

A Living Hope - Week 8 - 2 Peter 1

Last week, Matt Dean finished Peter's first letter to the churches scattered across modern Turkey.

To whom and from where?

Peter is writing in what many believe to be the last days of his incarceration prior to his death.

His audience is not quite as focused as his first letter, though it is identified as the second letter he sends them, but was also likely meant to be circulated beyond 1 Peter's original audience.

- As the Church spread the Gospel, Peter's understanding of the need for sound teaching would have grown in depth and breadth

Hardship and Heresy

- **1 Peter** - You Have been born again to a living hope, so no matter what comes, no matter what they say about you, no matter how hard life gets, you have Jesus, and He keeps you
 - The Father has made a way and a promise for you to be confident of your eternity with Him.
 - **THEME: Your Holiness in Hardship matters, and is possible, in Christ.**
- **2 Peter** - **THEME: Your Holiness in the face of heresy matters, and is possible, in Christ** - namely in a proper understanding of WHO God is and who you now are in Him. (**heresy - false teachings**)

Peter uses the word for knowledge - *epignosis* - in a beautiful way throughout the letter. 7 times he uses it in these three chapters as the early church wrestled with what it meant to be Christian:

2 Peter 1:2 - May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord.

2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the **knowledge** of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

2 Peter 1:5-6 - For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with **knowledge**, and **knowledge** with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

2 Peter 1:8 - For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the **knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:20 - For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

2 Peter 3:18 - But grow in the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Contrasting Greek and Hebrew Worlds

The GK ideal of knowledge was a contemplation of reality in its static and abiding being; "What is truth" - Pilate
The HEB was primarily concerned with life in its dynamic process, and therefore conceived knowledge as an entry into relationship with the experienced world which makes demands not only on man's understanding but also on man's will. - Jesus said - "I am the truth and the life." - foreign to the mind of this world.

For Jesus and his followers, truth/knowledge is a "who" question. Relationship.

For the many Greek thinking Christians of Peter's day, truth was fact. Gravity, Water for crops, and the resurrection were all abundantly true. But...

Peter desperately longed for his churches to remember that **knowing God intimately** would keep them from believing the lies that were beginning to spread.

1:1-2

Peter's introduction is important.

1 Peter "Peter, an apostle of Jesus." – Peter remembering Christ's renaming of him and saving him..

2 Peter - "Simon Peter, a servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ."

- He remembers "Simon" → never wanting to forget what Christ had done. Guzik writes, "*perhaps since he wrote this letter later in life, he didn't want to forget where he came from and that sometimes he was still more like the Old Simon than the new Peter.*"
- He inserts "servant" prior to apostle
 - Considers himself a servant first, and the status of Apostle second.
- Peter knew real shame and self-hatred.
 - He betrayed Jesus, in his moment of greatest need, and went out of the High Priests home and wept bitterly.
 - He sat around for days trying to figure out what to do next after Jesus' death.
 - And Jesus called him (again) to him on the beach one morning after a night of fishing and reinstated him as Peter, the Rock.
 - Not because he was naturally so, but because of what God was doing would make him so.

To Whom does He write: to those who have received a "faith of equal standing with ours by righteousness."

- The ESV here is a little clunky - The NRSV and NIV have it "a faith as precious as ours" →
 - True to the GRK - *of equal value, price, or worth*
- What we have been given, all of us Greeks, Hebrews, and all Gentiles → is precious because it is the righteousness of Jesus our God and Savior.

*May Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord. (v.4)*

1:3-4 → **This is What He has Accomplished in Your Salvation**

- By his divine power, he has granted ALL things...
 - Life, Godliness
 - Called You to His Glory and Excellence
 - Given us great and precious promises
 - Escape from a corrupt world
 - The Gift of partaking in his Divine Nature.
- How do we know this:
 - "Through the knowledge of Him who called you."
 - Again, if this were static, 2+2=4 kind of knowledge it wouldn't make sense. ...
 - **But this is living and active.**
 - He draws you to his precious glory
 - He has given you all things necessary for a life of godliness (all of 1 Peter)
 - You have been released from this corrupt prison of the world ...

- And he intends for you to share in his holiness, his very divine nature, as a partaker (literally → as a partner, or sharer of) the very essence of God.

1.5-10 → so...for this reason...

Make every effort... **Let's all just get ok with Peter saying, "Make Every EFFORT."** (if you grew up in a heavy handed church/home where performance mattered,

- and grace set you free from legalism, the tendency is probably, like mine, to balk at anything works related
- Not that i don't know that it's right (Paul, Peter, James, and Jesus all connected right theology and right living)

Let me say perhaps for the first time, or by way of reminder if you've read or heard Dallas Willard's words from the Great Omission:

Grace/the Gospel of Jesus/ is not opposed to effort but to earning.

Remember the order (v.3-4) → God has done all of these wonderful things (salvation, life, his presence, glory, partakers, etc) ⇒ for this reason (therefore)...

