

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Reality of Our Salvation

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:1-2, 12-15

Code: 1395

As I said, it's a great joy to be back and have an opportunity to share with you. There's so many things in me and it's very difficult, sometimes, to filter all the things out. And so I just kind of trust the Lord to do a little editing as we go this morning, and look at His Word.

I've been gone for three months. Some of you may not know that and just coming back from a sabbatical time. And I have to confess that I received no new revelations. I had no visions. I discovered no great new truths that will instantly change all of our lives. But I did learn something very very important and that is that it isn't a matter of what's new, it's a matter of remembering what's old.

Everywhere I went across the country I had occasion to speak or teach or answer questions, to talk with folks, and I found out that they all asked the same questions, whether they live in northern California or Texas or Arizona or Arkansas or Illinois or New York or Connecticut, or wherever we were. They all asked the same questions and they all want to know the same spiritual answers...the same basic spiritual truths are as true as they've ever been.

The Lord really drove that home to my heart. I sensed in my heart when I left some anxiety. This is the twelfth year that I've been at Grace. And for the first time in those twelve years, I was actually beginning to think about going somewhere else. And it was because of the fact that I was just asking myself the question: how long can one limited human being keep speaking to the same people?

You know, I just thought, "Well, maybe I need to be more creative and come up with some new stuff and keep them interested and...oh, just think, I could go to another church and I'd have 800 sermons. I could go to the office on Sunday morning and say, 'Let's see, I'll just use that one,' and, boy, I'd be so free from study." Then I thought as sure as I did that somebody would say, "How come you're preaching old sermons? I have that tape." So I'd be in real trouble.

But I was really at that point. And I had, in fact, not long after we left I received an inquiry from a church in an area that I have a great longing in my heart for and a great concern for asking me to consider being the pastor. And I didn't want to say no. That's the first time in my life I ever had that reaction. I wanted to pray about it and think about it because I was at that point struggling with, you know, is this the place, and how long can I stay in one place and aren't there other people in other places with needs...and wouldn't this be a good time to move on? I guess that was my struggle.

And I think the thing that triggered it was I just feel you people are so kind to keep coming and feeding on the Word of God but the challenge to me was how can I say it in another way? How can I... And so I really went away thinking the Lord maybe is going to open up to me some new vistas. And at first, Patricia can vouch for this, I read...I just started reading and reading and reading, trying to pump in new things. Everything I read sounded like the same old message from the Word of God in different words. And so, I'm...I have to confess after three months that you just got back what went away, basically, with, I hope, a few more refinements and a drawing nigh unto the Lord that will put a freshness in my ministry.

When I came back I said I want to share my heart with the people, but I can't just stand there and mumble for 45 minutes. So I asked the Lord to show me a Scripture that I could use to teach that would give expression to what I was feeling. And for some reason by His Spirit I was driven to 2 Peter chapter 1, and that's what I want to talk about, this morning, and next Sunday and for however long, till I get all of this out of me. Then we'll go back to Matthew.

But 2 Peter chapter 1, I just sat down when I first came back and I just read it. And then I read it again and I thought about it and I pondered it and I talked with some of the pastors about it and it just seemed to give expression to what was in my heart. Peter was called to feed a flock. I've been called to feed a flock. Peter was a shepherd, a pastor, an overseer. And I identify with him. And he's expressing to his flock his heart in this epistle. It's a marvelous epistle. But it really gave expression to what was in my heart.

Many times I was confronted by people around America who said to me, "You know, we are sustained by the ministry of Grace Church." I was in one home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in fact we went out to an Amish farm and we were in a farmhouse that was built in 1760 and we were talking to this little Amish family. And then we went over to visit some folks. I went in their kitchen, they have, I don't know, many kids. They've got a quiver full. I don't know how many, they were everywhere. The kitchen looked like our living room...huge place. And one whole wall was filled with tapes. Husband has terminal cancer and they all gather together every day to feed on the Word of God sent to them from Grace.

Well, this happened over and over and over again. We were in Schroon Lake one day and we were eating in a pizza parlor...the only pizza parlor in Schroon Lake. We were all sitting there one afternoon having a piece of pizza, our little family. And in walked a man and his wife and their two teen-age children. They sat down. They kept looking at us. And we are a strange looking bunch, frankly, but couldn't quite figure out why. Finally, the man said to me, "You're John MacArthur, aren't you?" And I said yes. He said, "We came here to see you." I said, "You did?"

