

Everything We Need 2 Peter 1:1-4

Most football fans are familiar with the name Vince Lombardi. He was the Hall of Fame coach for the Green Bay Packers. Many are also familiar with something that he did with the team at the beginning of each year.

He would gather his players in the locker room, take a football in his hands, and say to the team, “Gentlemen, this is a football.” As if no one knew that!

He would then lead them outside and show them the football field, and the out of bounds lines and so on.

Every year, he started with the basics, reminding his team of the fundamentals. (Shaddix)

Peter also knew the importance of reminding Christians of the fundamentals.

- “I intend to remind you of these qualities” (2 Pet 1.12)
- “Stir you up by way of reminder” (2 Pet 3.1)

Reminding people of the basics is important.

- “Remind them of these things” (2 Tim 2:14; cf., Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 15:1)
- Why?
 - God’s truth is worth repeating! (Think of the **four gospels** repeating the life and ministry of Jesus)
 - Christians can drift away from the fundamental truths.
 - It’s a safeguard against heresy. (Phil 3.1)

What are some of the basics in 2 Peter?

- The truth about the gospel and Christian growth (1:3-11)
- The trustworthiness of Scripture (1:12-21)
- The nature of false teaching (ch. 2)
- The certainty of Christ’s return [which the false teachers denied] (ch. 3)

One of the primary words that conveys this theme is: “**knowledge.**”

- He speaks some **11 times** of knowing God through Jesus
- **An inclusio: 1:2; 3:18. Everything in between is interpreted in light of it.**

Let’s look at the Greeting and then the first two verses.

Greeting (1.1-2)

1. **The Author.** He is identified as “Simeon” not “Simon.” He notes the Hebrew version of his name followed by “Peter” the nickname our Lord gave him (“rock” Semitic: Cephas).
 - This highlights his own testimony of the the life-changing power of the gospel.
 - This Jewish fisherman became a leader in the early church, as Jesus made him a fisher of men and apostle.
 - Originally a fisherman from Bethsaida (Jn 1:44), who later lived in Capernaum (Mk 1:29) by the time of Jesus’ public ministry.

- He was part of the inner circle of Jesus, and a key leader of the early church.
- God used Peter to preach at Pentecost, and later to Cornelius.
- God miraculously rescued him in **Acts 12** from prison.
- **Then in the next two decades** Peter traveled throughout the Roman empire preaching in places like Corinth (1 Cor 1:12), Syrian Antioch (Gal 2:11).
- He wrote 1 Peter around AD 60, while ministering in Rome, and was later martyred there between AD 64-67.
- **Date:** It seems that Peter is about to die (**v. 14**), so this letter would also fall between AD 64-67.
- He belongs to Jesus – “**doulos**” of the Master
- He as an apostle has authoritative commission to declare God’s word

2. The Recipients: They aren’t noted, **but 3:1** speaks of this being his second letter, so while we can’t be certain, a good option is that it’s the same recipients as 1 Peter. It does seem to have a strong Gentile flavor to it.

“to those who have obtained a faith of **equal standing** with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (1b)

- What Peter does say about the recipients is that they share the same glorious position in Christ as other Christians.
- This is perhaps a statement about how Gentiles are **not** second-class citizens in the kingdom.
- All true believers have “**obtained**” (a gift) a faith of equal standing.
- **The ground is level at the foot of the cross.**
- We come to the Lord’s Supper on equal standing in Christ.
- One might think Peter has a greater standing than these “ordinary Christians” but no!
- If you’re a Christian, you have the same standing as **Billy Graham or Simon Peter!**
- **We all get the same jersey! [Coach called, A Team]**

This standing comes from the “**righteousness**” of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

- Our righteous Savior lived a perfect life, and died an atoning death, bestowing on us a righteous standing before God.
- While rewards will be different in heaven, our standing remains the same as other believers.

Peter also leaves no doubt about the **deity** of Jesus: “Our God and Savior Jesus Christ” - not Caesar

3. The Blessing with the Theme Introduced (v. 2)

- The first part of this verse is identical to 1 Peter 1:2b, but here Peter adds the phrase “in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Savior”
- First part “May grace and peace be multiplied to you” combines Greek and Hebrew greetings.
 - Grace is God’s favor given to us for salvation and sanctification.

- Peace is the already-not experience of well-being and contentment; it's a fruit of the Spirit and the result of a mind fixed on the Spirit, Rom 8:6.

