

The Sufficiency of Christ and Scripture

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2 Peter 1:3-4

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So as we do at Redeemer Bible Church, we like to study God's words, so I invite you to take your Bibles and join me in Second Peter. We're going to be in chapter one today. If you got one of those blue Bibles from an usher that is on page 1120. In your Bible, I don't know the page number, because that would be really, really a unique spiritual gift to know that. But 1120 in those blue Bibles. Just know it's towards the back and we're going to be in chapter one. Our text for this morning will be verses three and four. But before we get into our text, we're going to do something a little bit different. Now, I'm going to judge you harshly compared to the other services, Based on your participation. We're going to play a little game, right? Everybody's like, "Oh, come on. We play games. We don't play games at Redeemer. We open the Bible and we study it."

And you're right, we don't play games with the Bible. We always preach it as accurately and correctly as we can. But we want to play this game to help illustrate what about this text is so important for us to know and so important for us to grasp. So this game is called, pay close attention. Sounds like a little bit of a, like a mean elementary school principal command. But pay close attention, it's going to be fun. So if you all will turn your eyes to the screen behind me, I'm going to point. And when I do, I'm going to ask you a question and you just give your answer audibly. Everybody has to participate.

Here's question number one. Is this the American flag?

No.

Wow. That was pretty confident. Are you sure?

Yes.

How do you know? It's got red and white stripes. It's got blue on there. There's a star. How do you know it's not the American flag, are you sure? Yeah, this one's pretty easy. That's not the American flag. All right. Smart group here. Pay attention. Is this the American flag?

No.

No. How are you going to tell me no? It's got stars. It's got the stripes. You judgy people. If I want to fly this flag in my front yard, who are you to tell me I can't do that? Huh? You're going to march down the street and say, you got to take that flag down, because that is not an accurate representation of the United States, right? That's what you're going to do. And rightly so, you should. Now what about this flag?

No.

No? What do I got to do to please you people? It's yeah, it's too many stars. It's got more stars than your flag does. It's better. More stars. More stripes. If anything, I'm more patriotic than you. Come at me, bro. This flag is better, right? No, it's not better. Okay. How about this one?

There's a little confusion in the room of whether or not we're allowed to say no to this one. It's not politically correct to say no to this one, but the question was, remember, pay close attention. The question was, is this the real American flag?

No.

No. No. Now this one, of course, you know, every analogy breaks down. We can fly this one if you want to, but you could not fly this one over the White House or over the Capitol building or anything like that as the flag that represents the United States of America. So what about this one? Yes. Wait a second. Next, next. Are we sure? What's this game called again? Come on, like a game show. Come on. Pay close attention. Right. Exactly. So is there something off? Were you fooled at first? Next slide. What's going on? Oh, 52 stars. Oh, so is this actually the real United States of America flag? No, it's not because it has 52 stars. Now, little bit tougher of a question. What about this one?

You're telling me that's not the flag of the United States of America.

Upside down.

It's upside down, but all the stars are there, stripes are there. Why are you guys coming at me? This is the real flag. And on a normal business day, say, I'm the policeman at the Capitol building and I want to put this flag up this way. Is that an accurate representation? No. Am I allowed to do that? No, I'm not. I don't get to make that decision. So what about this one?

Yes. Yes.

We there yet? Everybody's worried now that I'm going to pull another trick. Okay, next slide. Yes, we are there. This is the stars and stripes. We see 50 stars. We see 13 stripes, the right colors, the right shape, everything. This is the only flag that can be called the real flag of the United States of America.

It's kind of a funny little game, but isn't that funny that even things that we're so familiar with, they seem so familiar. They're in our lives. We know them. We can still be fooled by cheap knockoffs at times. Certain ones we can see and they're obvious. But you know what, somebody not from America would look at that first flag and be like, well, it's got stars and stripes, or might look at the second one and be like, well, it's got all the elements. I don't know how many stripes and stars it's supposed to have. So that's what's so funny about this, is something that can seem so familiar to us and something that we know so well can still deceive us if we look at it and we're not careful. See, counterfeits are made with malicious intent to fool the person who falls for them. And without paying very close attention in our lives, we can be fooled and we can be fooled by something even more dramatic and drastic and serious in consequences than just getting a flag wrong.

