

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

### **Our Precious Faith, Part 3**

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3-4

Code: 61-4

We come now to the time of proclamation tonight, a wonderful time, and I would encourage you to take your Bible and turn to 2 Peter, chapter 1. If you didn't bring a Bible with you, there should be one in the back of a pew near you, and you can kind of follow along as we look together tonight at two verses in the Bible that are very, very important. Let me read them to you, verses 3 and 4 of 2 Peter, chapter 1. "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, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Now, I want you to know those two verses are a mouthful; not only that they are a mouthful, and they are a heartful of great truth. To begin with, just a basic realization, and that is that life in general, even for those of us who are true Christians, is not easy. None of us escapes the troubles of life in these sinful bodies, living on this fallen planet. Temptation, sin, failure, disappointment, rejection, frustration, unfulfillment, weakness, pain, sorrow, loneliness, fear, anxiety, alienation, all of that comes to all of us, in varying forms. It's all a part of our life experience.

The question is where do we find resources to deal with that; in fact, to deal with it effectively; in fact, to deal with it triumphantly? Where do we go to solve the issues of life? Can we turn to God? Does He care? Does He love us enough to dispense some supernatural help? Some doubt that. Herman Melville wrote, "The reason the mass of men fear God and at the same time dislike Him is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all brain like a watch," end quote. Some people, I suppose, just think God is some machine, who made everything and really doesn't care that much. Is that true? Or does God care, and does God love us, and has God give us resources to deal with the issues of life? In fact, are we sufficient? Are we sort of self-contained? Or are the psychologists right – that even though you have God, and you have Christ, you're still inadequate, and you probably need therapy? And then some other religionists would say, "Well, yes, you may have God, and you may know Christ, but you need more of Jesus. You need some special anointing from Him to really be adequate." Are they right? Even if we know God, has God just given us a small dose of supernatural grace, barely enough to squeak by? Maybe enough to save us but not enough to sanctify us, maybe enough to save us and sanctify us, but not enough to glorify us; I mean if we come to God through Christ, are we really sufficient or is there more?

Well, this leads us to, at least preliminarily, a basic discussion of one of the attributes of God. I took out some of my books this week on the character of God, and I started looking for one attribute in

particular, and that was the attribute of generosity. I didn't find it. I didn't find it listed in any systematic theology, I didn't find it listed in any book about God, I just didn't find it. And I read maybe ten books through the index, trying to find somebody who said something about the generosity of God. Have Christian theologians also sort of questioned whether God is really very generous? Is He a little stingy? Does He just give us barely enough to get us out of hell and not a lot more? Well, let's look at the Scripture for a minute; just listen to these and see what you conclude. In Exodus 34:6, God gives a first person assessment of His character. This is what He says: "I am compassionate, I am gracious, and I am abounding in lovingkindness." In Lamentations, chapter 3, verses 22 and 23, it says, "The Lord's lovingkindness indeed never ceases, His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; small is Thy faithfulness." Is that what it says? Not in my Bible. It says what? "Great is Thy faithfulness." The psalmist said, "The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me." And then the psalmist says, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness." He provides what we need in the day, He provides what we need in the night, and we ought to praise Him for it.

You see, Scripture says that God is very generous. In fact, in all the issues of life, it says He is great, plentiful, tender, abundant, above the heavens, and from everlasting to everlasting. His grace is as far as the heaven is above the earth; that's how great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. Listen to what Psalm 121 says, "I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From whence shall my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night. The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. He will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever." Summing it up, He'll take care of everything, absolutely everything. In John 1:16 of the New Testament, it says, "For of His fullness have all we received." When we received Christ we didn't get part, we got fullness. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that you might have life and have a little bit of it." Is that what He said? No. He said, "I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly – more abundantly." In Romans 8:17 it says we're not just heirs, but we're joint heirs with Christ, and all that God gives to Christ, He gives to us.