- Like in other NT greetings, the author often introduces a main theme in the greeting; here: **“in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord”**
 - Grace and peace are experienced through a relationship with God.
- As mentioned this idea of **knowing God** appears throughout the letter. (1:3, 5, 6, 8, 2.20-21; 3:18)
- Peter is not interested in you just knowing about God, but knowing him personally.
- J. I. Packer in *Knowing God*: “What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God. What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God. “This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else? Knowledge of God. “Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord” (Jer 9:23-24). Once you have become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord.
- **Keep this as the priority of your life!**
- Seek to “grow in the knowledge of God” (2 Pet 3:18)

3-4: Beginning in verses 3-4 Peter begins by highlighting the privileges that believers enjoy, before going on to exhort us to pursue more growth in godliness.

- He then gives exhortations in 5-10 (next week); usual flow of what God has done, and what we're called to do.

We can note three gospel privileges, that you could summarize in three words: our power, promises and partaking.

#1: Power (1:3)

Christ has provided everything believers need for life and godliness.

- Have you ever ordered something that requires assembly, only to get the box and read, “other items necessary for assembly?”
 - That can be frustrating!
 - I appreciate it when they include the little Allen wrench or whatever is needed.
- Or, did you ever get a gift – perhaps at Christmas – only to read, “Batteries required.” If no one bought the batteries, the remote control car won't work!
- It's not like this with our salvation.
- ***When we're converted, we're given everything we need for godliness!!***
 - The all (panta) is put at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis in Greek.
 - Share in God's power. The power manifested at the Parousia (2 Pet 1:16)
- This verse speaks to the sufficiency of Christ.

- He supplies what we need: “God is able to make all grace about doing to you, so that always having all sufficiency for everything, you may have an abundance for every good work” (2 Cor 9:8).

God gives us **the resource (power) for the goal: godliness.**

- It’s **not** for miraculous power encounters; or mystical experiences, private revelations to start your own cult: but **godliness.**
- The fact that this power is ours means the battle against sin is **not a hopeless one!**
- It means we can have a unique kind of confidence in chaotic times...
- Is this your goal? Godliness? Make it your priority and know you have power to live a godly life.

“His [Christ’s] divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness”

- **“His power”** – the indwelling Spirit (“the Spirit of Holiness” Rom 1:4)
- God gives us the power to say no to sin and yes to godliness.
- We don’t need to go somewhere else to find the “key” to a faithful Christian life – we have it!
- **Have you ever walked around the house to find your keys, only to discover they’re in your pocket!?**
- **We have what we need!**
- **“Granted”** – it’s a gift
- **“Life”** – our spiritual life
- **“Godliness”** – This word (*Eusebia*) that literally means “good worship” (Moo).
 - It is sometimes translated “piety”
 - It refers to the reverence we have toward God, as we contemplate his glory and excellence and the proper lifestyle of one who has come to know God.
- **“through our knowledge of him”**
 - We’ve come to enjoy this power for godliness through knowledge.
 - This power flows through our knowledge of him.
 - Is knowledge important for godliness? Yes!
- **“who called us to his own glory and excellence”**
 - Jesus has called us and given us power.
 - God called light out of darkness and he calls us out of darkness!
 - This calling reveals Christ’s glory and excellence
 - We behold Christ as most glorious and renounce all other gods.
 - Christians are those who see Jesus as their highest good, greatest joy, source of endless pleasure.

“Aslan,” said Lucy, “you’re bigger.”

“That is because you are older, little one,” answered he.

“Not because you are?”

“I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.”

“There are few things more dangerous than being bored w Jesus.” (DeYoung)

Application: God has given us everything we need to live a life that honors him.

- God doesn't save us and say, "Well, good luck with life!"
- He has given us everything!!!! "What do you have that you did not receive?"
- We have his grace in the past that covers our sin; grace promised in the future in new creation; but his enabling grace is also given to us now!

#2: Promises (1:4a)

Glorious promises have been given to God's people through the gospel, a gospel that provides everything believers need.

"by which" is probably referring to "his glory and excellence."

- Through these attributes (glory and excellence) Christ is the fulfillment of the promises, that we now experience.
- We receive/inherit and experience these promises when we embrace the gospel.
- What promises do we now enjoy?
- The promises of the **new covenant** (forgiveness of sin, the indwelling Spirit – "partaking in the divine nature") and the promises of the **new creation** to come (resurrection, glorification, new creation).