In this final letter, we come to our text for today. We find Peter with that very thought in his mind. The Apostle Peter arrested by Rome, sitting in prison, waiting to be executed, writing a letter to his churches, to his audience for the last time. And we learn in verse one of this letter to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours is his audience. Other letters are written. Hey, this is Paul writing to the church in Corinth or Paul writing to the church in Galatia. That's the audience. And we get to look over their shoulders and learn. And this one is written to all those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with the apostles. Now, does that mean you better be really, really good and then maybe you'll be as good as the apostles. Is that what he's saying?

No. He's saying the simple, true gospel of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the authentic gospel. If that is you, then that means Peter wrote this letter for you. If you have faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ as known from scripture, a faith that calls you to submit to Christ as Lord and savior and to obey his word, then this is for you. And you can know that you are flying his authentic flag and not a counterfeit version of it. And in Peter's final letter here, in this first section in chapter one, what we're going to find is he's writing a sermon. He's a preacher. This is his last sermon. No audience in his cell, nobody to watch, but he pens still faithfully this sermon for a timeless audience of all Christians, everyone who would claim Christ as their Lord and savior. And Peter outlines in the sermon in these first two verses, verses three and four, some incredibly encouraging and deep, significant truths that we need to know.

Truths that would call each member of the body of Christ, not only to know, but also to trust in the all-sufficient word of God for their salvation and for righteous living, and indeed to pay close attention so that they aren't fooled by counterfeits. They have everything they need for life and godliness here. How do you know? How do you tell the difference between what's real and what's counterfeit? That's what we'll see. So as we jump into the text for today, I want to see the drive of the Apostle Peter. Peter's about to die, he's about to be put to death. This is the last sermon this preacher is ever going to give. And so these words, this sermon ought to carry special weight of significance in our hearts, should it not? Peter is very carefully choosing his words because he doesn't have many left. He is carefully choosing them. And I chose that word on purpose because he is caring indeed for his audience.

You see, he doesn't coddle them. He doesn't tell them everything's going to be fine, that he's going to get out of prison, and you can't touch the Lord's man and everything's going to be great and you're not going to suffer. Everything's going to be good as long as you just trust in Jesus. Now that is a half-truth. Counterfeits look real. But the half-truth would be that you're not going to suffer in this life at all, that'd be shortsighted. Peter tells his audience the truth that he is about to die, he is going to suffer. They are suffering through their life. Persecution is going to happen and he doesn't want them to be caught unaware. He wants to give them this hammer shot of truth that will shatter their fear, shatter their distrust in God's sovereign plan over their lives and over the life of their apostle.

He wants to make sure he looks at them and he says, "Don't look to me and my office after I die, look to Christ and his word as your all-sufficient source for godly living." He wants them to stop and consider this because this is something that is imminently coming to bear on their lives. And so Peter, just faithful, simple Peter, servant first and apostle of Jesus Christ would give them exactly that. He would give them not only the information they need on how to live a Christian life, but he would graciously share with them why and how to do it. Because it's not just about information, it's about shepherding. So as we get to our passage today for Second Peter 1:3 to four, in his final sermon, Peter seeks to give the church confidence in the sufficiency of both Christ and scripture. As he tells them that God has given them everything that they need to know him, to worship him, to obey him and to represent him until Jesus returns or until they finish their race.

So with that purpose, I'm going to read our passage and I'm going to start actually in verse one. So we get all four of the first verses for a little bit better context. But as we do, this is the most important thing that we'll do this morning in our service today. So we ask that you stand for the reading of God's word out of reverence for his word.

