

Spiritual Survival: Born Survivor

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Preacher: Simon O'Mahony

[0 : 0 0] to speak this morning. So, 2 Peter chapter 1, 1 through 2, 11. Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours, grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, to goodness knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, they are short-sighted and blind and have forgotten that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. Simon. Can I pray for you nicely? And then you can adjust. I'm going to pray for Simon and for us, and then we'll listen. Father, we thank you so much for your many good gifts to us. We thank you for your word. We thank you for this short letter of 2 Peter, written hundreds of years ago, but yet your word by your spirit speaking to us and to our lives today. I pray that you would pour out your spirit upon Simon and upon us all, that we may hear you, that we may understand, that we may apply it, and that we may become more like Christ as a result of what we do together right now. So pour out your blessing, we ask. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. too also struggle daily with indwelling sin in our hearts? Are there times we feel like giving up or giving in? The truth is we face these very same enemies as our first century brothers and sisters. And we need to hear now God's word as much as they needed to hear it then. How are we to overcome the world, reject false teaching and battle indwelling sin? Peter reminds Christians that we have been called by God to himself and we have been given a precious faith and precious promises. In fact he says we have been given all we need for a godly life. To this church Peter writes introducing himself as one coming in humility but also coming with a great authority. In verse 1 he writes Simon Peter a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ

In the very first verse Peter introduces himself as a servant and an apostle. Peter identifies himself as a servant which shows his humility but he does not intend this humility to result in the readers having a take it or leave it kind of attitude concerning his letter for he continues stating that he is a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Yes he is a servant but he is a servant coming in the authority of his master the Lord Jesus Christ. He is distinguished then from the false teachers who come in their own authority and speak from their own sinful hearts. Peter is an apostle he is one who has been commissioned by Christ to build Christ's church and it is in this authority given to him by Christ that he writes this letter reminding believers of the precious gifts they have received from their loving heavenly father.

[6 : 34] Peter first brings us back to the gospel. He reminds us of our standing before God. He tells us in verse 1 that God has given us a precious faith. Look with me in the second half of verse 1. He writes to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours. Faith Peter tells us is a gift from God. It's something believers have received from God.

We have faith because God has given it to us. And what does this tell us then about faith? One thing it tells us is that faith is not something we have innately within us. It's not something we have sleeping inside ourselves that we just need to wake it up and rouse it up.

But perhaps you've heard it before. People say that faith is something that we need to search for within ourselves. If we look hard enough and we look long enough inside ourselves, we'll find it.

That's what a lot of modern popular psychology says. Have faith in yourself. Trust in yourself. You can do it. Have you heard someone say that faith is unique to each person?

So what's true for you might not necessarily be true for me. You have your truth. I have mine. Many people today explain faith in this kind of way.

[8 : 04] In a way that perhaps faith is the absence of knowledge. If you want to have faith, you need to just empty your mind of all knowledge and understanding and take a blind leap in the dark. But scripture rejects these false understandings of faith.

Peter shows us in verse 1 that faith does not originate within us. Nor is faith a faith in self or even a faith in faith.

But that true saving faith has Christ as its object. He writes, This righteousness here is Christ's saving righteousness.

Peter says that it is through the saving righteousness of Christ in order that we might know that we did not obtain faith through our own efforts, but through God's favor alone.

God has called us by his own glory and goodness and he has given us this special faith to believe in his son. When our faith is placed in Christ, we are rejecting all of our own self-righteousness and leaning completely on the righteousness of Christ.

[9 : 21] We are turning our gaze from our own sinful selves and fixing it on our righteous Savior. And when we turn from our sins and confess them to God and ask for forgiveness, he forgives us because Christ bore the penalty of sin on Calvary.

In salvation, Christ takes our filthy rags and clothes us with Christ's righteousness. We who were enemies of God are made right with him. We who were dirty are made clean.

God adopts us as his sons and his daughters through the work of Christ on our behalf. So Christ, by his saving righteousness, has given us the gift of faith.

And this gift results in our salvation and righteousness before our holy God. And this righteousness comes to us not by working or looking within ourselves, but by believing in Christ alone.

Peter says our faith is precious. What makes it precious? Christ. Our faith is precious because of what is fixed upon our precious Savior. We come now to a very important question.