A big emphasis in 2 Pet: The promise of the **Lord's return** – 3:4, 3:9, 13 [read]

False teachers were denying this

- Christ will return, we will see him and we will be transformed into his likeness!
- This is our blessed hope!
 - **Not a political election, not return to normal, not the return of college football, not graduation...**

Not one word has ever failed.

- We trust in God's promises and experience the reality of God's promises.
- We are people of the promises.
- **A lot of empty promises out there: 100K from 4 women, Romance scams**
- Every word of God proves true... God never plays sike

"**Precious and very great**" - What else could be said to be "precious and great"?

- What is precious and very great are Jesus' promises.
- Our great Savior gave them to us, giving us a great life!
- "I am coming quickly" he said.
- We will experience a new heaven and new earth, where righteousness dwells!
- We will see him! This hope/promise purifies us (1 Jn 3:2).

The word of God is irreplaceable. It is the most valuable thing you possess.

- If we lost it, there would be no way to replace it!

So these are the two resources for growth in godliness: power and promises.

We can't say, I don't have the resources to grow!

We're not underprivileged Christians, but fully equipped with everything we need!

We stand on equal footing with brothers and sisters (1:2), enabled to grow in godliness.

#3: Partakers (1:4b)

Christ renews and restores the image of God in believers through our already-not-yet salvation.

God's promises have been given to believers "so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature..."

"through them" – the reality that these promises guarantee

"partakers" – *koinōnoi* – to share, participate in the divine nature.

- You are brought into a relationship with God, fellowship with God.
- **"Would you like to partake in this meal?" we may ask?**
- Peter says we get to share in the divine nature!
 - Nature determines appetite: Pigs, sheep
 - Nature also determines behavior: eagles/Dolphins
 - Nature determines environment: squirrels climb trees, moles burrow underground, and bass swim in the water.
 - Nature also determines association: sheep in flocks, and fish in schools. (WW)

As Xians, we crave God's word, we live a life of love/godliness, enjoy fellowship in the church, and we will experience glory to come - because of our new nature.

- "Partaker in the glory to revealed" (1 Pet 5.1)

"divine nature" – Peter is using a Hellenistic expression fitting for his Gentile audience.

- Peter is saying that **believers are promised that they will be like God.**
- They **will not be deified**, but the image of God will be fully restored in them.
- This idea carries forward the idea of **"godliness."**
- This is an already not yet reality.
- At conversion we are new creations, but this new creation will be fully realized in the new creation.
- Right now we are indwelt by the Spirit, and have the power to resist sin, and one day we will be glorified and freed from all sin, being morally perfected.

So Even now we can be like God in some ways

- Pandemic: **communicable attributes**
- "Be imitators of God"
- Verses 5-7 shows us what this entails... characteristics of Jesus
- How do we exhibit these qualities more and more?
 - Get close to Jesus.
 - Let his character rub off on you
 - **Going to B'Bque restaurant: You end up smelling like it.**
 - **Verses smelling like a pool hall!**

Becoming a Christian is more than just accenting to some truths.
It's about being changed – partaker in the divine nature.

We are changed at conversion we will be fully transformed in the eschaton.

“having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire”

- Peter is not asserting that a believer can't sin, but there has been a decisive break with sin and this world.
 - People have abused this truth radically through the years
 - **Example: Doug Moo illustration about a man in a church believing you can't sin any more, so he urged a lady to sleep with multiple guys.**
- The text means that conversion brings about a purifying effect in our lives, and that conversion involves making a break with sin, look ahead to the coming of Christ, when all things are made new.
- We share in the divine nature and will share in the divine nature fully because this has happened.

Summary: Let's tie some threads together.

1. The Christian life centers on Jesus.

- Everything in this passage is in, through and for Jesus Christ.
- Peter's identity is “servant of Jesus Christ”
- Our righteous standing comes through the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- Our glorious hope is his return!
- People drift into false teaching when they drift from the center.

2. The Christian life is a gift of grace.

- It's not us keeping our promises to God.
- It's us embracing God's promises.
- We cannot earn “divine power” we receive it.

3. The Christian life involves both Word and Spirit.

- It's power and promises.
- Peter keeps these two aspects of our faith together, which people often separate.

4. The Christian life is a an already-not-yet reality.

- Our salvation is true and real and life-changing now, but we wait for the fullness of our salvation to be realized.