Well, not actually to this pizza parlor but we came to Schroon Lake. I said, "Oh, are you here for the week of Bible conference?" They said, "No, we just drove in today from Florida," it's in upstate New York, a thousand miles. I said, "Well, you just drove in today? When you going to leave?" "We have to leave day after tomorrow, we'll just be here one day. But we just wanted to come and see you." I said, "Well, why did you do that?" "Well, you see, they said we've been listening to the radio program and we've been getting the tapes and we have become dependent upon this and we wanted to be sure that there was somebody behind that voice who was real and who lived those truths and we wanted to see you and your family."

Oh, I checked those kids over quick, you know. Right? Watch your manners, we're in real trouble here, folks. And you know, those dear people sat down with us and we had a wonderful time together. They gave us a lovely little gift, a little figurine of some kind, as a remembrance and the next day they went back to Florida. Now that's pretty shocking.

I was in city after city where this kind of thing happened. And it was amazing. People would say to me, "You know, we've written to your staff and they're helping us." One pastor said he read Alan Diddian's(?) book on discipleship and it was changing his life and his church. It was amazing.

I guess you could sum it up, one young pastor came to me, in his twenties, I guess, and he looked at me just straight on and his eyes were kind of wet with tears and he said, "John," he said, "I just want to say one thing," he said, "Don't do anything different and don't let anything change, because so many of us all over are depending on Grace."

Well, that's pretty scary, depending on the feeding of the tape ministry, or the radio or our staff, as they minister, or you folks as you live the life that sets the pattern. I don't know what it is that causes this to happen other than the sovereignty of God. And it's very, very fearful to me. But what I kept hearing was "We don't want anything new, we just want you to keep the same stuff coming." And the Lord confirmed in my mind that novelty is not my calling but what God wants us to do is to teach His Word. And it's not new, it's old, but it's very fresh, isn't it? Very fresh.

It was those kinds of experiences that drew me into this chapter. And I want you to look with me, for a moment, at verses 12 to 15...verses 12 to 15. And I think this will help you to see why I'm speaking the way I am.

Peter says this, "Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and are established in the present truth." Now if ever there was a church that was established in the truth, you are. One of the reasons that I wanted to go away, among many, was I wanted to see what the church really was apart from me. Because a church is a church, not an individual. And I saw in my absence that you are established in the truth, you are grounded in the truth.

You also know the things of which Peter writes. He says, "I want to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them." You've been taught and you're established. Now you'd think if they were taught and they were established, Peter might say, "Now it's time for me to leave. They're taught, they're established, I went away, I proved my point, they can handle it without me, better they should hear somebody else." But then this hit me, "Even though you know it and even though you're established in it, I'm going to stay around just to make sure you remember it."

And so he says in verses 13 and 14, "Yea, I think it's fitting," or it's in proper perspective, or it's in order, or it's right, "as long as I am in this tabernacle," now he's talking about his body there, "as long as I am in my physical body to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. And I know this also, shortly I must put off this tabernacle." I'm not going to live forever, he says. In fact, the Lord had told him in John 21 that he was going to die as a martyr. And so he says, "I know that I'm going to die in the vitality of my ministry before I ever get to old age, cause the Lord told me that. So I don't know how much time I have as the Lord has shown me that I must die, and as long as I have this time, I'm just going to keep reminding you of what you already know and of what you are already established in."

Verse 15, "Moreover, I will endeavor that you may be able after my disease, or death, to have these things always in memory." In other words, Peter says I want you to know these things so well that if I were to go away permanently, you would never forget them.

Well, beloved, let me tell you something. The ministry comes down to simply establishing people and then reminding them. And that's the way I see it. I guess maybe you could say we had 12 years to establish, 12 years to teach the truth. And now God has called us to be put in remembrance.

You know, any good teacher knows one thing about his pupil. Are you ready for this one? They forget what you teach them. You know why a teacher knows that? Because he forgets. Once in a while I have to take out an old tape to hear what I believe on a certain passage. That's right, because I forgot how I interpreted that. But we forget. And so any teacher knows that you teach by repetition. But a teacher also knows not only do his pupils forget, but he knows that they can become so familiar with things that they don't hear them.