Let me show you a wonderful Scripture, 1 Corinthians, chapter 3. Just listen, if you wish, I'll read it to you. First Corinthians 3:21, listen to this statement in the middle of the verse, "For all things belong to you." To who? To believers. You say, "Yeah, but that's certain kind of believers." No, that was written to the Corinthians, who probably were on the lowest rung of the ladder; very sinful people in many ways. They had come to Christ, but they hadn't really been obedient in many areas. And nevertheless he says, "All things belong to you." You see, it is the nature of God to be generous. And when God gives salvation, it is the fullness of salvation, it is grace upon grace, it is mercy upon mercy, it is all that God can give. Then he goes on to say, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all things belong to you."

Paul belongs to you, Apollos belongs to you, Peter belongs to you, all the great teachers; the world belongs to you, life belongs to you, death belongs to you; things present belong to you, things to come belong to you, everything belongs to you. And then here's the cap: "And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God." Wow. We're all wrapped up, and whatever God and Christ possess, we possess. We possess the world, God made it for us. We possess life, spiritual, eternal life in Christ. We possess death, to die is gain for us. We possess things present, that encompasses every element in life, everything in this life, everything we experience, the good, the bad, the pleasant, the painful, the joys, the disappointments, health, sickness, God gave it all to us to work together for our good. And we possess things to come. Eternal reward, the glories of heaven, the new heaven, the new earth, the millennial kingdom, and we belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God, and it's all wrapped up in the same package. Wow. What incredible, incredible thoughts.

No wonder back in chapter 2 of 1 Corinthians, verse 9, Paul wrote that "eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and it hasn't even entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." Listen, dear friend, they tell us that we only use less than ten percent of our brain at any time. With some of us that's apparent. But with most of us it's not. With most of us it's not. Well if you only use less than ten percent of your brain, I can tell you right now you and I only use a very, very minute portion of all of the grace that is ours in Christ. Your eye hasn't yet seen it. And your ear hasn't yet heard it. And your heart hasn't yet conceived all that the Lord has granted to you in Christ. Second Corinthians chapter 9, and verse 8, brings this to focus. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed." What an overwhelming statement; absolutely overwhelming statement. Let me give it to you again. "God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."

Do you have all you need? Yes, you do. You have more than you need. You have all grace, super-abounding, overflowing, so that you are always completely sufficient for everything, and you have an abundance for every good deed. The word "sufficiency" appears here, *autarkeia*. The word means self-sufficiency, to be self-contained. It means to be independent of external circumstances. It means particularly to be independent of the services of other people. Isn't that interesting? That as a believer, there's a sense in which you're not dependent on other people; you are self-contained and sufficient. In other words, you have within you grace upon grace upon grace in Christ, abounding to every need of life, so that you are sufficient, always, for all things. And the apostle then is clearly saying that the believer, by divine grace, is made self-sufficient; made competent and capable to meet the demands made on him and her.

We look at life, and we see everything in life, and we see all the trials and troubles of life – listen, there is no reason if you're a Christian to imagine that you're not sufficient. You always have all sufficiency in everything. Why? Because a generous God has dispensed a super-abounding grace,

which you have not yet even conceived of, let alone used. Hear it in these words, Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” We have it all. He’s blessed us with every spiritual blessing – every spiritual blessing. In chapter 2, verse 7, he says, “In the ages to come” – from salvation on, and throughout eternity, we will experience – “the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Grace upon grace upon grace. In chapter 3 of Ephesians, verse 17, he says, “I want you to be rooted and grounded in love, and I want you to be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth.” I mean can you get a grip on what you have? It’s breadth and height and length and depth.

And you get weary, don’t you, of Christians wandering around, looking for something more? More what? Look at Colossians, chapter 2, verse 8, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Don’t let anybody capture you to the human system. Now listen to verses 9 and 10, “For in Him” – that is, in Christ – “all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form” – now look at this – “and in Him you have been made complete.” What a statement. What an absolutely marvelous statement. In Him you have been made complete.

