Faith That Escapes Corruption

SS Lesson for 11/24/2019

Devotional Scripture: Ps 90:1-17

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: 2 Peter 1:4
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

ESCAPE THROUGH GOD'S POWER OF GODLINESS (2 Peter 1:1-4)

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- Sharing in God's Divine Nature means that we reflect God's glory (2 Cor 3:18)
- Sharing in God's Divine Nature means we have been renewed in the mind (Eph 4:23-24)
- Sharing in God's Divine Nature means God has given us a new self (Col 3:10)
- Sharing in God's Divine Nature means that we are a child of God (1 John 3:2)

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- Godliness is of great gain when combined with contentment (1 Tim 6:6)
- Godliness is devoting oneself to doing good (Titus 3:8)

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A death that goes from perishable to imperishable (1 Cor 15:51-53)
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A death that has no fear associated with it (Heb 2:14-15)

**CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

**Commentary Thoughts from J. Hampton Keathley**

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

**Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

Lesson Background and Key Verse

**Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Peter's second letter consists of only three chapters (61 total verses), yet it presents several intriguing connections to other books of the New Testament. Many have noted the overlap of material between 2 Peter and Jude. Both letters express concern that false teachers would try to lead Christians astray (compare 2 Peter 1:20; 2:2-4, 10, 12-15, 18-22; 3:3-5, 17 with Jude 3-16). Such teachers claimed authority and insight from God that they did not have. The warning from the apostle Peter is stated in terms of “damnable heresies” (2 Peter 2:1). Another cross-connection is found in 2 Peter 1:16-18, which refers to the transfiguration of Jesus recorded in the Gospels (compare Matthew 17:1-5). That pivotal and spectacular event revealed the true nature of Jesus and His glory to His inner circle of disciples of Peter, James, and John. Peter continued to tell of this event for some 30 years, bringing credibility to his preaching and teaching (Acts 2:14-36; 8:25; 1 Peter 2:23-25; etc.). An obvious connection between 1 and 2 Peter is not so clear however. The style of writing in 2 Peter is much rougher than the elegant Greek of 1 Peter. This difference may be explained in 1 Peter 5:12, which indicates that Peter had the help of Silas in writing the first letter. There is no record that Silas, perhaps a more educated man, helped write 2 Peter. Without a writing partner, it makes sense that Peter's solo work on 2 Peter resulted in a different style than that of 1 Peter. Peter wrote his second letter in the context of the persecution of Christians in the city of Rome. He wrote under duress, believing his own death to be near (see commentary on 2 Peter 1:13-15, below). The grim reality of persecution in Rome under Emperor Nero (reigned AD 54-68) served to focus Peter's thoughts in the direction we see in today's lesson text.

**Key Verse: 2 Peter 1:4**

*By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*

**Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary**

1:1a. The author is identified as Simon Peter. It is ironic that this letter, whose authorship has been so disputed, begins with a textual problem concerning the spelling of its author’s name. Some manuscripts have the common Greek spelling (Σιμών), whereas others have the direct transliteration of the Hebrew (שְׁמוֹן). The best textual evidence supports the more unusual Hebrew spelling, used elsewhere only in Acts 15:14. This detail provides support for the authenticity of Petrine authorship, for an impostor probably would have used the more widely accepted spelling. “Peter,” the Greek translation of “Cephas” and the name given to Simon by Jesus, is discussed in the Introduction of 1 Peter (see also 1 Peter 1:1). Peter’s combining these distinctly Hebrew and Greek names may be an indication of the mixed audience (Hebrew and Greek Christians) he addressed. Peter adds the term servant (doulos, lit., “slave”; cf. Matt. 23:11) to his title apostle of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1). Near the close of his life, at the apex of his apostolic authority, he was Christ’s servant first, and His apostle second.