In other words, if you teach the same truth in the same words, they think they know it and they don't really hear it. So you teach the same truth in other terms. And that's the way the reminders come. So, God helping us, we have in our family and in my own heart, a total heart commitment to Grace Church to bring to you a ministry, if you will, of remembrance, to keep saying to you the things that are in the Word of God in a fresh and exciting and vital way...nothing new. In fact, you don't need new revelations and you don't need new visions, you just need to remember the same old timeless eternal divine principles that glorify God, right? And that's what we're committed to sharing.

Now, as we examine this chapter...and it's going to take us a few weeks because I just want to take my time, I want you to get the focus...you need to remember. Now let me expand that for a minute just in concept. We function on the basis of our brains. We have to be physiological a little bit, just to understand this. But God has given us a body and we function in concert with that. And we function in response to our bodies. And there is in our bodies that amazing instrument called the brain. In some of us it's less amazing than in others, but nonetheless, all of us possess it. And the brain is a gift from God. It grants to us a very important spiritual capacity. Everything you hear, see, or experience in your lifetime is stored in a cell in your brain. There are so many cells, so many little slots in your brain that nothing is ever really forgotten at all. It is all stored there.

Now God therefore has given you the capacity to live out spiritual truth because you can't say, "Hey, I tried to learn that stuff, but all my categories are filled up...I don't have any empty cells left." You have the capacity to receive it all and it is all stored there.

I did some research in the encyclopedias on the brain and I found out that though everything in the brain is stored, when you recall it and when you relearn it and when you apply it, you expand that storage capacity. And so the more you use something and the more you hear it and the more you apply it, the greater part of your thinking process it occupies. So that as you hear and you respond to the Word of God, it begins to take over a larger portion, to put it in layman's terms, of your thinking process. But all of us have the capacity.

In fact, I hear that we only use one tenth of one percent of our brain. Now some of us probably use more. I've often prayed to the Lord, "Lord, if there's so much there, help me to use it." And I think sometimes I'm going to get the answer, "Hey, you're using all you've got," you know. But I know that there's a sense in which we don't even use all that's there.

There's been some interesting studies on this. For example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge(?) related the tale of an ignorant slave girl. And this ignorant slave girl was never taught to read, never taught to write, but she could repeat verbatim long passages of Hebrew. And they examined her and they found that she had worked for a scholar who was her employer, he constantly read aloud from rabbinical books. And though she never did learn to read and never understood a thing she was saying, by rote she could repeat long passages of Hebrew. This is because all of that that she heard was stored on the brain. And for some reason, she found herself going back and reactivating and relearning and restating all of those things until they became rote for her.

For example, the first Greek class I ever took when I was about 18 years old, the professor said, "Now I want you to get a feel for the Greek language." So the first month of Greek, he made us memorize 1 John 1:1 in Greek, even though we couldn't translate it. We just memorized it. That's been over 20 years ago. , , , amen, that's it. First John 1:1, I haven't said that in I don't know how

many years, but it's there because I went over it and over it and over it and over it and over it to memorize it.

I took piano when I was young...not very far but I took it for a little bit. And I had one recital and I played "The March of the Wee Folk." I was, I think, seven years old. And to this day I can play "The March of the Wee Folk," and only "The March of the Wee Folk." See, repetition...repetition expands the capability of recovery. Do you understand what I'm saying? To recover spiritual truth demands repetition and use so that the more you hear and the more you think through and the more you apply spiritual truth, the more it begins to dominate your thinking. And eventually as this goes on and on, it will become almost an involuntary reaction to respond in a spiritually proper manner to a situation...because you are so filled with that controlling principle.

I talked with some people and it was kind of amazing, folks would say something like, "You know, I feel that I have to study the Bible every day...I feel that if I don't hear the teaching of the Word of God on the radio, or if I don't study under the teaching of somebody on a tape every single day that I can't keep my spiritual life in order." And it's hard for me sometimes to understand that. But I began to think about that and I think I do understand that. Many people in our country go to churches where they're not really fed the Word of God, they're not given a feeding of the Word of God that gives them principles by which to live. Therefore, they are at the mercy of the society they're in. And they are literally bombarded by the filth of the world through the books and the newspapers and the television and the radio and the movies and the music and in the office and at school and wherever they are, the flood just keeps coming. And it just leaves all these impressions on the brain. They're just incessant and constant.