Now, in spite of all of this revelation about God’s amazing generosity, nobody writes about that. And in spite of all of this revelation about God’s amazing generosity, Christians still think God was stingy, and He may have given them salvation grace, but not enough grace to be sanctified, or maybe enough grace to be sanctified, but not enough grace to be glorified. You might lose your salvation. Or He maybe gave you enough grace to be saved, and enough grace to be somewhat sanctified, and enough grace to be glorified, but not enough grace to handle your problems. You’ve been cheated in terms of the resources necessary for life. Beloved, that is an unthinkable thankless attitude toward a generous God. Listen to the words of Solomon, who was wiser than a lot of people in this world. In Ecclesiastes 3:14, he said this, “Here’s something I know, I know this; that everything God does will remain forever and there’s nothing to add to it, and there’s nothing to take from it.” That’s good. Whatever God gave, you can’t add to it, and you can’t diminish it. Are we sufficient in Christ? Or do we lack resources? Do we need more of Jesus? Do we need more of supernatural power? Do we need some kind of human help, some kind of therapy, some kind of psychology beyond Scripture? “No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly,” Psalm 84:11. Nothing’s missing.

You say, “Well, why do so many people doubt that?” Well, one reason people doubt it is because they’re not really saved; they don’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, so they are insufficient. They just think they’re saved. Another reason people doubt it is because they’re ignorant. They don’t know what they have. And that’s why Paul said to the Ephesians, “I want the eyes of your understanding to be enlightened so you’ll know what is the riches of His grace.” Another reason some people don’t experience it is, even though they’re truly saved and they are sufficient, and even though they may be well taught and know they’re sufficient, they’re not walking uprightly; and so the resources are there,

but not available. But for the true Christian and the obedient Christian, there is complete self-contained sufficiency. Think of it in these terms, Romans 8. This is very, very strong. Romans 8 and verse 32, listen to this, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” – stop there. He’s talking about God. God didn’t spare His own Son. God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die on a cross for our sins.

All right. If God didn’t spare His own Son, which was the most He could give, right? The most He could give. Paul says, “How will He not also with Him” – that is, with His Son – “freely give us all things?” Here’s his reason. If God gave us the most, the sacrifice of His own Son, how could we imagine that He would hold back the least, the good things which the death of His Son purchased? Does that make sense? If God gave us the most, He wouldn’t hold back the least. You say, “Well, yes, God gave me His best gift, the Son, forgave my sins in the sacrifice of the Son, but He won’t give me enough peace to handle this situation.” No – no, if He gave you the best, will He hold back the least? You see, all of this speaks of the great reality that in Christ we are sufficient, that we have a sufficient salvation. Now, I’m not discounting fellowship. I’m not discounting the wisdom in mutual care, and kindness, and counsel. But I am saying when it comes to spiritual resources we are, by the indwelling Spirit, through the miracle of salvation, self-contained, sufficient believers. Salvation isn’t a stingy gift. In Matthew 22:4 Jesus likens salvation to a wedding feast. And the reason He used a wedding feast was because it was at a wedding feast when everything was done lavishly. When you became saved, it was God dumping lavishly on you what a person would do at a wedding feast.

You remember in Luke 15 when the prodigal came home, pictures the sinner coming to God? What did the father do? The father said, “Get the best robe, get a ring on his finger, get sandals for his feet, kill the fatted calf, start the music, let’s dance, this is a celebration.” That depicts salvation. It isn’t God saying, “Well, here’s salvation, but don’t expect more.” It’s a full-blown, lavish, wedding feast celebration, with everything that God could possibly dispense. That’s how God works – the best of everything. All of that leads us to verse 3. You didn’t know that, but it does. What does verse 3 say? “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us” – what – “everything pertaining to life and godliness.” As Peter introduces this marvelous letter, he is talking about our salvation. Being sure of our salvation is the first place to take your stand against false teachers, and false teachers are his main theme. But he starts out talking about our salvation, which is where we take our stand against false teaching. He’s already talked about the source of our salvation in verse 1. He’s talked about the substance of our salvation in verse 2. And now he’s talking about the sufficiency of our salvation in verses 3 and 4, and it is, frankly, one of the greatest statements in all the pages of Scripture.

