

01. The Epistle of 2Peter—1:1-4

(9/12/18)

The emphasis of Peter's first epistle was on the external suffering and persecution believers were facing from the outside world.

The emphasis of his second epistle was to warn believers about the dangers that were in their midst—inside the walls of the church.

You see, he knew that if the devil couldn't persecute the church out of existence from without—he would infiltrate the church and try to poison it from within.

And he would accomplish this thru false teachers who would peddle their destructive doctrines to unsuspecting Christians leaving them sick and ineffective.

One pastor put it well—

“Peter wrote [his second epistle] to help believers face a world filled with subtle spiritual deception. Knowing that his death was imminent (1:14), the apostle wanted to remind his readers of the truths he had already taught them, so that those truths would continue to safeguard them after he was gone (v. 15). Peter also knew that the deadly threat of false teachers loomed large on the horizon; he wanted to expose the apostates in order to expel their demon doctrines from the church.

Never has Peter's warning been more timely than it is today. The rapid advancement of mass media, coupled with the church's lack of discernment, has allowed doctrinal error to spread like wildfire. False teachers propagate their heresies via television, radio, the Internet, books, magazines, and seminars—doing whatever they can for their own self-promotion. In the process, their deceit lures multitudes to exchange the truth for utter lies (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 2:16–18). To make matters worse, some in today's church, motivated by cowardly fear of rejection or misguided notions of love, are reluctant to expose today's apostates. Instead of countering error, they either embrace it or ignore it in the name of tolerance.

The apostle Peter, however, had no qualms about denouncing the deceivers who threatened his beloved flock. He recognized them for what they were: wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29), lurking to devour the ignorant with their beguiling lies. Peter understood that false teachers are the emissaries of hell and pawns of Satan, motivated by the love of money, power,

prestige, and prominence. Because they are masters of deception, they successfully peddle the doctrines of demons to unsuspecting souls, marketing eternal ruin as if it were eternal life. The only sure defense against their tactics is found in the truth of God's Word. Peter knew this, of course, which is why he penned this epistle. As a true man of God, he was deeply concerned to protect those under his spiritual care."

2 Peter 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

Simon Peter

Peter used his physical birth name (the one his parents had given him), coupled with his new spiritual birth name (the one Jesus had given him) so that everyone would know who was writing this epistle.

The name 'Simon' means '*shifting*' or '*unstable*'—where as the name Peter (*Petros* in Greek) means '*a rock*'.

'Cephas' is another name for Peter and is the Aramaic word for *stone*.

This spiritually speaks of the transformation that he went thru as he followed Jesus. (Comment)

A bondservant...of Jesus Christ

The term '**bondservant**' isn't found in the Greek—the word Peter used is *doulos* which means—**slave**.

When we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior our life as we have known it and lived it—is over, and we are now the slaves of Christ.

Jesus doesn't come alongside the believer to help them fulfill all of their dreams, desires and personal goals—He takes over where He now becomes the focus, and His will becomes dominant.

Many in the church don't get that—

Luke 6:46-49 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? (Comment)

An apostle of Jesus Christ

‘Apostle’ is a word that means “*one who has been sent forth with a commission*”.

John 20:21 (NKJV)

²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Mark 16:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Our English word *ambassador* is the closest word in our language to the Greek word ‘apostalos’.

An ambassador is a person who represents a king on foreign soil—“*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ...*” (2Cor.5:20)

2 Peter 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, **To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:**

“**To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours**” (NASB)

Here Peter uses the word ‘**faith**’ as a noun not a verb—in other words, he is talking about the N.T. truth (starting with the gospel) that we have embraced and built our lives upon.

Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

This idea of Christians remaining faithful to and defending the truth that saves and sanctifies—is the core theme of Peter’s second epistle.

When he called it “**like precious faith**”—he was saying that it is the same truth that saves all people—whether they are Jew or Gentile.

One commentator said—

“‘Like precious faith’ probably speaks to the fact that the Jews and Gentiles enjoyed the same faith, and therefore the same benefits in Jesus. ‘God having given to you—believing Gentiles, the same faith and salvation which he had give to us—believing Jews.’”

You wouldn’t think a big, burly, rugged fisherman like Peter would use the word ‘**precious**’—but Peter uses it to communicate to us that there is nothing more precious (valuable) in this world than the truth of God which alone can give eternal life—

Psalm 19:7, 10-11 (NKJV)

⁷ The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple... ¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.

2 Peter 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us **by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:**

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest says that this statement in the Greek is Peter’s way of saying unequivocally that Jesus Christ is both our God and our Savior.

One of the things false teachers always do is to attack the Person and work of Christ—

2 Peter 2:1 (NKJV)

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them...