And it's come to my attention as I perceive our society with media approaches to everything, that no longer can Christians be sustained on a one Sunday morning a week diet of spiritual truth. There's no way that you can counter the onslaught of the system unless you expose yourself to the truth of God on a daily basis and feed that into your mind. If you feed into your mind the things of the world, your most automatic response is going to be an ungodly one. And just on a once a week basis, you're not going to be able to sustain control of those things for the glory of God. And so I see these folks all over the place who are just digging in deeply. And someone told me it was...I don't know, was it 300,000 tapes or something in the last five months went out because people are feeling that they cannot live for God's glory unless they are daily exposed to His truth so that it's stored in the front part of their mind and they have instant recall.

Now you have the capacity for this. Mozart, the marvelous musician that he was, they said of Mozart that he could hear a great musical piece one time and weeks later write from memory the entire score having only heard it once. God has given us a marvelous tool in the brain. It's just that it gets jammed with so much stuff.

And so, I'm trying to say to you that God has designed our physical capacity to accommodate the spiritual need. We must be told to remember and God has given us the capacity to deal with that. We have a marvelous memory capacity. And over and over in the Scriptures, as I've been seeing it, and this has refreshed my heart, I'm sure you don't understand how I feel about it but over and over I've seen how that God's prophets were called to tell His people just to remember. They're just like people with a prod, to sort of jog you, to make you remember. And if I can serve no other purpose than that, I can serve the highest purpose that God has intended. First, to establish in the present truth, and to let you know these things and then to constantly jog your memory so that you never forget them. And the more you do that, the more they come to the front of your mind and you find as you grow toward spiritual maturity that spiritual responses are almost involuntary. You almost don't even have to think about them, they're just involuntary because you're so dominated by the truth of God.

Turn with me for a moment to the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 2...look at verse 1, first of all, "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give unto your fathers." Now watch this, "And thou shalt...what?...remember." Moses is there to tell the people to remember. It isn't any new truth. It's to prod them about the old truth. "Remember all the way which the Lord your God led you."

Look at verse 11, "Beware that thou...what?...forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I command thee this day, lest when thou hast eaten and art full and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply and thy silver and thy gold are multiplied and all that thou hast is multiplied, then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord."

Prosperity is its own curse, you know. It makes it so easy for us to forget.

Go back to Deuteronomy chapter 4, and all of the book of Deuteronomy, you see, is a preparation for God's people entering the land. All of it is a preparation for them living to the glory of God in the place of promise. And this is the key, Deuteronomy 4:5, "Behold, I've taught you statutes and ordinances even as the Lord my God commanded me that you should do so in the land to which you go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations who shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great who hath God as near unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and ordinances as righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself and keep or guard your soul diligently, lest you forget." Lest you forget.

Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 12, "Then beware lest you forget." In Psalm 119, there's a wonderful verse somewhere you ought to write it in your Bible, it's 119:16, just the last sentence, listen to it, don't need to look it up, just listen, Psalm 119:16, "I will not forget Thy word." I will not forget Thy Word." In Proverbs 3 the father says, "My son, forget not my law but let thine heart keep my commandments." Isaiah 51:13 warns us not to forget. Hebrews 6, James 1, Revelation 2 calls us to remember. Nehemiah 4, Nehemiah called his people to remember. First Chronicles 16 verses 12 and 15 calls us to remember.

And I think there's a special word in Ecclesiastes 12:1 about this. Listen to what it says, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth." You know, when the mind is young and fresh, the input comes in and if it's godly and the repetition of the years builds upon that, there's a security for the old age in godliness. And if you forget God when you're young, the brain gets dominated and crowded with all the things of the world, it's so hard to relearn spiritual truth. Oh, it's so hard. Start when you're young.

And then he goes on to describe old age and all of its problems and all of its weaknesses and all of its infirmities. And apparently Solomon didn't really apply this when he was young and so in his old age all he could say was "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Be sure you do it while you're young.