So let’s talk about the sufficiency of our salvation. We can’t say everything that ought to be said, we don’t have time for that; but I want to give you a few words to hang your thoughts on, all right? As we look at these two verses, they just literally ought to cause us unending joy when we see the immensity of our sufficiency in Jesus Christ. The first word I want you to put down is the word power – power. These words will just take us through these verses. “Seeing that His divine power” – now,

power is the source of our sufficiency. Whatever sufficiency has been given to us is because of supernatural energy, not because of our power, not because of anything we did, not natural power, not human power, divine power. And so Peter begins with a well-founded assurance that in our salvation benefits, the power of God is in full operation. Boy, what a thought. Paul said it this way, “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think according to the power that works in us.” What power – “The power that raised Jesus from the dead.” Resurrection power operates in us, and we can do what we can’t even think, we can’t even speak. Divine power, His divine power.

“His” probably goes back to modifying Jesus our Lord – the power of the Lord Jesus. You say, “Well, maybe it could go back to God.” It could, except he probably wouldn’t use the term divine, because if he was referring back to God, it would be enough to say His power, since inherent in the word God is deity. The fact that he adds divine is probably leading us to assume that His goes back to Jesus our Lord, whose deity someone might question, and so he says, “Jesus our Lord,” and it is His divine power – His divine power. According to Matthew 24:30, the Lord Jesus had great power. According to Mark 5:30, great power came out of Him to heal. According to Luke 4:14, His ministry in Galilee was done with power. According to Luke 5:17, the power of the Lord God was present in Him. Paul said in Romans 1:4 that Jesus Christ was the Son of God with power. And Paul rejoiced that the power of Christ dwelt in him, 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Beloved, the Christian can never experience a power failure. Did you hear that? You can get unplugged, and you can turn the switch off, but the power never fails. It can’t. It’s there. Divine power, the moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ, divine power is granted to us – to Christians. The word granted – I wish we had some time to look at it more closely. It is a word, compound word, in the perfect tense, which means that God has generously granted to us permanent power; something He gave us in the past with continuing results. There can never be a power failure. These things are not naturally found in us; they have to be given. And Jesus our Lord, by divine power, generously, continuously gives them to us.

The second word I want you to hang your thought on is provision. What has His power granted? Provision – what provision? He has granted to us – here it is – “everything pertaining to life and godliness” – absolutely unbelievable statement, apart from the fact that it’s in the word of God. None of us, if we looked at our practical lives, would assume that we have everything necessary to life and godliness, because we stumble and fumble around so much, but here it is. The word everything is in the emphatic position, because what Peter is emphasizing is full sufficiency. We have everything. Related to what? First of all, everything pertaining to life. What a statement. Life is the essential reality. Everything related to life, we have. We have new life in Christ, and everything related to sustaining that life, we have. That’s why we have to believe that a Christian is eternally secure. Why? Because you have everything that pertains to that life. That’s why we believe that a Christian will permanently persevere. Why? Because you have everything which is necessary to sustain that life.

That's why we believe that in any vicissitude, struggle, trial of life, you have everything you need, because all that you need in life, you have. You have it in fullness, you have it in abundance, you have it in perfection – everything. And then he adds, “and godliness.” Everything you need to be godly, you have.

That beautiful word *eusebeia* means true reverence, reverence in worship and active obedience. Everything you need to be a reverent, holy, pious, godly person, you have. You don't need to be begging for something more. You don't need to be asking for something more, some ecstatic experience, some ecstatic gift, some miracle, some wonder, some sign. You have every spiritual resource to sustain and perfect that eternal life that is in you, and every spiritual resource to manifest that life in godly living. What a statement. Let me say that again. You have every spiritual resource to sustain and perfect that eternal life that is in you, and you have every spiritual resource to manifest that life in godly living. All you need is there. It is never a question of sufficiency. The grace that is so powerful to save is equally powerful to sustain, and equally powerful to manifest itself in our conduct.