Of course, one of the main ways false teachers and cults have attacked the Person of Jesus Christ is by denying the deity of Christ. (Comment)

2 Peter 1:2 (NKJV)

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

As my pastor was fond of saying, “*You’ll never experience the peace of God until you first experience the grace of God.*” (Explain)

Warren Wiersbe—

“Our Lord Jesus Christ has three “spiritual commodities” that can be secured from nobody else: righteousness, grace, and peace. When you trust Him as your Savior, His righteousness becomes your righteousness and you are given a right standing before God (2 Cor. 5:21). You could never earn this righteousness; it is the gift of God to those who believe. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).

Grace is God’s favor to the undeserving. God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve; God in His grace gives us what we don’t deserve. Our God is “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10), and He channels that grace to us through Jesus Christ (John 1:16).

The result of this experience is peace, peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and the peace of God (Phil. 4:6–7). In fact, God’s grace and peace are “multiplied” toward us as we walk with Him and trust His promises.”

2 Peter 1:2-4 (NKJV)

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

When Peter says, “**Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**”—he has in mind first and foremost an intimate knowledge (relationship) with God that comes thru the new birth.

This was the same way Peter opened his first epistle—

1 Peter 1:22-23 (NKJV)

²² Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever...

All of God's blessings, all of His great and precious promises, all of what it means to know God and be victorious over the enemy starts with the new birth.

But then Peter makes a remarkable statement that many Christians kind of 'gloss over' and fail to understand the importance of—in fact in my mind it's one of the greatest truths in the Bible.

He tells us that when God saved us, He came to live inside of us—and made us partakers of His divine nature!

Further, he goes on to tell us that knowing Jesus (salvation) and having the Holy Spirit living inside of us—is all we need to live our lives as God desires.

We have all we need to live a life of power, victory, fruitfulness and godliness—nothing more needs to be added—“*you are complete in Him...*” (Col.2:10)

You see, one of the ways false teachers are able to snare people is by making them think that they have *special* insights or even *secret* information that no one but them (and their group) possesses.

This information, they tell people, will help them to know God in a deeper way and unlock the wisdom and power of God in a way that 'ordinary', uninformed Christians couldn't even begin to imagine—but it's all dependent on their secret information and insights.

False teachers have been peddling that malarkey for centuries—in fact they were doing it in the first century church.

Peter is dealing with it here in his second epistle—and Paul also dealt with it as did the other apostles.

Colossians 1:24-27 (NKJV)

²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The main heresy that was not only prevalent in Colossae at that time but had spread like wildfire across the ancient world was something called “Gnosticism”.

The word ‘Gnostic’ comes from the Greek word ‘gnōsis’ which means ‘knowledge’ (mystical, experiential knowledge).

The Gnostics prided themselves on their knowledge—spiritual knowledge that they claimed not even the apostles had when it came to understanding the deeper things of God.

The bottom line was that the Gnostics considered themselves spiritually smarter and wiser than everyone else.

They were the spiritual elite and everyone else was below them—which was one of the main reasons this philosophy drew so many people to it because it appealed to the pride in man.

But it was also popular because the Gnostics practiced a form of mysticism which included various practices that appealed to people because it promised that they could connect with God in a way that others who didn’t practice these things could not.

This is what made Gnosticism so attractive—it gave people things they could *do* to conjure up God and become one with Him in a way that would give them power and spiritual wisdom that non-Gnostics didn't have access to.

So, if they meditated a certain way or chanted the right words or only ate certain foods they could connect with God and reach spiritual perfection.

This was one of the greatest threats that the church faced back then and also today.

People in the church who think that they are more spiritual than anyone else and that they've "outgrown" the Bible and have now embraced "new revelations".

These people think they're in '*the know*' and have special and insights into spiritual things that others who are outside their little circle of spirituality don't have.

They engage in spiritual practices and exercises that connect them to God in a way that makes them more spiritual and more knowledgeable than others.

Colossians 2:1-10 (NLT2)

¹ I want you to know how much I have agonized for you...and for many other believers who have never met me personally. ² I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. ³ In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. ⁵ For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong. ⁶ And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. ⁷ Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. ⁸ Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. ⁹ For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. ¹⁰ So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

For in Him **“are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (v.3)**

Again, the Gnostics were always teaching people if they meditated a certain way or chanted the right way then—all the secret treasures of hidden spiritual wisdom and knowledge would be unlocked to them.

Paul said, “*Phooey! In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and by virtue of you being one with Him—you have access to all of God’s truth.*”

The only way a person can gain knowledge of spiritual truth and the wisdom to apply it into their lives is by receiving Jesus into their heart at which time the Holy Spirit comes in and begins to lead them into all spiritual truth. (John 16:13)

Many Christians continue to be deceived with “*high-sounding nonsense*” today all because they don’t have a “high-view” of Scripture.

Satan knows this only too well and he knows the quickest way to destroy the local church is to destroy the foundation upon which it’s built—the Word of God!

Psalm 11:3 (NKJV)

³ If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?