I've gotten this question a lot, so I'm just going to say it. Simeon is the form of Peter's name in Second Peter. I talked about this last time, but he's hearkening back to his life right when Jesus saved him. He is still simple Peter. He's not Simon the great apostle here, he's just saying in verse one, "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. 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 desire." That is God's word for us this morning. You may take your seats. As you do, please pray with me for our study.

Father, we are grateful to be able to sit under your instruction. It doesn't matter what I say, it matters what your word says and speaks to each heart in this room, whether you are calling Christians to more faithfulness and obedience to your word, or whether you're calling sinners to repentance and forgiveness and salvation. Please, Father, do that work among us. Teach us your word and do the same. We expect that you've done the same at Shepherd's House this morning as Pastor Costi was preaching. And we ask that you bless their launch as a church, give them courage and focus on your word and allow us to do the same this morning. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

So we've got some loaded verses here. If you were paying attention in verse three and four, there's a lot in here, good, vital, brilliant, beautiful realities for you, if you are in Christ. And really, frankly, for your joy. Have you ever stopped and realize that it is joyful for you to read the Bible? Sometimes, maybe not. Doesn't feel that way. But in reality, it is, it's joyful. God has given us this truth for our joy. And he has determined from eternity past that you would be sitting here this morning, hearing his word being taught. So we want to look and see what joyful truth does God have for us today. And we see the first in point number one that God has granted to us, everything we need for godly living, everything we need. And that's the first part of verse three. There's more detail in this that we can break down, but it's literally what this verse is driving at. You, if you are in Christ, already have been given everything that you need for life and godliness. Close your Bibles, the end. Let's pray. Let's go home.

I mean, that should be enough. That should be sufficient for us. But just like Peter, God wants to be gracious and not just give us information, but tell us why and how he loves us so much and why we'll be so joyful because of this passage. So we will flesh it out a little bit more. God wants to comfort us and teach us and to draw worship out of our hearts for him who is so deserving of it. So as we break this down, we want to understand what's going on here in the grammar. The first kind of interjection at the beginning of the verse here, it's this kind of weird little thing that Peter does here. It's not normal, but it's kind of cool. It's basically he's throwing back to what he said in the previous verse and linking this big idea.

So in this verse, it says in the ESV, his divine power, and that seems kind of simple, and that's what it says, but there's something more grammatically going on. So you would want to flesh it out a little bit more like saying something like, because of the fact that his divine power, or seeing as the fact that his divine power has, so there's a little bit more kind of weight. And it's almost like, well, duh, because of this. And so he is this unique way of saying that. But what Peter is doing is, back in verse two, he's saying may grace and peace be multiplied to you. That's the drive. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. How, in the knowledge of God and of our

Lord Jesus Christ. And now here, basically what he says, his grace and peace will be granted to you because of the knowledge of God.

Do you see that? That's why he begins here, because his divine power has granted to us all things for life and godliness. This is literally by divine decree, by the full power of the creator and sustainer of the universe, who, by the way, holds nothing good back from his people. His power, are you convinced? Is there any other credential that would convince you if not that one? The power of God who created all things has given to you everything you need for life and godliness. And by it, Peter says, I greet you with a desire that you find grace and peace multiplied to you because of that knowledge. Not burden, grace and peace because of that knowledge. And so Peter wants to instill confidence in God and confidence in his word. He gives us this incredible little statement here. He says, God, who is the giver of all good gifts, has given you something.

And nobody's interested. Are you interested? If the God of the universe gave you a gift, would you just be like, "Eh, I hear that all the time. Yeah, I got four of those in my garage." No. Let me put it this way, if the most important person in your life that you could ever possibly imagine, the most significant human being alive to you came to you and said, "I want to give you a gift." Would you be like, "Nah. I'll hear about it next week." No, you'd be like, "Are you kidding? Can we have a ceremony where I invite all my friends so they see you bestow this blessing on me? And I'm going to display it in my house where I can see it and revisit it and treasure it. And by the way, I'm going to invite all my friends over and brag about it when they're here for dinner, because it's such a great gift."

