

1, we'll be looking at verses 3 and 4 this morning. 2 Peter 1, verses 3 and 4. The Apostle Peter is the author of this book, writing by divine inspiration, and according to verse 1, he is writing to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours. In this letter, Peter writes about the lordship of Christ. He writes about the fact of the coming day of judgment.

And he warns his readers of false teachers. Last week we saw that false teachers hate God's authority. They hate God's salvation and they hate God's revelation. And this week we see that the only way we can withstand false teachers is by God's power and God's promises.

And so with this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and preaching of his word. O great God, we come before you, the maker of the heavens and the earth, who have loved us enough to give us a book, your book, written by your own spirit-inspired writers, written by you truly and really through them. O God, a book that has authority, sufficiency, clarity to tell us about salvation and how we are to live. What an incredible thing, oh great God, that you have given us the Bible. And oh God, as we get to read it this morning, would we hear it as what it really is, the very word of God.

We pray this in Jesus's name, amen. This is the word of God, 2 Peter 1 3-4. 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, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature. having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desires. Amen.

Thus ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless the reading and now the proclamation of it to our lives. On our text today, the apostle Peter, writing by divine inspiration, writes about God's power and God's promises. The reason Peter writes about God's power and God's promises is because apart from God's power and God's promises, those to whom he is writing will not be able to withstand the false teachers.

You see, we need to remember that false teachers do not walk around saying, I am promoting heresy. Believe in what I teach and it will destroy your soul. False teachers don't do that. False teachers mask their teaching as angels of light, even though they are darkness. Their teachings will appeal to the desires and lusts of the human heart. False teachers will take the very word of God and twist it to say doctrines that are ultimately damning. False teachers don't Look all that bad externally.

They might even have a smile upon their face. They can be very persuasive. And so you see him telling them about the power and promises of God as he gets into this letter because he knows that they need God's power and they need God's promises if they are going to be able to withstand the false teachers.

And so this morning, we're going to consider these two things, the power of God and the promises of God. So first, the power of God, verse three. We read there in verse three, 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. So Peter begins this verse with the words, his divine power.

But what is divine power? Well, divine power is infinite power. Divine power not only does not get tired, divine power cannot get tired. Divine power not only does not slumber or sleep, divine power cannot slumber or sleep. Divine power not only does not increase, Divine power cannot increase because it is infinite. Think about how a man will go and work out at a gym. And over time, if he's consistent, he will increase in strength. Divine power cannot increase over time in strength because it's omnipotent.

It is all powerful. Next time you go to the gym, remember the infinite power of God. Nothing is heavy to him. A feather in your hands is lighter, is heavier to you than 10,000 worlds in the hands of divine power. God has upheld the world by his power for as long as the world has existed and he has not so much as dropped one drop of sweat. Think of how incredible that is.

Think about that scene in the Old Testament where Aaron, or rather Moses, had to hold his arms up while the people were fighting. And as long as he held his arms up, remember what would happen? They were winning the battle. Moses couldn't hold his arms up long enough. Have you ever tried to hold your arms up?

Even that can get heavy, can't it? Growing up, I would have to, or well, someone in the family, when somebody called my dad, who was a big talker, Someone would have to hold the phone up to his ear because, as you all know, I think, most of all, that he was a quadriplegic, so he had to go hold the phone up to my dad's ear. And your arm, especially because my dad was a big talker, you felt like your arm was gonna fall off. You'd have to switch on, you're holding a phone up to somebody's ear, and your arm feels like it's going to fall off in just a few minutes. We are weak.

This is divine power that we see here in the text. but is such divine power a good thing? Well, it's only a good thing if it's for you. You see, if divine power is against you, who can stand? Take all the nations and pile them together and they are but a drop of water in the bucket compared to divine power. Take all the kings and all the princes and put them together and they are emptiness and nothing compared to divine power.

Do you have sin in your life? Divine power is against you. Have you ever lied? Divine power is against you. Have you ever cheated on a test? Infinite power is against you. Have you ever lost your temper? Infinite power, divine power is against you. Indeed, infinite power is not a comfort. Infinite power is a terror to all of humanity, unless there be a way that such power could ever be for you.

And this is exactly what the text says of this divine power, that it is for you. His divine power, the text says, has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. His power is on our side. But who is the us in the text who have this divine power on their side? This us refers back to those to whom he has been writing since verse one, those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, verse one. In other words, this divine power is only on the side of those who are in Jesus Christ. This divine power is only on the side of those who have received the righteousness of Christ. Verse 1. If you do not trust in Christ, then the implication is that omnipotence is against you. Divine power is coming for you. There is a way of escape, but it's only in the righteousness of Christ. It's only in Jesus Christ.

