

2 Peter

A Shared Salvation

2 Peter 1:1-4

August 4, 2024

HDBC

Today we continue our study of 2 Peter. This is the second and final letter written by Peter to dispersed and often discouraged believers. He understood that he would soon be facing the executioners. The specter of crucifixion must certainly have caused deep anxiety, but the thought that it would lead him into the presence of Jesus gave him the courage to face it. In the meantime, he penned his last letter.

It was written to the same group as his first letter. They were fellow believers who were scattered throughout Asia Minor. More important than their geographic location was their spiritual condition. They were believers who were experiencing persecution from the outside as well as a number of internal challenges. They needed instruction and encouragement.

The writers of the New Testament letters were good at weaving deep doctrinal truths even into the opening statements of their letters. Peter was no exception. Here he describes his readers in rich theological terms, reminding them of the greatness of the salvation that he shared with them. What may appear to be a casual greeting is actually a great statement describing some of the more important aspects of salvation.

I wrestled with the text for multiple days this week, trying to determine the best way to present these truths. I always want to be true to the text not only in the content, but even in the structure of how it is presented. That can sometimes be a struggle. NT writers often use a structure in writing that we are not as comfortable with. Like long, long, long sentences that contain multiple prepositional phrases. My job is to unpack those, discern the truth expressed, and find the best way to share it with you.

For this text, I'm going straight to the takeaways. There are 8. 😊

Eight statements about salvation. Ask the Lord to highlight a few for you.

1. God gives the faith needed for salvation.

If you are a believer in Jesus it is because you placed your faith in Jesus as Lord. You trusted Him for the forgiveness of your sins. You believe He died for you and was resurrected from the dead. These beliefs are essential for salvation. But be aware of this important truth. Your ability to believe these things is a gift from God. God enabled you to have this faith. Notice Peter's words in verse 1.

To those who have received a faith. We did not possess the faith to trust Jesus. We received it from God. He is the giver of saving faith. Now, we still have to use it. You can't blame God for those who don't believe. God does not take away our faith. He does not block our faith. He provides it, but each individual has to decide to embrace it. But never forget that its source is God. My salvation is not my doing, but God's doing. I could not be saved apart of His gift of faith.

Just to be clear, faith alone is not enough. It has to be faith in Jesus, who He is and what He has done. There are some things you cannot believe in. You deny that we landed men on the moon. You can deny that Elvis is dead. You can refuse to believe the earth is round. Help yourself with any number of things to ***not believe***, and you will be relatively unimpacted. But if you refuse to believe Jesus, you will be denying a great gift that God has given and you will be lost.

What does it mean? Don't be too proud of yourself when you think of your salvation. Be thankful to God who enabled you to believe.

2. Jesus provides the basis of our salvation.

By the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our salvation comes only through Jesus. He is the means of our salvation. We can be saved because of what Jesus. He did for us what we could not do. He lived a perfectly sinless life. That's what Peter means by *the righteousness* . . . He never sinned. We can't say that.

Then, as the perfect, sinless person, He offered his life for our lives. He died the death that we deserve because of our sins. The Bible says Jesus, who knew no sin because sin on our behalf that we might have His righteousness. He took our sins and gave us his goodness, so that we could stand before God in His own purity. That is the only way we will be able to stand before God and not experience his judgment and wrath.

Through faith in Jesus, we receive His forgiveness and right standing before God. We are welcomed into Heaven because of Jesus, not because of anything good in us. If you are trusting anyone or anything other than Jesus to get you to Heaven, there will come a time when you will be sadly disappointed.

3. Grace and peace are benefits of salvation.

Grace is getting what we have not earned and do not deserve. Grace is never earned. It can only be given to the undeserving. In saving us, God is giving us what we have not earned and do not deserve. Take a few seconds and let that sink it. Not a single inhabitant of Heaven will have earned the right to be there. All will be there because of grace.

Peace is a condition and awareness that we are right with God.

Reconciliation where that had been a separation. Our sins separated us from God, kept us from being right with God. Salvation fixed that. **Clear and clean conscience**. No sense of guilt, leading to judgment. No fear of his wrath. **Unhindered fellowship with God**. We are not afraid to approach Him in prayer. We are welcomed into His presence. Not only are these benefits of salvation but . . .

Grace and peace are meant to be multiplied.

This is a prayer of Peter for his readers. His desire is that grace and peace would be multiplied. What does it mean? Grace and peace are not static benefits that we receive and put on a shelf to admire. They are to be part of our lives. And as such they can grow.

We appreciate more the grace and peace with have with God. Grace and peace are more and more parts of our relationships with others. And how does this happen? Grace and peace are multiplied through a growing knowledge of Jesus. Not intellectual knowledge, but experience with Jesus. In other words, through a growing, maturing relationship with Jesus. The more we know Him, experientially, the more grace and peace will be evident in our lives.

