

Subject: *Believers Are Blessed Beyond Measure*

Scripture: *2 Peter 1:1-4*

We are beginning a study of 2 Peter. Last year we spent several months in 1 Peter. The focus of these two letters is different, but both of them provide the truth we need for tough times. In the first letter Peter's main theme is staying faithful to Christ in a time of trial and persecution. In this second letter he writes about growing in our knowledge of Christ in a time of false teaching. In First Peter he instructs believers about threats from outside the church, but in Second Peter he instructs us about dangers from within the church. In this second letter Peter begins with an introduction and then reminds believers of our abundant spiritual blessings in Christ. This is similar to what he wrote in the first letter when he reminded believers of the blessings of Christ and salvation so they would be encouraged and strengthened in their trials and troubles.

In verse 1 Peter identifies himself briefly and then gets right into the matter at hand. He identifies himself as a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Notice he puts servant first. There is no higher honor than to be a servant of Christ. That's more than a title. It's a description of a believer who understands that he has been saved to serve. Peter was a fisherman by trade until Christ made him a fisher of men. Jesus knew Peter long before Peter knew Him and believed in Him. He was also an apostle ("one sent on a mission"). Christ authorized Peter and the other apostles to be the official teachers of doctrine in the formative days and years of the church.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine

Ephesians 2:19-20 Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

This second letter of Peter is a warning to the church and also a reminder of spiritual truth that would protect and strengthen them. This letter shows that the best way to defend against false teachers and their deceptive ways is to know the truth. In the first part of chapter 1 he says that believers should know the rich blessings of their salvation. In 1:3-4, their salvation was given and sustained by God's power. In 1:5-7, their salvation involved spiritual growth and how they participated in that growth. And in 1:8-11, their salvation would be assured and eventually result in a glorious entrance into God's everlasting kingdom. So Peter teaches them about the past, present, and future aspects of their salvation.

1. The source of salvation

Those who are saved have "obtained like precious faith with us" (Peter and other believers). This means that faith (the same precious, valuable faith that was given to the apostles) was given to them by God (attained by God's will; that is, it was a gift of grace, not something they had done). Salvation is a gift that comes from God through Christ and His obedience and death on the cross. All believers share in the very righteousness of Christ which is imputed (credited) to them. All believers come to share in the righteousness of Christ by faith, and that faith in itself is a divine gift.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

2. The substance of salvation

The substance of salvation is grace and peace that are multiplied to believers when they come to know God and Jesus as Lord. The heart of the matter is personal saving knowledge of God and His Son Jesus. Christ prayed in **John 17:3** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

Knowledge is a key word found in some form 16 times in 2 Peter (1:2, 5, 6, 8; 2:20; 3:18). The word for “knowledge” is not only knowing facts or information about God and Christ, but it is personal, intimate knowledge. Being a Christian involves knowing the truth about God and Christ, but it moves beyond that to knowing God and Christ. It is the knowledge of a personal relationship. As our knowledge grows deeper and wider, the more His grace and peace are multiplied in us. All believers have grace for all their sins and peace for all their trials.

3. The sufficiency of salvation

Peter writes about components of our salvation which include:

- A. Divine power – Believers have no sufficiency of their own, but only through Christ.
- B. Divine provision – Christ has granted to believers all things pertaining to life and godliness. To be godly is to live in reverence, submission, and obedience to Christ. He has supplied everything we need to become godly. False teachers want us to think that we lack something more than Christ (an experience, a special blessing, an extra ability, a second level of spiritual blessing). “Life and godliness” refer to what God supplies for our sanctification. It takes a lot to make a saint out of a sinner, but God has all we need.
- C. Divine perception – (“through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”) This knowledge comes through Christ who called us. In the Bible God’s call should be understood in two ways. There is a general call which comes through the preaching and sharing of the gospel. There is an effectual (effective) call that always results in salvation. In all the NT letters the word call refers to the effective call by which sinners are drawn to Christ by His glory (deity) and virtue (excellence). God opens our spiritual eyes to see Christ as the pearl of great price. We can see His majesty and beauty, and He becomes precious to us. When we are saved we understand who Christ is and because of that we repent of our sins and trust in Him as our Lord and Savior.
- D. Divine promises – God promises to give us spiritual life, eternal life, resurrection life, forgiveness, and so much more. By these promises we believe in Christ and become partakers of the divine nature. That is what we partake in, but there’s something we don’t partake in—the corruption that is in the world through lust (selfish desire). When we’re saved it means we love what God loves and we hate what God hates. It means we love what we once hated, and we hate what we once loved. Salvation changes our desires and affections. Believers have escaped the world’s corruption.