

We Have It All!

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn together now to 2nd Peter, with the Lord's help, looking at verses 3 and 4 this evening. 2nd Peter, chapter 1, verses 3 and 4. We'll read from the beginning just to get the run of these opening verses of the letter.

2nd Peter, verses 3 and 5.

3rd Peter, verses 3 and 4.

Now it's important always to try and take note of the way in which verses are connected together, because not only are the different points that are raised by the apostles and other parts of scripture important, but it's the way that the Lord has brought these together and the connections between the various points are important as well.

So here in the opening we saw last time how Peter having greeted those he's writing to and described them as those who had obtained an equal standing with themselves, with the apostles in faith through the righteousness or by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, which we saw as a title really for Jesus Christ himself as divine along with God the Father.

[1 : 5 6] And then verse 2, where he's praying that grace and peace, these two great properties of our salvation, as they come from God, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

And following on from that then there's the connection with verse 3 and 4 is that as you think of grace and peace being multiplied to us, which is what Peter is praying for in verse 2, the grace of God continuing to bless us, the peace that Christ has purchased continuing to be enjoyed and experienced by us.

How is that going to come about? And what is the connection between that prayer and the standing that we already have and the way that things will continue to work out in the lives of Christians?

And what are Christians anyway? If we have an equal standing with the apostles, which is what he said here, what does that effectively mean for us in our own lives as we continue to live as Christians?

Well, verses 3 and 4 are actually a very powerful summary, but a very comprehensive one, of what it means to be a Christian and how you've come to be a Christian.

[3 : 1 7] And as we said last time, the second epistle of Peter is perhaps somewhat neglected more than it should be because it's not very long and the second chapter is very difficult and the third chapter too is not necessarily easy.

But it's a tremendous loss if we were to really ignore or pass over this little epistle very quickly because here, for example, is this tremendous definition of a Christian and how a Christian has come to be a Christian and what that means effectively for a person who is a Christian.

Because what it tells us here really is, first of all, that God has given us resources that not only are adequate but actually replete or full for all that we need to be godly and living as compared to death, what we were before.

What we're really saying is his divine power, in other words, the grace and peace that is to be multiplied, this is in accordance with what we are, and then verses 5 and 6, what we are required to do.

In other words, you've got very often what you find in the Bible. We're brought back when we face our problems, when we have concerns, when we have anxieties, when we're not sure of things, when there are things happening in our lives that we don't really know just quite why they're happening or how to handle them.

[4 : 44] God is always calling us back to this, first of all, what we are in Christ, what he has already made us to be. And that's really put in terms of what he has given us, what he has gifted us, what he has granted us, what he has made us to be by his grant.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain or are connected with life and godliness. Now, theology is very often, or Christian spirituality, if you like, as you follow out the teaching of Scripture, it's very often, as older theologians used to put it, in terms of the prepositions.

The little words that connect the phrases that you find in these sentences. Words like to, or in, or unto, or so that. And if you follow that out in this passage, you'll find that it's according as 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, you see, the logical argument, one step follows another, through these little words, but they carry you in this tremendous argument, the power of these words, so that by the time you're finished, you're saying, or should be saying, what an incomparable thing it is to be a Christian.

What an incomparable person a Christian is, compared to anyone else in the world. There is just simply nothing like what a Christian is, as the Christian has come to be what he or she is, by the power of God, through the knowledge of God or of Christ.

And that's so that we may become partakers of his divine nature. That's an outline, how the run of these words is, how the flow of one phrase leads into another, and how it all connects up, so that you can see all together there, such a brilliant summary of what a Christian really is and is about.

[7 : 00] Well, the resources, first of all, that God has given to his people. Now, as we've seen, there's a number of things bound up closely together, but look, first of all, what it says here. He has given us or granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

You could spend a long time even on that little phrase itself. All things that pertain to life and godliness, he has given us. Life, obviously, is the opposite of death.

That's what we were. That's where we were when God's grace actually came to bring us to life. We were dead in trespasses and sins. And what he has given us is the opposite of that.

And he has given us all things that pertain to life. Life in Christ. Life in terms of eternal life. Beginning in this world, finishing in heaven, climaxing in heaven, and godliness.