Power, provision, third word: procurement. How do you get this powerful provision? Verse 3: “Through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.” Oh, what a statement this is. How do you get it? Through the true knowledge of Him. You say, “What does that mean?” Well, what it indicates to me is that you have to know Christ – you have to know Christ. The word here, *epignosis*, is simply a word that means knowledge. It's sometimes translated the deep knowledge, or the true knowledge, but in all honesty it's used interchangeably with the simpler word *gnosis*, which just means “to know.” But what he is saying here is that you have to know Christ. Not a superficial knowledge, not some kind of surface awareness of the facts that Jesus lived, and died, and rose again, and that. Not some shallow acquaintance with the story of Jesus. But you have to know Him – to know Him.

You remember Matthew 7:21? “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord.’ And then will I confess unto them, ‘Depart from Me, I never knew you.’ ‘But, Lord, we – we preached in Your name, and we did many miracles in Your name, and we cast out demons in Your name.’ ‘I didn't know you.’” What do you mean, know? Well we're talking about a kind of knowledge that we need to say something about. Not a superficial shallow knowledge, but to know in the deep and intimate sense. Like in the Old Testament, when it says, “Cain knew his wife, and she bore a child.” That's a deep knowing. Joseph was surprised when Mary was pregnant, because he hadn't known her. That means intimate sexual contact. It's talking about intimacy. And when it says that the procurement comes through the knowledge of Him, it means that intimate relationship that a person can have with Christ by faith, by truly knowing Christ, in the sense of intimate communion. When one comes to the true knowledge of Christ, he receives the power of God through Christ, which brings into his life every spiritual provision his life could ever need to be sustained and manifest itself in godliness.

You say, “How does that personal knowledge take place?” When I understand that Jesus lived and died as God in human flesh, when I understand that He died for my sin, when I understand that He rose again, when I understand that He is Lord of all, and I come to Him and say, “I believe in You, I turn from my sin, and I give You my life to follow You in obedience as my Lord,” that brings one into a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. And in that true knowledge, the power comes and the provision is granted. And it’s unnecessary to ask for anything more. We’re not born like polliwogs. I think most Christians think we are. You know how polliwog is just this little comma, or apostrophe, little round thing with a tail. And I think, you know, some of us think that’s what a Christian is. You’re sort of born like a polliwog, and eventually an arm comes out, and another arm comes out, and a leg comes out and – no. You’re not born like a polliwog. When you are born into the family of God, you’re born sufficient and self-contained. Nothing new will be added. You’re a totally new – what – creation. Not a polliwog, but a fully self-contained, developed, new life. Oh sure, you need to learn, you need to grow, but all the resources are there. “My God shall supply all your need” – how – “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” By means of Christ Jesus come all your needs supplied. So a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ is how you procure.

But there’s more here. There’s a couple of elements to this marvelous true knowledge. First of all, God initiates it. Please look at verse 3. It’s “through the true knowledge of Him who called us.” Oh. You can’t come to that true knowledge unless God – what – calls you. That’s the sovereign side. How does God call you? How does He do that? First of all, John 16 says the Holy Spirit begins to convict you of sin, you see your sin. And then I believe the power of Satan is broken. Then you begin to see the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. And that’s God drawing you. The only way you can procure this is through true knowledge of Christ; the only way you can have true knowledge of Christ is when God calls you. Jesus put it this way: “No man comes unto Me except the Father draws him – draws him.” But there’s something else. What about my part? Look at verse 3 again. The true knowledge starts when we are called, but notice that call is affected toward us by His own glory and excellence. I didn’t wake up one day and say, “I think I’ll be a Christian; I hear God calling.” Oh. I didn’t wake up one day and say, “Oh, I feel drawn, drawn, drawn.” No. What caused me to seek a true knowledge of Christ – watch this – was when I saw His glory and excellence. See that?

God calls, but that calling becomes effectual as we are drawn by the glory and excellence of Christ. This is marvelous. Peter is referring to the revealed majesty of Jesus Christ that made Him attractive to us. That’s why the only way you can have saving faith is to understand Christ. That’s why in John’s gospel, for example, he just presents Christ, the miracles of Christ, miracle after miracle after miracle, the majestic, unbelievable, divine, supernatural words of Jesus Christ. And then at the end he says, “These things are written that you might” – what – “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that believing you might have life through His name.” You have to see the glory of Christ; you have to see the excellence of Christ. His glory, *doxa* – always in the Old Testament glory belongs to God. So when you’re seeing the glory of Christ, you’re seeing the deity of Christ. You have to see Christ as God in human flesh; you have to be impacted by the glory of His majestic deity.



