

A Weathered Soldier Speaks: 2 Peter 1:3-4

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[0:00] And good morning to you. If you're a guest with us today, we are in a sermon series.! We began last Sunday in 2 Peter.

And so I encourage you, if you have a copy of Scripture with you, to turn there. 2 Peter is found at the end of the Bible, the New Testament. So if you turn to the book of Revelation, you'll find 3 John, 2 John, 1 John, 1 John, Jude, I'm sorry, Jude, then the 30 Johns, and then you'll arrive at 2 Peter as you turn back to the left.

Peter is at the end of his life. We historians and theologians think he's going to be shortly murdered and martyred by the Emperor Nero shortly after writing this letter.

So this is his letter where he writes kind of his last words, and he's being very poignant in this letter. I want to read our text this morning, and then I will share more.

But 2 Peter, chapter 1, we're going to begin reading in verse 2. 2 Peter, chapter 2.

[1:53] Through them, you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. What is, we're going to look at this text is, maybe it can be helped by this illustration.

My wife and I purchased some patio furniture recently, and we were assembling it, and in the process of assembling, I noted something that as I took out all the cushions and all the hardware and all the framing for the patio furniture, as I took it out before assembling, I came upon a package, and the package read this.

All items necessary for assembly are included. Usually, I have to dump out my whole tool bag and find whatever is necessary to assemble this, but in this case, indeed, every tool, every bolt, every nut, every lock nut, every washer, everything was included.

I needed nothing of my own. It was all there for me to assemble this. All things necessary for assembly are included. How handy.

Thank you, manufacturers of furniture like that. And sure enough, that was the case. And that is the kind of package God delivers to those who he saves.

[3:25] All things are included for life and godliness. You already have them. And that is the overarching point of our passage today, is that all items necessary for the saint are included with salvation.

Everything you need to know about Christlikeness, everything you need to know in order to grow in Christlikeness, everything you need to be empowered for Christlikeness, is on board.

You're welcome. And it's included in salvation. And so, in the face of opposition, so what will Peter write about in this letter? He's going to be writing about opposition and temptation and false teaching and persecution and all of these things.

But he's informing the believers at the very beginning of the letter, you have everything that you need for life and godliness. I will see you through, and you can become more and more like Christ. All things are included. So if you're taking notes today, there's going to be three points to this sermon. Those three points, we're going to begin with this first one, is this.

[4:41] We're going to see that all power for Christlikeness, all power to be like Christ, is one of them. So let all power to be like Christ. I find it interesting, there are verses and passages in God's word that tell us what God is thinking about before creation.

And for those of you who have been around for a while, I'm sparing you the box, the box of creation. But if you will, in a moment in time, God created all things, but God exists outside of time and space.

And so he existed prior to creation. But what is on God's mind prior to creation? Prior, what is God doing? All there is at this point is just God.

One God in three persons. There he is. What's on his mind? There are certain verses in scripture that tell us what's on God's mind prior to creation. I want to begin with one of them.

Romans 8, 29 reads this. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

[6:00] Now let's read this a little slower here. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined. So prior to creation, God is out here, and he is looking into the future.

He says, for those whom he foreknew, he predestined them. But to what end did he foreknow them and predestine them to? It says, to be conformed to the image of his son. So here, prior to creation, he had those who had come to Christ on his mind, and he says, already, before anything is created, he says, on his mind, he says, I foreknow them, I've predestined them that they may be conformed to the image of my son.

Already. God exists, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. There he is. And the Father is saying, I want them to be like my son. And that is on the heart of God prior to creation.

It's an unfathomable thing. And how do I know that? We read in Ephesians 1, 4, that he's chosen us before the foundation of the world, chosen us before the foundation of the world, those who would come to know him. So God's greatest delight is to mark out for himself a people who would resemble him well.

to be relational, moral, social, holy agents who would demonstrate what Christ is like, that we would represent the divine.

[7:34] That's what was on his heart prior to time. But what about in time? Then God creates. And we read in Genesis 1, and God created man in his own image, and he created them male and female.

God creates us in his own image. What does it mean to image God, to represent him, to demonstrate what God is like?

So in time, God creates, and he says, I want them to be created in my image, that they would bear his image. And then, but we know that mankind sinned, and that image bearing was a little bit marred.

The ability to image bear was marred. And so the rest of history, if you will, is to redeem mankind to such a place where they could image him well, represent him as what he had on his mind from the beginning of time, prior to time, that is.

And that is why Peter says, Christ has given us all things that we need that pertain to life and godliness. When you and I get saved, we have everything on board already to represent him well, to bring about, granted to us, has been granted to us to bring out everything for life and godliness, to be like him, to be holy, moral, social agents.

