

## II PETER

Grace and Peace in Abundance

October 20, 2013

- I. His Divine power has granted us everything necessary for life and godliness
  - A. II Peter 1:1-4 . . . Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: [2] Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; [3] seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. [4] For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.
  - B. Pray
- II. Multiplied Grace and Peace
  - A. II Peter 1:2 . . . Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
    1. After making sure his readers know who was writing this letter, Peter expresses his desire that grace and peace would be multiplied to them. In other words, Peter wants grace and peace to be added to their lives in multiplied amounts, or in abundance. And he attaches this added grace and peace to their knowledge of God – thus making it clear that our knowledge of God and His son, Jesus Christ, has a direct affect on what (i.e., grace and peace) we receive from God.
    2. Now because Peter attaches the increase in grace and peace to our knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, it seems best to begin with the phrase “the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” to see how it is used in reference to the grace and peace he wants us to have in abundant measure.
  - B. The knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
    1. The first thing I want to say about this phrase is that the Christian’s knowledge of God is not merely to be head or book knowledge – though that kind of knowledge is important. The Christian’s knowledge of God is to include at least two important aspects of knowing God:
      - a. Our knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord is to be a life transforming knowledge. Any knowledge of God that does not

lead to repentance and salvation, or following being born again, that does not lead to an increase in godliness of life is of no more value than food that fills the stomach but provides no nourishment to the body.

- b. And our knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord is to include the kind of knowledge that only comes from being in personal and intimate fellowship with Him. This is important to God and for us. Let me explain:
  - (1) God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not just educating the world about Himself. He wants more than an educated following. He wants a meaningful, mutually satisfying, and intimate relationship with us – starting in this life and lasting throughout eternity.
  - (2) But there is another side to God’s longing for reconciliation, and that side is the effect on us of entering into a reconciled relationship with God.
  - (3) To have a meaningful, mutually satisfying reconciled relationship with God, we must invest a proper amount of time, we must do things like be open and honest in our communication, confess our sin, put off the old nature and put on Christ-likeness, study the scriptures, pray a lot, and seek to love Him with ALL our being.
  - (4) Why? Because it is in doing these things that we gain an experiential knowledge of God – which means we are getting to know God personally. And this is important because the more experiential knowledge of God we gain, the greater our understanding of God, His ways, and His Word.
- 2. The second thing I want to say about this phrase “the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,” is that our life transforming, personally intimate knowledge of God has a direct effect on the amount of grace we receive from God and the amount of peace we have within our heart and mind.
  - a. As I have just pointed out, we do not enter into the kind of relationship with God that takes us beyond book and theological knowledge to experiential knowledge without putting off the things that separate us and putting on the things that unite us to Him.
  - b. And we will not put off the things that separate us from God and put on the things that unite us to God without seeing our desperate need for an abundant supply of God’s grace – grace in

the form of power, and grace in the form of assistance. But something else is also happening while we put off and put on, and that something else is a growing confidence or faith in God that He does all things well, which leads to a growing inner peace that keeps us peaceful in the face of difficult, trying circumstances.

- c. Therefore, the more we know about God and the more we know God personally and intimately, the more grace we want and receive from Him and the more inner peace we have in the face of life's trials and tribulations.
  3. To further reinforce the importance of knowing about God intellectually and knowing God, himself, experientially, I want to read Paul's words in Philippians 3:7-8a . . . But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord . . .
- C. Now that we have looked at what Peter means when he speaks of knowing God, let's look at what he means when he speaks of wanting grace and peace to be multiplied to us as a result of our knowledge of God.
1. It seems that Peter expresses this desire almost as if it were a prayer for his readers, or at the very least, a strong yearning for them to have a multiplied amount, or an abundance of grace and peace.
    - a. Now it isn't that we do not already have a measure of God's grace working within us, or that we do not experience at least occasional times of inner peace.
    - b. However, any Christian who takes seriously God's call to put off the old nature and put on the new soon discovers how beneficial God's grace and peace are in the pursuit of spiritual growth, victory over the flesh and sin, and Christian maturity.
    - c. And once you discover how beneficial God's grace and peace are, you will want more than you have, in fact, you will want it in abundance. It is my guess that Peter, having fought his own spiritual enemies, knew this, and so he is yearning for us, his readers, to have a multiplied abundance of grace and peace.
    - d. So with this in mind, let us look at these two qualities or gifts that Peter wants for us.
  2. Grace: The grace that Peter is talking about here is God's grace for living the Christian life, not God's grace for salvation. If we share the same faith Peter does (vs 1), then we have already received God's

grace for salvation. What we need now that we have been born again is grace for living the Christ-like life.

