these**"- all this other would happen. So, what was he saying here? "By these" what? Well, the context here are two things:

- The multiplied Grace and Peace
- Everything granted to us pertaining to a Life of Godliness

... by these- God is now going to give us something that is so *valuable*; and so *precious*; and so *useful* in our walk with God:

... He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises ...

Here, Peter calls the Promises of God two things:

- Precious
- Magnificent

Now the original Greek words that Peter dictated and his scribe wrote down (*megas*; Strongs #3173/760 and *timios*; Strongs #5093) have to do with: *something very large and widespread in Importance*; as well as: *something held in honor or something that is especially dear*. That's how Peter described the Promises of God.

So, I have a Question. How many Promises from God are in the Bible? Does anybody know? Have you ever looked for them? Have you ever counted them? Have you ever written them down? I haven't. And I am ashamed to tell you, this morning, that I don't have clue how many times my God promised me something. I have never bothered to take the time to even look. I have never written them down and I have never even thought

much about them. What a shame!

The *best* I have done is that when I am studying a particular Subject- I look for what God has promised about that particular Subject- like what God promised in the Old Covenant about the New. But I really can't say I have seen EVERYTHING that God promised about the New Covenant in the Old.

Now I'm not trying to make us all; feel bad this morning. All I'm trying to do right now is to try, as best I can, to tell you what **2Peter 1:4** means. And Peter said that "BY" the multiplied Grace and Peace and "BY" having been granted everything pertaining to a Godly Life- God has given us Promises that are very large and widespread in Importance; and Promises that are *especially* dear and sweet. And so, it should behoove us to at least know *some* of these Precious and Magnificent Promises.

Now that would be enough- but Peter was not finished. He then went on to say,

... so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature ...

... so, that by these Magnificent and Precious Promises- we MAY; we have Permission- to become PARTAKERS of the Divine Nature.

Now the original Greek word for Partakers (koinoonikos; Strongs # 2843) has the idea of: *fellowship; intimacy; associated with; a comrade of; companion; a sharer in or with; in communion with.*

So, "BY" the Magnificent and Precious Promises of God- we have God's Permission *to become intimate with* the Divine Nature. We have Permission *to have Fellowship with* the Divine Nature. We *May be associated with* the Divine Nature; we *May be a comrade of* the Divine Nature; *a sharer in or with* the Divine Nature; and we have God's Permission to be *in communion with* the Divine Nature! Wow!

But is Peter teaching that we are going to have Christ's very Own Nature- in the sense that we will become gods? The ancient Gnostics thought so- and so that's what they taught. And the modern Gnostics think so today- and that's why they teach the very same thing. Dear friends, please understand that the very first time that anyone taught that human beings can become gods- was in the Garden- when satan deceived Eve with it. That is pure blasphemy. And I don't care how large the following may be- or how many books or tapes they have or how large their television audience may be- anyone who teaches that human beings can become gods (by any means)- are false Teachers and they are guilty of Blasphemy.

That is NOT what Peter is saying here.

Now two hundred and seventy-four years ago, America's greatest Theologian, Jonathan Edwards wrote a book, entitled, "*Religious Affections*". And I heartedly recommend that every one of you buy that book and read it. Now, if you're like me, you might have to read it about ten times before what Edwards says takes hold- but the book is good enough that you could read it ten times anyway.

But on page 203, Edwards wrote this:

"[This union] is expressed in Scripture by the saints being made "partakers of divine nature" (**2Peter 1:4**), and having God dwelling in them, and they in God. . . . Not that the saints are made partakers of the Essence of God, and so are 'Godded' with God, and 'Christed' with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics; but, to use the Scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God's *fullness* (**Ephesians 3:17-19; John 1:16**). that is, of God's spiritual Beauty and Happiness [His Holiness], according to the measure and capacity of a creature.

In other words, to share in the Divine Nature is NOT to share in the Divine Essence of God. We don't become God when we come into union with God- even as we don't become Christ when we come into union with Christ. By using the word, "nature," Edwards means

"that property which is natural to anyone and is eminently his character."

... in other words,

"'Holiness' would be the normal *Nature* of the Holy Spirit- but, because He is fully God- His *Essence* would be 'Divinity'"

The Promises of God's Grace provide the Power that makes the Demands of God's Holiness on us- an Experience of *Freedom* rather than *Fear* and *Confinement*. Peter described the freeing Power of God's Promises like this:

For by these [the multiplied Grace and Peace and being granted everything pertaining to a Godly Life] **He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them** [the precious and magnificent Promises] **you may**

become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

In other words, when we trust the Promises of God, we sever the root of Corruption and sinful desires (lust) by the Power of a *superior* Promise!

And that is why Christianity is mainly about how the Word and Spirit breaks cruel and deceptive power of *counterfeit* Pleasures and *replaces* them with infinitely BETTER Pleasures (JOY, GRACE, PEACE, and LOVE)! And that is why we should all be diligent to light our paths and load our hearts with the Word of God!

The death of my Sin sounds really sweet- until, of course, I actually try to kill it. Our greatest adversary, Sin, is also our greatest Handicap. It's perfectly positioned to undermine the great Goal of our new Life.

But may God forever be praised that He doesn't stake the battle on *our* ability!

... 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.

The way to *enjoy* more of God- is to live like Him. And the Power to live like Jesus- is not ours- but His. We find sure Help in God's Hands- in His Power- the Power that formed mountains; that dug the rivers; that lights the stars; and that breathes life into bears, sharks, and bald eagles. This is the Power that established the Universe; governs the nations; and judges all people. And when we even try to live by that Power- you lack *nothing* on the road to Godliness.

"But we need some ammo to do this, Brother Blair" We sure do. And Peter gave that ammo to us:

The precious and magnificent Promises of God

[God has given us] **precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature**

The ammunition for our daily battles are God's Promises- specific, Blood-bought Promises. And it really is a feast- NOT a burden. So, when our hungry souls groan- this is what it really wants. These Promises are very specific. You can find them; understand them; memorize them; and share

them.

Remember, when we're physically hungry- we don't just TALK about what food *is*. We go and find real food- a turkey sandwich on wheat; a Wendy's cheeseburger with chili; a grilled chicken salad; some trail mix; or a Hershey's bar. The mere *idea* of food does nothing for our hunger- if we don't then go and identify something specific and edible and actually put it in our mouth.

The same logic applies to God's Promises. We don't win any battles over Sin, Suffering, and satan by just acknowledging we need Promises. No! What are they? How do they keep me from sinning or despairing or doubting? If Promises are going to fulfill their God-given Purpose- we have to know them; rehearse them; and voice them to one another. Promises like these:

- **[We all] *are* being transformed into the same image [of Christ].
(2Corinthians 3:18)**
- **[God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain:
(The Revelation 21:4)**
- **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until day of Christ.
(Philippians 1:6)**

So, at least as often as your stomach gets hungry- your heart and soul get hungry. Look for God's Promises when you read the Bible, *specific* Promises, and feed your hungry soul. Eat them. Eat them every day; and all throughout the day. Eat full meals. Eat snacks. Eat planned meals. Eat spontaneously.

And as you eat- you will become *more* like God. And as you become more like Him- you will experience *more* of the Abundant Life that He has given you- and *less* of the Sin from which He has rescued you! And that's a Promise!

Amen. Let's pray

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This is a single transcript in a larger series of Sermons taken from a verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of 2Peter**.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

