

2 Peter Part 2 – Study Notes

Introduction

I'm sure most of us here want our lives to matter to others and want our lives to make a difference to this generation and future generations. We want to leave a legacy behind. This second letter is Peter's last will and testament and legacy to the church. It is a legacy that has encouraged and strengthened generations of believers live the Christian life. The first section of Peter's letter teaches us how to focus on being useful and fruitful.

2 Peter 1:1-3 *Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: ²Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* Simon combined his birth name here with the name that Jesus gave him when he confessed that Jesus was the Messiah in Matthew 16:16-18. He began by introducing himself with the God-given identity and significance he had through becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. It is important to know who we are in Jesus Christ. The answer to overcome false teaching is to know God. Peter here referred to Jesus as both God and Saviour. When we experience God in our lives we will become fruitful because of the moral transformation that takes place.

True knowledge, *gnosis*, will counteract heretical and humanistic teaching. The Greek word for **knowledge** is *epignosis* and refers to having a heart knowledge of Jesus. Peter and his readers did not just merely know about God but they shared an intimate relationship with God. They literally knew God through their relationship with Jesus Christ and through it had moral insight. It is the same for us today. Devotion to Jesus supplies us with all we need for godliness. It results from steadfast commitment to God's Word, which alone is the source of thinking. Any other source corrupts the believer's mind.

Peter said that *God has given us everything we need for a godly life*. God provides everything we need to live a Godly life. This amazing truth does not provide an excuse for passivity but is an invitation for participation. Whilst God provides everything we need, we must still act. If Peter or Paul or the other Apostles had not acted no growth would have occurred. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 *I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.* Paul and Apollos were active in ministry, not passive.

Along with our initial salvation, God has equipped us, by the Holy Spirit living within us, with everything that we need. We can access resources that when used will result in fruitfulness in our relationship with God and with other people. Our responsibility is to use those resources correctly.

2 Peter 1:4-9 *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.* In light of God's powerful provision (*2 Peter 1:3*) and His precious promises (*2 Peter 1:4*), Peter now called the Church to do something; to participate. **Some of these precious promises are:**

- Ω Forgiveness of our sins, past, present and future
- Ω Spiritual adoption by God the Father
- Ω Spiritual strength by the Holy Spirit
- Ω Provision of our needs
- Ω Hope of heaven when we die
- Ω Bodily resurrection when He returns
- Ω Reigning with Him in His kingdom

There are many many promises in Scripture. Peter explained how we *participate in the divine nature* and *escape the corruption in the world*. As we put away the lust that causes corruption, we increasingly partake of the divine nature. Then we become more and more like Christ. We start with **justification**; that means we are declared righteous before God, moving in our **sanctification**; that we are made increasingly more righteous, which should be seen more progressively in our everyday lives.

2 Peter 1:5 says we to *make every effort to add to your faith*. It implies haste, eagerness, and determination. Peter gave us a progressive list of Christian virtues, that when established in our lives, will cause us to be fruitful in the knowledge of God.

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With this kind of persistence and determination Peter taught to add a number of things to **faith**. **Faith** is already present. **Faith** is the foundation, relying on the promises of God for spiritual growth. It is therefore upon this foundation, established by the Holy Spirit, that we are to build.

Goodness: This is to do with moral excellence, courage to do what is right, and to stand alone if necessary. Live by what is right not popular.

Knowledge: This is practical knowledge by both study of the Word of God, and a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, through having an intimate relationship with Him.

Self-control: Believers build on faith with moral excellence and knowledge, they do not allow anything or anyone control them except God. Self control means maintaining a balanced life, even when the world encourages other things. It means saying **no** at times.

Perseverance: Believers are to continue on the narrow path even when things try to draw them away from it. It means to remain steadfast.

Godliness: The Greek word *eusebeia* refers to someone who has the right perspective and attitude towards God, showing the proper reverence and worship due to the Almighty God. This also reflects in having the right attitude towards others, having a genuine servant heart.

Mutual affection: The Greek word *philadelphia* refers to treating others as if they were members of our own family. Living in close relationship with others where we bear one another's burdens, sharing each other's joy and pain. This love is key to living in a harmonious relationship.

Love: These all lead to love. The kind of love seeks the highest good for others, putting their needs above our own. God demonstrated that kind of love by sending Jesus.

The divine power of the Holy Spirit, God can and will work in us and we grow more like Jesus Christ **if** we allow Him.

2 Peter 1:8 ***For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*** We don't participate in these things for our salvation, that's already ours by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Peter said that **if** we have these increasing measure we will be useful and fruitful in our lives. The result is we will leave a great legacy.

2 Peter 1:9. ***But whoever does not have them is short-sighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.*** Peter acknowledged that not everyone will engage in these and reach maturity. Blind believers will not look back on their conversion, when God purified them from their sins. Short sighted believers cannot look far ahead to the coming of the Lord Jesus and His reward to the faithful. So if they live for themselves they squander the provision and power God has given them.

2 Peter 1:10-11 ***Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*** Remember we don't do these things to secure a place in heaven. Peter asked the church passionately and urgently to demonstrate the reality of our salvation. The result of diligence is stability, usefulness and fruitfulness. With these things come eternal rewards upon Christ's return. Peter talked about a grand entrance into heaven. None of us want to face Jesus ashamed of our lack of fruitfulness, ashamed of squandering the powerful promises and provision He has bestowed upon us.

As Christians we must invest our time, energies and resources into spiritual growth. God has given us irrevocable promises that what we invest in our spiritual growth, He will reward. This is a guaranteed reward in our investment, which cannot be said of what the world offers. We are called to develop Christian virtues on the foundation of faith, that results in love.

It is vitally important to nurture these virtues. We need to take specific steps to put away ungodly behaviour. It takes our time and our energy but its rewards are out of this world