[9:13] Hmm. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. That's just another way of describing this image bearing of God.

In South Dakota, I have not yet been there, Mount Rushmore, you see four presidents etched into the rock. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln.

That rock bears the image and the likeness and the representation of these four presidents. We get to be living representations of God, who bear his likeness, who bear his image.

And it says that we have this privilege to do so and he's bringing about all these things to bring about life and godliness.

Let's first talk about what is this life. Much can be said, but here, it is just the true life, the life that God has for the believers for which he has created them and godliness.

[10:13] It refers to the practical conduct in addition to the devotional service. So, God wants to bring about this practical conduct that is like him and godliness and all that you need is on board already with you.

Jesus has provided Christians everything they need to flesh out in our lives every day so that we reflect his image and his likeness. We are his representatives.

He made it possible for us to grow and mature for that life that which we were created for. And you say, well, Scott, how is that possible?

I'm glad you asked. The beginning of the verse tells us the resource that we needed in order to have a life and godliness. It says this at the beginning of verse 3, the resource that we need is his divine power brought that about.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. It is his divine power that makes that possible. That is the resource that's required and needed and on board.

[11:26] Whatever spiritual sufficiency, whatever spiritual enablement we need is not because of any of our own doing. We don't have it. It's God's power in Christ that we are talking about.

This word for power is the word that we get, the word dynamite, but I think that's not a helpful word, dynamite, to describe this power. Indeed, dynamite is powerful and that's why we share the root of that.

But what is dynamite? It's a loud explosion. What is the result of dynamite exploding? It's a loud explosion. It wreaks havoc to everything around. When the dust settles, you pick up the pieces. I think a better way of thinking of this, this divine power is more like gasoline.

It's this substance that we use that is dependable, it's ongoing, and it will get you from A to B.

Except this illustration breaks down because many of us have ran out of gas from time to time.

And so this is, that's where this illustration falls down. This divine power never runs out. And you say, well, how do you know that, Scott? Well, it's because of the word granted. This divine power, and it's God's power, has granted.

[12:41] Well, you say, well, Scott, that's, that is, that's a past tense word. So it must have ran out because it's granted in the past. But it's, it's a past, this verb tense that's in there that to describe this word granted indicates this.

It's a past action with a continuing effect. So yes, God's divine power is the resource that one needs that has been granted when we got saved but is continuing in its effect every day of your life to bring about life and godliness.

That is too wonderful. And you think, well, oh, I don't know, Scott. Help me appreciate this divine power. I'm glad you asked.

Verse 16 says this, Romans 1 verse 16. Paul describes salvation. And he says this, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it, the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Did you catch that? that the good news of Jesus Christ is God's divine power to bring about one's salvation. When you and I came to faith in Christ, you were radically saved.

[14:08] This is why you have an incredible testimony. You say, but Scott, I came to faith in Christ when I was a young child. Well, you still have an amazing, radical testimony.

You say, well, I didn't, I didn't, I wasn't riddled with drugs and sin and immorality and then I came to met, and then I met the Lord. I don't have that kind of testimony. Oh, but you have a testimony of God's divine power.

You have an incredible testimony. And you, and here, because here's the truth and the reality of what God's word says about all of us pertaining to our life prior to Christ and then after Christ.

Here's what I mean. And I'll just use myself as an example. I was once a slave to sin, controlled and constrained to only no sin, but by the power of God, I am now alive unto him.

I was once walking in darkness, but by the power of God, now I walk in the spirit. I was once alienated from God without hope, estranged from him, but by the power of God, I have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ.

[15:14] I was once hostile toward God. In my mind, in my attitude, I was actively opposing God in rebellion against him, but by the power of God, because of the atonement, I now have peace with God.

I was once dead in my trespasses and sin, following the course of this world, but by the power of God and because of his great love toward me, I am now alive unto God. That is the testimony for all of us.

It is a radical testimony. It's amazing. And it's true of you who have come to faith in Christ. It's true of me. All of us have an amazing testimony because it's an amazing testimony of the power of God. I've asked Thomas to sing the song, Hallelujah, what a savior, to conclude the service today because I want us to understand it is because the divine power of God that any of us are saved.

And to be reminded of that and to close our service thinking, Oh Lord, your divine power that brought us to salvation because of the gospel of Jesus Christ is so good and thank you.

[16:27] At struggle, at times, I struggle to find words. And you all have the privilege of being blessed by that every week I preach. And I took comfort this week through the apostle Paul who is trying to describe God's divine power.

And I feel like this is not true, but I have in my mind's eye Paul trying to do his best to describe God's divine power.