And so Peter just told us the God of the universe has given us a gift. So the question is, what is it? And the answer is, everything. All things, by the way, that pertain to life and godliness, we see in the verse. Now wait a minute, I smell an objection coming. I've heard this objection before. And so we're going to answer this objection right now. Wait a minute, pastor preacher. I can think of lots of things that are not in the Bible that refer to my life. Doesn't tell me how to fix my car or play dominoes or cook a good steak. Doesn't tell me how to do those things. Therefore Bible's not sufficient. It's not authoritative. It says it is, it's lying. I don't have to listen to it. You see, the Bible's false. Never met that guy? Ever have those discussions?

So the question is, is the guy wrong? Or is the Bible wrong? Because clearly he's right about the fact that the Bible doesn't teach you how to fix your car or climb Mount Everest. There's a lot of things you can find outside of the Bible that the Bible doesn't teach. So the question is, does it give you everything for life and godliness? Now, the question is, what does that phrase mean? That's how you answer that question. What does life and godliness mean? We know that the Bible is perfect. It's God breathe. It's profitable. It's unchanging. It's authoritative. It's without error. It's good in every respect, but is it sufficient? Do we need other sources of wisdom and truth? Now really, I think that depends on how you define wisdom and truth and what wisdom and truth are you looking for. But for the sake of this passage, we must see and understand that Peter's use of life and godliness here is a grammatical construct and Greek that makes two words mean one big idea. So it's not life, and by the way, also godliness. It's a life of godliness. It's all things that pertain to living a life that pleases God and exemplifies godly wisdom and behavior.

Folks, this is why grammar matters, because you can now win these arguments with these people. Peter's choice of words here and how he uses them, prevents people from being able to say things about the Bible that aren't true. Like, well it doesn't teach me how to fix my car, so I don't need to listen to it. It's insufficient. Rather Peter's very choice of words here does us a favor

by excluding everything that doesn't pertain to life and godliness, but it includes everything that does. And that's a brilliant thing that the Holy Spirit does for us because then we don't have to worry about every last little thing, like how to build a nuclear power plant.

We don't have to worry about that, that doesn't have to do with life and godliness. Everything that we know that we need to know about living a godly life is found in scripture. Of course, the Bible doesn't tell you how to fix your car, that doesn't have anything to do. The steak thing, I'm still trying to figure out, because a good steak should be cooked right. That's like close to godliness right there. I don't know, it might be somewhere in the Old Testament, somewhere, but we'll find it. If we don't find it, that's okay.

But what I want you to take away from this passage is the kindness and graciousness of God. He gave us every last thing that we need to live a life of godliness and obedience before him. But the question is this great gift of life and godliness, wonderful. Where is this gift? Where is it found? If the king of the universe, the God of all creation has given me a gift, I want it, I want to put it on display. I want to use it. And Peter tells us in point number two of your outline that it is God's word that is the all-sufficient source for godly living. Verse three says his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Great. How? Where? Through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.

Peter continues by telling us exactly what the substance of this gift is. And it's the second part of verse three, located in the complete and sufficient and authoritative word of God is all the stuff. All the building blocks we need to build a life of godliness. You ask, how do I know that? It's right there in the text. It says his divine power is granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. How? Through the knowledge of him. Now you might ask what is the knowledge of him? And that's a good question. Knowledge of him is God's truth revealed in his word or from his mouth, which is recorded and put in his word. Knowledge is what Paul spoke of in Second Timothy 3:16 and 17 when he said all scripture is God breathed and is profitable for teaching for reproof, for correction and for training and righteousness. Why? That the man of God may be complete.