Compared to the ungodliness. Compared to the worldliness. The sinful lifestyle, which is mentioned as we'll see in verse 4 there, so that we can just remind ourselves of the power of God and what it has done.

[8 : 09] It has just brought us from ungodliness and death into life and godliness. From one thing to its very opposite.

And that's how we come to be what we are as Christians. The whole point is that the Christian life is really at the same time being unlike something and yet being like something else.

Being unlike what we were to begin with. Being unlike a sinful lifestyle. Being unlike the world. Being unlike ungodliness. Ungodliness. Being unlike all the things that hate God, that hate the Bible.

Being unlike. And at the same time, being like God himself. As we'll see when we come to that great phase, partakers of the divine nature, that's essentially what the apostle means.

When God takes us out of where he finds us, when he actually rips us out by his grace of our worldliness and of our attachment to the world and of our deadness and trespasses and sins, he brings us into an opposite state.

[9 : 27] And in an opposite state, he brings us into this life of godliness. And he's given us all things that pertain to that.

That's very important that we notice these words. He has granted to us all things. Sometimes you'll say to yourself, I don't feel very godly today.

You'll say to yourself, well, I know I haven't lived up to my responsibilities today. I know I have to go and confess to God how far short I've come of what he expects of me, of what he demands of me, what I should be in the presence of other people, of the world, all the things that I ought to be and ought to do.

I know, Lord, I haven't done this. I haven't reached up to the mark. I've come very far short. But you can never turn around and say, it's because God hasn't given you something that you ought to have.

He has given us all things that are connected with life and godliness. Can you think tonight of any one element, any one thing that you need in order to live a godly life that God has not given you?

[10 : 42] No. So that you always come back to this. The tremendous gift that he's already given us when he has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness.

Every single thing you need comes in the package of this grace and peace, of this grace and peace that is in Christ, of this salvation. It actually contains, as you receive life, as you receive the Holy Spirit, as all of these things are granted to us in Christ.

It's all there. We have it all. That doesn't mean we're perfect. But it does mean that as we look forward to growing in grace and to growing in holiness and to becoming more and more like our God, which is what we desire, we are always thankful that we can say to God, Lord, I thank you that I have the Holy Spirit, that I have your power working within me, that I have all things that I need.

You have given me the resources, all the resources that I need. You know how frustrating it is when you order something, it comes in a flat pack.

You know what I'm going to say? You start putting it together and somewhere along the line, very often it's when you're nearly finished it, then you come across that although it says in the advert before you sent it, contains all the screws and all the bolts and all the things you need to put it together successfully, inevitably, or almost always, there's something missing.

[12 : 26] Sometimes it's a pretty vital bolt or screw. And then you've got to look in your garage and if you can't look in your garage, you've got to go in town and buy one for yourself. It's not doing what it says.

It doesn't give you all things. It's a human product. Therefore, it's subject to failure. God has given us all things, all the nuts and bolts, all the connections, all the elements that we need for life and godliness.

They have come to us. They are ours. He has given to them. He has given them to us. And we have no excuse if we fall short. We can only just hold up our hands and confess, Lord, it's my fault.

It's not yours. I have not used the all things that you have given me the way I should. I still have sin working within me. Please forgive me.

Help me to be more perfect. But there it is. That's such a tremendously comforting thing. You don't have to go out and earn something that God hasn't given you.

[13 : 31] You don't have to take certain steps like charismatics will teach you in order to get into the fullness of the Holy Spirit. You already have that Holy Spirit. You have all things that you need for life and godliness.

and we need to apply daily to God by prayer for the power of these all things to be at work for the grace that we need to use them properly as God has given them to us already.

And he has given them to us by his divine power. His divine power has granted this to us. His divine power. God's divine power. You don't leave Jesus out of it but Peter is not here making a very clear distinction between the contribution of God and the contribution of Jesus.

He's combining them both I think very deliberately so that we can say that Jesus is as much a party to the giving of all things to us as God the Father is.

And he's here saying it's his divine power. And even if you think that that's Christ specifically that's mentioned well it doesn't really matter it is God in any case. It's his divine power that has granted us all of these things.

[14 : 47] You haven't achieved what you've got. You haven't achieved all things the resources that you carry in your life spiritually. You haven't deserved them. You haven't done something in order to earn them.