1:1b. The recipients of the letter are described only in general terms (cf. 3:1). They are those who... **have received a faith as precious as ours.** “Received” is from the unusual verb lanchanō, “to obtain by lot” (cf. Luke 1:9; John 19:24). This implies God's sovereign choice rather than anything they might have done to deserve such a gift. The words “as precious” translate the compound word isotimon, used only here in the New Testament. It comes from ixos (“equal”) and timē (“honor, value”). The word isotimon was used for foreigners who had been granted the privileges of citizenship which were equal to those of the native born. The faith given them by God was of equal honor or privilege with that of the apostles’ faith. Here Peter...
foreshadowed his purpose by stressing that the faith of the apostles was no different from the faith of any believer. This contrasted with the pre-Gnostic doctrines of the false teachers who spoke of an inner circle of special knowledge attainable by and available only to a privileged few. The word “faith” (pistin) is used without the article; thus it could refer to the objective content of faith (cf. Jude 3) or, more likely, to the subjective ability to believe. This faith is given through (or, on the basis of) the righteousness (dikaiosynē, “justice” or “uprightness”; cf. Rom. 1:17; 3:22) of our God and Savior (Peter called Jesus Savior [Acts 5:31]) Jesus Christ. The grammar here clearly indicates that “God and Savior” are one Person, not two (i.e., there is one Gr. article with two substantives). This passage ranks with the great Christological passages of the New Testament which plainly teach that Jesus Christ is coequal in nature with God the Father (cf. Matt. 16:16; John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13). “Savior” is used of Christ five times in this short epistle (2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18).

1:2. The first half of this verse corresponds exactly with 1 Peter 1:2b: Grace and peace (charis... kai eirēne4; cf. Pauline usage in Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; etc.) were the characteristic Greek and Hebrew greetings (eirēne being the Gr. trans. of the Heb. šālôm). The verb translated be... in abundance (plēthyntheiē; also used in 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 2) is in the optative mood, thus stressing a sincere, prayerful wish for his readers. This blessing of grace and peace is more than a mere formula of greeting. These virtues come through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. In each of his first two verses Peter mentioned God and Jesus as equal. “Knowledge” (epignōsei, “full [epi, additional] knowledge”) implies an intimate and personal relationship. It is the means by which God’s grace and peace may be received and experienced. Peter used this term epignōsis again in 2 Peter 1:3, 8; and 2:20. The shorter form (gnōsis) is found in 1:5-6 and 3:18. Christians are urged to take advantage of the “full knowledge” available to them through Christ Jesus (each occurrence of epignōsis in 2 Peter is related to Christ). In this way they could combat false teachers who claimed to have special knowledge (gnōsis) but who openly practiced immorality (cf. Paul’s usage of epignōsis to combat incipient Gnosticism: Col. 1:9-10; 2:2; 3:10). Peter challenged believers to take full advantage of the divine power and promise of God which made it possible to participate in the divine nature and thus overcome the corruption caused by evil desires (vv. 3-4). Based on this promised power, Peter further challenged Christians to practice the characteristics of the divine nature so that they would experience the assurance of eternal rewards (vv. 5-11).

1:3. Christ’s divine power has provided everything believers need for life and godliness. “Divine” translates theias, which is from theos (“God”) and is used only three times in the New Testament (here and in Acts 17:29; 2 Peter 1:4). “Power” (dynameōs) is one of Peter’s favorite words (cf. 1 Peter 1:5; 3:22; 2 Peter 1:16; 2:11). All that believers need for spiritual vitality (life) and godly living (eusebeian, “godliness,” “piety”; cf. 1:6; 3:11) is attainable through our knowledge of Him (Christ). An intimate “full knowledge” (epignōseōs; cf. 1:2) of Christ is the source of spiritual power and growth (cf. Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9-10; 2:2). Christ called (cf. 1 Peter 1:15) us to this life of godliness by His own glory and goodness (aretē, “moral excellence”; trans. “praises” in 1 Peter 2:9 and “goodness” in 2 Peter 1:5). Christ attracts people enslaved by sin (cf. 2:19) by His own moral excellence and the total impact of His glorious Person.

