

## 2 Peter 1: Looking After Your Faith - Sermon 19/05/19

Reading: 2 Peter 1- 21

*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:*

*<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our  
Lord.*

*Confirming One's Calling and Election*

*<sup>3</sup> His 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.*

*<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness,  
knowledge; <sup>6</sup> and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to  
perseverance, godliness; <sup>7</sup> and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection,  
love. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> But whoever does  
not have them is near sighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their  
past sins.*

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election.  
For if you do these things, you will never stumble, <sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into  
the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*Prophecy of Scripture*

*<sup>12</sup> So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly  
established in the truth you now have. <sup>13</sup> I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I  
live in the tent of this body, <sup>14</sup> because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus  
Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort to see that after my  
departure you will always be able to remember these things.*

*<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our  
Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> He received honour  
and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying,  
"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice  
that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

*<sup>19</sup> We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do  
well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the  
morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of  
Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never  
had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were  
carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

## Introduction

A couple of weeks ago we had our 'God of Trial' service

- We thought about questions people bring to God
- And discussed possible answers

I thought it was really good

- Some of the comments got me thinking
- I was challenged we need to think in terms of eternity
- Not just this life
- Challenged that we don't often preach on heaven and hell

At the same time, I have been wondering about studying a book of the Bible

- A series of sermons based on a book
- This is good because it means we can't just pick passages we like
- We have to deal with the other ones as well

As I pondered, I revisited the letters of Peter

- And it seemed that they did both things
- Covered the ideas I wanted to expand on
- And would be a series based on a book.

They cover similar themes

- I have chosen to look at 2 Peter because it 3 chapters long
- So conveniently fits into the 3 sermons I have before the summer break

2 Peter was probably written around between AD 65 and 68.

- Which would have been about 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection
- It can't have been later as Peter was Martyred in AD68
- It is clear he knew he did not have long to live
- And wanted to reinforce some of the teaching and encouragement of his first letter
- As we read in verses 13-14

*I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,<sup>14</sup> because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.*

In his first letter he sought to offer encouragement in facing persecution

- Primarily from outside the church
- In this one he is more focused on false teachers who have come into the church
- And to encourage Christians to be live lives looking forward in confidence
- Because Jesus' return is certain

But before he tackles these issues, he sets out some truths about Jesus

- Truths that should give us confidence and strength to live Godly lives
- Is letter is written to all Christians

He begins

*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:*

So, this is for anyone who has received faith

- I think that is an interesting choice of words
- We talk of 'finding faith' or 'coming to faith'
- As if it is something we have done
- But Peter sees it as something we have been given
- Something that comes from "the righteousness of our God and saviour Jesus Christ"

Our faith is a gift from God

- A gift that Jesus paid for on the cross
- Consequently, it is inexpressibly precious
- And should be held on to with care and gratitude.

Luke recalls a parable Jesus told about this - The Parable of the Lost Coin

*"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?<sup>9</sup> And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.'* (Luke 15:8-9)

These coins were precious

- They were probably part of her dowry, like a wedding ring for us.
- It is something precious and needing to be kept safe.
- Jesus explains the parable saying
- *"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* (Luke 15:10)

If God thinks our salvation is precious

- Shouldn't we be careful with our faith
- Looking after it and holding on to it?
- This is really the theme of 2 Peter - "Looking after Your Faith"
- As we read in verse 10  
*Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, <sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

## Grace and Peace

Now Peter Goes on to offer a blessing (vs 2)

*"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."*

It is easy to skip past these verses as just part of an introduction

- But this is not just a polite comment before he starts the letter properly
- It is an integral to the rest of the chapter
- He is wising us grace and peace as something real
- Something we can receive and experience

And he tells us how we can receive this grace and peace

- It is through knowledge
- Knowledge of God the father and of Jesus our Lord
- And the rest of the chapter is about sharing that knowledge that brings grace and peace in our lives

I want to begin by thinking about what we mean by Grace and Peace

- Last week Jenny talked about judgement, justice and mercy
- Looking at what the words mean
- This morning let's do that with Grace and Peace

Grace is translated for the Greek "*charis*"

