

Joshua & Peter: The Sufficiency of God

Lesson 15: the Sufficiency of God's Preservation

Key Verse: 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 through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ~2 Peter 1.3-4

Peter's final letter before his death reflects his sense of urgency felt as he eagerly prepares to meet Jesus again. Scholars note that this is a "fighting" letter with a "belligerent" tone; in other words, Peter was a bit of a cranky old man! If we consider Joshua's tone in dealing with the final allotments and inheritance of God's promised land, it's likely that we can hear some of the same "fight" for God's people to fully embrace what God has given them (**Perseverance of the Saints/Preservation of the Saints**), and a belligerence in their unwillingness to do what is necessary to faithfully trust in God's proven promises (**Promise-Maker**). *God Most High, Lord of lords, may I embrace Your precious and very great promises. May grace and peace be multiplied to me in the knowledge of God and of Jesus my Lord. Thank you for Jesus, my Savior, who rescued me from the corruption that is in this world because of sinful desire. Teach me so that I will remember and recall the sufficiency of God's preservation so that I may finish well. Amen*

2 Peter 1.1-15 Simeon¹ Peter², a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. **3** 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, **4** by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, **6** and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, **7** and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. **11** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. **13** I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, **14** since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. **15** And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Diamonds:

As both Peter and Joshua review their lives of faith, rather than elevate all God has done for them as their accomplishments, they come alongside their fellow brothers and sisters to encourage them to live a life in faithful devotion and obedience to God. They have no doubt that there is no barrier to God fully accomplishing His will and delivering on all His promises to His people corporately and individually. They both strongly desire that all God's people finish well as they enter His eternal rest.

Peter begins his letter identifying himself by his Hebrew birth name and the Greek name Jesus gave him. In doing so, Peter is reminding the Church that he is a man "who knows the fullness of guilt and grace"³. Much of this letter is anchored in Peter's remembrance of who he was as he followed Christ, the shame and guilt of his betrayal of Christ, and the grace given him by Christ over breakfast.

¹ His Hebrew birth name

² Greek, meaning "rock" given to him by Jesus (Matthew 16.18)

³ Helm, D. (1-2 Peter and Jude) p.185

Having understood Peter's tone in this letter, we further understand Peter's mind by reading about what happened to him that caused him to identify himself as a man of both guilt and grace.

1. Read the following passages, listing the events that occurred, especially noting Peter's implied presence ("the disciples"), as the author specifically cited Peter's presence, or as Jesus called him by name:
 - a. Matthew 26.20-75:
 - b. Luke 22.7-62:
 - c. John 21.1-19:

Matthew and Luke follow the same timeline, including different vignettes of what occurred over the same period. John is unique in his story of Jesus' restoration of Peter and his specific command to Peter.

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2. Why does Peter know the fullness of guilt and of God's grace through Jesus?
3. How does Jesus personally restore Peter? What detail of Jesus' restoration of Peter is most meaningful to you?
4. Perhaps you also know the fullness of guilt and of God's grace through Jesus. How did Jesus personally restore you?

From the anchor of this story, Peter demands God's people understand the reality and impact of "the knowledge

of God and of Jesus our Lord" (V 2). He understood this personally, knowing the life-changing difference it will make in their personal lives, as well as in their love and service for one another as Christ's Church. In addition, Peter demands that God's people understand that they have all they need to live to "become partakers of the divine nature" in the "precious and very great promises of God" (V 4).

5. While not necessarily found in the vitamin aisle or a holistic pharmacy, list the faith "supplements" Peter commands in verses 5-7. Read these verses in several translations, listing the faith "supplements" in your own words to more fully understand what Peter is commanding:

Peter knew what it was to stumble by living nearsighted and blind, to fall away, and to learn of Satan's desire to sift (or isolate) him from God. As such, these supplemental qualities to one's faith have an opposing effect that result in a life full of God's divine power, godliness, and escape from the world's corruption through His indwelling divine nature. In a bid to "stir up by way of reminder" (V 13) God's people to live in the sufficiency of God's preservation, Peter uses the sharp contrast exposed in his life experience with Jesus.

6. Peter was impulsive and passionate to a fault (see questions 1-3). In his flesh, these qualities resulted in his being nearsighted and stumbling (V 9). Contrast this with the faith supplements from verses 5-7. What is the effect on God's daughter if she is stumbling (V 8-9)? How will the faith supplements keep her steady?
7. Second, Peter contrasts his falling away (V 10) with his being strengthened by the Lord. How do these faith supplements likewise strengthen His daughter (V 10)?
8. Finally, Peter contrasts being sifted versus being established (V 12). Why are these faith supplements necessary for His daughter to remain established?
9. Peter's ultimate aim is for God's people to finish their lives well. Which contrast presents you with the greatest struggle (questions 6-8)? How can your fellow sisters pray for you this week?