1:4a. Through these, that is, Christ’s “glory and goodness” (v. 3), He has given believers His very great and precious promises. The Greek verb translated “has given” (dēdōrētai) means “to bestow, to endow.” Not the usual word for “give,” it carries with it the idea of the worth of the gift. Peter used the same verb in verse 3. In Mark 15:45 the word is used to describe Pilate’s “giving” of Jesus’ body to Joseph of Arimathea. The word for “promises” (epangelmata, from epangellō; used only in 2 Peter 1:4 and 3:13) implies an emphatic public announcement. The promises are appropriately described as “very great and precious” (timia, from timē, “value”). Peter used “precious” to describe a Christian’s faith (1 Peter 2:7; 2 Peter 1:1), Christ’s blood (1 Peter 1:19), and here, Christ’s promises. The promises Peter had previously written about related to a believer’s inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-5) and the return of Christ (1 Peter 1:9, 13).

1:4b. These promises enable Christians to participate in the divine nature. “Participate” is literally “become partners” (genēsthe... koinōnai). “Participate” in 1 Peter 4:13 and “share” in 1 Peter 5:1 are from the same word koinōnai (“partners” or “sharers”). “Divine” is theias, also used in 2 Peter 1:3. Believers take on God’s very nature; each one is a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). Because they are “partners” (kJV) of God’s nature, Christians can share in His moral victory over sin in this life and share in His glorious victory over death in eternal life. Because of the promise of the new birth (1 Peter 1:3), the promise of God’s protecting power (1 Peter 1:5), and the promise of God’s enabling power (2 Peter 1:3), believers can “participate in the divine nature,” that is, become more like Christ (cf. Rom. 8:9; Gal. 2:20). In addition they can escape the corruption (phthoras, “moral decay”) in the world (cf. 2 Peter 2:20; 1 John 2:15-17) caused by evil desires (epithymia, lit., “lust”). In 2 Peter 1:3-4 Peter employed graphic vocabulary borrowed from the false teachers he warned against. His language must have arrested his readers’ attention...
as he invested words from the pagan and philosophic worlds with new Christian meaning: “godliness” (eusebeia), “virtue” (aretē), “nature” (physis), and “corruption” (phthoras). In this beautiful paragraph Peter orchestrates a symphony of grace. To the melody line of faith he leads believers to add harmony in a blend of seven Christian virtues which he lists without explanation or description. A carnal Christian has spiritual myopia (v. 9), but a spiritual Christian is both effective and productive (v. 8) in his understanding of the Lord Jesus and his application of biblical principles to daily life.

1:5-7. Peter referred back to the divine nature by beginning this new paragraph with the words for this very reason. The words make every effort translate a participle (pareisenenkanteres, “applying, bringing to bear alongside of”; used only here in the NT) and spoudēn pasan (“all diligence” or “all zeal”; spoudē in Rom. 12:11 is rendered “zeal”). It takes every bit of diligence and effort a Christian can muster, along with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, to “escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4) and to bring in alongside of his faith a complement of virtue. He should work hard at cultivating the seven qualities Peter listed in verses 5-7. As a Christian does so, he becomes more like Christ, participating more fully in God’s divine nature. The word add, in the imperative, translates epichorēgēsate, from which come the English words “chorus,” “choreograph,” and “choreography.” In ancient Greece the state established a chorus but the director, the chorēgys, paid the expenses for training the chorus. Then the word came to be used of one who provides for or supports others or supplies something for them in abundance. A believer is to “furnish, supply, or support” his life with these virtues. (The same word is trans. “supplies” in 2 Cor. 9:10 and “supported” in Col. 2:19. Peter used it again in 2 Peter 1:11 where the NIV renders it “receive.”)

Faith in Jesus Christ is what separates Christians from all other people. Pistis, trust in the Savior which brings one into the family of God, is the foundation of all other qualities in the Christian life.

1. To his faith each believer should add goodness (lit., “moral excellency,” or “virtue”). In Greek the word is aretēn, which Peter also used at the end of verse 3 and in 1 Peter 2:9 (“praises” in the NIV).

2. Knowledge (gnōsin; cf. 2 Peter 1:2; 3:18) comes not from intellectual pursuits, but is spiritual knowledge which comes through the Holy Spirit and is focused on the person and Word of God.

3. Faith, goodness, and spiritual knowledge are not enough for a Christian’s walk. He must also make every effort to practice self-control (enkrateian; used only two other times in the NT, in Acts 24:25; Gal. 5:23). This means to have one’s passions under control. It contrasts sharply with the anarchy and lack of control on the part of the false teachers whom Peter exposed (chap. 2). In an increasingly anarchistic society Christians do well to let the music of self-control be played in their lives.

