

2 Peter. I would invite you to turn to 2 Peter 1. We'll look this morning at verses 1 and 2. 2 Peter 1 verses 1 and 2. As you turn there, let me give you a brief overview of the book. This book was written by divine inspiration by the apostle Peter. The recipients are simply called in verse one, those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours. But who were these people who had obtained a faith of equal standing with ours? Well, we can't say for certain, but in chapter three, verse one, Peter calls this his second letter to them. As a result of him calling it his second letter to them, this obviously implies there must be a first letter to this group. And so many scholars believe that this group may be the same group that 1 Peter was written to. That being the first letter to this group and this being the second letter to this same group. Well, when was it written? Well, it was written shortly before Peter was martyred.

He indicates this in verses 12 through 15, but look specifically at verse 14. He says there in chapter one, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Christ made clear to me. So he is, in other words, on the eve of his martyrdom. He knows he's getting ready to die. And that's somewhat significant because we know that last words are important. He's preaching, if you will, a deathbed sermon.

So that should garner our attention. Now, it was written primarily, it seems, to remind them of the truths of the gospel in the midst of false teachers. There were false teachers that these people were having to deal with, and he is trying to help them as they work in the midst of these false teachers. Now exactly what these false teachers believed is not clear at every point. Some people think it was an early form of Gnosticism, The Gnostics had lots of different thoughts, but among them was this idea that you needed to have some sort of special inside knowledge to be saved. But you had to have this special hidden knowledge. And Peter, throughout this letter, about 11 times, uses this word knowledge. And so some suggest that he's trying to combat that.

And he's saying unto them, you don't need a hidden knowledge for salvation. The salvation you need has been publicly proclaimed in the crucifixion and resurrection and in the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. This did not happen in a corner somewhere hidden. This was public, what Christ has done. And you need to embrace him and Him alone for your salvation."

But whether they had some form of Gnosticism or not, what we can say for sure is that they denied the return of Christ. And as a result of this denial that Christ is coming again to judge the living and the dead, they lived lawless lives because they didn't believe that a judgment was coming. They essentially said, we will live however we want. And so you can see from this how just a seemingly maybe minor doctrine, air quotes, minor doctrine has catastrophic consequences.

We need to get these things right. Well, with this in mind, Let us pray and then read the holy word of God. Oh God, we come before you now and we pray that you would bless us as we hear your word read and proclaim, we plead with thee, oh God, that it would be blessed by your spirit that he himself would go forth for the glory of your name, oh God, we pray, amen. Hear now the word of God, 2 Peter chapter one, verses one and two. Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus, our Lord. Amen and amen. May God bless now the preaching of his holy word.

Well, today in our text, we see three things that false teachers hate. False teachers hate God's authority, God's salvation, and God's revelation. False teachers hate God's authority, God's salvation, and God's revelation. First, false teachers hate God's authority.

Look at verse one. Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. Now to be clear, when we say that false teachers hate God's authority, we're not saying that false teachers hate all authority. False teachers don't mind authority so long as they are the ones who have it. But they hate God's authority. The problem with God's authority is that it is over the authority of the false teachers. that they are to submit to God at every point, and this is a problem for them.

Peter begins here by describing himself as a man under authority. He calls himself, right out of the gate, a servant. Why does Peter call himself a servant here? He doesn't do this in 1 Peter 1. There is a particular reason he is acknowledging his being a servant here.

It's because the false teachers that he is going to combat do not view themselves as servants of Master Jesus. They do not view themselves under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at chapter two, verse one. But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." So Peter is saying, I'm not like those people. I am a servant of master Jesus Christ. And he embraces that. but these false teachers hate God's authority.

They hate Master Jesus's authority because they want to think what they want to think. They want to do what they want to do, live how they want to live. But a servant is under the authority of another. They don't get to do whatever they want to do. They don't get to think however they want to think. They are called to think the thoughts of their master. They are called to do the bidding of their master, the Lord Jesus Christ. But what will make you want to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? What will make you want his authority over your life?

Well, you have to realize how bad you are and you have to realize how good he is. When you realize that trying to be your own master is a recipe for disaster, you will joyfully submit to the authority of another. When you know that your own view of yourself as a lord, as a master, is disastrous, you will be joyful to receive the mastery of one who is not like you. You will say in your heart, I don't want to think my own thoughts because my thoughts are sinful. I don't want to say my own words because my own words are sinful. I don't want to do my own things because my own things are sinful.