That's why we must always present Christ, present Christ, present Christ, because it is through that that the call of God to draw men is affected.

It's amazing to me how people today can assume you can lead someone to Christ without a clear presentation of Christ. No man comes to faith except by hearing about Christ, Romans 10 says. And the first thing you want to hear about Him is His glory; He's God. And so yes, people are saved because the Father calls and draws, but from our viewpoint, what pulls us, what attracts us, what the Father uses to draw, is the glory of Christ, His deity. So what do we have to preach to sinners? What do we have to preach to people who don't know the Lord? We have to preach the glory of Jesus Christ. We have to preach that He was God in human flesh, as proven by what He said, by what He did. And then he says we are drawn by His excellence, *arête*, His virtue. Not only His person as God, but His function, His life, as virtuous. When I look at Jesus Christ I see not only God, but I see a perfect humanity. I see perfect excellence. I see a display of divine acts and divine words coming through that God-Man. The divine nature of Jesus, the moral excellence of His life is what draws men. Beloved, let me tell you this. That's the only thing that will draw men to God. Not promising them happiness, not promising them good times, not promising them heaven. All of those things come; not promising that. What draws men truly is the vision of Christ becomes clear. They see that He was God, and that He was perfect. The manifestation of His glory drew the Twelve. The manifestation of His excellence kept them there. It's still the same thing that draws.

That leads us to a fourth word. This is the word promises – promises. Power gives provision, which is procured, and leads to promises – verse 4, “For by these” – by what? What do you mean, these? “By His own glory and excellence.” His glory and excellence is not only what attracts us, but His glory as God and His excellence as perfect grants us His precious and magnificent promises. “For by these” - His innate divine, holy person; because of who He is, that's what that means. Because of who He is – “He has granted to us” – again a perfect tense verb, which means continuous, He gave it and it has continuing effect. And what did He give us? Look at this: “His precious and magnificent promises.” The word precious obviously means valuable, costly, honorable. The word magnificent, *megistos*, very great, superlative, the greatest. So by the saving gospel, our glorious, majestic, virtuous, holy, Lord Jesus has generously and continually given us promises – promises.

What are those promises? He said, “He that believes in Me shall live,” the promise of life. He said, “I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” He said, “Because I live, you too shall live also,” and promised us resurrection life. All of His promises; the promises of everything that we saw in Corinthians 3, all things, things present, things to come, life, death, everything. He promised us life. He promised us all blessings in the heavenlies. He promised us abundant grace upon grace. He promised us joy. He promised us strength. He promised us guidance. He promised us help. He promised instruction. He promised wisdom. He promised the Holy Spirit. He promised heaven. He promised eternal rewards. It's all ours, all of it. He isn't even qualifying it. Just go through the New Testament and find every promise He gave, and it's yours. Do you have everything? Are you

sufficient? Oh yes, by divine power has come provision to every person who procures that through faith in Christ, and they then become the possessors of every promise – every promise.

The last word: partakers. This is too much – too much. All of this He gives us in order that we might be partakers. Partakers of what? “In order that by them” – the precious magnificent promises – “you might become partakers of the divine nature” – wow. What are you saying? The purpose for the promises, the purpose for God’s goodness through Christ, was so that you could become a partaker of the divine nature. You mean to tell me that the Father God drew me through the attractive glory and excellence of Christ, and gave me all these promises in the true saving knowledge of His Son, so that I could partake of His very nature? That’s right. When you come to Jesus Christ, you receive everything you need for life and godliness, you receive all the promises of God in time and eternity, and you become a partaker of God’s nature. That’s two-fold. First of all, it’s here and now. You mean to say that if I’m a Christian now, I am a partaker of the nature of God? Yes, John 1:12 says you become children of God. Romans 8:9 says the Spirit of God dwells in you. If the Spirit dwells within you, you possess the divine nature. Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me.” God lives in me. What? “Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?” Colossians 1:27, “Christ in you.”