4. Believers living in the latter days, especially when surrounded by scoffers and false teachers, also need perseverance. This word hypomenēn means “staying under.” It is frequently used in the New Testament to refer to constancy or steadfast endurance under adversity, without giving in or giving up (cf. Rom. 5:3-4; 15:4-5; 2 Cor. 1:6; 6:4; Col. 1:11; 1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:4; James 1:3).

5. Godliness (eusebian, also used in 2 Peter 1:3 and 3:11 and 10 times [in the Gr.] in the Pastoral Epistles) refers to piety, man’s obligation of reverence toward God. The fourth-century church historian Eusebius was named for this lovely Greek word. How unfortunate that the words “piety” and “pious” have fallen on hard times in current usage.

6. The first five virtues pertain to one’s inner life and his relationship to God. The last two relate to others. Brotherly kindness translates the Greek philadelphia, a fervent practical caring for others (1 John 4:20). Peter already urged this attitude on his readers in his first epistle (1 Peter 1:22; cf. Rom. 12:10; 1 Thes. 4:9; Heb. 13:1).

7. Whereas brotherly kindness is concern for others’ needs, love (agapēn) is desiring the highest good for others. This is the kind of love God exhibits toward sinners (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:9-11). Interestingly this “symphony” begins with faith and ends with love. Building on the foundation of faith in Christ, believers are to exhibit Christlikeness by supplying these seven qualities that climax in love toward others (cf. faith and love in Col. 1:4-5; 1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:3; Phil. 5).

1:8. Christian growth (vv. 5-7) results in spiritual effectiveness and productivity. The word possess (hyparchōnta, lit. “possessing”) emphasizes that these spiritual qualities “belong to” Christians. However, Christians are to do more than merely possess these virtues. Effective and productive spirituality comes as these qualities are held in increasing measure. There is to be a growth in grace. A believer who does not progress in these seven areas is ineffective (argous, “idle” or “useless”) and unproductive (lit., “unfruitful”) in his knowledge (epignōsin, “full personal knowledge”; cf. vv. 2-3; 2:20) of our Lord Jesus.
Christ. Unfortunately many Christians know the Lord in salvation but lack the “fruit” of the Spirit and are not advancing spiritually. They remain “infants in Christ” (1 Cor. 3:1), still in need of spiritual “milk” (Heb. 5:12-13). But as Peter urged, believers should “grow in the grace and knowledge (gnōsei) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

1:9. In contrast with a growing Christian, a carnal believer is blind (typhlos) and nearsighted (myōpazōn). (The NIV reverses these two words; in Gr. the word “blind” comes first.) Myōpazōn (from which comes the word “myopia”), occurs only here in the New Testament. A believer with spiritual myopia is not magnifying the grace of Christ. Since his life is not evidencing the qualities cited in verses 5-7, he seems to be just like a spiritually blind (or unsaved) person (2 Cor. 4:4; cf. John 9:39). Such a person has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past (preconversion) sins. Some commentators say this refers to unbelievers. But it seems preferable to say that Peter wrote of Christians who are spiritually immature. After all, they had been cleansed from their sins (cf. Titus 3:5), but had not grown spiritually.

1:10. Being eager (spoudasate, also used in vv. 1, 15; 3:14 [“make every effort”]; cf. spoudēn in 1:5) to make one’s calling and election sure focuses on the confidence a Christian has about his standing with God. A believer hardly has the authority to assure God of his status; actually the reverse is true. The Greek word for “sure” (bebaian) was used in classical Greek to refer to a warranty deed somewhat like those people use today on houses and other pieces of property. One’s godly behavior is a warranty deed for himself that Jesus Christ has cleansed him from his past sins and therefore that he was in fact called and elected by God. Bebaian is rendered “secure” (Heb. 6:19), “guaranteed” (Rom. 4:16), “firm” (2 Cor. 1:7), “courage” (Heb. 3:6), “confidence” (Heb. 3:14), and “in force” (Heb. 9:17). “Calling” refers to God’s efficacious work in salvation (cf. Rom. 1:7; 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:9), and “election” is God’s work of choosing some sinners (by His grace, not their merits) to be saved (Rom. 8:33, 11:5; Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 1:1). Election, of course, precedes calling. A believer shows by his godly life and his growth in the virtues mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7 that he is one of God’s chosen. Such a believer will not fall (or “stumble,” ptaisēte). This word “stumble” does not suggest that a believer loses his salvation, for salvation does not depend on one’s spiritual growth. The Greek word for stumble means “to trip up” or “to experience a reversal.” Certainly one who is maturing in Christ will not trip up in his spiritual life as readily as one who is immature and nearsighted.