*Make every effort to supplement your **faith** (which is the **gift** of salvation from God alone) with...*

1. Virtue

- A very GRK word choice, Peter speaks clearly that the life we live should be a virtuous one.
- As Pastor David Helm defines virtue: "it means doing the right thing regardless of the outcome. The virtuous person is brave and generous and acts appropriately to all."¹
- This is essentially - "you have been made holy. Now live like that is true."

2. Knowledge

- True, revealed knowledge of the person of Christ, the godness of the Father, and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Here the theme of an active "knowing" of God - relationship with him, matters.
- And you develop this out. You show up. You study the Scriptures. You lean into prayer...etc.
- Helm again: "If we are going to finish life well, we must KNOW God. TO faith in Christ, let us add a praiseworthy life. To that let us add knowledge. We must get to work on knowing God. this is the pathway that leads us home."²

3. Self-Control

- You have all that you need "pertaining to life in Godliness."
- You have been given the righteousness of Christ and access to the Father ...
- **And there is no one that can say NO to the passions of the flesh other than you.**

4. Steadfastness

- Once you begin the work of saying NO to the flesh, the world, and the spiritual forces of evil (those are our three enemies),
- Then we begin with a yes to Jesus. ...

¹ David Helm, *Preaching the Word, 1-2 Peter and Jude, Sharing Christ's Sufferings* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), p.196.

² *Ibid.*, p.197

- And Steadfastness is walking in the way of Jesus for a long way.
- This is another way of describing discipleship - learning the way of Jesus...
- Eugene Peterson describes steadfastness, or discipleship by borrowing from the famous Nietzsche, “who at last saw this area of spiritual truth at least with great clarity: ‘The essential thing in heaven and earth is ... that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living.’ It is this long obedience in the same direction which the mood of this world does so much to discourage.”³

5. *Godliness*

- Your life, my life, should increasingly look more and more like Jesus’
- 1 Peter’s message was about suffering for the sake of Christ’s name, glory, and your becoming like him.
- Would you learn to live a life that is submitted to the same authority as Jesus was, would you learn to suffer when you are maligned or mistreated as Jesus did, and would you live your life for the sake of the church and the world the way Jesus did?

6. *Brotherly Affection*

- When we live from a place of remembering, keeping the truth of the gospel close to our hearts and present in our minds, it warms our hearts for others.
- Forgiveness, longsuffering, patience, unity → these are all commanded throughout scripture because they don’t come naturally to our old man.

7. *Love*

- How do you keep from living a life that is contrary to Jesus’ hope for you?
- Love one another. Here is a summary of all of these exhortations.

As Peter ends his life, here is what many have affectionately called “the Golden Chain for fallen people” as we journey homeward.

1:8-11 → increasingly so...

- Perfection is not the goal.
- In “increasing measure” these are yours, then you will finish well.
 - You will be effective and fruitful ... again...
 - **In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**
 - **You will know!**
- **V.9 the one who doesn’t is nearsighted, having forgotten that he was cleansed.**
 - Don’t let that be so of you!!
 - Remember.
- **V.10 - be all the more diligent to confirm your election and calling ⇒ by the way you practice these things!**
- **V.11 - and your entrance to the Kingdom (when you finish your race) will be a welcome homecoming.**

³ Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downers Grove, IL, 2000). p.17

V.12-15

Paul is keenly aware that his end is at hand (and he remembers that Jesus told him during his time with him that he would give his life for Jesus' name).

- Peter is desperate for them to remember!

"I am writing to remind you...by way of reminder...so that...you may be able ... to recall these things."

Peter's style of teaching as he grew older clearly solidified (he does the repeat reminders in ch 3) w/ this clear call:

Church!! Remember Christ. Remember, don't forget, all that He has done. You are His and He is yours!!

Why? That the church would be "established in the truth" that it has! (v.12).

V.16-21

Because the reality is clear to Peter - there is a Father of lies that would love to infiltrate the church with half-truths and "cleverly devised myths."

But the church was not established on fairy tales and self-help sections of local bookstores.

The Church was established by those who were with Jesus, in Peter's case, literally having seen the glory of God on the mountain and lived to tell about it. Over three years and the months after Jesus' resurrection the Holy Spirit established the Church and she has forever been built on the foundation of

- 1) Eyewitness testimony to those who were there
- 2) The secure leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit
- 3) A confirmed gospel given to the Apostles in the decades thereafter.

With so much misinformation already circulating through the ranks, Peter wanted them to be crystal clear that the Holy Spirit is the one leading their movement → no one else. No other gospel. No other King but Jesus.

Today, as we conclude, i ask these questions to my own soul:

- What cleverly devised myths are you prone to believe? About yourself? About others?
- What have you forgotten today that Jesus would have you remember?
- You have been given the gift of faith → are you supplementing it with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love?
- Are you living with eternity in mind? Peter was. Did he fail? Sure. but as he got closer, his gaze remained on Christ.
- Do you live as a pilgrim, or a resident? A pilgrim assumes he is still on a journey, and this land is not home. Resident settles in and assimilates. Disciples are always pilgrims, and Jesus is the way.