Now that word in Greek is weird. It means perfect, but it doesn't mean sinless. It just means it has all the parts. Everything that you need, not incomplete, absolutely finished, sufficient for every good works. That's the rest of that passage. Equipped for every good work. And knowledge is also what the author of Hebrews is speaking about in chapter two, verse one, when he says, therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard. Why? Lest we drift away from it. Pay close attention, know it, otherwise we're going to drift away. And he was speaking, this author of Hebrews, was speaking of the words of the prophets, the words of Jesus, the words of the apostles. And this knowledge, this prophetic word is what Peter will even say later in this very sermon is to be trusted over his apostolic office or human experience or intuition.

He's like, don't look to me, don't look to my experience, look to Christ. That's what he's going to say. But we understand that this is not simply a substance of knowledge, otherwise anyone who read the Bible would know it and they would be saved. This says, through the knowledge of him who, what, who called you. And so what we see is a calling to something by that knowledge. Through the knowledge of him who called you to, what, his own glory and excellence. And this is a simple but profound theological statement. This statement not only explains the knowledge of who, that's the knowledge of God, of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. But

it's also a clarification, it's a truth bomb that Peter is dropping that we all need to know. And he says, Hey, you reader, listen, you're not saved by this knowledge. You need this knowledge to be saved, but you are saved by his calling, his calling of you. And what have we been looking at in the gospel of John for the last couple of weeks? The new birth, the spirit doing the work of regeneration, being born again.

And how does Jesus say that happens? Spirit's like the wind. He moves where he goes, he does what he wills. And so the question is, do we understand this? Do we understand that? Though the knowledge, church, listen, the knowledge of his word is necessary. It's not going to save you. It's the only way to get put in the line of fire to be saved. But how does it work, how does the work of the Holy Spirit work? I don't know. Do you know how the wind blows and every which way it moves? No, but I know certain places are windier than others. I can go stand on the cliffs in Ireland and get almost knocked off. If I want to go where it's windy, I'll get in the way of wind. If I want to feel wind on my skin, I go where it's windy. So if I want to be put in the way of the Lord's work, you go where his word is being preached. That's why John records such a strange, interesting analogy.

Jesus is like, no, the spirit just does what he wants. Nothing we can do can manipulate that. Be impossible for us to know the Spirit's mechanism. But what we do know is that the father chose all of his people, he chose you if you were in Christ. He didn't choose you because you're handsome or pretty or smart or whatever. In fact, we're all rotting, gross, spiritual corpses and he chose us anyway. He didn't look down the corridors of time and see us, our good righteous behaviors and see that we would choose him. Otherwise his choosing us would be wages that we earn, not grace, not undeserved favor. And Titus 3:4 makes it clear. But when the goodness and loving kindness of our God and savior appeared, he saved us. Not because of works done by us in righteousness, but by his grace, which is unmerited favor, undeserved blessing.

And so his calling then, it's clear, but it calls us not just to be, it calls us to do. And that something is to be called to his own glory and excellence. So what does that mean? And just like life and godliness is this phrase that teaches us that it's the all-encompassing everything about the Christian life, his glory and excellence is that same type of construct. It refers to the fullness of God's worth, his character, his grandeur, his glory, and his perfectly effectual plan of redemption. God has called you to those things if you are in Christ. He called you to know him, to experience those things in him, to tell of his wondrous deeds and to be made like him in Christ.

So how does that happen? That is, what is this process of the bestowal of this gift that God has given to us? And that is what we see at the beginning of verse four. By which, first two words, by which, that's the mechanism, by which. If I ask you, how'd you get to church today? And you're like, well, I came here by car. By car, the car's mechanism. I came here by foot. The godly people say I got here by the shuttle. I parked across ... The 11:50 service is like, what shuttle? Like, yeah, we have a shuttle service. You park across the street. Anyway, it's just a cheap sell right there. So the shuttle, or however you got here, that's the, by which, that's the mechanism. But what we see then, it's not just by which. He says by which he has granted. This is the second time we see this word. We've seen this word granted already, haven't we, in verse three. And in English, it's the same word.