[10 : 29] Who is Jesus? It's a question we must all answer. Peter himself was asked this once by, when Jesus asked him, Who do you say that I am?

It's a question we must all answer. Peter answered, You are the Christ. Peter believed Jesus not merely to be a moral teacher or a good man, but God in flesh.

In verse 1, Peter describes Jesus as our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Peter is saying here that Jesus is God. Only a Jesus who is fully God and fully man could have borne the wrath of God for our sins.

So everything actually stands on the question of who is Jesus. Scripture teaches that only a faith that is Christ as its object, that is fixed on God, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, can save.

So friends, if your faith is not on the Christ of the Bible, then you're not saved. If you do not have this faith, throw yourself on the mercy of God and ask him for faith to believe in his only Son, who is our God and Savior.

[11 : 48] He promises that all who call upon his name will be saved, and he will turn no one away. We then, who are recipients of this grace and this faith, share in a common faith.

Peter writes that we have received a faith as precious as his. I like how the ESV describes these few words as a faith of equal standing.

So by the righteousness of Christ, we have received a faith of equal standing. So who do we have this faith of equal standing with? Peter says ours, meaning himself and probably the other apostles.

So what an encouragement that we have as believers, this common and equal faith with all other believers, this common standing before God.

We all share in having been given this precious faith through the work of Christ. Certain false teachers in Peter's day emphasize the necessity for believers to have a special knowledge and special particular experiences, and perhaps be in possession of some special gift, which set them apart and made them better than other believers.

[13 : 07] But this runs contrary to what Peter is saying here. Believers have all the same kind of faith. And we all have this equal standing.

There's no secret which we need to unlock to get to another level, because in Christianity there are no levels. Since we all have the same standing in Christ, there are no divisions.

We're not divided by our race, our color, our nationality, our gender, or even our social status. Christians are all united in this equal faith. So may this be an encouragement to us when we feel alone in a world that isn't our home.

When the enemy of our soul tries to undermine the faith that we've been given. Though our faith may at times increase and decrease, we know that our standing before God is secure because of Christ.

So let's remember, we don't have, we stand alone, we don't stand alone, but share in a common faith with all believers, who have all been given this precious faith.

[14 : 15] And God has given this faith indiscriminately to all of believers, so that all might share equally in the precious gifts and privileges of God.

So God, having called us to himself by his glory and goodness, and given us to us a precious faith, does not leave us to our own devices to fend for ourselves, but gives us precious gifts for godly living.

Look with me in verse 3, he writes, His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

God has given us everything we need for a godly life. Outside of what he has given us, we need nothing else. We have every spiritual provision we need to live a life pleasing to him.

And God's gifts to us then are not the kind of silly and practical gifts that we unwrap and shrug our shoulders and toss away or else re-gift to someone else. These are precious gifts. And we need them.

[15 : 25] They're necessary for living that life that's pleasing to him. Peter tells us next that we have been given very great and precious promises. The gifts just keep on coming.

Verse 4 says, Through these, his glory and his goodness, he has given us his very great and precious promises. So why are these promises so great and precious?

These promises are precious and great because of the one making the promise. These promises aren't the kind of promises that we too often make rashly and realize only after that we can't actually fulfill them.

Our loving Heavenly Father, who is the maker and sustainer of all things, is the one promising us. And his will shall come to pass.

How then do we know of these promises? We come to know these promises through knowledge of God. We learn about God and his promises that are for us through his word.

[16 : 26] God has given us his scripture, which contains all of his promises for his people. And as we read God's word, God reveals himself to us and his will for our lives.

In verse 3, Peter writes that God has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him. The knowledge of God is the means by which we receive all we need for a godly life.

A knowledge of God comes through reading the word. It's through the text of Holy Scripture that we come to know God and that we learn of his very great and precious promises.

The promises of God aren't found in our particular experiences or some special new revelation only available to a select few number of Christians.

But his promises are indiscriminately given to all who trust in Christ. And the reason that we are recipients of these promises is not because of our faithfulness are based on something we've done, but on something Christ has done on our behalf.

[17 : 36] Since scripture then is the source of true knowledge of God and it contains all of God's promises, then there's nothing outside of scripture we need for godliness. God's word alone is

sufficient for knowing God and informing us how we're to live lives that are pleasing to him.

The church in Peter's day was plagued with false teachers who proclaimed false promises. And again, it's not unlike the church today. There are false teachers today who are popular men and women declaring false promises based on a false knowledge of God.