- Meaning, being favoured or blessed,
- In this context "receiving divine favour",
- It carries the sense of a gift
- It is the root of the word charisma.
- We might describe someone with charisma as a gifted speaker or leader
- We also use 'Charismatic' as referring to the gifts of the Holy Spirit

Last week Jenny said Mercy was not receiving the punishment we deserved

- Well grace can be described as receiving blessing we do not deserve
- In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for Grace is '*Hesed*'
- Often used to describe God's covenant love
- Sometimes translated faithfulness and loving kindness

Peace is from the Greek word 'Eirene'

- From which we get the name Irene
- Meaning peace, quietness, rest,
- In relationship with others meaning 'to be set at one again'
- As in the reconciliation Stella was talking about 3 weeks ago

The Hebrew, as we know, is Shalom

- This is more than living in a peaceful situation
- It is an inner peace, wellness, wholeness
- Something internal that can be known in the midst of chaos and trouble
- It is to be in harmony with ourselves and essentially with God

Peter reinforces this in the next verses

- So, Grace and peace are ours in abundance
- We receive them through the knowledge of Jesus

Because

*His 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. (2 Peter 1:3-4)*

## The Knowledge of Jesus

So, what is this knowledge the Peter is referring to.

- He suggests it comes in two ways

### 1. Experiencing the divinity of Jesus (vs 16-18)

*For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

Peter here is referring to his experience of the 'Transfiguration'

- We read about it in Matthew 17:1-9

*After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup> Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.*

*<sup>4</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."*

*<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*

*<sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." <sup>8</sup> When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.*

*<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."*

Peter is saying he had seen Jesus transformed

- This is not some made up story
- He is an eyewitness to Jesus' divinity
- That Jesus is God and deserves our trust in him

Obviously, he could have talked about the resurrection

- But at this point no-one was claiming Jesus did not rise from the dead
- There were too many eyewitnesses still around for that to be believable
- But some were teaching that Jesus was not God
- He was just a good man or a created being
- But Peter refutes this
- He refers to Jesus in verse 1 as "Our God and saviour Jesus Christ"

He was witness to Jesus divine nature shining out

- He heard God's own voice acknowledging Jesus was his son
- With God's endorsement of Jesus' ministry (being well pleased)
- And the command to listen to him
- To put our trust in Him

Peter's experience of Grace and Peace were founded in that experience

- In his knowing Jesus as his God and saviour
- In God the Father's words that we can trust in Jesus

But this is not all,

- Peter also says there is another way we can gain this powerful knowledge of Jesus

## 2. Finding the truth in Scripture revealed through the Holy Spirit (vs. 19-21)

*We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

The bible is God's revelation of himself to us

- We can find Him in its pages
- He speaks to us through it,
- Just as he spoke to the prophets through the Holy Spirit

He says the bible is reliable

- And it will be a light to us in dark places.
- If we want to experience grace and peace in dark places
- It comes from knowing and trusting the bible
- And Knowing and trusting Jesus

## Build your Knowledge

This is really the message of this passage

- We have received salvation and faith
- We need to look after it and walk in it
- And Peter gives some practical advice. (vs 5-8)

*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;<sup>6</sup> and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;<sup>7</sup> and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. <sup>8</sup> 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.*

It requires effort

- We need to build on our faith
- Work at goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love
- This is what growing faith means
- This is what knowing your bible should produce
- If this is not happening Peter explains the reason. (vs. 9)

*<sup>9</sup> But whoever does not have them is near sighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.*

What a vivid description Blind, Short Sighted and forgetful

- Blind to the truth of Jesus, to the truths of scripture
- Taking Bible verses out of context and applying without understanding
- Short sighted
- They cannot see beyond their own nose
- They see only what affects them – not the width, breadth and length of God's plan
- They forget the reality of their own need for salvation
- And like Jenny said last week they point fingers at others

Peter says don't be like that

- Open your eyes to see Jesus
- See him as he is, both God and Man
- Judge and saviour, King and servant, Lion and lamb

Look beyond

- See the future that awaits us
- The glorious rewards for those that stay faithful to God
- And remember what Jesus has done for us
- The things we have learnt and been taught

## Conclusion

I want to finish with Peter's exhortation

- Encouraging us to hold on to the truth and knowledge of Jesus
- Verse 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, <sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

And

*"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."*

Amen