And you can kind of lose this, but in Greek, it's the same word, but it's two different forms of a verb. A perfect verb and a perfect participle. Good, everybody's edified. What that means is, it's not leaving any possible way that something could have been excluded. It is totally and fully and

completely utterly granted. It's the second time we see this word, this full thing. And so God is telling us in his love for you, in his love for his people, his faithful, he has given freely and fully of all, everything, nothing held back, everything for life and godliness. But not only that, he has also granted, as this verse says, his precious and very great promises.

What a good day to be a Christian. Not only do I have this gift from God, everything I need for life and godliness through his word, but every precious and great promise, his magnificent promises too. What are we worried about, folks? Do we remember that throughout our daily lives? Or do we let the worries and concerns of the world wash over us like Peter falling into the waves when he took his eyes off of Jesus? We have nothing to be worried about, he's finished and is keeping going and he started the story. How do I know this? I'm glad you asked. Ephesians one says that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians two says that he has raised us with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Now, let me ask you a question. This is a very nice room, but is this the heavenly places? No. Are we currently physically presently seated in the presence of God? No. So what is this verse saying? It's saying that based on the ceiling of the Holy Spirit that we see in Ephesians one, he stamped you with his royal seal. Your seat is as good as saved. It's like you're already there. And so this blessing is yours. All the great promises are yours. But why does God do this? Good question. Thank you for asking. Ephesians two goes on to say this, gives us the reason. Remember, God's character. He wants us to know the why, not just truth, but the why. That's his heart behind it. The why is this. So that in the coming ages, that is, in the future kingdom, he might show us the immeasurable riches of his kindness and grace toward us in Christ Jesus.

Did you hear what I just said? If you are in Christ, the God of the universe saved you to be kind to you forever and bless you forever. Imagine the greatest day of your life multiplied by a million. And then the next day is even better, forever. That's pretty good. Guys, these are precious and very great promises, outlined as kingdom promises. Peter is giving his people this truth to anchor them, to give them joy. And as Romans 8:17 says, we are co-heirs with Christ. And so if we are co-heirs with Christ and sealed by the divine king, then the divine king that has bestowed upon his son, the kingdom has also given the kingdom to us and all of those spiritual blessings, every spiritual blessing.

So let me ask you again, how do you know them? Through the knowledge of him, through his word revealed to us. And did you see that kind of fun little exercise we just played? We went all over the New Testament looking for truth, and it's all there. We built this great picture and I didn't even scratch the surface. We built this great picture of this truth that we can look at from all these different angles and be encouraged by and be blessed by, every spiritual blessing, every great promise, every life-giving doctrine. Every reason to give all glory, honor, and praise to worship to Jesus is present in those pages sitting on your lap.

And yet how often are those pages sitting on the shelf, gathering dust ignored, not trusted, just thinking like, well, I've tried that before. God's word has given us everything. It's the only source of everything we need for life and godliness. And that comforting truth, that God not only gave us his precious and very great promises, and not only has granted to us the knowledge of him by his divine power, everything we need for godly living. But also according to point number three, he gave us the reason why his word, the Bible, is completely necessary in this life. You ask, well,

he saved me. Why doesn't he just zap me to heaven? Why do I have to deal with all this? I'm already seated there, let's just go. Yeah. I ask that question a lot.

Paul calls us ambassadors for Christ, ministers of reconciliation. We serve as ambassadors for the king until he returns. And so scripture tells us, point number three, God's word saves us from sin and unites us with Jesus Christ. He saves us from falling into those pitfalls of sin and unites us with Christ. John 14:15 says about Jesus. He says, if you love me, you will what? Obey my commandments. That's proof that you love me, that you follow me. Follow means walk, imitate, do the same things I do. And so this is now where we hit applicable truth immediately for today. We can have this beautiful kind of joy of the future kingdom and all these great promises and truth that we have everything that we need. How do we get to it now? We know we have the book. Now, how do we get to it?