They declare promises that sound great. They sound like good things. But they're not promises of God, so they can only bring us spiritual ruin. Being surrounded by a mentality of consumerism makes it more difficult for us to grasp the concept of the sufficiency of God's promises.

Not much is sufficient today for our desires. We always strive for something bigger, something better, something new, and more of it.

This thinking, if we bring it into the Christian sphere, will leave us grasping for things that God has not promised us. God has not promised us in this life that we will be physically healthy, that we will be cured of all illness.

[19 : 09] God has not promised us in this life that Christians will be financially successful and have the most successful careers. These are false promises, and if we've heard people speaking these false promises, we've heard from false teachers.

Dr. Albert Mohler said, the biggest problem with this kind of theology is not that it promises too much, but that it promises far too little.

The gospel of Jesus Christ offers salvation from sin, not a platform for earthly prosperity. So though we acknowledge that all blessings, both temporal and temporary, and eternal blessings come from God, the promises of Scripture are not temporary, but they're eternal.

They're better promises. Through our knowledge of God, he has given us all we need. Let's now look to the richness of the promises of the gospel that are ours through Christ, in the Old Covenant. God promised Israel many temporary, earthly blessings, but he also promised a new and better covenant. The book of Hebrews demonstrates the superiority of the ministry of Christ under the New Covenant over that of the priests under the Old Covenant.

[20 : 40] The author of Hebrews writes in chapter 8, verse 6, But, in fact, the ministry of Jesus has received, the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs, the priests, as the covenant of which he is a mediator is superior to the Old One, since the New Covenant is established on better promises.

So the New Covenant is established on better promises. As Christians, we have Christ as our mediator on our behalf to the Father. Jesus is the guarantor, the one who guarantees these promises.

So what are these promises that we have as believers in the New Covenant? God promises in Jeremiah 31, verses 33 to 34, this is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my law in their hearts, in their minds, and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another, Know the Lord, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

What precious words to sinners' ears. The promises of the Gospel are precious and very great. God promises that in the New Covenant, which we are a part of, that he will write his law on our hearts and on our minds.

[22 : 09] God has worked in us, transforming our wicked hearts and giving us hearts that love him. So that through faith in Christ, we can say that we know God.

Through Christ's righteousness, we have peace with God. God promises, I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more. As Christians, we can know true forgiveness from sins.

We have a new heart that wants to serve and love God. The promises of the Gospel are overflowing mercy and grace from our loving God.

Having given us, then, precious faith, and precious promises, God also gives us a new and a precious identity. God's purpose in giving us faith and promises is that we would live godly lives which reflect Christ.

Peter writes in verse 4, through these, through these, he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature.

[23 : 23] God's purpose is that we would participate in the divine, partake of the divine. Peter isn't actually saying that we become deified, we don't become little gods or anything like that.

He's saying that through God's promises we become more like Christ. Christ. As God works in our hearts, he makes us and creates us in such a way that we become more and more like Christ, that we live godly and fruitful lives.

The purpose of God calling his people to himself is to restore them to the glorious image of God and to renew them in holiness and in righteousness.

God has given us as Christians all we need for living godly lives that reflect Christ. A plant has three basic needs.

They're water, light and a soil to grow in. Think with me for a moment of a gardener who carefully places a plant in soil that he's prepared that is rich and full of nutrients.

[24 : 32] He searches the garden for the perfect spot that has the optimal amount of sunlight and he ensures that the plant has an adequate supply of water. The gardener has provided for all of the plant's needs.

The plant has everything it needs to grow healthy and strong, to bear fruit and flowers which please the gardener. the very same is true for us.

We have everything we need for a godly life. Since we share in the riches of Christ we're lacking in nothing. Through his gift he is reproducing his character in us which is holiness.

His very same power which accomplished salvation is also at work in us in our lives. Since God has given us this new Christ-like identity how then are we to live lives that are pleasing to him in a corrupt and sinful world?

Peter tells us through trusting in promises in the promises we have escaped the corruption of the world. Look with me again at verse 4 the second half.

[25 : 49] Here Peter sets before us the majesty of heaven and contrasts it with the lust of the world. Through them you may participate in the divine nature having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

What then does it mean to escape the corruption in the world? Are we to flee from the world? Are we to set up special Christian communes where we can live in a kind of sinless society?