In fact, to whom specifically is this divine power ascribed in the text? It begins, his divine power. Who is the his? Well, the most immediate antecedent to his is look at verse two, the last little bit. Jesus, our Lord. This is referring to the divine power specifically as it is manifested in the second person of the Trinity. And how can omnipotence be ascribed to the second person of the Trinity?

Because he's God, just as verse 1 has already declared. Our God. and Savior Jesus Christ. So either you will have the divine power of Jesus for you as Savior and Lord, or you will have the divine power of Jesus against you in condemning judgment. Either you submit to him and receive all you need in him, or you resist him and receive from him all that you deserve.

But why do you need this divine power? Well, the text says you need this divine power for life and godliness. Now, a lot of commentators, most of them, frankly, if you want to go look at them, most of them are going to say that life and godliness simply means that the divine power is for you so that you can live a godly life. And I think that is merely half the truth. I think that it's not just so that you can live a godly life, it is so that you can have life, eternal spiritual life, be born again, life. and so that you can have godliness, so that you can grow in grace and holiness of life. The two are, of course, closely tied together, but you cannot have a godly life if you don't first have eternal life, if you're not first born again.

So while I confess to you, you can go look them up. I can find at least one for you who agrees with me. But if you go look them up, most commentators will not say it that way. But when I look at this, that is simply what appears quite obvious to me. Though maybe I'm quite obviously wrong, I don't know, but that's how I understand the text.

It's so that you have eternal life because of what the power of the Lord Jesus Christ at work in you, redeeming you from your sins, and so that out of that life eternal in Christ, you live a godly life, you have a godliness about you. In other words, this divine power is so that you can start the Christian life, and so that you can finish the Christian life. It's the divine power that you have from infancy in Christ to glory in Christ when he returns and you're with him forever and ever. But why does Peter use this word power in the text?

Couldn't he have said mercy instead? Imagine if the text had read, instead of power, it said his divine mercy has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Would that be theologically incorrect? No, it would not be theologically incorrect to say His divine mercy has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

In fact, in 1 Peter 1, verse 3, he says essentially that very thing. 1 Peter 1, 3, he says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to His great mercy. Not power, great mercy he has caused us to be born again, 1 Peter 1.3.

So why power here in 2 Peter 1.3?

Well because they're facing powerful enemies. They're facing persuasive false teachers and they're going to need power from outside of themselves that they might be protected and that they might be able to withstand the evil false teachers who are about them.

And the truth is, you need mercy and you need power so that you might be saved and sanctified. Mere mercy alone has never saved anyone. And neither has mere power alone ever saved anyone. You need mercy and you need power. You need mercy that can pity you but power that can stoop down to you and lift you up to life and godliness. You need infinite mercy that can pity you in all of your misery. And you need a power that can come to you and get you out and bring you to life and raise you up that you might live a godly life.

Infinite power without mercy is terrifying. But infinite mercy without power is helpless. It will do you no good. And it is only in Christ, you see, that you can find infinite power and mercy to save you from your sins and to sanctify you that you might live a godly life in this present evil age.

They have spiritual life, he wants them to know this, and they can pursue godliness, even amidst their enemies, because divine power is mixed with mercy and it will never let them go. You see, in chapter two, where we're headed eventually, you'll see that these false teachers are trying to convince them that they should just live lives of lust and godlessness, that they should live flippantly and just break God's law all over the place. And what he is trying to help them understand right here is that they don't have to live that way, that they actually can live a godly life. Did you know that you can live a godly life? That's not legalistic, that it's not being self-confident or self-absorbed to believe that as a redeemed sinner, one saved by the grace of God, that you indeed can live a godly life.

You can live for the Lord by divine power. He has granted to you, the text says, all things that pertain to life and godliness. And notice those words, all things that pertain to life and godliness. This means that you have all you need to live a godly life in Christ, and it also means that you must do so with utter humility. because it's he who has granted you all things. You haven't conjured up all things to live a godly life. He has granted you all things to live a godly life. And so it is contradictory to scripture for the man or woman living a godly life to be full of pride.

Because insofar as you have grown in your walk with the Lord, all you can say is, He's given me all things to do this. He's given me all things that I might pursue Him. He's done all of this work in my life such that I might grow in grace and godliness. It is because of Him that I have matured. Even if it's only ever so slightly in my walk with Him, He gets all the glory. But how do you receive this divine power? He goes on to say, of course, that it's through knowledge of him who called you, verse three. This divine power is apparently closely associated with knowledge.

And there are different words for knowledge, but this is the same one used back in verse two. It'll be used again in chapter one, verse eight. It'll be used again in chapter three, verse 18. There are different words for knowledge throughout this book, but this is a specially important one It's one that actually NESB, the word true isn't even there, but the NESB will translate it, true knowledge.