So, Peter sees himself as I see myself. Look back with me at 2 Peter chapter 1. One who is sent by God to remind you...to remind you. I take the exhortation from the folks around this country to keep doing the same thing, keep preaching the same messages, tell your people to keep being the same people, your elders to keep doing the things they're doing as a word from the Lord instructing us in the ministry of remembrance. And so we're committed not to anything new but to something very old, but to keep repeating it. Peter says I'm sent to remind you.

Now, of what does Peter choose to remind us? There are seven things in this chapter, we're going to look at one this morning. And next week we'll go on. But there are seven things that we're to remember. Look at verse 12...2 Peter 1:12..."Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things." What things, Peter? What are these things? "Wherefore" takes us back, they are the things of which he has just spoken. All of the things from verse 1 through 11, "Wherefore I want you to remember these things," and even the things that follow in verses 16 to 21.

What are we to remember, Peter? What do you want to put us in memory of? First of all, let's just look at number one, the reality of our salvation...the reality of our salvation, verses 1 and 2. "Simon Peter a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness in God and our Savior Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

Now that's salvation conversation, folks, in those two verses. You notice terms like "faith, righteousness, Savior, grace, peace, knowledge of God," all of those are salvation conversation terms. Peter's referring to our redemption. And he calls upon us, among other things, to remember the reality of our salvation.

It's so easy to forget that. You say, "Oh, I'd never...I'd never forget that I was saved." Well, I'm not talking about the technical idea of remembering you're saved, I'm talking about remembering all that such a salvation should mean to you. Christians can become so picky, so minuscule, so sometimes critical and they can just find all the little things they don't like about things and they forget the magnanimity of their redemption and they get all bent out of shape on little things.

You know, one of the things that's been good for me in stepping away from Grace Church is I had no responsibility other than to teach and to be with my family. I didn't have to do things, little things, deal with problems, you know. We just saw people for a few days and left. We never got that involved. And you begin to just get away from all the little things. You begin not to see this and that and become critical or analytical, and you just begin to enjoy the greatness of God and the wonder of salvation. You just kind of were removed from the problem aspects. And there's a certain sense in which that's a washing out of the heart.

And coming back to the church, I couldn't really see the problems...the little things, the picky things, the disagreements, or whatever. I mean, I didn't want to even see those or think of those. I could only sense the glory and the joy of the fullness of the fellowship here. I think sometimes we lose our perspective in salvation. And so Peter says I want to remind you that you have obtained like precious faith.

Now what does he mean by that? Let's take the terms. The word "obtain," really the concept of that verb is to receive by allotment. It's not so much that you took it as that it was given to you. In fact, it even is used to refer to choosing by lot and lots were cast, that was a way in which God revealed His will. So it's the idea of a divine allotment. He says I'm writing to you who have obtained faith as a divine allotment. Now that's a tremendous concept.

You know, you have a basic human faith. I mean, you have the faith it takes to turn your ignition on and know that there's eight little things firing in there but they're not going to blow you into eternity. You have the faith to get on an airplane and fly, though you can't see behind the door, you don't even know if there's a pilot up there. You have the faith to ride in a car and not believe you're going to go off the end of a freeway deal that doesn't go anywhere. You have the faith to eat in a restaurant and you've never been in the kitchen. You have the faith to do a lot of things in life. You just live by faith. You have faith to put your money in a bank. That's human natural faith.

But that isn't going to redeem anybody. The faith that saves is a gift from God by divine allotment. The faith of which he speaks in verse 1 is not the faith, definite article, the content of the Christian faith. It is not Christian theology. It is redeeming faith, saving faith. And we have received saving faith by divine allotment from God. I hope you haven't forgotten that God didn't have to give that to you and that in His marvelous mysterious sovereignty, He did it. I look here and I say, "God, how can I ever find words to say thank You for the allotment of saving faith given to these people?"

You see, it says in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, "For by grace are you saved through...what?...faith but...what?...that not of yourselves." What's not of yourselves? The whole thing, including the faith. God had to give you the faith, the saving faith and it came, according to Romans 10, "Faith comes by hearing a speech about Jesus Christ." Faith is a gift of God that is given in responding to the gospel of Christ.

