

2 Peter 1:1-4

“Unlocking Godly Living”

As you know 1st Peter was written not too long before Peter’s martyrdom which means that 2nd Peter probably finds him with literally months if not weeks to live. It wasn’t something that would surprise him he’d known for a long time that he would die a martyr’s death; Jesus had told him that he would.

You recall, we rehearsed it a couple of weeks ago there they all were it was that scene on the beach whereby Jesus restored Peter into the ministry. After Peter had so boldly declared that he would *never deny* his Lord but rather he would *die* with Him if it came to that, he buckled just as Jesus said he would and denied Him 3 times... You’re familiar with the chain of events Jesus was taken, given a mock trial; beaten, battered, bloodied, nailed to a cross and left there to die. 3 days later He rose from the dead and began to reveal Himself once again to His disciples. It was one of those occasions... Jesus was there on the beach, the disciples had been out fishing all night. Jesus called their attention to Himself, Peter jumped into the sea and swam to Him on the shore and as the rest of the disciples made their way as well they all sat down and began to eat together. It was then that Jesus restored Peter publicly commissioning him back into the ministry with these words, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these? Feed My lambs. Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? Tend My sheep. Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? Feed My sheep.” It was then that Jesus said to him, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.*’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’” John 21:18-19 “It’s going to get rough *on* you Peter, it’s going to be tough *for* you Peter, anchor yourself in your resolve, you *follow* Me till the very end.” Now here he was, and the time of his departure was at hand, he draws our attention to his awareness of that in Vs 14 where he says (notice), “knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.” Translation, “I’ll soon be put to death.”

So these are some final words that Peter had to say to the church. As you know final words are often times very serious words, words that are wanting to be communicated *clearly* and listened to *carefully*.

When it all comes down what is it that Peter points us to? The word of God, the overwhelming emphasis of this epistle is that we might know the word of God, consequently deepening our relationship with the God of the word. There are only 3 Ch's in the book of 2nd Peter, it takes about 10 minutes to read in its entirety and the word *know* or *knowledge* is used at least 13 times. Not as reference to intellectual understanding (though that's obviously included) but it speaks more to a living participation in the truth, an intimate experience in the truth... You might know the President of the U.S. because you see him on T.V. you'd recognize him if he walked through the doors, but you don't know him by experience, you don't have a working relationship with him. That's the kind of knowledge that Peter encourages us unto.

You see, as to where 1st Peter addresses problems and pressures on the outside coming in through persecution; 2nd Peter addresses problems and pressures on the inside creeping in through deceitful and destructive doctrines; heresies. Perhaps you recall Paul's final meeting with the Ephesian elders when he spoke to them *his* final words knowing that they would never see him again. He said to them, "...*take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*" Acts 20:28-30 Now in much the same way as Peter realizes that he won't be around to watch out over the flock much longer, to shepherd, provide spiritual sustenance and protect the flock, he issues much the same warning. "People will rise up and they will seek to deceive you with destructive doctrines, now set yourselves on the sure foundation of scripture so as to recognize those teachings that though they may sound so good are in reality poison to your relationship with God." It's the classic, tried and true exhortation. How can one recognize a lie? By knowing the truth, "A storm of heresy is headed your way (Peter is saying) anchor yourselves in the word of God."

Vs1-4

So as is common from the very outset we find out whose writing and who he's writing to. Who is it who's writing? Simon Peter, who is he writing to? To those who've obtained like precious faith... That is to you and me, to any and all who've come to know Jesus Christ in a personal way, to you Peter has something to say.

So he begins, "Simon Peter," and I think even in that there are a couple of things that we can glean. How's that? Well, as you know Simon was his given name, Peter was the new name that the Lord had given to him. What's the point? Do you recall when it was and the scenario that surrounded the Lord's changing of his name?