Deity: Promise-Maker~Throughout Scripture, God makes glorious, wondrous promises...

- promises about our redemption from the Fall, promises about our salvation from sin;
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- promises to be with us, IN us, and for us;
 -
- promises to never leave us or forsake us;
 -
- promises of abundant life now and eternal life lived with Him;
 -
- promises of rest, refreshment, and restoration; and
 -
- promises to give His people His all-sufficient grace, abounding mercies, incomprehensible peace, and incomparable power

...just to name a few.

God can be trusted to fulfill every single one of His promises. He cannot help but fulfill them. He must be true to Himself...to His perfect, unchanging character.

He has never, ever broken a promise or violated a covenant and He never will. When God makes a promise, He must keep that promise.

“The promises and invitations of the Lord are as valid as the character of God.”~AW Tozer

10. We did not forget to include scripture next to these few promises of God! This week, you will provide the scripture for each of the identified promises of God in the space provided beneath each bullet point of this definition. This exercise will prove that you are established in His truth and are (rapidly!) growing in the knowledge of God. It may be helpful to review the definitions of the deities and doctrines in past lessons. While we pray God will bring to mind scripture for every promise, please feel free to do only as many as you can. May this exercise bring you great JOY in His precious and very great promises!

Doctrine: Perseverance of the Saints/Preservation of the Saints~ This doctrine teaches that those who are genuine believers will endure in the faith to the end. The foundation of this doctrine is established and secured by the security of the believer's union with Christ (John 10.28-29; Romans 8.35, 37-39).

All those who are truly born of the Spirit and united to Christ by faith are kept secure in Him by God's power and thus will persevere in faith until they go to be with Christ in death. The believer's security is grounded in the unchanging love, infinite power, and saving will of the Father (Malachi 1.2; Romans 8.30). The Father will not fail to carry out the fullness of His electing purpose to its designed end (John 3.16, 10.28-29; Romans 8.31-38; Philippians 1.6). Believers can be confident that they will persevere by the preserving power of the Father.

Christ's death, resurrection, and present intercession further secure the believer that no charge against God's people will ever stand. Because He has died, has risen, and is interceding before the Father, no one will separate us from His love (Romans 8.35-39; Hebrews 7.25; 1 Peter 2.24). The sealing work of the Holy Spirit further establishes and secures God's people in His promise of His indwelling work and future inheritance of salvation (2 Corinthians 1.20-22; Ephesians 1.13-14).

However, believers have a responsibility to persevere in faith throughout their lives. While God's power is only source of a believer's preservation in salvation, His power is kept “through faith”, meaning the believer's persevering “faith working through love” (Galatians 5.6; 1 Peter 1.5). Jesus warned of His people's persecution and hostility against His truth and righteousness as His people endure in Him (Matthew 10.22). But Jesus is clear that endurance matters (Matthew 24.12-13; Colossians 1.22-23; Hebrews 3.14).

11. What would finishing well look like for you? In the space below, write what your life would look like if you lived fully in “the knowledge of God and of Jesus our LORD”, faithfully and wholeheartedly believing in “His precious and very great promises” all the way until your final breath on this earth, finishing well?

12. If time allows, reread what you wrote on Question 11 after letting a day or two pass. How does the knowledge of God drive your finishing well as strengthened (versus falling away), established (versus sifted), and steady (versus stumbling)?

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer: Sometimes we get to this section and our minds go blank. Sometimes we are in the ashes of our failures, looking in hope at our preserving Savior. (Still, with little to say.) Other times, we get to this section and erupt in praise, requiring endless ink or challenging our typing fingers to keep up! No matter your predicament when you get to this section, write something to “stir you up by way of reminder”.

Lecture Outline:

Aim: What you know makes all the difference.

- I. The Tools (2 Peter 1:1-4) **T1:** God has sufficiently provided all we need to live holy lives.
 - a. What promises of God empower you to live differently?
 - b. What will you do to move from a mere intellectual knowledge of God to an experiential knowledge that comes from a relationship with God?
- II. The Job (2 Peter 1:5-11) **T2:** What you know of God should be evident in your life.
 - a. In which of these qualities do you need to grow?
 - b. How will you use your knowledge and experience of Jesus to help you grow?
- III. The String Around Your Finger (2 Peter 1:12-15) **T3:** The gospel may not be novel, but it is still spectacular.
 - a. Who in your life would benefit from you being a minister of remembrance? What verses will you use to help them continue heavenward?
 - b. How can you grow in reminding yourself of the truth? What do you need to remind yourself of today?