And Peter had learned this. Peter had tried to be his own master in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said, I will not deny you. If I have to die with you, I will not deny you, Jesus. And it turned out disastrously because he did the very things that he said he would not do because he tried to be his own authority, his own master. But you also have to realize if you want to have Jesus as your master, if you want to be his servant, you have to realize how good he is. So it's a twofold thing, recognizing how bad you are, but also recognizing how good he indeed is.

Think, he shed his blood for you so that you could be his servant. And he first came to be a servant so that you could be his servant. Remember what the word of the Lord Jesus Christ said in Mark 10 45, the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. You have been purchased by his blood so that you could be his servant.

And this master is not just good, this master is perfectly good. This master doesn't just want what is best for you, he actually knows what is best for you. Whenever Master Jesus says to us, do this. it is for our good. Whenever he says do not do that, it is for your good. Whenever he says think this way in your life, it is for your good. Whenever he says do this in your marriage or don't do that in your marriage, raise your children this way or don't raise your children that way, what he is saying to you is always good for you, his servants.

He has never asked you to do a single thing as his servant that was not good for you to do. Think about it like this. Would you imagine that Jesus shed his blood for you because he loves you to make you his servant and then ask you to do things that are not good for you? Do you think that he shed his blood for you and then he's gonna give you commandments that aren't good for you to do? He loves you. His commandments are good for you. If he gave his life and love for you, you can trust that when he gives you commandments, they are good for you too.

But one mark of the false teachers is that they hate God's authority. God's laws are for good for Jesus' servants, but these people do not think that way. But you sitting here this morning, can you say what the psalmist? Oh, how love I thy law. The Christian should not be afraid to say, I love the law of God. Did you know that? That a Christian should be able to say, I love God's law. I'm thankful for his precepts. His commandments are my delight.

But these false teachers are not like Peter. They did not want to have Jesus as their master. Perhaps to some measure, they were willing to have him as their savior. but they did not want to have him as their Lord. Do you here this morning want to have Jesus as the master of your whole life? Well, secondly, you see the false teachers hate God's salvation. We read here in verse one, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

False teachers hate God's salvation because it is free and it is costly. What do I mean? Well, the fact that it is free is utterly pride-crushing. The false teachers want to be able to boast at some measure for their own salvation. So they hate the doctrine of sovereign free grace. They despise the idea that your salvation could be entirely the work of Christ, absolutely and completely, on your behalf. As J. Garcia Machen says, the Christian does not make himself a Christian, the Christian is made a Christian by God. False teachers hate this utterly pride-crushing doctrine.

And this is why the text stresses that God's salvation makes everybody put on the same level playing field. Look what it says there again, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours. In terms of your justification, in terms of your standing before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ, you are equal with all other believers. The infant who dies as an elect infant in infancy is as righteous in the sight of God as the seasoned saint. The thief on the cross is as righteous in the sight of God as a child or as anyone else. The pastor, who is a Christian, is as righteous in the sight of God as you, and you as him, and all of you are on the same level playing field.

Even Peter goes further. Notice he uses that word our. He is saying that they are on an equal standing with God as the apostles. You here this morning in Christ Jesus are as righteous in the sight of God as the apostle Paul. Peter is no more righteous in God's sight than you. And you think to yourself, well, how could that possibly be? Well, Peter tells you how. Look what he says.

It's that you lay hold by faith of the righteousness of Christ in your place to those who obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. You are equal in the sight of God who are trusting in Christ because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to you and received by faith. You see, it's not the quantity of your faith, how much faith do you have, nor is it the quality of your faith, how pure is your faith, how perfect is your doctrine. It's who is the object of your faith. If your object is Christ and His righteousness, you cannot be any more righteous in His sight. You are as righteous as Christ. Christ is no more righteous in the sight of the Father than you who are in Him. I'm not talking about ontologically here. We could get into some philosophical, theological, but I'm talking about you are as declared righteous in His sight as the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they hate this doctrine. They hate this doctrine because it preaches that you're a sinner and that you can only be declared righteous because of the righteousness of Christ. They can't stand the idea that they could be on equal playing field with every other believer. They can't stand it because they want to lord themselves over other people. They want to be superior. They want to look down their nose at other people and say that they're somehow better than them or they've done something.

And Peter's saying, I, the apostle, am no more righteous in God's sight than anyone else who's in Christ. But they also hate that it makes God the Lord That it is free, but also that it is costly, that it demands everything for them. You see a few other words in here that are of importance for us to consider.