And it's as if he's building a sentence as he goes and in every step he says, Well, no, no, that's not sufficient. Let me add this word. That's not sufficient. Let me keep going.

That's not quite adequate. And here's the verse. Now to him who is able to do, there's the first time you stop.

No, not quite sufficient. Now to him who is able to do far more. No, that's not sufficient. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly. Yep, well, that doesn't quite sufficiently capture it.

[17:34] Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all I ask. That's not quite. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than we ask or think.

There. That's close. That's getting it. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly all that we ask or think according to the power at work within us.

There. I hope you, that helps capture the power of God. Not only that brought you to Christ unto salvation in other places in scripture, it's the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is alive and active in each of us to bring about life and godliness.

Hallelujah. What a savior. This is why, and this is poor English, you can spare your email, this is why I'm a perpetual hopefulist, hopefulist.

Maybe the word will catch on. Who knows? When it comes to a believer's sanctification. Think about the application of this.

[19:06] We ought to be all perpetual hopefulists for those who are in Christ. For our own sanctification.

God, mighty power is at work in us to bring about life and godliness. And it is, he can do more than we can ask or think with regard to this mighty power that is in us to bring about this result, to bear his image well.

So, this is why I'm a perpetual hopefulist. A believer can overcome sin. A believer can overcome addiction. A believer, a believer's marriage doesn't have to be a loveless marriage.

It can be restored. A believer can overcome harsh and a critical spirit. A believer, if one has a profound self-orientation, can change to a God orientation.

A believer's acute sense of discouragement and hopelessness. Why am I here? I have no value on this earth. It can change. Because that divine power that is in each of us who have believed is bringing about life and godliness.

[20:30] I will never cease to be a perpetual hopefulist. All excuses for the other, for the believer, are rendered null and void as to why a believer is not growing or sanctified.

Now, let me be clear. We do have a responsibility in our sanctification and that is next week's sermon, so stay tuned. So, but a believer has everything one needs to be true to the calling to spiritual maturity and grow in Christ like this.

no exceptions, no excuses. In view of this reality, the Lord holds each of us responsible to obey the commands of scripture. There is no temptation of the flesh, no assault from Satan or his demonic hopes, hosts that can eclipse the strength of his divine power to overcome.

If a person is in Christ, God's divine power is at work in him to bring about life and godliness. Okay, that's my first point. The power to become like Christ.

But what do we, there is also a process, there is a process of becoming like Christ also articulated in these verses.

[21:55] The second half of verse three gets at the process. So, the second part of the verse reads this, verse three, through, it's three B, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and his excellence.

Peter makes the argument that growth and godliness comes by the way of the knowledge, through the knowledge of him. So, what is the process? Yes, you have this divine power that is active at work in you to bring about life and godliness through, it has a process, a means by which this occurs through the knowledge of him.

Now, Peter had a couple of words he could have chosen to use here. One word that in the Greek he could have used just means having good sense or understanding, a practical wisdom.

But that's not the word that Peter chose to use here, that through the knowledge of him, he used a different word for knowledge. And the word that he chose to use here means which is a full and intimate knowledge.

It's like the difference between, let's say, a wedding and a marriage. And a wedding is a one-time event that may be likened, oh, please work with me on this illustration because there's some things about it that I don't like either.

[23:23] So, but you could think of a wedding as justification. You just entered the relationship. But a marriage, though, gets to know someone. It's our life ambition to know our spouses intimately and fully.

And so that's what it's like with Christ. You're introduced to Christ on the day of salvation and now we are to have this full and intimate knowledge of the Lord. How do we do that? But first, before we get to the how we do that, I want to make sure it's clear that a believer's conformity to Christ comes about by the way of active participation and the pursuit of knowing the Lord more and more.

This is why it's so important for us to spend time in God's word. This is a beautiful gift that we have. What's incredible to think is to be reminded that not all peoples have a Bible in their language.

And many American households have multiple copies that just sit on a shelf. I pray that not be true in our homes. But this is God's self-revelation to say, you want to know me fully and intimately?

This is who I am. This is my gift to you. This is my self-revelation to you. Please, know me. So how is it?

[24:53] And if we, if this is the process that the Lord has laid out for us, we have this divine power already on board and we're to, the process to become like Christ is through the knowledge of him, well then, we ought to spend time knowing him.

This is why I encourage all of us, I know I say this a little tongue-in-cheek, but there's actually a lot of sincerity here, but I desire for all of us to participate in the nine o'clock hour to study God's word together, learn how to do that in our nine o'clock hour.

I encourage all of us to be there. But more than that, also, I encourage you to spend time in God's word, have a reading plan, have a study plan. I'll give you an example.

Pastor Jay, he's reading through the Bible and he listens for, he has a chunk of the Bible that he listens to on his commute into town.