Across this country from one end to the other and we went 13,000 miles crisscrossing America, over and over again in my mind I saw people living and moving and running around without God and I was thankful for my redemption. Are you? I hope you haven't forgotten that. Peter says, "Remember, you have received by divine allotment faith to be redeemed, to believe." That's not a human act.

Now notice also verse 1, it's called "like precious faith." That's a great word, isotimos. You know what it means? It means of equal value, of equal honor. Oh, that's good. There are no first-class, second-class Christians. There are no people, well, some people want to say that you become a Christian and later if you get your act together you get promoted to being a disciples, so there are two levels. I don't see that. Equal value, watch this, we have obtained a saving faith of equal value.

In other words, there's no inequality in the body of Christ. There's neither male nor female, bond nor free, Jew nor Greek, all are one. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. We have received an equally valuable saving faith.

But the word isotimos is also used in a political sense frequently in Greek writing. And it means equal rank, or equal standing, or equal office. Get that? In Christ we all stand equal, too, don't we? The righteousness of God is imputed to us, we stand before God like everybody else stands before God. What a great thought. No matter who you are, no matter how intelligent or how unintelligent, no matter how physically gifted or physically seemingly non gifted, no matter how educated or ignorant, it doesn't matter what it is, rich or poor, all of us have received a saving faith that is equal in its value and gives us standing equal before God. Great truth.

And that's what makes the body of Christ so wonderful. I mean, just look around. Here we all are from every imaginable part of life. And none of us has anything over anybody else, we're all going to spend forever in heaven. We're all going to know the glories of being like Jesus Christ because our salvation knows no grades. Great truth, no distinction, no upper level disciples, no secret 144,000 are going to

get all the gravy in glory. We have equal value in our faith and equal standing.

Why? How so? Again verse 1, "Through the righteousness in God and our Savior Jesus Christ." The word "righteousness," a consummate word, a word that's so full of meaning it's hard to even begin to get it out. And so much of its interpretation is dependent upon the context. Paul uses it in a more forensic way to speak of total righteousness, the nature of God. Peter uses it to speak specifically of God's fairness and God's justice. And that's exactly what it means here.

Mark this, the reason we've all received a faith of equal value and the reason we've all received a standing of equal honor is because we have a God who is fair and does not make distinctions. With God, says the Bible, there is no respect of what? Persons. Isn't that great? People say, "Well, I wish I was a Christian like the Apostle Paul." I've got news for you, you are. "Me?" That's right.

Look back at verse 1, "You have obtained a like precious faith with us." Who is the "us?" Peter and the Apostles. You are just as honored in your saving faith, just as exalted in your standing, just as much a recipient of the justice of God as an Apostle. You have a like precious faith. What an incredible thought.

And, you see, we're all sinners any way. So God doesn't distinguish between us a whole lot. He gives us equally His mercy and His grace. Every time I see a believer moping around, "Oh, you know, I'm just don't know if I've got the resources," I just want to remind them you've got everything the Apostle Paul had, enjoy it. God gives us equally and values us equally. You are as much value to God as anybody who ever entered His kingdom. Is that great?

Grace Church has always been committed to the fact that salvation is a reality. And that there aren't people who get to wear gold hats and white satin because we all have the same like precious faith. And we're all one in Him. And we've always been committed to that, haven't we? I'm just going to remind you of that. Don't ever forget your salvation.

Then verse 2, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord." Now listen, salvation, this equalled honored faith, this equal standing before God, given to us by divine allotment because God is such a fair and just God and treats all sinners the same, the fact that this has happened is to multiply unto us grace upon grace and peace upon peace. But, that only happens through the knowledge of God.

In other words, if verse 1 is God's verse, verse 2 is our side. God does His part and we respond with knowledge. We have to really know Christ. The word knowledge here is not gnosis, the simple word for knowledge, it's epignosis, it means a deep, full, rich, genuine knowledge.

Now listen to me. The reality of your salvation is this, you have received from God by divine allotment a precious faith equal to all other saving faith that gives you a perfect standing in Christ equal to all others in Christ and that is designed to multiply unto you grace upon grace and peace upon peace, but is only valid when you have a deep true knowledge of Christ.