It was there in Caesarea Philippi, the Lord had taken the boys for a bit of a respite and as He was there He began to ask them what it was that people were saying about Him. He said, “*Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?*’ So they said, ‘*Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*’ He said to them, ‘*But who do you say that I am?*’ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*”
Matt 16:13-18

Here’s what I’m saying, when you realize who Jesus is in truth, Christ will change your life. When the revelation occurred, the scales (as it were) were removed from his eyes and he saw Jesus for who He is in truth there was a change that took place there. No longer Simon, the one who was unstable, talking when he shouldn’t, not talking when he should, fumbling and faltering. “That’s who *you are* Simon, it’s not who *you’ll be* when I’m done with you, I’m doing a work in you, bringing about change with in you and when I’m done with you you’ll be a rock (Peter), resolved in your commitment to follow Me, to be used by Me and encourage others in Me.”

So the 1st thing the words “Simon Peter” do is remind us that Jesus changes lives, takes them from shaky to stable, from reserved to resolved. The 2nd thing we note is that all those yrs later Peter hadn’t forgot where he’d come from and who he was before Jesus changed his life.

I think that we can come to the place as believers whereby after enough yrs go by we begin to forget the grace that has been bestowed upon us, we fall out of touch with people who are in need of Christ, we forget what it’s like to be hurting and full of empty confusion. We take for granted the work that God has done in our lives, that there was a day when we were desperate, unstable, unsure and headed in a direction that would make for our destruction, but Jesus intervened and rescued us from the miry clay. Oh, we acknowledge it but we forget the reality of it, Peter knew where he’d been, who he was and what he’d been delivered from... Here he is at the end of his life “Simon Peter” still mindful of the work of Jesus on his behalf.

“A bondservant and an apostle of Jesus Christ” of course the word “bondservant” here is the word “dulous” it speaks of being a slave for life out of a willful choice because I love my master. Under the law you could own a servant for 6 yrs, the 7th they were to go free. But if that servant said, “I don’t want to go, you’ve been good *to* me, you provide *for* me and take care *of* me.” He could choose to go before the elders of the city, have his ear pinned to the door with an awl (get his ear pierced) and that would signify that he would serve his master now for life of his own freewill because he loved his master and wanted to remain *with* his master. Peter is saying that there’s no better Master than Jesus Christ no one loves me more, can take better care

of me or provide more efficiently *for* me therefore out of love for Him I'm going to serve Him all the days of my life. "A bondservant and an apostle" one sent by God commissioned *of* God and given authority *from* God over His people. But here's what I want you to see; with Peter it was *service* before *status*, bondservant 1st, apostle 2nd. In reality it's our service that makes for our status isn't it? Jesus said, "*If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.*" Mark 9:35 In Matt's gospel we read, "...*whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" Matt 20:26-28 So as Peter approaches the end of his run he puts it out there, "Before my status is my service" God help us that we be more service minded and less status minded...

"To those who've obtained like precious faith with us," who's that? It's you and me, as many who've exercised a saving faith in Christ. Couple things real quick here, #1 He calls it a "like" precious faith, which is to say that it's a faith of the same value, equal in value. What that means is that there are no 1st or 2nd class citizens in the kingdom, the faith that you've received, the standing that you have in Christ is exactly equal to that of the apostle Peter. God is no respecter of persons, oh He may call me to do this, and you to do that but pertaining to saving faith, what you have and what I have is no different. We're all co-equal in Christ.

The 2nd thing we should notice is that he says that we've "obtained" it, that is we haven't done anything to deserve it we've simply received it or have been allotted the faith by God's grace. You say, "Well how is it that some are allotted the faith and others aren't?" "How does God determine who receives it and who doesn't?" It's true, the bible declares that even the faith to believe in Christ is a gift from God, what determines whether or not God will grace you with the faith to trust Christ? When Paul was speaking of the blindness of the nation of Israel toward Christ in 2nd Cor he said this, "*But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*" 2 Cor 3:15-16 What's that? When one turns to the Lord the veil is taken away.

In other words God is all too eager, willing and ready to see you in Christ, to give you the faith to *trust* Christ, God's isn't willing that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to repentance, for God so loved *the world* that he gave His only begotten Son, and here's the thing *whosoever will* may come. What does that mean? It means that when you're ready to turn your heart *toward* Christ, God will give you the faith to trust *in* Christ. The veil is removed in Christ.