Charles Stanley has it right. *Grace and peace are twin sisters, grace being the firstborn. Where grace abounds, peace thrives. Where grace is stunted, peace shrivels.*

4. The power of God is sufficient for our salvation.

God has the power to provide everything we need for life and godliness. My power (abilities) will often fail. There are things that I may attempt that I cannot do. My weaknesses become evident when I try difficult things. This is not true of God. His power is sufficient for all things, and that includes the most important thing . . . my salvation.

Life and godliness. Those two things refer to salvation (the power to get saved) and godly living (the ability to live as God wants us to live).

Has granted – God gives it to us. It is in a verb tense that means it is a past, completed act that has ongoing results. His power saved us. His power keeps us saved. His power enables us to resist sin and live in His righteousness.

5. Salvation comes only through a relationship with Jesus.

I've already mentioned that the basis of our salvation is Jesus. But Peter takes it a step further. Our salvation is not only based on the finished work of Jesus, but it comes to the individual through a personal relationship with Jesus. Watch what Peter does.

Through the knowledge of Him. This phrase is not about intellectual knowledge but about experiential knowledge. In other words, having an ongoing, relationship with Jesus.

When Peter and the others were called to trust Jesus, they were called to enter into an ongoing relationship with Jesus. They did not simply check a box, then go back to their previous life. They entered into a relationship with Him that transcended everything else. Jesus explained it with an illustration from the vineyard.

I am the vine and you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. Abiding speaks of an intimate, ongoing relationship. It implies togetherness.

6. Salvation comes with great promises.

Peter mentions the promises of God and describes them as precious and magnificent. **Precious** means they have great value. **Magnificent** means they are the greatest. What promises of God are precious and magnificent to us? Let me just mention a few.

Promise of unconditional love.

Promise of forever forgiveness.

Promise of eternal life.

Promise of a home in heaven when this life is over.

Promise of a better understanding than we have now.

Promise of a reunion with other believers in Heaven.

Promise of victory over the Devil.

Promise of a new body that will never be sick, injured or die.

7. Salvation enables us to experience the divine.

Peter uses a very unique phrase to point out that through salvation we can experience God's divine nature in some way. Let's be careful here. It does not mean we will become gods. It does not mean we cease to be human.

How do we ***partake of the divine nature***? When you were saved the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. He comes to abide in you. The Holy Spirit has the divine nature. He is part of the Holy Trinity and is fully God. We experience the divine nature when we experience the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

8. Salvation rescues us from spiritual corruption.

In salvation, we have escaped the normal, natural corruption of sin in our lives that will lead to destruction. Through the forgiveness of our sins, we escape the penalty for our sins and the judgment for our sins. But more than that, the natural corruption of our souls has been stopped and reversed by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Corruption refers to the process of decaying, like an organism that dies, decays, rots. That was us. Because of our sin natures, it was our destiny. It was where we were heading. It was the road we were on.

Having escaped speaks of something that has already happened and cannot unhappen. It means we have moved from danger to safety, from dying to perpetually living, from the road to Hell to the road to Heaven. In salvation we have escaped from our former destiny. We have been given a new destiny and a new destination.

Peter reminds us of ten great things about salvation. I love all of these things. If you are a believer, ponder them often. Maybe jot them down & put it in a prominent place where you will see it daily. Write them in your own words. They will bring you peace when things are chaotic. Joy when the road gets difficult. Assurance when the enemy threatens. Comfort when you are in the final days of this life. They did for Peter. They will for you.

On the other hand, if you have not experienced salvation, these ten things may not mean so much to you. But hopefully one or two will resonate with you and you will sense the loving call of God to be saved. When you do, please be aware of God's part and of your part.

There is an interesting scene in the best Indiana Jones movie that offers an illustration that you might find helpful. I'm referring to Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.

The critical scene toward the end of the movie shows Indiana hanging by a single hand on the edge of a chasm. With the other hand he is reaching out for a goblet that supposedly once held the blood of Christ. In the movie it does not represent Christ, but power, fame and fortune.

As the tips of his hand just graze the edge of the goblet, he's mumbling, ***I can just about reach it.*** Above him is his father (Sean Connery) reaches out pleading ***Junior, take my hand! Take my hand!*** Finally, his father tells him to ***Let it go***, and Indiana reaches up for his father to take his hand. He turns from the chalice and toward his father who takes his hand and lifts him away from the danger.

How does this illustrate the act of being saved?

Lost condition of a person without Jesus:

Indiana is hanging on, in danger of losing his life. Picture of lost sinner. He is reaching for what he thinks will bring him fame, fortune and power.

Grace of God in calling us to repentance and faith:

Dad is calling him away from the danger to the safety of his hands.

Repentance from sin:

When Indiana turns from the chalice to his father it.

Acting in faith:

When Indiana allows his father to take his hands and lift him out of danger.