

Introduction

I have often expressed the thought that if I just had “such and such”, life would be better. I have been emphasizing the Spirit’s instruction to live different because we are different. We don’t live different to gain God’s approval but we live different because we already have it. We don’t need to live a certain way in order to get something from God. God has already granted us all we need to live godly in this ungodly world. Apostle Peter’s first letter addressed a scattered and suffering church. He encouraged them to hope completely on the grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ while daily entrusting the keeping of their souls to a faithful Creator. He addressed his second letter to a settled church struggling to live holy in a fallen world due to internal struggles and doctrinal error. In this 2 part message I will first address God’s provision for life and godliness in a dark world. Second I will address the exhortation to continually live out the faith God has implanted.

God’s Provision or resources – Our Practice or responsibility

The foundation for these messages comes from 2 Peter 1:1-11. When studying the Bible, I try to focus on a unit of thought usually represented by the paragraph in our English translations. The first paragraph in Peter’s second letter ends at verse 11. The basic thought Peter wished to communicate had to do with the necessity to cultivate the new nature granted us at salvation. It is real close to the idea we have been tracking for some time now which is “Live different because you are different.” He reminded them of all the things God provides pertaining to life and godliness. After reminding the readers of these essential truths, Peter says this...

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. 2 Peter 1:12-15

Do you think these things might be important? I am going to break the paragraph down into two parts. In this message I will focus on God’s part of the new life in Christ (verses 1-4). Next week I will cover our responsibility to employ those provisions and cultivate the new life established by God through Christ. (Verses 5-11)

In the first four verses we learn that God provides everything we need for a meaningful and fruitful life. The outline of this passage looks something like this.

- I. God’s Provision / Resources 1-4**
 - A. God granted everything pertaining to daily life and godliness**
 - B. God granted promises pertaining to initial life change**
- II. Our Practice / Responsibility 4-11**
 - A. The Behavior (Seven character traits)**
 - B. The Benefits (Four benefits)**

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Peter 1:1-4

Peter wrote to those who “received faith” because of the righteousness of God. Faith is a gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast. (Eph 2:8) Peter asked God to continually provide grace and peace to those trusting Him.

I. God’s Provision

A. God granted everything pertaining to life and godliness.

The two terms “grace” and “peace” appear multiple times throughout the New Testament. They appear in nearly every letter of Paul. They represent the two greatest needs of every person who ever lived. We need “grace”. We need God’s favor. We need a power outside of ourselves to enable us to function in a broken world. We recently expanded on the various contexts of this amazing concept of grace.

God demonstrates a level of favor to everyone. (Common Grace)

God’s grace is basis by which we are saved. (Saving Grace)

God’s grace or favor is extended through our life in the form of power to live. (Daily Grace)

God’s grace impacts our life in such a way that teaches us to live godly. (Teaching grace)

God’s favor will be fully demonstrated at the return of Christ. (Future grace)

God will shower us with examples of his favor for all time. (Everlasting Grace).

The type of grace Peter asks of God here has to do with grace for daily living.

He asked for an ever expanding favor or “grace be multiplied”. Our need for God’s enabling power apart from our merit is a daily necessity.

Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb 4:16

Paul suffered an excruciating trial perpetuated by a soldier of Satan. He asked God to intervene on his behalf and deliver him from it. Here is how Paul described the interchange between him and God.

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations (given to Paul from God), for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger (angel) of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

It takes a much greater demonstration of the power of God to enable us to faithfully endure suffering than to just remove it. The grace the God referenced here refers to the power to endure difficult situations. Peter prayed that God’s enabling power will increase or be multiplied. He also prayed for an increase in God’s peace at the same time. Biblical peace is

not dependent on external circumstances. God's peace has to do with a calm contentment in spite of challenging circumstances. It referred to a sense of wellbeing, being blessed. It is the contentment that comes from the realization that God is in control and powerfully orchestrates everything for my good and His glory.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. John 14:27

Peter prayed for God to increase His grace and peace to manage life in a troubled and difficult world.

Peter provided here a clue as to the source of such grace and peace.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 2 Peter 1:2

This ability to overcome difficulty with a peace that passes human logic comes through a deepening experiential knowledge of both the Father and the Son. Knowledge really is power. The more you know the better able to face difficulty. Often our response to life has to do with our perspective. This is most true concerning our knowledge of God; His person, His promise and purpose. It is possible to fall short of the grace of God by failing to see things from HIS perspective. God provides what we need, but we have to appropriate it. One translator suggests this translation...

May God show his love to you greatly and cause you to have peace, because you have come to experience the presence (or, power) of God and Jesus our Lord (or, the one who controls us).

God makes His grace and peace available for every situation.

*seeing that His divine power has granted to us **EVERYTHING** pertaining to life and godliness,*

This is a most remarkable statement. Grace and peace increase in our life because God provides everything necessary leading to life and godliness or a life of Godlike living. Peter used a perfect tense verb indicating an action in the past with ongoing results. God granted access and we still have it to His inexhaustible grace and peace. Again, it is the result of a vital connection with God.

seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:3

Do you hear that, EVERYTHING! Whatever we need to live a meaningful and fruitful life, God powerfully provides. He called us and promises to equip us through His word.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for EVERY good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Peter shifts from God's grace and peace available on a continual basis to our initial conversion. Everything we have now flows out of an initial work of God in the core of our being or nature.