It's a very powerful word for knowledge here. And what it's conveying is that it's not just merely intellectual ascent. It's knowledge, you'll notice, what does the text say, of him. It's personal knowledge. It's intimate knowledge. It's experiential and transformative knowledge.

This is knowledge of who Jesus is and what he has done to redeem me from my sins. That's the sort of knowledge in view here, not just ideas, but real personal acquaintance with the living Lord. It's knowledge I can say with the apostle Paul, he loved me and gave himself up for me. And it's not so much knowledge that you discover by your inquiry, but it's a knowledge to which you have been called through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. It's a knowledge, you could perhaps put it like this in some ways, it's a knowledge that discovers you. It's a knowledge in which God is calling you to himself and making himself known to you. And what is the goal of it or the end of it, this divine power and this knowledge? It is his own glory and excellence.

Verse three, the end of salvation isn't that you wouldn't go to hell. The end of salvation is that you would bask in the glory and excellencies of the God who saved you. It's that you would worship him. that you would fall down and praise his name, that for ages without end you would give him glory and honor and power and majesty because he is the God who has brought you to himself that you might marvel at his beauty. And what happens in your life even today as you begin to bask in the glory and excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ?

You begin to look like the Lord Jesus Christ. There's that old saying, you become like what you worship either for ruin or for restoration. When you worship the Lord Jesus Christ, you will become like him for restoration. You begin to look more and more like Christ.

Recently, I read of a Christian leader who upon his deathbed said this, I have spent much of my life seeing Christ as useful. I wish I had spent more of my life seeing Christ as beautiful. And isn't that what Peter is saying here? He is saying that Christ is useful. He is saying that. He is your power, but he empowers you for a purpose and that purpose is to see his glory and to see his excellencies, to bask in the beauty of your Redeemer and your triune God. I also read this recently.

It does not take the supernatural work of Christ to make a man want to live forever. But it does take the supernatural work of Christ to make a man want to live forever. for his glory alone. Plenty of people, ask somebody on the street, you wanna live forever? I bet you I can tell you what their answer's gonna be. Yes. Ask them if they wanna live forever for the glory of Christ? Perhaps not. That ought to be the disposition though of the Christian. Why do you here this morning wanna live forever? It ought to be to glorify the triune God forever.

Well, secondly, we see in our text the promise of God, verse four, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Notice these promises here in verse four are gracious. They're gracious because they've been granted to us, the text says. These promises are valuable. They're valuable because they are called precious. It's the same word used in 1 Peter 1, verse 19, when it talked about the precious blood of Christ. It's valuable blood. These are valuable promises. These promises are magnificent because they are called very great. These promises are many because it's not singular, it's plural, promises. But what specific promises are in view in verse four? Well, I can't tell you.

I suppose all the promises that are ours in Christ Jesus are in view. Justification, adoption, sanctification, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and perseverance therein to the end. Union and communion with God are surely in view here, that we would be, that he would be our God and we would be his people. Surely that promise is in view here. Everything you need for life and godliness is surely in view here. The promise of glorification. But while we might not be able to say specifically what promises Peter has in view, isn't that perhaps Peter's exact point?

He doesn't give a list of the promises. because all of the promises are ours in Christ Jesus. Every promise is yes and amen in Him. In Him, you have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. I don't think Peter, writing by divine inspiration, intended to give you a list of the promises, because they're all yours, every one of them. Deliverance from death, resurrection life, glorification, you name a promise, in Christ, it's yours. It's all in him.

You see, outside of him, there is no way you can go to heaven. Outside of him, you get no promises of any good. You get promises of eternal judgment, but inside of him, there's no way you can't go to heaven. Inside of him, there's no way you can't get every promise in the heavenly places. You get them all.

But these precious and very great promises have two practical results in your life according to the text. On the one hand, these promises make you more like Jesus. On the other hand, these promises make you less like the world. Look what the text says. So that through them, that is the very great and precious promises, you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. What this means is simply this.

Through these promises you begin to look more like Jesus and look less like the world. You see that through these promises you begin to look more like Jesus in the words partakers of the divine nature. Now, what do these words partakers of the divine nature mean? Does this mean that you become divine one day? That you one day will get to become a God or at least part of God?

We can say right away that any doctrine that turns you into God, is anti-Christian. Fundamental to Christianity is what we call the creator-creature distinction, that he is the creator and we are the creatures. He is infinite and we are finite. Any doctrine that confuses or blurs this is simply not Christianity.

But what does it mean? Well, we do not become partakers of God in the sense that we become part of who he is in and of himself, in his essence, but in a moral way. This is a statement that is ethical or moral. As one person put it, Peter's thought has to do with moral transformation, not divination or becoming divine men.