We open it, we study it, we read it. We cement our minds to it and we trust it. And that's this true applicable truth. And so we're going to look at this here in this last half of verse four. And it's loaded, so stay with me. So that through them, you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. Now, again, loaded phrase. We'll break it down, but I first want you to note something. I want you to circle, underline, highlight, do whatever you do in your Bible, so that. Right now, everybody. Command. No, this is good to know. These little so that phrases are brilliant. It gives us the purpose behind what was just said. It gives us the heart, the why. Why does God do this?

So for all the people in the room who've raised three-year-olds and you sit there and like, why, why, why mommy? Why do I, they always want to know what's the curiosity. And you're like, stop asking me why. But God doesn't say that to us. He said, I'm going to tell you everything that you need to know for life and godliness. And it's not only the truth, but the why, because I love you and I want to give you joy. And so he says, what's the goal here? He says, so that. This is the goal. This is the purpose statement. So that what? So that through them. Through what? Good questions, keep them coming. Through his precious and very great promises. Look to what we just read. Through those promises, that his promises to secure our eternal future, promises of every spiritual blessing and the promised helper of the Holy Spirit given to us.

Jesus said, I can't stay with you, otherwise, the helper won't come. That's the Holy Spirit. If I stay with you 12, the rest of the millions don't get the Holy Spirit. So let the Holy Spirit come in and guide us and teach us and preserve us so that through them, those promises, you may become partakers of the divine nature. Now, that's a little bit confusing, right? What does that mean to actually partake of the divine nature? And commentators will disagree on whether this is eternal life or holiness or God's ethical standards or his word. But I think what makes the most sense and encompasses all of these blessings and all of these things is the actual indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every believer. This is the how. By partaking in the divine nature, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit inside of you, God fulfills all the divine promises, both present and future.

He seals you in salvation. He teaches you his truth. He convicts you of sin. He illuminates his word for you. He preserves you in trials. He sanctifies you. And ultimately, he brings you safely home to glory. And what is this a full picture of? That right there, I just outlined is the full, magnificent, complete work of the gospel on our behalf. Our salvation on display. Look at the end of verse four. because of all this, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. Okay. Now, have you escaped? Yes. Were you ever corrupted? Yes. So what does that mean? How does that work? You were corrupted. It says having escaped

corruption, you were corrupted. You didn't escape. You couldn't escape. You were dead in your trespasses and sins. But that's Ephesians 2:1 to three. And then we hit Ephesians 2:4. Who knows it? The best two words in the Bible. But God, but God. Being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead, stinking, rotting, ugly corpses, dead in our sins, he made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved, God intervened, that's regeneration. That's justification. And he caused you to escape from those sinful desires. That's the only way. He cleansed you of your corrupt spirit. He breathes new life into you, and he now serves to live to help you continually escape the corruption of sin that is in this world as you walk the Christian life. That's sanctification, it's painful, it's long and it takes a tremendous amount of effort to put off sin, to kill sin in the flesh, to fight to obey. Now, that doesn't save us, God already did that. But this process of making us more like Jesus, more holy, more righteous to bring God more glory and to show off the gospel better to the world around us, the Holy Spirit's like the wind in our sail. He comes behind us and pushes the boat. And what happens is he pushes us away from trouble and we jerk the wheel towards trouble whenever we feel like it and think it's fine. Everything's fine. The gentle guiding hand of the Holy Spirit is keeping us away and all we got to do is just follow his wisdom. How do we know how to follow it? It's all in his word.

And when we have finished our race and when we ascend to glory because of Christ, when we have finally escaped that everlasting corruption that is due to every sinner who dies in rebellion against God, that's glorification. He ushers us safely to glory and completes his work of redemption. And so that is something that we know from scripture that he will do. It's something that we know he is doing. And that's something that we know that he did. He rescued you according to Colossians 1:13, if you are in Christ.

