WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED

2 Peter 1:1-11

The Second letter of Peter... The Apostle Peter claims to be the writer in the first verse. That said, many scholars have debated whether this letter was really his. Early on it was thought to be a forgery. It DOES differ from First Peter in its structure of the Greek language. Also, the subject matter is different. I’m not going to take up our time explaining why Second Peter eventually became accepted as Peter’s writing. I have passed out an article which does a pretty good job explaining the history of the debate over Second Peter’s authenticity and why it was included into the biblical canon. It’s all very interesting and if you want you can read about that on your own. Our focus this morning will be on the Word of God itself and what this letter of Peter has to say to us as believers in Jesus Christ.

As Peter writes this letter, he is aware that his own death is imminent (1:13-14). He is writing from prison in Rome where he would soon be martyred. This places the writing of Second Peter around 67 A.D., shortly before Peter’s death. We’re not 100% certain who the recipients of this letter were. Based on 2 Peter 3:1 (“This is now the second letter that I am writing to you…”), most scholars believe that it is the same group as in First Peter. However, it is possible that Peter was referring to some other letter he wrote other than First Peter (a letter not preserved). The bottom line is that we don’t know for sure who his original audience was. One thing that IS clear, based on the content of this letter, is that false teachings about Jesus Christ and His return and about Christian behavior and our spiritual condition were prevalent. So, in this letter Peter is going to address these issues. In doing so he offers us guidance and foundation for Christian growth. And given that we live in a day and age where there are so many false teachings about Jesus, this message is certainly one we need to pay attention to.

READ 2 Peter 1:1-2

Point out that “Simeon Peter” is the same person as “Simon Peter.”

Our quarterly must have viewed these two verses as merely an introduction by Peter and not all that relevant, but I take a different view.

 V1 Peter identifies himself as a “servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.” First he is a servant of Jesus Christ. The word here is actually “slave.” Peter says that he is a slave of Jesus Christ; a humble servant bound by duty to do whatever his master, Jesus Christ, tells him, no matter what the cost. And it would cost Peter his life. Second he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. This is the way he described himself in 1 Peter 1:1. He introduces himself as one who has apostolic authority.

We received “a faith equal with [that of the apostles] by the righteousness… of Jesus Christ.” This is talking about our salvation. Peter is addressing Christians. How did we obtain our salvation? “For by grace you have been saved thru faith…” (Eph 2:8) Salvation is a gift of God. Not by our own merit or good works, but thru our faith in Jesus Christ.

One thing I need to point out is that phrase (v 2) “May grace and peace be multiplied to you…” It ties Second Peter to First Peter. Here and then back in 1 Peter 1:2 are the only 2 places in the Bible where this phrase is used. This unique language is a good indicator that Peter wrote this letter. Peter says that grace and peace are multiplied to us based on our knowledge of God (God the Father) and of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.

(V 2) “In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” Remember, Peter is addressing the problem of false teachers. So then, possessing the true knowledge of God and of Christ is fundamentally important. If you have truth, know truth, then any false teaching that pops up can be easily recognized.

Unfortunately we live in a day (not unlike Peter’s day in this regard) where knowledge of God and absolute truth are downplayed. In fact there are those voices out there who will claim there is no such thing as absolute truth. Most people are motivated by their own personal desires, their own experiences, emotions, feelings, personal intuition, and so forth. Things I hear all the time from people who argue against what the Bible says go something like this: “I just can’t believe in a God who would \_\_\_” Or this: “I just don’t understand how God could \_\_\_” Or this: “I don’t think \_\_” or “Well, I think \_\_\_.” The promotion of the gay agenda, the demand for personal rights, a woman’s right to choose, “if it feels good do it,” “all you need is love,” being politically correct, and all that sort of stuff are all dismissive of what the Bible says – clearly they would not have their viewpoint if they fundamentally believed the Bible. They have elevated their own thinking above all else. Jeremiah 17:9 warns that: “The heart is deceitful above all things…” By the way, elevating one’s own thinking above what God says is exactly what Adam and Eve did in the Garden, wasn’t it? “Who cares what God says or what the Bible says; **I** want this or **I** think this…” Peter says that if we are going to have the grace of God lavished on us; if we are going to experience true peace that only God gives, then we must possess HIS knowledge. NOT our own knowledge or opinions, but His. And where is it that we go to get the full knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ? To God’s Word. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing thru the word of Christ.” Jesus told His disciples in John 6:63, “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” We must start with Scripture, then the Holy Spirit helps us to interpret it and develop our theology. And by that we evaluate our life and our experiences. Not the other way around! READ 2 Peter 1:2 again. Later in this letter Peter will tell us (3:18) “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” This is foundational for believers!

READ 2 Peter 1:3-4

God has given us all that we need for life (eternal security, eternal life, salvation) and for godliness (reverence and obedience to God, living a life pleasing to God). Are we sufficient in Jesus Christ? Peter seems to think so. By the way, so does Paul. Listen to the following scriptures: 2 Cor 9:8 “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work”; Eph 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”; Phil 4:19 “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” We have everything we need for life, for salvation, and for godly living.