Is that what we're supposed to do? Peter doesn't advocate that we flee the world. We don't need to flee the world in escape pods or set up communes because we've been equipped with everything we need to live in this world.

Christ prayed to the Father for us in John 17-15 he prayed my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

God has given us every spiritual provision necessary for living in this world. you're not alone at the times you feel under attack from the world.

[26 : 57] Perhaps you're a student and you're the only Christian in your class and you're made feel different. Maybe you're mocked. Maybe at work you're the only Christian in your workplace and colleagues treat you differently.

Maybe your boss or your manager actually discriminates against you in terms of the kind of work he gives you or perhaps in promotion. Maybe you're a parent struggling to raise children in a God honouring way in a world that's completely hostile to everything you're inputting into them and teaching them.

As Christians we often feel like pilgrims in a foreign land and it's at these times we must look to the promises of God. Peter seeks us seeks to invite us to God and draw our affections from the things of the world to look to the glory and goodness of God.

Peter's declaration that we have escaped the corruption of the world means we can stand firm in the face of opposition that comes from the world. Later on in the letter Peter writes in chapter 3 verse 13 but in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

The promise that Christ will return for his people and the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth is a comfort for weary believers. Knowing that God has given us all we need to live a godly life means we do not have to retreat from the world.

[28 : 31] During the Reformation Martin Luther lived in constant fear of his life both from the Pope in Rome and the authorities. However he acknowledged that there was something far more dangerous than his physical enemies than the Pope in Rome and that was his own heart.

As we battle against the sin in our hearts we don't fight with our own homemade weapons. God has armed us with every spiritual weapon necessary to fight sin in our hearts.

Is there habitual sin in our lives? As Christians we are those who have escaped corruption. We are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness. And when we do sin scripture promises us if we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

As we trust in God's promises our faith is nurtured and we grow in holiness. This promise of forgiveness should spur us on to reject sin and the promise of the Holy Spirit in our lives working in us should cause us to put sin to death and strive for holiness.

God hasn't called us to an impossible task but has equipped us for a life that is pleasing to him. We recall his promises then when we read his word when we sing his word and we speak his word and pray it and as we recall God's promises to us we come to know him more and more for God's promises show forth his glory and his goodness.

[30 : 08] There is nothing outside of the promises of scripture which we need for godly living. Having glimpsed for a moment at the glory and goodness of God what more could we possibly need?

The hymn writer Robert Robinson penned the words of the hymn Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing from a heart that was aware of its propensity to wander. He was aware of his weakness in the face of spiritual enemies but his faith was not in his own strength but in Christ who he had every confidence had delivered him from sin and the world as he had promised.

He penned the words Here I raise my Ebenezer Hither by thy help I am come and I hope by thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home. Ebenezer means rock of health and it's a reference to when the Lord delivered Israel from their enemies the Philistines as a monument to what God had done and a constant reminder to the people Samuel set up this Ebenezer saying thus far has the Lord helped us thus far has the Lord helped us we see from scripture that God is faithful to fulfill his promises his divine will shall come to pass so when we hear false promises from false teachers who seek to rob us of our hope look to God's living word search the scriptures that you may obtain true knowledge of God which leads to grace and peace when you feel overwhelmed by the world and feel submission or retreat are your only options stand firm on the promise that God has given you every provision needed when temptation to sin bubbles up inside remember that we are those who have been delivered from corruption and given new and precious identities which reflect Christ Christians we have been called by God to himself we have been given a precious faith in Christ alone and he has equipped us with very great and precious promises having called us from the world he has given us a new nature so that we can live lives pleasing to him in a sinful world until he finally calls us home if you are a believer these promises are yours will you trust these promises let us take hold of them and then look to God with expectant eyes dear heavenly father we thank you that you are gracious and giving God Lord your gracious gifts show forth your glory and your goodness Lord we acknowledge that all blessings come from you both the earthly blessings we have here and the wonderful spiritual blessings that we have that are eternal Lord thank you Lord for the precious faith that you have given us in Christ Jesus your son who is God and who is the mediator and the guarantor of the precious promises that you have given us please Lord increase our faith help us to trust in these promises so that through that you would be working in us creating your image in us that we would live lives that are pleasing to you and reflect your glory reflect Christ in Jesus name I pray Amen