This word obtained is used in verse one, to those who have obtained a faith. Now that word obtained might make it sound like something you work to earn. You obtain it because you've earned it, you've worked for it. Well this word obtained is translated in NASB, for example, as received. And what it really means is to obtain by lot. To obtain by lot. So you remember how in the Old Testament they would cast lots, and even sometimes in the New Testament they would cast lots, and they would obtain something as a result.

But nobody would say they worked for it. It was simply the free gift of God. They cast the lot and they received X from God. Now it's still from God because Proverbs 16.33 tells us that you cast the lot in the lap and it's every decision is from the Lord. The Lord is still in control of that, but it's not something you've obtained or earned. So for example, this word is only used three other times in the New Testament. Let me just briefly comment on two of them.

Luke 1.9, Zechariah, who's the father of John the Baptist, is chosen by lot to enter the temple. The exact same word, he's chosen by lot. Or John 19, 24, do you remember how the people were casting lots about who would get the tunic of the Lord Jesus Christ when he was on the cross? It's the same word. It's a reception of something that you have not earned.

And so Peter is very strategic here in his choice of this word because it highlights that it's the free gift of God which we exercise. But he also highlights that Jesus is God here in verse one. The righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ. He explicitly calls Jesus Christ God in verse one.

Now, for all the grammar Greek geeks in the room, I think we have a total of one, you'll know that this is an example of the Granville-Sharpe rule, which in the most simplistic terms, Hunter, I know you know it's more complex than this, probably you do too, Chad, but in the most simplistic terms, it's when you have two nouns in Greek that are governed by one definite article, it refers to the same person. So here, in the Greek, you've got one the, and two nouns in view. So it's one person though that is in view ultimately. So when you read our God and Savior Jesus Christ, it's referring to one person. It's not God the Father and then there's this other person, the Savior Jesus Christ. It's saying God is. Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is God, he's called God here.

You see the same thing in Titus 2.13, where we read in Titus 2.13, our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a reference to one person.

Jesus Christ is called God in Titus 2.13, and he's called God here.

The significance of this is just this, that we need an infinite righteousness, we need a perfect righteousness, and you can only find that in God. You can only find that in Christ, who is God. So this morning, if you're looking for a righteousness, if you're trying to make it to where you can stand just in the sight of God, stop. and turn to Christ, because that's the only place where you're gonna find perfect righteousness. Are you perfectly righteous? You're not, but Christ is, and it's saying he's the God in whom you can find the righteousness that you know you need, and that only he can provide.

Turn to him. And he's called Lord in verse two, at the very end of verse two, our Lord. He is the Lord of your life. He's called Savior and Lord five times, I believe it is, in this book. Right here he's called Savior and Lord, verse 11, chapter 220, chapter 32, the very end of the book, which ends almost exactly how it begins, which is important to note, chapter three, verse 18. He repeats this over and over and over again, that he's Savior, and Lord.

And this gets at that idea that it's not only free, it's also costly, isn't it? That he saves you entirely and utterly of his free grace, but then he demands your entire life. He demands your whole life as your Lord. And these false teachers, they didn't like this idea of free salvation that costs everything for the rest of your life, demanding your whole being be given over to him. They didn't like this. They wanted a salvation that they could in some part earn. And they wanted a salvation that after they had earned it by some measure of their works, gave them the freedom to live however they wanted.

Well, how is it with you? Do you love this salvation of Scripture? Do you love the Christ of the Bible? The Christ of the Bible who says, I've done it all for you, and don't you dare think you can do anything to earn your salvation, because you can't. You can't do it.

I did it all. Don't you dare try to take any glory from me. I've done it all. I did every bit of it for you. Not an ounce is left for you to do. I took it all on myself. And then says, will you now live for me? I'm telling you that I will give you commands, and that they're good for you. I'm telling you that I'm the Lord of your life, and there's no place else you should ever want to go than where I tell you to go. It's free, and then it's costly, but at the same time, any real believer knows that it's completely worth it. It's totally worth it.

There's no other life worth living than a life of following the Lord Jesus Christ. Some false teachers will say that they want Jesus as Savior to remove God's wrath. Or other false teachers will say that they want him as Lord, but they don't really want him as Savior. They want him to always be a taskmaster.

And the Jesus of the Bible says, I do all the saving. But he says, I save you so that you would obey me and live for me. And I do it all in love. All of it is in love. It's all good for you. False teachers hate thirdly though and finally God's revelation.