B. God granted promises pertaining to our initial life change.

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Peter 1:4

The “these” has to do with the glorious aspects of God’s nature. Out of God’s glorious and excellent nature come precious and magnificent promises. Peter attached two adjectives describing these promises granted at a point in time and still in force.

“precious” valuable, esteemed highly, priceless

“magnificent” very great.

All of the promises of God regarding our rescue from darkness are valuable and great. From the first promises of a future Savior that would defeat the Serpent found Genesis to the description of Satan’s defeat revealed in Revelation, we find a multitude of priceless promises.

“so that”

The focus of these precious and magnificent promises shows us the way to a new life and restored relationship with God. Peter expressed this truth from the positive as well as the negative.

Positively, these promises show us how we can share God’s very nature with Him.

Negatively, these promises show us how we can escape and forsake our old nature.

“Partakers” means to share, to fellowship, be joint participants, mutually belong.

“Nature” refers to one’s essence, inner nature.

We say someone has a “gentle nature” or is a “good natured” person. It usually describes an inner quality flowing out of the inner soul. God transforms our inner core by imbedding His very divine nature in the core of our being. To receive eternal life is to receive God’s life.

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 3:9

This act of God transforms our core. This act of God replaces the old core with a new core.

We mentioned 2 Cor 5:17 last week.

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a **NEW** creature; the old things passed away; behold, he has become **NEW**. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

This is the heart of the gospel message. Through Jesus, we become children of God. God shares His nature with His children.

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1 John 3:1-3

This rebirth or transformation comes about by faith.

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even 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

Christianity is not just about a change in our thinking. It may start there, but it is not complete until God actually transforms the core of our being. The Bible calls this REGENERATION.

It comes about when we put our trust in His precious and magnificent promises. Abraham was saved because of the fact that he was...

fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Romans 4:21-22

Through trust in God's promises, we become sharers in God's nature. Also, through trust in God's promises we escape the corruption of the old nature. The one must precede the other. God must first deal with our old nature before we can enjoy a new one. That is indicated here by the use of a participle – "having escaped the corruption". The term "corruption" was used to describe what happens to a dead body in the grave. It is a moral corruption that comes as a result of unbridled evil passions or desires.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:1-3

Unless God does something to change our nature, we are stuck, in bondage condemned. Well, God did do something by sending Jesus.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Ephesians 2:4-10

Because of Jesus, we are no longer children of wrath because of our evil nature. We are His workmanship who replaced our old nature. We share the life of Jesus. God made us alive with, raised us up with and seated us with Jesus. God granted precious and magnificent promises SO THAT we might become sharers in divine nature rather than fallen nature.

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, Colossians 1:13

God's Provision

God grants everything pertaining to life and godliness.

God can multiply grace and peace in all the difficulties of life in a broken corrupt world.

Family tragedy, financial disaster, physical deterioration, relational heartbreak, marital struggle, mental limitations, emotional darkness, spiritual attack, worry, fear and more.

The Bible record recounts countless examples of people who faced life with faith and courage. It even instructs us to rejoice when such difficulty comes. God told Paul, "My grace, my power, my strength is made perfect in your weakness."

Is His grace and peace really sufficient to address EVERYTHING pertaining to life and godly living? How do we access His inexhaustible resources? Our passage mentions twice the fact that it comes from a true knowledge of Jesus; a vital true understanding of who God is and what God has promised.

God granted promises pertaining to initial life change.

God grants what we need for daily fruitful living. God grants what we need for the transformation of our core. Both come through trust in the promises of God.

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

This is a reference to the new birth. We are born again through trust in the promise of God to save us.

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Galatians 3:2-5

This is a reference to daily growth and maturity in our new life. This refers to living godly in an ungodly world. This too comes by trust in the powerful promises of God. This is all about God's provision on our behalf based on faith in His promise. It is a decision to trust that what God promises He is able also to bring it about.

Why don't I experience God's grace and peace? Perhaps it is because you have fallen short of His grace through unbelief.

Let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as the children of Israel also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Hebrews 4:1-2

He references the fact that even though God promised Israel victory in the Promised Land, they did not experience it because they refused to trust that promise and refused to claim it. It was a frightening choice. There were walled cities and giants in that land. They had limited resources. They felt like grasshoppers. They refused to trust God. They doubted His good intentions for them. Many want God to recuse them out of the mess they are in but fail to do what is necessary to access the ever increasing grace and peace available through cultivating deeper relationship with Christ. Truly, God's grace is sufficient. God's grace is greater than any need. God provides new life. God provides EVERYTHING pertaining to living out that new life on a daily basis.

This is my prayer for you today drawn from this passage and Col 1:9-13

Father, may grace and peace be multiplied to us in an increasing knowledge of You; realizing that Your divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of You who called us by Your own glory and excellence.

Our of you power and glory You have granted to us many precious and magnificent promises, so that by them we may become partakers of Your divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Peter 1:2-4

I ask that we may be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that we will walk in a manner worthy of the You, to please You in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of You; strengthened with all power, according to Your glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and longsuffering; joyously giving thanks to Your precious Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light for You rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of Your beloved Son, Colossians 1:9-13