- a. But why do we need God's grace, in abundance, for living the Christ-like life?
- b. For me, the answer is simple. To live the Christ-like life requires putting to death irrational fears, ungodly cravings, long-standing bad habits, wrong thinking, unkind or even abusive speech, and unloving behavior – all things that have been a part of our life prior to salvation.
- c. But it doesn't stop with putting these kinds of things to death. To live the Christ-like life, we must put on and nurture faith, godly desires, godly habits, right thinking, gracious speech, and loving behavior – all things we once thought foolish or too demanding or too limiting or unpopular or lacking in fun or too much work.
- d. In other words, putting off and putting on in an honest pursuit of becoming holy in all our behavior as God is holy, is like entering a war zone where the battles are ugly and long and hard. And as everyone who wants to be godly in Christ Jesus knows, consistently winning battles of this nature requires some super human strength and divine help. And this is where God's grace for daily living is so invaluable to us, for it is His grace that provides this much needed help. And of course, receiving an abundance or multiplied amount of God's grace is all the better.
- e. Let me give you an Old Testament example of what I am talking about here. And as I do this, picture the NT realities and the realities in your own life that mirror my example.
  - (1) As we know, God saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, and He did this apart from any thing they did or could do to help free themselves.
  - (2) God then led them to the Promised Land and told them to cleanse it by driving out the sinful inhabitants, and then they were to live in the land according to God's laws.
  - (3) Now the problem the Israelites had was that they were facing walled cities, well equipped armies, and giants – while they themselves were not strong enough or trained in the ways of war enough or in possession of sufficient war equipment or in any other way powerful enough to defeat the enemy on their own. They needed supernatural power and divine help to fulfill God's will in cleansing the land.

- (4) Or in other words, they needed God's grace for daily battles to drive out the old and replace it with the new.
- f. We are like Israel. Our salvation is all God's doing. But when it comes to cleansing our lives of sin and putting Christ-likeness in its place, it is a shared doing – our efforts empowered and assisted in various ways by God's gracious doing.
  - (1) Therefore, trust in God, look to God, and even pray for an abundance or a multiplied amount of daily grace to empower and assist you in gaining victory over your flesh, the world, and the devil. And look to God and pray for an abundance of daily grace for putting on the qualities and character and righteousness of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
  - (2) And even though the battles can get really ugly, long, and hard, God's grace for daily living comes in increasing measure to those who in increasing measure, know God both intellectually and experientially.
3. Peace: The peace that Peter is talking about here refers to an inward calmness or serenity that comes from a stable confidence in God's presence, His provision, His protection, His goodness, and His empowering assistance for dealing with whatever comes your way. And it is this peace that enables us to remain calm and serene in the face of temptation, trouble, crisis, suffering, or testing. Now there are several important truths concerning this peace.
  - a. First, we do not gain this peace based on need, but rather based on trusting in, submitting to, and obeying God, day after day and in situation after situation.
    - (1) Let me use Israel as an example once again. We know that God promised to give the Israelites a comprehensive peace in their land – not based on their need for peace, but based on their obedience to God's laws and the fulfillment of God's will. The same is true for us.
    - (2) But as with Israel, so for us. This peace does not come on our first instance of faith, submission, and obedience. Rather it comes incrementally, even slowly for many of us, as we work through our thoughts and feelings about God, our faith in God for daily living, and our struggles with our flesh and pride in relation to doing things God's way or our way.
    - (3) Interestingly, growth in inner peace parallels our growth in getting to know God experientially – which, in my opinion, is why Peter puts them together.

- (4) Here is how it works. Trusting, submitting, and obeying take us through a variety of situations where we see God's faithful protection and provision, where we pray so much and so fervently that we connect to God in such a way as to sense His presence with us, and where we discover in ever growing ways the quality of His character, the depths of His love, the perfectness of His will, and the incredible joy of snuggling close to His breast and being held in His arms.
  - (5) Therefore, inner peace comes to us when we take the path to knowing God personally, intimately, experientially. And it is this peace that becomes a powerfully calming force within as we face those things that would steal our peace.
- b. Second, this peace will start small, but it will grow and grow until it rules over your heart and mind, producing its intended effects in your life.
- (1) As I have already said, we work our way toward this peace by working out – day by day – our relationship with God and faith in God against the backdrop of our flesh, our pride, our history, and our culture.
  - (2) Consider, who of us trusts God completely from the start? Oh yes, we trust Him for salvation and some other areas of daily life, but most of us build our confident trust in God, incrementally rather than all at once. This means that most of us gain this deep, calming, inward peace incrementally.
  - (3) And so, rather than being discouraged over lacking this deep inward peace, examine your life and see where you are not trusting in God, not submitting to God, and not obeying God. Then use this insight to begin the process of correcting your wayward ways – because the more you trust God, submit to God, and obey God, the more God's peace fills your heart and mind and keeps you calm and serene in the face of whatever comes your way.
- c. Third, it is this inward peace that keeps us stable and faithful in the face of difficult, trying, threatening circumstances and difficult people. For example, when tempted to such things as anger or fear or anxiety or projecting doom or assuming the worst or sicknesses such as cancer or losses such as the death of a loved one, it is this inward peace of God that enables you to remain holy in all your behavior rather than giving way to fear, anxiety, anger,

discouragement or any other ungodly response you might choose for dealing with the problem at hand.

4. There are two scriptures I want to point you to relating to the peace Peter is wanting us to have.
  - a. John 14:27 . . . Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.
  - b. Philippians 4:6-7 . . . Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### III. Conclusion

- A. God's call to holiness of heart, mind, and behavior requires God's gracious help in varied forms, and we refer to that gracious help as grace for daily living. May we join Peter in wanting and praying for an abundant portion or a multiplied amount of God's grace for living.
- B. In a similar way, faithfulness in the face of trials, tribulations, testing, and temptations which stir such things as anger, frustration, fear, anxiety, and discouragement is greatly helped by a deep inner peace that, like grace, comes from God. May we seek that peace.
- C. Finally, Peter longs for us to know an abundance of grace and peace for daily living, and He reminds us that they come to us through an ever growing intellectual and personal knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. May we want such a relationship with God.