I see this in verse two, may the grace, may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Throughout this book, Peter will regularly use this word or other words for knowledge and he says it over and over and over again, but this knowledge is not just propositional, it's personal. This knowledge is life transforming, This knowledge is relational or personal. And so he'll use it here in verse two, knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. He'll use it in verse three, knowledge of him, see it's personal. The knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, verse eight. And then at the conclusion of the whole book, which again starts nearly the same as it begins, the last verse of the book begins, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That word knowledge being used again. Now, why is this book so full of this knowledge?

Well, as I've told you before, it's perhaps the case that these false teachers were claiming they had some sort of special knowledge that you would have to have, and Peter's saying, get rid of your special knowledge, because it's garbage. What you need is knowledge of Jesus Christ. If your knowledge is eloquent and laxing and all these wonderful things, but isn't in Christ, your knowledge is worthless. doesn't have any long-term significance.

I was with a couple friends recently, pastor, and he said, if my theology doesn't pass the granny test, then it's probably wrong. And then he said, here's the granny test. The grandmother, who's read her Bible her whole life, she's prayed a thousand times more than I have, She knows the scriptures inside and out. And if my theology, she says, I don't understand that, that doesn't make sense, then I'm probably wrong.

Because grandma knows what she's talking about because she's got a simple, not saying it's not deep, but a simple, profound knowledge of Christ. And if your theology can't be simple and wonderful in Christ and Christ alone, then you've got something wrong.

The false teachers hate God's revelation. Now, when I say the false teachers hate God's revelation, don't get me wrong. These guys would have read the Bible. They could quote Bible verses. But what they hate about God's revelation is the clarity of it and how it all points to Christ. That's what they don't like. They don't like a Bible, a revelation from God that is clear and takes them to Christ. That is something they don't like.

It's simple, it's clear, you can understand it. They wanna muddy things up, they wanna make things confusing, but it's just not that way. The Bible is clear about the way of salvation and the way we ought to live our lives. they impose their moral or philosophical ideas onto the Bible. So when they read the Bible, they try to make the Bible say whatever they wanted it to say before they started reading it.

You know, I have often said, if you've read the story of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and you've never been challenged, you're probably not reading it right. In fact, let me go further, you're not reading it right. He will challenge you. Jesus is, he's a challenge.

But these people wanna read the scriptures and make it say whatever they have already decided they want it to say. That's the idea of the false teacher. They don't like God's clear revelation. They really like the serpent, aren't they? Did God really say? Yes, God did in fact really say. So do you love the clear teaching of God's revelation? God's Word, the clear revelation here in God's Word, finds its climax over and over and over again in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism. What is it really all about? I mean, we could go into different things. But it's a pointer to the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, our need for Christ, and the good news that Christ has come to save sinners. What's the Lord's Supper really about? It's pointing it to the Lord Jesus Christ. Is that too simplistic for you? That's the clear revelation of God's word.

Well, we've seen today that false teachers hate God's authority. They hate God's salvation and they hate God's revelation. But let us be those who love these things. Let us love God's authority. Let us love his salvation. Let us love his revelation. Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you for your authority over us. We praise you that we get to be your servants. Father, we were once the servants of Satan. and the servants of our own flesh. And now we war against those whom we once thought of as our masters, and they were our masters, but not any longer, Father. We have been adopted into your family, and we praise you for Jesus. Would we love his laws? Would we delight in his commandments? Would we be unashamed to actually think positively about your laws? O Lord, and also at the same time, Father, What do we love? Your salvation. We love a salvation.

We have to say, I couldn't, I didn't do any of it. I literally did nothing. I literally contributed nothing to my justification. I am as deserving as the wrath of God as anyone else. It's all been Christ. I can't claim the smallest amount. And then we would love that that salvation is full of your good laws to then obey out of love for you. that your laws aren't evil, and oh God, we pray that we would love your revelation. We would love your word, we would love the sacraments, we would love prayer, we would love what you teach us. We would not make it too complicated where it's not.

So much of the Bible is clear, and the false teacher wants to make it convoluted or confusing. You did really say that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. It's very clear, oh God. Let us be content with what you teach us. You've told us so much and we make it so confusing when so much of it is really, really, really true and clear and simple. Christ Jesus alone and apart from him we can do nothing. Let us bask in these truths, never grow tired of hearing them in the name of Jesus, amen.