You know what that does? That eliminates the superficial, doesn't it? That gets rid of the Jesus bandwagon, the cheap grace, the easy believism. Do you remember we were talking about that, weren't we, in Matthew 7 when the summer began, how many will say, "Lord, Lord," and He'll say, "Depart from Me...what? I never knew you."

There's a lot of superficiality. But he is saying when the deep knowledge is there, then the real faith is there. And that's just our part of it. Wish we had time to go through this bit by bit, but let me just show you. What is the deep epignosis, the full rich knowledge of God? Well, just take the terms used. Isn't it marvelous that in verse 1 it says, "Our Savior Jesus Christ," and in verse 2 it says "Jesus, our Lord."

Some people want to say, "Well, you can take Him as Savior, but now as Lord." You see, in one verse He's the Savior, in the other verse He's the Lord, and that is the composite of who He is. Take the terms. He's called God, Savior, Jesus, Christ, Lord. What then is a true deep knowledge? It is a knowledge of Christ that perceives Him as God, Savior, Jesus, Christ, Lord in the fullness of all that that embodies, you see? You are redeemed when you perceive Christ to be who He indeed is, now when you add Him as if He were some spiritual trinket to your life.

Peter was writing to people who claimed to know Christ, claimed to have a knowledge of Christ, but were continuing in immoral behavior. And he is, in effect, probably using the word knowledge like a catch phrase because they used it. And he is putting authentic Christian content into it and saying you better have a genuine knowledge.

The elders instructed me when I left to preach on true salvation from Matthew 7. They said they felt that the places I went would..that would be the message I was to give. And so we were in New York and I started out this whole week of conference, I said we're going to study this week Matthew 7:13 to 27. And people were kind of surprised cause usually you get spiritual life or the Holy Spirit or whatever but this was heavy stuff. You know, and everybody's up there sailboating and, you know, fiddling around and they come in and voom, see, comes Matthew 7, the broad road and the narrow way.

Well, I preached the first day and one lady came to me and she said, "Well, you did it to me. My husband will never come back to hear you again this week." I said, "Well, I'm sorry about that." And it was very...and one fellow said, "You know, you have really just put a very great pall over this conference." I said, "Well, good, you know, because I think we need to think about these things." But I said, I told this fellow that I'd pray that the Lord would show him what I was trying to say.

And the third day, three men came up to me, nice looking men, gentlemen, and one of them said to me, "You know, we're very concerned. We've been listening carefully to what you've said. All three of us are Sunday-school teachers but we don't know if we're saved." I said, "Well, that's an important thing to recognize whether you are or not." And so we had a wonderful talk and they got their lives settled with the Lord.

You see, there are a lot of people who...who are involved but they've never really looked back at the beginning to see if it was legitimate. This happened in many places where I shared that message.

In fact, I took some of that material together to give to a publisher to be published. They said, "We can't publish it, it will scare the Christians too much."

There is much to be thankful for, beloved...so much. First of all, I'm thankful for the reality of my salvation. Are you? That it was given to me by a divine allotment of God, that it was given to me on an equal basis with the Apostles or anybody else, that it was given to me and made me equal in standing before God so that all that is His is mine, and that it is multiplying to me grace upon grace and peace upon peace because it is a true and deep and rich knowledge of Christ as God, Savior, Jesus, Christ, Lord. So much to remember. Don't forget. Don't get petty. Think on the great reality of your salvation. That's only the first of seven, we'll continue next week.

Our Father, we come now in a moment of prayer at the close of this hour, so filled in our hearts that we feel we would burst if we could not give expression through song, through word, through that internal praise that releases our hearts into your presence. Thank You for meeting us in this hour, for the majesty and the wonder and the glory of music, the beauty of the notes, the truth of the words, the commitment of those who shared them with us. Thank You for this Your truth through Peter. Father, may we be committed to remembering. May we know that You want us just to repeat the first works. Go back where we started, relearn it, recover it, recall it, reactivate it, reapply it so that it fills our brains that we may function in obedience to You.

And, Lord, we know, too, that there are some dear ones gathered in our midst today who do not know Christ. They've never opened their hearts to Him. They don't have the deep knowledge, the rich knowledge, the true knowledge. We pray that the Spirit of God would grant to them that allotment this day and may they respond in faith, that like precious faith, for Christ's glory we pray. And everyone said...Amen. God bless you.

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).