That's not the only way and only time that Pastor Jay spends time in God's word, but he just listens to God's word on his commute into town on an audio Bible. But that's one way of many that we're just seeking to saturate our minds in God's word.

[26:05] Many of you also study God's word in the early morning. Please do that. The desire is to have an intimate and full knowledge of God. We also have the beautiful gift of prayer to talk to the living God.

And God has also given us community of faith to help us understand who God is. Many believers limit their knowledge of God to their conversion.

We say words like this, well, I came to know Christ when I was and we mentioned the time and season of our salvation or I have believed in Christ, our frequent confessions that we make.

But knowing God is actually a lifetime pursuit. You're never done. this lifetime pursuit is the avenue through which God's children access the powerful resources he has provided to make them look more and more like Christ.

so what is what is my encouragement in terms of application?

[27:18] I just want to encourage you to know the Lord. Pursue ways to know the Lord through his word. The primary three buckets that I want to encourage you is his word, his prayer, getting the privilege to pray to God, and then community, helping you understand things in community.

Things, understanding God's word in community. Okay. We come to our third point. We have the power to become like Christ.

We have the process of becoming like Christ. And then we have the promise of becoming like Christ found in verse four. Before I read verse four, this speaks to a time that occurs in the eternal state when Christ returns.

Because we read it and this is what we hear. So let's read, I'm going to read verse three and then four. By his divine power is 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.

And so here's verse four. This is the promise that one day we will be like Christ. Because look at verse four. By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may be partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption of this world because of sinful desire.

[28:53] Let me just spend a little time and we'll close here. Notice in this verse I want to caution us in how we interpret and read the phrase so that through them you may be partakers of the divine nature.

This is not talking about Peter is not suggesting that we actually become gods like the Mormon religion does. Nor is Peter suggesting that we will be someday absorbed into deity. That's not what Peter is communicating. Remember what is the overarching theme of what Peter's is on Peter's mind is that we will become like Christ and in his moral and perfect attributes. So what Peter is saying is that morally we will be one day morally perfected by sharing in God's moral excellence in the eternal state.

And so that's what he is talking about so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature. You'll be morally excellent excellent just as he is. The very thing that we lost in the garden will one day be reclaimed.

[30:03] He's speaking of a union with Christ that begins a conversion and continues to this day and will conclude at his return. I appreciate John in the book of 1 John.

He says it this way in verse 2 and 3. Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we will see him as he is and everyone who has this hope purifies himself as he is pure.

We have not yet become what we will one day be and we will be perfectly more like him. So, what I appreciate is this.

We have walked in this passage in becoming like Christ. We see the power to become like Christ in his divine power. That is a gift that is perpetually with us all the time.

We see the process of becoming like Christ through knowing him and we see the promise of becoming like Christ at his return. I am sure many of you have had a similar instance of what I am about to describe.

[31:22] Imagine it being Christmas morning and you have got your child a gift that requires batteries and the child is eager to open this gift on Christmas morning.

They are ripping it open and it is the gift that they have longed and waited for. And the problem is mom and dad glance at each other their eyes and they whisper and mouth did you get the batteries?

And the spouse says and shakes their head no. And in that moment all of the joy empties the room. It is gone. We are in tears. There is there is sorrow that is almost inexplainable in that moment. that never happens with your heavenly father. He adopts us into his family and it is as if the batteries are included.

[32:28] He has provided everything that you need to experience this life and true life. We have everything we need to live lives in a way that reflect his character on the road of sanctification.

and to arrive safely at glorification where we will look fully like his son Christ which is the very thing he had on his mind before all of creation.

It is too wonderful. And he has provided everything we need to know about him through his son Christ. No doubt Peter's readers had an intimate knowledge of God in Christ.

And I'm grateful for this letter. All that to say that kind of Christmas morning where there are no batteries will never occur.

That's not true of you as a believer in Christ. You have everything you need because of his divine power given for life and godliness and that ought to be of encouragement to all of us.

[33:37] Let's pray. Father you are too too good to us. We thank you that you have provided all things that pertain to life and godliness.

We thank you for your divine power. We thank you for the process through an intimate knowledge of you. May we be a people who spend time with you and desire Lord I want to know you more. I want to increase in godliness. I want to bear your image well. May you Lord be pleased in our pursuit of you.

We thank you for Peter. We thank you for the burden of his heart toward the end of his life. So as we sing hallelujah what a savior Lord.

Lord I pray that as we sing of the very thing that is because of your divine power brought us to you. We would be reminded that same power is at work in each of us.

[34:40] Thank you Lord to bring about life and godliness. We want to know you more. Amen.