1:11. The ultimate reward of a growing, Christ-honoring life is the personal “welcome” by the Savior into His kingdom. Stephen experienced it (Acts 7:56); Paul knew when it was imminent for him (2 Tim. 4:7-8, 18); and every believer will experience such a welcome when he enters the Lord’s presence in heaven. You will receive a rich welcome is, literally, “the entrance will be supplied richly for you.” “Supplied” is from the verb epichorēgeō, translated “add” in 2 Peter 1:5. The entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be supplied with richness; it will be a wonderful “welcome home.” As Peter made a transition from focusing on the Word of God in believers’ lives (vv. 3-11) to the Word of God as the instrument of nurture (vv. 16-21) he began with a parenthetical personal note about his readers’ need to remember what he wrote (vv. 12-15). His section on the Word of God climaxes in a major statement on revelation and inspiration, reaching a high-water mark in verse 21, Peter’s tribute to the Holy Spirit’s role in God-breathed Scripture.

1:12. Peter, knowing his days were numbered, wanted his readers to retain all he would write in this epistle. Three times he spoke of this: I will... remind you (v. 12), “I... refresh your memory” (v. 13), “you will... be able to remember” (v. 15; cf. 3:1). Peter was almost apologetic in the second half of 1:12; he did not want his readers to misunderstand his intention. He was not being critical nor did he suggest they were wavering. Instead, he said they did know the truths he wrote about and he was aware that they were firmly established in the truth. He wanted them to stay that way. (“Established” is from stērizō, which means “strengthen” or “be firm”; cf. 1 Thes. 3:2, 13; 2 Thes. 2:17; 3:3; 1 Peter 5:10.) A problem in many churches today is not that believers do not know what God expects of them, but they either forget (cf. 2 Peter 1:9) or are unwilling to live out the truth they now have.

1:13-14. Expecting he would soon be with the Lord, Peter wanted to refresh (lit., “keep on refreshing,” pres. tense) their memories as long as he was allowed by the Lord of life to live in the tent of his body (cf. “the earthly tent” and “this tent,” 2 Cor. 5:1, 4). Peter would put that tent aside, as the Lord had made clear to him. This could refer to Jesus’ words to Peter about his death by crucifixion (John 21:18-19) or to his awareness that through old age or the threat of persecution, his life was almost at an end. The image of this earthly body being like a tent fits well with Peter’s pilgrimage theme (1 Peter 1:1, 17; 2:11).

1:15. Peter deliberately repeated himself, perhaps for emphasis: I will make every effort translates the one word spoudasō, also used in verse 10 (“be... eager”) and in 3:14 (“make every effort”). The word
departure (exodon), though not the usual word for “death,” does not veil the clarity of Peter’s suggestion that he is about to die. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke of Jesus’ “departure” (exodon; Luke 9:31). Interestingly this “exodus” (lit., “going out,” i.e., from this body) contrasts with a believer’s “entrance” into (eisodos, “going into”) God’s kingdom (2 Peter 1:11). How could Peter guarantee that after his death his readers would always be able to remember these things? Some suggest this is a subtle reference to Peter’s aid in preparing the Gospel of Mark, but this is only speculation. More obviously he was laboring to complete this second epistle which, when joined with the first, would provide ongoing written testimony of the truths so close to his heart. Still another possibility is that he referred to his own life and ministry extending into the lives of others, as Silas and Mark, who would carry on his work after he died. One thing is clear—Peter wanted to be sure that the Lord’s people would not forget God’s work and God’s Word.