So the major question that ought to be ringing in your ears right now is, am I in Christ? How do I know? How can I be sure? I'll take you back to our game. Remember, our game? Game was fun, right? Who was fooled by the 52-star flag? Raise your hand. Rest of you're liars. I'm just kidding. It's one of those things you first look at and the first thought is, yes, that's the real flag, and if you were to stop there, you would've been wrong. How often do we do that with people claiming Jesus and claiming truth and teaching and preaching? How often are we like the Bereans where we faithfully go and search the scriptures? Or do we say yeah, that guy, yeah, he's a brother. Yeah. Just trust everything he says. It's fine.

Remember, counterfeits are made with malicious intent to fool the one who falls for them, to steal, to rob, to entice away from the real thing. And this world is full of counterfeit gospels, counterfeit Jesus, promising, by the way, all the same things the Bible promises. They'll steal that bit, but then they'll tell you a different way to get there. How do you know which is real? That counterfeit flag flown above the US Capitol building would be a crime. Only the true flag of the United States represents the USA. And only a true, biblically true, authentic gospel rooted in the biblically authentic and true person of Jesus Christ as known from scripture and only a true new birth and only a true conversion and only a true life of faithfulness to God, only in them will you be granted these blessings and promises and rewards and the rescue from the corruption that is in the world.

Guys, this is important. This is probably the most important, the most important question you could ask yourself ever. Peter wasted his final breath, rather spent wisely his final breath with these words. We cannot accept, we cannot allow our church members or friends or family to

accept or fall victim to a counterfeit gospel and simply be okay with it. We can't think we're okay if we fall in for it, like, well, I'm close enough. What if I said that with that flag, you'd march to my house and kick my door down. I hope you have that same kind of zeal for the gospel. Justification is on the line. True forgiveness is on the line. Heaven and hell are on the line. Your friends and families and yours forever is on the line. We cannot allow ourselves or others to believe we're living under a flag of righteousness when we're truly living under a counterfeit version of it.

So Peter, wisely and correctly, didn't root his confidence in his audience, in him as a person or as an apostle, as an office, he said, trust in the all-sufficient Christ is known from the all-sufficient word. And that's how you will know. That's how you'll be able to compare your life and see is my flag counterfeit, or am I waving the flag of the king? I compare my life, my obedience, my confession, my conversion, my desire to obey all of that, does it match scripture? And if it doesn't, friend, that doesn't mean that you're not a Christian, but it certainly raises concerns maybe, that you might be a little off. And we want to be as close to biblical perfection as we can. And so we look, have I trusted in a false conversion? Am I leaning on something that I did in the past and my life has been utter shambles spiritually ever since. But yeah, I did that thing. That's trusting in hopeless works.

Trust in Christ, and if you are flying a fake Christian flag, there's an antidote for you.

Condemnation comes at death. There's an antidote until then. And that is submitting your hearts to the truth of Christ and scripture and living a life of repentance and faith before him, trusting in him for your salvation, nothing in your hand you bring, and simply to the cross you cling. God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth according to First Timothy 2:4. Hebrews 3:15 says, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts like those stubborn Israelites. Don't harden your hearts, give in to the Lord. Humbly confess your sin. And Psalm 51:17 says a broken and contrite heart, oh God, you will not despise.

Don't think you're going to come to the Lord and ask and he's going to reject you. If you come in humility and faith, he will grant you salvation and he will help you clearly see the difference between the authentic gospel and the counterfeit ineffectual gospel. And I pray and hope that God has made his truth clear and will make his truth clear in all of your hearts today. Amen.

Amen.

Let's pray. Father, what a joy it is to sit under the instruction of your word. No one more so than me, I wrestled with this text all week and got to teach on it five times, and I'm just blown away every time to see your kindness and grace and giving us everything we need to live a godly life before you, because you have given us and granted us your precious and very great promises that are found exclusively in the truth of Christ. Please, Father, teach every heart in this room, whether or not they're in Christ and they can love him and know him better and be blessed by him daily or whether they are still outside of Christ and must repent and trust the gospel. Please, Father, do that work in each heart. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.