In other words, as you grow in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, you are reflecting more and more the image of God in your being, in your person, as you are growing in grace and holiness. You are looking more and more as your God in heaven looks in his moral character. In that sense, you are partaking of his divine nature. This is how Paul the Apostle puts it in Romans chapter eight. We were predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. In other words, as you are being conformed more and more into the image of Christ, You are, in a moral sense, partaking more and more of the divine nature. You're looking more and more like your God. But as you begin to look

more and more like Jesus, something else also must happen. You begin to look less and less like the world, and that's exactly what he goes on to say.

One of the outflows of this is, the last part of verse four, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. And notice that he doesn't say that you escape the world. The world isn't the problem. You escaped from the corruption that is in the world. Not the world, but the corruption that is in the world. You remain in the world, but you remain unlike the world in which you live. And so you escape from the corruption of this world.

And why is this world full of corruption? The text tells you, because of sinful desire. The problem with the world isn't the world. The problem with the world is the sinful desire of man that inhabits the world. There's corruption in the world because there is sinful desire in the heart of man. Sin does not begin in the actions according to this verse. Sin begins in the heart.

This means that you cannot cleanse yourself where you need cleansing most. You don't need reformation of character. You need a new heart. You need new affections. And nothing can do that other than the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. can only happen through these very great and precious promises in Christ Jesus.

One author I read this week was mentioning, he said that sin corrupts by reproducing. Sin corrupts by reproducing. And what he went on to say is, you know how one lie leads to a second lie, which leads to a third lie. It's corrupting more and more and more. It's reproducing. It grows. Sin is like cancer, it kills because it reproduces.

But as you've seen on the text, it all begins with a sinful desire. So what does this text say to you here this morning? At this point, it says, as Thornwell put it, we must kill the serpent in the egg. We must kill the serpent in the egg. We must deal with sin right where it begins. We must deal with sin right at the start, right in our very own hearts. And the sooner you kill it, the better. Don't let it grow.

And what is the weaponry specifically that this verse has in view for you to use as a Christian to kill your sin? What is the weaponry that this text gives you? Specifically, certainly the divine power, which is seen in verse three, but also right here, it's the divine promises that make you more like Christ. God's promises should make you a fierce warrior against your sin.

You can go forth and slay your sin with the confidence that God Almighty is with you so you can stand firm against evil in your heart. Because the God of the universe is with you. How do you know it? Because he promised he would be with you. And so you can go forth with that confidence.

When Wayne was teaching through 2 Samuel chapter seven in Sunday school, and he moved on to chapter eight, he brought something out which was rather profound. When you move from chapter seven of 2 Samuel to chapter eight, you see David start to go out and fight many of his great enemies. And he's destroying one enemy after another enemy after another enemy. But what Wayne brought out is that 2 Samuel eight begins with the word after those days or after these things. And what 2 Samuel 8 follows upon, of course, is 2 Samuel 7. And in 2 Samuel 7,

God had made covenant promises to David. And all of a sudden, you see David in the next chapter going out and fighting and slaying enemies.

David wasn't going out and slaying enemies because he had so much self-confidence in his military skills. He was going out and fighting and destroying enemies because he believed in the promises of God to him in the previous chapter. It gave him boldness to go out and be a warrior to fight against the enemies of God.

And so God's promises to you that he is with you should set you forth fighting to kill your sin and living for him because he's with you. It is not self-confidence. that brings you boldness as you fight against your sin. You fight sin in the confidence of the divine power and the divine promises that God is your God.

And that's what they needed as they went up against persuasive and powerful false teachers. And that's what you need, surely, to address false teaching. But to address all sin in your life, you need these this divine power and these promises. So today we've seen the power of God and the promises of God.

You become more like Christ by divine power and the divine promises of your omnipotent and merciful God. Let us pray. Almighty God, we are so thankful for the divine power that we see in this text and the divine promises in this text that give us courage, oh Lord, to go forth as men and women of God, knowing that our sins are a multitude.

And O Lord, they are so many sometimes, and sometimes even so great, that we really do think in ourselves, I'll never grow in grace. I'll never mature in holiness. I will never be able to withstand a false teacher. I will never be able to see through the lies of the evil one. but such as a denial of the power of God that is for your people in your word, and a denial of the promises that you are with us in that power and in that mercy in Jesus Christ.

And so, O Lord, may we be among those who gird up our loins for action like men, or would we be among those who take up the sword of the spirit, the word of God, and go forth, utterly weak, completely destitute in ourselves, but unstoppable in the power of God and the promises of God that are for us in Christ Jesus. Give us strength to go forth, oh Lord, this week and live for you. We pray this in Jesus's name, amen.