You see, the unbeliever wants to assert often times that they have *mental reservations*, the fact is that unbelievers have *sinful reservations*, if you'll turn your heart to the Lord, God will remove the veil, you don't gotta clean up your act before you come, you just need to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and He'll take it from there, if you give your heart to Him sincerely, if you'll surrender your life legitimately God will transform your life and make of you a new creation in Christ.

You see it's not of works, or by what we do lest we should boast (or be puffed up with pride) but it's by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ You guys this is one of those great declarations of the deity of Christ found throughout the scriptures. When he says, "Our God and Savior" he's not talking about 2 different people, "our God and our Savior," this is a reference to one and the same Person. For the purpose of clarification we might understand it to read like this, "...by the righteousness of our God, who is our Savior Jesus Christ" There's no way out of it the scriptures make it clear that Jesus is completely co-equal in nature with God the Father that He is the eternal 2nd person of the triune God. Paul recognized that as well and he wrote to Titus exhorting us unto a life of holiness saying that amongst other things we ought to be, "...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:13-14 It was after the resurrection; they'd seen the risen Lord! Well...most of them had there was one who missed the meeting, you remember his name...Thomas. Oh, they tried to tell him, "Thomas we've seen the Lord, He's risen!" Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." 8 Days later there they were, all together again, Jesus appears in their midst and says, "Thomas come here, look at My hands, reach your hand here and place it into My side...don't be unbelieving, but believing." It's there that we read, "*And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'*" John 20:28 Jesus didn't say, "Wait a minute Thomas you're going a little overboard with that whole 'my God' thing. I'm just an extraordinary man." Jesus didn't say that. Why? Because He's God; our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ

Vs2

"Grace and peace" never apart from one another in the greeting and always in that order, you know why. Because experiencing the *grace* of God is a prerequisite for experiencing the *peace* of God. Until you've tasted the saving grace of God you'll never know the sustaining peace of God. But once we've made peace *with* God through the blood of Jesus Christ we can have the peace *of* God at work *in* and at rest *upon* our lives.

Paul told the Romans, “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*” Rom 5:1 Notice it’s through Christ that we make peace *with* God, then to the Colossians he said, “*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*” Col 3:15 So don’t be confused making peace *with* God and letting the peace *of* God rule in your heart are 2 different things.

Here Peter is wanting your life to be blessed with the peace *of* God ruling in your heart, in an above and beyond measure kind of a way. He says, “Grace and peace be *multiplied* to you.” That implies measure. Whatever amount that you have, Peter is saying, “May His grace and His peace *increase* in your life, may it *abound*, be multiplied.” I’m all for that! How do we get that action happenin? There is a realm in which God’s grace and peace is multiplied in your life. What is that realm, what is that arena? Notice, “In the (underline it) knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ”

There’s that word, “knowledge,” it’s speaks of an exact and accurate knowledge of God, not just intellectually (there’s a place for that) but this is intimacy. It’s not in the knowledge *about* God, but it’s in the knowledge *of* God. This is that which Jesus was talking about when He was praying in John 17 saying, “*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*” John 17:3 The idea here being that the more I come to know God, the more I’ll come to recognize His grace toward my life, the more I understand God’s grace toward me, the more His peace will resonate with in me. It’s a “snowball” effect, the one builds on the other. Of course we come into an exact and accurate *knowledge* of God through the *word* of God. God has revealed Himself to us in His word, do you want to know God more, have His grace and His peace multiplied in your life? Then spend time in His word...

