

THE SCROLLS

All is Well | 2 Peter 1:1-4

Life Lesson

True peace is not the absence of problems but the presence of Christ. When we receive the gift of salvation, we are not only brought into peace with God, but we are also invited to experience God's ongoing, multiplying peace. As we surrender ourselves as servants of Jesus and grow in an intimate, experiential knowledge of Him, His divine power equips us with everything we need for life and godliness. Peace becomes not something we chase, but something God creates within us as we walk closely with Him.

Examine Scripture

1 *Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.*

- Underline “servant” and “apostle” in (v. 1).
- Circle “received” in (v. 1).
- Circle “faith” in (v. 1).

Peace of Mind

Over the past weeks, we have been celebrating Advent with the theme of “peace.” As we have seen, there is no question that we need peace in the world. We have also seen how the Gospel (the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus) transforms us from enemies of God to joint heirs with Christ, enjoying peace with God. Now, in our text, we see that when we truly have peace with God, we are promised the peace of God.

The biblical concept of peace is much more than what we usually think of as peace. We define “peace” as something like “the absence of hostility or fighting.” Although the biblical definition does include some of this, the Hebrew concept of peace goes much deeper. In Hebrew, which underpins even the New Testament idea of peace, the word is “shalom.” Shalom, or peace, is more than just stopping hostility; it represents wholeness, goodness, and complete life satisfaction. This is the abundant life Jesus promised in (John 10:10)! Shalom, or peace, can also mean even more: “a sense of well-being and harmony both inside and outside—completeness, wholeness, peace, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, fullness, rest, harmony; the absence of agitation or discord, a calm state free from anxiety or stress.”

So, the peace of God promised is much more than just the absence of hostility. It is truly a state of your soul and spirit. One author describes the peace of God as “being able to exhale with confidence and assurance.” Isn’t this what we need? Don’t we need wholeness, well-being, tranquility, a sense of peace? But how do we receive it? How do we find this kind of peace in our lives? The Gospel! It not only brings peace to the world and with God, but also the peace of God.

V. 1

There is so much spiritual truth and depth in this one verse. Many times, we glance over the greeting of the epistle; yet, in this one verse, in his simple greeting, Peter unleashes immense and powerful truths. Peter begins his letter to Gentile believers with a simple, humble description of himself. As a leader of the Church, a personal friend of

- Circle “equal to ours” in (v. 1).
- Underline “through” indicating means in (vs. 1-2).
- Bracket “our God and Savior Jesus Christ” in (v. 1).
- Underline “grace and peace” in (v. 2).
- Circle “multiplied” in (v. 2)
- Underline “knowledge” in (vs. 2, 3). Write “experience” above it.
- Circle “divine power” in (v. 3).
- Underline “everything” (v. 3).
- Circle “great and precious promises” in (v. 4)

Personal Notes

Jesus, a bold preacher of the Gospel, and one who performed miracles, Peter chose to identify as “a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ” (v. 1). He used no pompous title or claim to authority. He understood exactly who he was and knew that, without Christ, he was nothing and had nothing.

First of all, Peter declares himself a servant of Jesus Christ. The Greek word used is “doulos.” Some translations soften the term by using words like “bondservant” or “servant,” but the proper translation is “slave.” It is a bold term to use to describe oneself. According to Strong’s Concordance, it literally means “a person owned as a possession for various lengths of time.” In biblical times, Hebrew slaves were slaves for no more than seven years; however, Gentile slaves had no time limit. Since his audience was Gentile believers, Peter was conveying that being a slave of Jesus Christ has no time limit; it is permanent. Peter was a slave to Jesus by right of purchase (1 Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, his life purpose is to obey and do the will of his Master. William Barclay writes, “To call the Christian the slave of God means that he is unqualifiedly at the disposal of God. The Christian belongs to God, for God to send him where He will and to do with him what He will. The Christian is the man who has no rights of his own. We ought to have this same attitude and awareness!

Secondly, Peter saw himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (v. 1). He was a slave bought by price, but an apostle called by God. Peter was set apart to share the Gospel. His passion for ministry was driven not only by his salvation (his being bought), but also by his calling (his role as an apostle). Similarly, our motivation for ministry and desire to serve Christ should come from gratitude for our salvation and a sense of calling to share the Gospel. We may not be literal slaves, but we should obey our Lord wholeheartedly and willingly. We may not be apostles, but we are ambassadors with the same calling to declare the Gospel.

Notice how Peter addressed the Gentile believers: “To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 1). The Gentile believers have received a faith that was equal to the faith of Peter and the other Apostles. We must not overlook the word “received.” Not only does it carry the idea of receiving a gift, like at Christmas, but it also shows that this faith, this salvation, is not something we can achieve or earn ourselves. This saving faith is a gift! As Paul writes in (Rom. 6:23): “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Again, in (Eph. 2:8-9), he writes, “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works.” Salvation is given through Jesus’ atoning work on the cross, but it must be received. We must accept it as a gift.