Major Theme Analysis

(.Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Escape through God’s Power of Godliness (2 Peter 1:1-4)

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us 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 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,
4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God's Divine Nature (1-3)

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means that we have been born of God (John 1:12-13)
12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means we reflect God's glory (2 Cor 3:18)
18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means we have been renewed in the mind (Eph 4:23-24)
23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means God has given us a new self (Col 3:10)
10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means we are a child of God (1 John 3:2)
2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

God's definition of life and godliness (3)

Godliness is of great value (1 Tim 4:8)
8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Godliness is of great gain when combined with contentment (1 Tim 6:6)
6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.
Godliness is devoting oneself to doing good (Titus 3:8)

8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Gods precious promises (4)

Promises of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:25-27)

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Promises that are "yes" in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Promises that are better through the new covenant of Jesus (Heb 8:6)

6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

Promises for those who are called by God (Heb 9:15)

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Promises of eternal life (1 John 2:25)

25 And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.

Escape through Matured Faith (2 Peter 1:5-9)

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,
7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.
8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

Building on faith (5-7)

Eight steps toward spiritual maturity

Faith - Belief in action, which means believe without seeing (Heb 11:1), having confidence (Ps 27:13), and having hopefulness (Ps 42:11)

Goodness - Virtuous moral goodness, which means being pure and righteous (Phil 4:8) and knowing that only God is good (Matt 19:17)

Knowledge - Intelligence, understanding and moral wisdom, which means growing toward maturity (1 Cor 14:20), wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:17), and understanding (Eph 5:17)

Self Control - One who masters his desires and passions, which means being disciplined (Titus 1:8), worthy of respect (Titus 2:2), and devoted to God and prayer (1 Cor 7:5-9)
Perseverance - Patient, steadfast waiting on God, a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings, which means waiting on God (Ps 37:7), waiting with patient hope (Rom 8:25), having endurance (Rom 15:4), and being strengthened by God (Col 1:11)

Godliness - Reverence, respect, or piety toward God, which means being righteous and devout (Isa 57:1), always having faith based on sound doctrine (1 Tim 6:3), and based on the knowledge of truth (Titus 1:1)

Brotherly Kindness - The love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren, which means being devoted to one another (Rom 12:10), God loving through me (1 Thess 3:12), and being obedient to God's truth (1 Peter 1:22)

Love - Affection, good will, or benevolence, which means being compassionate, kind and humble to others (Col 3:12-14), living in harmony (1 Peter 3:8), loving God (1 John 4:21), and knowing that love never fails (1 Cor 13:4-8)

Mature faith (Ps 71:9-18)

Abounding in fruit (8-9)

Abounding fruit that is the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Abounding fruit that comes from the giving of oneself to God (2 Cor 8:2-5)

2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.
3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Abounding fruit of love (Phil 1:9)

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

Abounding fruit of thanksgiving (Col 2:7)

7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Abounding fruit of pleasing God (1 Thess 4:1)

1 Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

Abounding fruit of growing faith (2 Thess 1:3)

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.
Escaping Results in Eternal Life (2 Peter 1:10-15)

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;
11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.
13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,
14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.
15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

Life of calling and election (10)

A calling that is according to God's purpose (Rom 8:28-30)
28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

An election accomplished through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13-14)
13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

An election accomplished through the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)
2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

An election whereby God makes us holy and beloved (Col 3:12)
12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Life in everlasting kingdom (11)

An everlasting kingdom that is on Jesus' shoulders (Isa 9:6-7)
6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

An everlasting kingdom of which Jesus has been given authority and sovereignty (Dan 7:13-14)
13 'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

An everlasting kingdom where all will worship and obey God (Dan 7:27)
27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'
An everlasting kingdom where righteousness will be the scepter (Heb 1:8)

8 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

Life of privileged reminders (12-13)

A privilege because it is a gift from God (Rom 12:5-7)
6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

A privilege because of God's word indwelling us (Col 3:16)
16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

A privilege because God has trusted us with it (2 Tim 2:2)
2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

A privilege because it is an ability that God has given us (2 Tim 2:24)
24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

A privilege that must be done in accordance with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)
1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

A privilege that has accountability attached to it (James 3:1)
1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

A privilege because of the anointing that should be part of it (1 John 2:27)
27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit-just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Eternal life after earthly death (14-15)