The word “partaker” is *koinnos*. We often translate that word fellowship. It means sharer or partner. We partake of God’s life in us; we’re partners in the same life. How can that be? End of verse 4, because we have “escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” There is a sense in which our new life in Christ is a new nature, the divine nature, and we have escaped the corruption that marked us prior to our conversion. The word “corruption” has the idea of something totally decomposing, something decaying, corrupted, ruined. That’s what we were, we were rotten to the core, decomposing, decaying, corrupted, ruined. The term implies the stench of decomposing organisms, and we’ve escaped that. Isn’t that wonderful? You have a new nature in Christ; it’s the life of God in you. You’re a partaker of the divine nature, having already escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The corruption that is in the world is rotten, decaying sin, driven by lust. That word lust, *epithumia*, means evil desire. So at the time of salvation, we escaped. The word depicts a successful flight from danger. We escaped from the rottenness of our decomposing, stinking, fallen, sinful nature. And now I’m a new creation, I have a new nature in Christ, the life of God in my soul. How wonderful – how wonderful.

But there’s another sense. Peter also might have the future in mind. He might be saying, “The Lord has saved you, and the Lord has dispensed you all the provisions for life and godliness, and granted to you all the promises, in order that in the future you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” And he might even include the same concept in a future dimension in this sense; that he’s saying, “Someday you will fully partake of the divine nature when your flesh is also redeemed, and you will fully escape the corruption that is in the world through lust when you have a glorified body and you’re completely perfect.” It’s two dimensions

here. There's a sense in which we already partake of the divine nature, because we have a new heart. And there is a sense in which we will yet partake of the divine nature, when we have a new body to go with the new heart, right? We have already escaped the lusts of the world and the rotting corruption of our fallen flesh spiritually. Some day we will escape the rotting, decomposing flesh of our bodies temporally. In that day, we will be like Jesus, for we shall see Him as He is. We are partakers of the divine nature; Christ lives in us. But we will yet partake of the fullness of that nature when we bear a glorified body like Jesus Christ. So it has a present meaning and a future meaning. We've escaped the spiritual corruption of our fallen nature; someday we'll escape the physical corruption of our fallen flesh. And that may be Peter's major point.

Beloved, this is a fascinating portion of Scripture. And Peter's terms here are most interesting, because he is borrowing from pagan religion. Pagan mystical pantheism has always called for man to recognize the divine nature that is in him, right? And live in accord with it. Or, pagan religion has always said, "Lose yourself in the divine essence." False teachers in ancient times and more modern times put an emphasis on transcendent knowledge. That's what the Gnostics did, ascend to the transcendent knowledge. Peter's stressing the true knowledge. The false teachers felt that transcendent knowledge elevated you above the need for morality. Peter says no, the true knowledge gives you all you need to live a godly life. The false teachers taught that holiness was impossible. Peter says holiness is inevitable. We will be delivered from the corruption. One writer put it this way, "Rival pagan schoolmen asserted that you escaped from the toils of corruption by becoming partakers of the divine nature by *nomos*, works, or by *phusis*, some ascending transcendent nature. Peter takes up their language and replies, "No, you come to the true knowledge and deliverance from corruption by sheer grace through faith."

Is there sufficiency in our salvation? Listen to this: anything less than a completely sufficient salvation mocks God and dishonors Christ. Of course it is sufficient. Our God gives more grace. More than what? More than you could possibly ever understand. Let's bow in prayer. It's been a wonderful evening that we have shared, Father. We're so grateful. The joy of the music that filled our hearts, and now the thrill of hearing about our spiritual sufficiency in Christ. O Lord, may we never question that, but may we be thankful for it, and may we understand that it's our own ignorance; eye hasn't seen, ear hasn't heard, and neither has it entered into our heart what You've prepared for us. Lord, open our eyes that we might understand what we have in Christ, and that we might enjoy those resources to the fullest, and not be so foolish as to think we must depend on the wisdom of men, or that somehow we need something more, when we couldn't even begin to exhaust all that we have. O God, thank You for providing all we need to live in the way that would glorify You for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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