They're the grant of grace but the grace that's granted it to you has worked by divine power. How could any other power actually take us out from the power of sin and put us in a place where you now want the opposite of that to be true in your life.

How could any other power actually bring us to life. You need to be born again the Bible says. Jesus as he said to Nicodemus you must be born again and accept a man be born again.

He cannot enter the kingdom of God. How are we going to be born again? You have no more capacity to give birth to yourself spiritually than you had in the first place to give birth to yourself naturally.

You didn't give birth to yourself. Your mother did. She brought you into the world. What he's telling us is such is our condition.

[16 : 00] As sinners such is our lostness and our deadness and trespasses and such is the power of sin such is the grip of the evil one. But it takes divine power to take us out of that and into life.

We saw going through Luke's gospel how frequently Luke took note of the power of Jesus at work in things like casting out demons demonstrated that he had come to actually vanquish and overcome and tie up this evil power that held people under its power and under its influence.

How is it broken? It's broken by divine power. And where is that divine power made manifest to us? Where is it seen particularly in Christ and what God has done in Christ?

You see it's through the knowledge of him who has called us to his own glory and excellence. That's the next thing. And when Peter uses this word knowledge he doesn't use it this particular word that's used here it's not for a general sort of knowledge not even for a general knowledge of God on our part.

It's a much more specific thing and it really it's such a specific word for knowledge that it really is impossible to leave out of it the personal aspect of coming to know God for yourself.

[17 : 26] That's the whole point of the gospel really isn't it? Why do we preach the gospel? Why do we pray for people who come under the gospel? What is it we're praying for?

Yes we're praying for their conversion we've been looking at some instances of that for a few Sabbath mornings. We're praying for their conversion what does that mean? Well among other things it means as we've seen it means as we saw with Samuel last time coming to know God.

Samuel did not yet know the Lord until God himself spoke to him revealed himself to him brought him into that knowledge personally of himself by which he established him as his prophet and that's our great problem.

That's the great problem of the world and its worldliness and its lostness in its opposition to the gospel that we don't know God and we don't want to know God and if you look at people's statements with regard to our views of such things as same-sex marriage and these kind of issues that are so current today I'm not just raising that just to make a point of that on its own it's just something that's very current as you very know right now it's all over the news and has been for some time.

Why is it that people don't accept the biblical view of such things? Because they do not want to know God that's the bottom line it's not a matter of relationships one person to another it's not a matter of what people think of human life and what it ought to be it's all about what do they think of God?

[19 : 19] Where does God fit into the picture? And the one thing that an unregenerated human life a sinful human life does not want to be is subject to God having their will taken over by the will of God you don't come to want that and to actually have that as a reality in your life until divine power has renewed your will and brought you into the knowledge of Christ to know God so you see there's the run of the argument again is divine power has given us all these things we need for life and godliness and has come to us through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence which again is really a big phrase but it really simply means if you can say simply that God has called us when he comes to change our lives it's a calling it's an effective way of taking us and giving us the grace to respond to his call so that we come into a new relationship with God and we come to the kind of relationship where he has called us to his own glory and excellence and to fellowship with him we are friends with the glorious

God we have a connection a living connection with the excellencies of God with God in his excellency with God in his majesty with God in his holiness we have a living connection with that God we have come to actually be called to his own glory and excellence which will take us as we will see in a minute also into his likeness to be like him to be a reflection of the glory and the excellence that belongs to our God by which he then goes on to say he has granted to us same words again used by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises what does that mean well again you follow the thread of the argument and from the power of God that has granted us all these things we need for life and godliness and the way that's come through the knowledge of him the one who's called us to his glory and excellence all of that has led to granting us these precious and very great promises and that really goes back to the Old Testament

Peter loves to quote from the Old Testament or to bring up Old Testament sayings and bring them up to weave them into what now is the case having Christ come and Christ dying and Christ being raised from the dead well go back to the Old Testament go back to the passage that we read in Ezekiel that's just one example of many many passages in the Old Testament that speak about promises promises God saying to his people I will do this I am the Lord I have spoken I will do it what did he talk about what does it mean in the Old Testament what do you come across when you come across these promises well Ezekiel 36 really is one of the great passages that deals with that I will bring you out of all the lands where you've been scattered God is going to gather God's going to bring together one people and I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean pardon forgiveness cleansing the work of the Holy Spirit and our sanctification and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes obedience through the effective work of the Holy Spirit taking over if you like our lives granting to us a new perspective on life looking at