Vs3

It’s almost like an infomercial (except I would never want to reduce the word of God like that) Peter just keeps building on the resources that are ours through the knowledge of God. It’s like “But wait, there’s more!” He says, “Grace, peace, yes and all things that pertain to life and godliness have been given to us through the *knowledge* of Him” (that is of God), how important is it that you grow in the knowledge of God? Every resource that you need in life is there, if it pertains to spiritual vitality, or godly living it’s already there and available to you, you just have to “tap the resource.” You just have to crack your bible and get busy getting to know the heart of God as the Holy Spirit takes of the things of God reveals them to you through His word. Peter here is revealing to us that an intimate, exact and accurate knowledge of Christ is the source of spiritual power and growth. To make it simple; knowing God is the key to all things that pertain to life and godliness, and we come into the knowledge of Him through His word, through prayer, through the community of God’s people.

His divine power has given us everything we need through the knowledge of Him, He's made it that simple, don't complicate it, you don't need 7 steps to a healthier, happier me, you don't need your best life now, you don't need to awaken the giant with in, you don't need to comb the bookstores looking to unlock the mysteries of life, you need an intimate knowledge of God as revealed *by* God in His word, it's the key to everything that pertains to life and godliness, spiritual vitality and godly living.

Vs4

What's this saying? It's saying that the *promises* of God, found in the *word* of God have caused us to become partakers of the *divine nature* of God and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. It's no wonder these promises are called *exceedingly great* and *precious*.

What are some of these exceedingly great and precious promises? Well I can't even crack the tip of the iceberg but here's a few. Jesus said, "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" Matt 11:28-29 He said, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*" John 6:35 Here's one more; Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*" John 11:25-26 Now that's just a sample of 3 passages, there are literally thousands of promises to be found throughout the pages of scripture!

But it's through the word of God being implanted into your heart springing forth into everlasting life that causes you to become a partaker in the divine nature. That means that when you're born again you become a child of God. You become His son, His daughter and in so doing you effectively escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

That is, you're no longer under bondage to sin but you've been made free in Christ, you through the power of the Holy Spirit have become a partaker of the Divine nature. Now listen, nature will determine *appetite*, the pig wants slop, the dog will return to its own vomit, the sheep desires green pastures. Nature will also determine *behavior*, an eagle will fly because that's the nature of an eagle, a fish will swim because that's the nature of a fish, nature will determine *association*; sheep don't generally hang with wolves, lions will travel in prides, sheep in flocks, fish in schools. "Where you going with all this Jeff?" If nature determines appetite and with have God's nature with in us then we ought to have an appetite for that which is pure and holy, our behavior should be like that of the Lord as we grow in grace by the power of the Holy Spirit. We ought to associate with that which is true to our nature, a normal life for the child of God is a *godly* life.

Jesus said it like this, “*You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*” Matt 7:16-20 You see Jesus makes it real clear, keeps it simple. Our life is either fruitful for Christ, or it’s not. You’re either a partaker of the Divine nature or your not. You’ve either escaped the corruption that’s *in* the world or your headed in the same direction *as* the world. The invitation goes out, the promise is there, if you need to receive Christ...do it. If you need to repent of your sin and return *to* Christ, do that. There’s no reason that as a child of God we should be wallowing in the mire of the world, ensnared and entangled in sin, He’s given us all things that pertain to spiritual vitality and godly living in the knowledge of Him, draw near *to* Him, walk intimately *with* Him, and your life will be fruitful *for* Him...

Prayer Points:

God help us that we not over complicate it, but may we simply resolve to the fact that the key to living a godly life is simply in growing to know You in an ever increasing/intimate way. Give us a heart that seeks after You, that wants to know You and lead a life that’s pleasing *to* You. You’ve given us everything we need, all we have to do is take Your yoke upon us and learn *of* you, not learn *about* You, but learn *You*. Increase our appetite...Lord You are the bread of life, and You’ve given Your life for us, may it we lead our lives for You.

God wants to pour His grace out upon you, He wants to give His peace *to* you, He wants you to partake of His nature being set free from the bondage of sin and the corruption that’s in the world. Is He calling to you today? The bible says, “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” John 1:12-13 God can forgive your sin, wash you clean and make you brand new right here and right now, so if He’s knocking on the door of your heart...why do you open it and invite Him in, give Him His way in your life...