It is also interesting to see how Peter describes this faith as “equal to ours” (v. 1). Imagine a spiritual giant like Peter saying that the

Personal Notes

faith of these believers is equal to his. The Gentiles have long heard that their faith was inferior because Jesus first came to the Jews, as they were His chosen people. However, Peter reminds these Gentiles, and us, that our faith in Christ and our salvation are in no way inferior. It is equal to the faith of the Jews, the faith of the Apostles, and the faith of all who have gone before us. All those who repent of their sin and believe in the Gospel are saved by grace and enjoy full acceptance before God; Jew or Gentile, male or female, free or slave (Gal. 3:28).

Where does this faith originate? It comes through “the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 1). There are two ways to interpret what “righteousness” Peter refers to. First, some scholars say this righteousness pertains to the “justice or fairness” of God’s character, making “a faith equal to ours” accessible to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile. It is God’s righteousness that allows Him to act impartially. Others believe it refers to God’s rightness, the very power to justify sinners and declare them righteous. This is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, enabling us to be justified and in right standing with God. As Paul writes in (Rom. 3:23-26): “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God presented him as the mercy seat by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.” Therefore, Christ is both just and the one who justifies; he embodies righteousness and imputes it. Either way, the righteousness of our God and Savior does not come from us. It is solely a gift from God.

There is yet another jewel in this verse. Peter states that this faith comes through the righteousness of “our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Though it’s hard to see in the English translation, there is only one article before “our God and Savior,” indicating that it refers to a single person. Our God and Savior is Jesus! He is God, and He alone is our Savior. Jesus’ incarnation was not His beginning; He always was, is, and will be because He is God (Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8; Col. 2:9). Jesus is also our Savior. In the Old Testament, Savior is one of the main titles for God. We see this in (Is. 43:3): “For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, and your Savior.” Again, in (Is. 45:21), it says, “There is no other God but me, a righteous God and Savior; there is no one except me.” (Is. 60:16) says, “you will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.” So, Peter is using the title of God for Jesus because it truly belongs to Him. Even in the Magnificat, Mary sung: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47). The angel told the shepherds, “Today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Personal Reflection

1. Where in my life am I experiencing anxiety, restlessness, or incompleteness? What would it look like for the shalom of God to fill those areas with wholeness and well-being?
2. Do I view myself the way Peter viewed himself, as a willing servant of Jesus Christ, completely at His disposal? If not, what areas of my life am I still holding back from complete surrender?
3. Do I live each day with gratitude for the “faith received” as a gift? How does remembering that truth impact the way I worship, serve, and treat others?
4. Am I intentionally pursuing deeper experiential knowledge (epignosis) of God, or have I settled for merely knowing facts about Him? What practices draw me closest to truly experiencing His presence?
5. If God has already “given me everything required for life and godliness,” what step of obedience, growth, or ministry have I been delaying even though He has already equipped me to do it?

Commentaries

Believer's Bible Commentary by
William MacDonald

Expositor's Bible Commentary
(Abridged Edition): New Testament
edited by Kenneth Barker

NIV Application Commentary: 2
Peter by Douglas Moo

Mt. Zion's Mission

Mt. Zion Baptist Church exists to
MAKE, MATURE, and MULTIPLY
disciples of Jesus Christ.

This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12). So, Christmas is about our God taking on flesh to dwell among us; born to be our Savior.

V. 2

This verse addresses our Advent theme: peace. Peter writes, “May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” The grace and peace of God are multiplied to us. Grace and peace are not given in small doses, but multiplied in ever-increasing measure. When you have peace with God, the peace of God flows through you, never ceasing; however, not only is it never ceasing, it is forever increasing. So, there is no chaos, no struggle, no pain, no depression that can outweigh the peace of God offered to us. As the chaos in our lives increases, so does the peace of God to the full measure of abundance.

The peace of God does not come from ourselves. It is found only in the “knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (v. 2). The central message of the Bible is to reveal the means of knowing God truly. Here, Peter uses the Greek word “epignosis” three times in this chapter. It is an intentional word choice. It is not just intellectual knowledge; it is experiential knowledge. In other words, the peace of God is not only found in mere intellectual knowledge about God (though that is important). It is found through genuinely experiencing God in an intimate relationship with Him through Jesus.

Vs. 3-4

As if God's grace and peace were not enough, we are also assured that “His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness” (v. 3). We lack nothing in Christ! We have salvation (life) and sanctification (godliness). Everything we need to live a godly life is ours in Christ. In fact, Peter describes this in (vs. 5-8), saying that to our faith, we can add “goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love,” all increasing. What else could we possibly need to live a godly, holy life? In fact, Peter writes in (v. 8): “For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In His grace and love, God provides us with more than we can ever imagine. He “has given us very great and precious promises” (v. 4). The vastness of the oceans could not contain all of the “great and precious promises” we have in Christ. Spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian life are made possible by God's divine power and His precious promises. All we need to follow Jesus is available to us as long as we have peace with God and the peace of God.