A death where there will be a resurrection (1 Thess 4:16)
16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

A death that goes from perishable to imperishable (1 Cor 15:51-53)
51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

A death that is precious in the sight of God (Ps 116:15)
15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

A death that cannot separate us from the love of Jesus (Rom 8:37-39)
38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
A spiritual death that represents a baptism into Jesus' death (Rom 6:2-5)

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

A death that has no fear associated with it (Heb 2:14-15)

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil-15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from J. Hampton Keathley

Fundamentally, false teachers attack the gospel of Jesus Christ. While the church today may be soft on such things, the apostles were not (see Acts 20:29-32; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4; Galatians 1:6-10). In chapters 2 and 3 of 2 Peter, Peter exposes the error of those false teachers who prey upon the churches. He focuses in chapter 1 on the positive dimension of the spiritual life, summarizing in verses 1-11 what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. In verses 12-21, Peter turns to the only source, and the only standard, for teaching and practice—the Scriptures as divinely revealed and authenticated to the apostles.

In the first four verses of chapter 1 in 2 Peter, Peter distills for us the essence of the gospel. He indicates this is not just “his” gospel, but the gospel revealed through Christ, attested to by the Father, and consistent with the teaching of the apostles. To be able to recognize false teachers, we must first be crystal clear about the truth which they seek to undermine, pervert, and distort. Peter gives in these four verses the fundamentals of the gospel.

When the Lord Jesus left His disciples to ascend and be with His Heavenly Father. He left the apostles in charge. It was to them and through them that His Word was to be conveyed to others (see Matthew 16:19; John 14:26; 16:12-15; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 2 Peter 1:12-19; 1 John 1:1-4). In these first verses of his second epistle, Peter reminds his readers of just what the gospel is. These verses summarize the gospel according to Peter and the apostles, as opposed to the “new gospel” of the false teachers (2 Peter 2 and 3; see also Galatians 1:6-10; 2 Corinthians 11).

Peter defines his gospel in these eight ways:

1. Peter’s gospel is an apostolically defined gospel.
2. Peter’s gospel is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel in which Jesus Christ is central.
3. Peter’s gospel proclaims a salvation which rests on the righteousness of God, made available to sinful men in the person and work of Christ.
4. Peter’s gospel is the manifestation of sovereign grace.
5. Peter’s gospel is available to the whole world; it is not an exclusive gospel available only to the Jews.
6. Peter’s gospel does not promise men everything they want or think they need; it does promise them all they truly need, in Christ.
7. The gospel Peter speaks of is a gospel which transforms men.
8. The gospel according to Peter leads to discipleship.

That which stands out clearly in our text is the deficiency of man and the sufficiency of God. Man is unrighteous; God is righteous and He offers righteousness to men in Christ. Man is corrupted by worldly lusts; God is holy and offers men the opportunity to become partakers in the divine nature. We have nothing God needs or wants from us regarding our standing righteously before Him. And we have nothing which God does not have and which He has not made available to us. The gospel is about our need and God’s provision, in Christ.

Closely related to the emphasis on man’s poverty and God’s provisions is the important role of knowledge. Knowledge is referred to in verses 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8. Whenever man departs from God and from divine revelation, he is ignorant. Ignorance is the opposite of knowledge, and it is deadly. Peter told the Jews that when they murdered and disowned the Holy and Righteous One, the Prince of life, they acted in ignorance (Acts 3:14-
Likewise, the idolatry of the pagan Athenians was ignorant (Acts 17:23, 30). Paul speaks of the ignorant unbelief of the Jews (Romans 10:3) and of his own ignorance as a persecutor of the church (1 Timothy 1:13). Peter has written in his first epistle that ignorance is evident in conforming to one’s lusts, while implying that knowledge leads to obedience (1 Peter 1:14). Peter also indicates that the resistance of unbelievers springs from ignorance (1 Peter 2:15). Later in 2 Peter we are told that false teachers are willfully ignorant of the reality of divine judgment in history (2 Peter 3:5). Ignorance is not bliss; it is death.