God's commandments even in a new way compared to the old they're no longer tedious they're no longer something you push aside you don't want anything to do with your desire is now to live in accordance with them not to try and earn righteousness for you you've already got that in Christ but the pattern of godliness that you require to live is still found in the commands of God in the law of God and you go to that to find an expression in it of the will of God so the promises you could say are all the promises of the old testament including the coming of the saviour the things the saviour would do the kind of life that that would issue in for God's people you put all of that together these are the promises and what's he saying he's given them to us he has granted to us his precious and very great promises all these of the old testament apart from those that still remain to be fulfilled and remember promises strictly speaking are things which were then in the future when the promise was given it had not yet come to be a reality the coming of a saviour when you read

Isaiah well that had not yet taken place it was hundreds of years before Christ came into the world was born into the world promises refer to things what God will do in the future and so the promises that have already been fulfilled they have been fulfilled so as they've become ours but the promises for the future are ours as well Peter Peter Peter Peter can't think of the promises of God without using this description they are very great and precious promises they're not ordinary promises they're not the promises of a human being they're not promises for something temporal only although that might be included they're primarily promises that are filled with spiritual life and every time we think of the promises of

[26 : 28] God the promises fulfilled in Christ the promises towards things yet to be fulfilled they should always be in our mind thought of and accompanied by the idea in our mind that these things are absolutely precious and they are great they have an enormity about them they have a quality and a size and a depth and a weight about them that makes them very great and precious and every time you come across a promise of God a promise that he's fulfilled already or a promise that's still waiting to be fulfilled always try and think of it with the kind of mindset that Peter has here this is really something very very significantly great and precious to me it is

God's assurance towards me as a Christian God's establishment of truth certainly for me and not only that but he has given us he has granted us he began now he says by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises he has granted it's a tense in the Greek text of the New Testament and these are very precious things when you study the New Testament and you realize how rich the language is in which the New Testament was written one of the great advantages of having had some training in that as ministers is that it really puts across to us just the richness of language with which God speaks to us in the scriptures and the tense here is called a perfect tense and it means that something has already taken place but continues in force in other words he has granted us this but the grant continues in force it continues to be relevant it continues to be enjoyed he has granted it and it continues to be ours he has granted us great and precious promises they remain and will remain in our possession the resources that

God has given us when you think about what a Christian is and how a Christian has come to be a Christian you have to conclude from this passage that a Christian is fully equipped they have all the resources they need for the life God requires they have that already they don't wait till they get to heaven to get the remainder that's the perfection of the life they already have and the resources that God has given are already complete though the work of sanctification and things like that is still incomplete but why has God given us what's the reason why we were given these resources let me just try and finish that quickly what is the reason why he has given us well he says then the second part of verse 4 so that you see there's the purpose of reason so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption that's in the world now that's a great phrase that you may become partakers of the divine nature it's a phrase which slightly if not more so troubles people by thinking well how can

I be a partaker of the divine nature when I think about God and what God is how can I be a partaker of what God is well is it doesn't say that you partake of the being of God even in our highest state of glory we will not be divine we will not have the attributes of God himself we will not have things the things that make God God what this means basically on simplest level is to be a partaker of the divine nature means that you come to bear a likeness of God character the character of God as he's revealed himself to us is that he's holy that he's pure that he hates sin that he's love all of that works itself through into what a

Christian is and is to be they are to love one another they are to love God they are to love their enemies they are to be partakers of the divine nature in the sense in which more and more they seek to become like God and God is committed to making them like himself ultimately to be in the image of his son in perfection in glory they are partakers of the divine nature already he's saying through all that God has done he has already placed you with all of these resources in a position where you have become partakers of the divine nature you are reflecting something of the character of God and when you say to yourself well I honestly don't feel very much like God at all I don't see that I'm anything like holy as I would like to be therefore how can I be like God well ask yourself what do you like sin do you delight in sin do you want to continue to hold on to sin no you want to get rid of sin you want to fight sin you want to put sin beneath your feet that's just one example well that shows you that you're like