OK, what specifically has God given us? Peter mentions 4 things in these verses. V 3 First, His divine power. “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). V 3 Second, the knowledge of Him. We just talked about that – the true knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Peter says that we were called to Him (we were saved) by His glory (we saw Him as God) and excellence (we saw Him as perfect man). He is the God-man. What drew us to God? The glory and excellence of Jesus Christ! V 4 Third, His promises. He has granted them to us and the tense of the verb used indicates they are granted to us generously and continuously. What promises? All of them. What’s He promised us? Where do we begin? Read His word! He promises us life. He promises us all blessings in the heavenlies. He promises us abundant grace upon grace. He promises us joy. He promises us strength. He promises that He will never leave us or forsake us. He promises us guidance. He promises us help. He promises instruction. He promises wisdom. He promised the Holy Spirit. He promises heaven. He promises eternal rewards. It’s all ours. V 4 Fourth, we become “partakers of the divine nature.” That word partakers is the Greek word *koinōnos* (KOY-no-noss). We often translate that word “fellowship.” It means “sharer” or “partner.” This isn’t something we receive later. We have it now. John 1:12 says that if we receive Him we “become children of God.” Romans 8:9 says, “the Spirit of God dwells in you.” If the Spirit dwells within you then you possess the divine nature. Right? Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” God lives in me. Really? 1 Cor 6:19 says, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?” Colossians 1:27 – “Christ in you…”

So we have everything we need for life and godliness. The last part of verse 4 says that we have escaped the corruption in the world. We escape the corruption of sin and all that is produced by it. How do we do that? 2 Cor 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation…” We have a new nature. We are no longer under the control of sin.

READ 2 Peter 1:5-8

“For this very reason…” Since God has given us everything necessary to be successful in our Christian growth and to be effective servants of Jesus Christ… Then use it, apply it to your life. “Make every effort…” God expects something of us. We have a responsibility. Now this has nothing to do with keeping or maintaining our salvation. Our salvation is secure. We’ve been sealed by Spirit until the day of redemption. Everything that needed to be done for our salvation was completed by Jesus Christ on the cross. “It is finished!” (V 5) Therefore, Christian brother or sister, “make every effort to supplement your faith.” You need to grow. You start out as a baby in Christ when you are saved and you are to grow to spiritual maturity. Peter lists several qualities that we, as believers, should possess if we are to grow in our faith and if we don’t have these then we need to pursue them. They’re a vital to our spiritual growth. Oh, yes, just for the record, these will require some effort, personal discipline and commitment on our part. Again, these are NOT necessary for our salvation, but rather, they are marks of a healthy, growing Christian. Peter gave a similar list in 1 Peter 3:8 and these qualities resemble the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5).

(V 5) “Virtue” is better translated as “moral excellence.” It is the exact same Greek word as “excellence” found at the end of v 3. We are to strive to have the moral excellence of Jesus.

(V 5) “Knowledge” is practical wisdom obtained by learning God’s truth in the Scriptures, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and then applying in the life decisions we make and attitudes we adopt.

(V 6) “Self-control” is mastering one’s emotions and passions.

(V 6) “Steadfastness” is perseverance or a patient endurance under adversity, not giving up or giving in. The idea is that of a marathon runner who runs the race that is set before him (Heb 12:1).

(V 6) “Godliness” is living reverently, loyally and obediently toward God. We should live for God, because we love Him, and not for ourselves.

(V 7) “Brotherly affection” (brotherly kindness) is linked to godliness. First John 4:20 says, “If anyone says ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother…cannot love God…”

(V 7) “Love” here refers to God’s kind of love. Peter told us back in 1 Peter 4:8 that “love covers a multitude of sins.” Love overlooks one’s faults, love forgives. Read 1 Cor 13: “Love is patient and kind…does not envy or boast…is not arrogant or rude…does not insist on its own way…is not irritable or resentful…rejoices with the truth…bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things…never ends.”

 V 8 “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing…” Remember he is talking to believers, but clearly having these qualities and growing to full maturity is a choice we make. If we choose to grow in Christ and to develop these qualities we will be effective servants for Christ and fruitful. But clearly we have a choice because then Peter gives us V 9…

READ 2 Peter 1:9-11

V 9 A Christian who is not growing, who is living a carnal life, for himself or herself has forgotten that they were saved. You’ve forgotten what God did for you. Not growing = no joy, no assurance, unfruitful.

V 10 Peter says, “therefore,” make the choice of verse 8, practice those qualities of verses 5-7. To “confirm your calling and election.” This has a lot to do with the joy and the assurance of your salvation. A stagnant, carnal, non-growing Christian will likely have doubts about whether they are saved or not. A growing, productive Christian knows they are saved. They have that assurance.

V 11 “For in this way,” the way of v 10, being “diligent” Peter is speaking about our entrance into Christ’s eternal kingdom when we die. One day we will stand before Jesus face to face. What greater words to hear when we meet our Lord than, “Well, done, My good and faithful servant.”