The New Testament instructs us that the cure for ignorance is knowledge. Let us note the emphasis on knowledge in verses 2, 3, 5, 6, 8. I take this to be doctrinal knowledge, for it certainly is knowledge of God and knowledge from God. It is scriptural knowledge, and it is true knowledge as opposed to false knowledge. This is the knowledge that protects the believer from false teachers and their teaching. This knowledge is also the means by which grace and peace are multiplied to us (2 Peter 1:2). Everything pertaining to life and godliness is granted to us through the knowledge of Him who called us (1:3). Knowledge is one of the virtues the Christian should diligently pursue (1:5, 6). The knowledge of which Peter writes is the knowledge of God as taught by the divinely revealed Word of God. It is also doctrinal knowledge, a propositional knowledge. Some tell us they do not worship doctrine—they worship Jesus. But, apart from doctrine, we cannot know which Jesus we worship. The maturing Christian is marked by his knowledge of God through the Scriptures (see Ephesians 1:15-23; 4:13; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10; 2:2; 3:10; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1). Knowledge can be perverted so that it becomes the enemy of love (see 1 Corinthians 8:1). Ideally, knowledge informs and regulates love (Philippians 1:9) and promotes godly living (Colossians 1:9-10). Godly teaching and instruction leads to love (1 Timothy 1:5). We also see from the Scriptures that knowledge of God leads to intimate fellowship with God.

I ask you, my friend, do you “know God,” or are you still ignorant? The way to know God is through His written Word and through the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us about God, and the Lord Jesus revealed God to us in human flesh. He is God, manifested in human flesh; He died in our place and suffered the penalty for our sins. He is the righteous One who offers His righteousness to all who believe in Him, by faith. To know Christ is to know God and to have eternal life. If you are a Christian, my question to you is a bit different. Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ? Do you know more of Him today than when you first believed? Is your walk with Him more intimate than before? Is there evidence of continued growth in your life? There should be. Our God is infinite, and our knowledge of Him in this life will never be complete. But we should be constantly growing as we feast on His Word and fellowship with other believers. Because the gospel is the truth, it is under constant attack by Satan, by our culture, and by false teachers. Consequently, we are inclined to forget the importance of the gospel and slowly drift away from it.

(Adapted from URL: https://bible.org/seriespage/2-gospel-according-peter-2-peter-11-4)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Christians cultivate godly characteristics and habits as modeled by Christ. This is essential in following Jesus as Lord. Our values and attitudes flow from faith in Christ. This is the Christian life as Peter presents it to his readers. We do not live without guidance in how to do this. We have Jesus’ example and the Holy Spirit to guide us. God has shown us what he values. Are you making every effort to confirm your calling, to live your faith virtuously?
Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

A Persecuted Audience - Peter’s two letters addressed persecuted believers. Despite their external challenges, the apostle impressed upon their hearts to cultivate their faith and seek to increase their understanding of Christ. The believer is at a great advantage; the Lord provides everything one needs to live a godly life. But it’s like an infant born into royalty. Only as the child grows does he or she understand what that entails. Gradually, the new Christian comprehends what comes with the inherited heavenly package.

Getting to Know God - Getting to know God and increasing confidence in Christ is a lifelong exercise in spiritual growth. The Father draws individuals to Himself, imparting divine attributes, and giving power to resist the pull of the world. How does one continue to seek the Lord and build up a steadfast allegiance in Christ? Peter answers that question by saying, first, realize God wants Christians to be complete and well rounded—not ruled by fleshly desires but walking in partnership with the Lord. Those who are lacking in their understanding of God end up being unproductive. An "It’s all about me" personality lacks a comprehension of the fact that old behaviors are gone, forgiven, and God is attempting to bring forth something new. As the new Christian grows—seeking the Lord, studying His Word, staying humble, following the Holy Spirit's instructions—it’s not as easy to stumble.

A Reminder - Even though the audience Peter addressed already knew the basics of a godly walk, it was good for them to be reminded of the basics. That only results in a more confident belief in God's ability to work in our lives. Peter wanted them to remember his words long after his earthly tent had been discarded. What a legacy Peter left behind, and what a challenge for us. Can all our joys and sorrows help us draw closer to God day by day? Can our Christian walk be like Christ so that our journey ends with, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"