[32 : 31] God because that's how God views sin and when you think of partakers of the divine nature it really means effectively that you see things as God sees them that your will is already attuned to the will of God towards such things as sin and the world and eternity and the scriptures and God himself in other words you are already like God in your outlook in the way you see things not in the degree to which you already obtained holiness or perfection in any of these things but in the way that God has brought you to see things from his point of view to be a reflection of his character to become a partaker of the divine nature what a privilege that is and he goes on to finish having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire or through lust in other words that's what you're called out from you have escaped you've been taken out you've been rescued from the corruption that is in the world that's alongside of partakers of the divine nature because this is the opposite of being a partaker of the divine nature if you were still back in the world and the way you always were in the world if you still looked at things the way the world continues to look at things you'd be the opposite to be a partaker of the divine nature that's the whole point of the verse you're no longer the way you used to be you're now a partaker of the divine nature you see things as

God sees them your desires are themselves a reflection of the way God views things like sin and holiness and lust you've escaped from that it is what he means you've been rescued from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire because of lust and really just as he's in one sense saying this is what a Christian is like he's just reminding us well this is what the world is like this is what characterizes a Christian that are partaker of the divine nature this is what characterizes the world it is corrupt through lust it's corrupt through sinful desire the problem with people including ourselves by nature is not what's around us it's not the conditions we live in it's not the economic climate it's not how much or little we have of worldly goods it's not employment or unemployment it's none of the things that are around us it's what in us it's lust it's sinful desire it's the drive of the fallen human heart that's what makes the world what it is that's why the

Christian has been taken out of that and has become its opposite you've escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust through sinful desire and all you've got to do is just look around you and you can see the characteristics of the world of course you can look at it in terms of what you once were yourself but just look at society the way it is and what marks our degenerate society by large well it's lust isn't it it's desire it's sinful desire there's so many places where you see it so many ways by which you see it we're not going to go into much of it that's so distasteful but when you look at many tabloid newspapers what are the main bits of news they're not really news at all they're just bits and pieces of human lust corruption why do you find so many soap operas focusing on the world as it is instead of the world as it should be instead of people's lives as they should be because people like that because people really are taken up with it's the desire of the human heart to be fed more of that stuff more of the corruption more of the lust more of the sexual immorality more of the promiscuity why do you find so much in current days to do with child abuse and sexual abuse and the church has not escaped from it but what is the reason for all of that where's the root of all of that it's not in conditions around us it's in here it's the human heart it's the lust the sinful desire that belongs to every fallen human being and it's from that that God has taken us and that really tells us something very important as God has pulled us out of that and as you look at this passage in 2 Peter you can see that Peter's concern is not primarily with what the world is like yes he's calling attention to that when he's saying you've been taken out of the corruption that's in the world through lust but his concern is not what's the world like what's our society like his concern is what is the church like what are the people of God like what is my Christian life like that's the big question that's the big issue for Peter and it should be for us as well that doesn't mean we neglect evangelism of course

I'm not suggesting for a moment we don't think of the conditions that are in the world or what the world is like but it's not our primary concern the world is always going to be the world until by God's grace it gets changed but you and I have to be God's people in it and fit the definitions that God gives of a Christian life his divine power has given us all things we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who has called us unto his glory and excellency so that so that so that you would become partakers of the divine nature having been rescued from the corruption that's in the world through lust and that should be our concern as I'm sure it is that we are the kind of people that God desires us to be a people rescued and then the world will take note because if we're like the world it won't bother with us won't even notice that we're there that's one of the big mistakes of the modern church that thinks you can influence the world and get them attentive and get them to like the gospel and bring them to the gospel and really make inroads you'll never do it the world will remain the world until it's converted and the most effective way of being

God's people in the world is to be as unlike the world as you can possibly be let's pray Lord we thank you for the amazingly rich resources that you have given to us and the assurance in your word that you have indeed given us all of these things we thank you tonight for the comfort it brings us when we realize Lord our own weakness and our own failure our proneness to constantly be unlike what we should be we ask as we seek forgiveness for our shortcomings that you would continue Lord to remind us not only of what we should be but also of what we already are what you have made us to be what your grace has achieved what you have made us as partakers of the divine nature grant Lord that we may be filled with a sense of continuing gratitude and aspiration as we would seek more and more to be like you hear us now we pray for Jesus sake

[41 : 22] Amen Amen Thank you