

Sermon Brief

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September 4, 2022

Text: 2 Peter 1:1-4

Title: “Everything We Need”

Subject: Believers have been fully resourced in Christ.

Complement: We are to live godly lives in this present, evil world.

Textual Idea: We’ve been given everything we need in Christ to live godly lives here and now.

Sermon Idea: We’ve been fully resourced to live in the fullness of Jesus.

Interrogative: Am I living in the fullness of Jesus?

Key Points:

We stand firm in the faith by remembering:

1. We’re fully accepted, children of God through faith in Christ.
2. We’ve been fully resourced to live a godly life.
3. We’ve been brought into fullness with God.

What do I want people to know? I want people to know that believers have been given all they need to live a godly, full life. I want them to know that this transformation is a work of God that comes through faith in Him and His promises through Jesus.

What do I want people to do? I want people to (1) remind themselves of the promises of God, (2) focus on increasing their intimacy with God, (3) confess any known sin.

What need am I addressing? I am addressing the need for godly living in a corrupt world.

“Everything We Need”

2 Peter 1:1-4

September 4, 2022

I know not everyone’s a sports fan, but this is a big week! The NFL is back! Woo hoo! That reminds me of a famous story involving legendary Green Bay Packers coach **(LCD) Vince Lombardi**. In July 1961, the Packers re-grouped for another season after having lost in the championship game the year before. They expected to pick up where they left off, but instead, after sitting down, Lombardi held a football out and said, **(LCD) “Gentlemen, this is a football.”** He then started on page one of the playbook and went over the basics of blocking and tackling and catching as if they were eight-year-olds! One player, Max McGee joked, “Coach, you’re going too fast!” Lombardi smiled and kept on teaching the basics. Sure enough, they went on to win the championship that season and they never lost a playoff game again under Lombardi.

Sometimes, no matter how well we’re doing, we need to be reminded of the basics. That’s essentially what Peter is doing as we begin our new sermon series today on the letter of 2 Peter. Go ahead and turn there. You may remember that back in July, we finished our series on the book of 1 Peter which I entitled, **(LCD) Alien Living in a Chaotic World**. That letter was written to churches in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, who were suffering under persecution for their faith. In this letter, Peter has a different concern – false teaching. He gets pretty “in your face” in this letter against those who were twisting the Word of God. We have the same problem in our world today. What we need is to be reminded of the basics of the faith.

2 Peter, chapter 1, verse 1, “*Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.*” We need to stop there for three reasons. First, there is widespread disagreement as to whether Peter truly wrote this book; second, we need to remind ourselves of who Peter was, and third, we need to think about how he describes himself. First, the disputed authorship. Look at this quote, **(LCD) “The history of the acceptance of 2 Peter into the New Testament canon has all the grace of a college hazing event. This epistle was examined, prayed over, considered, and debated more than any other New Testament book—including Revelation.”** Seriously, 2 Peter barely made it into the Bible! Why? There were a **(LCD) number of reasons: questionable apostolic authorship** is the big one. You need to know that in the decades after Jesus’ ascension and the era of the first apostles, those who knew Jesus firsthand, there were many, many books and letters that claimed to be Scripture. The early church had to decide which were legitimate and which weren’t. The main criteria was whether it was written by an apostle, like John and Peter, or someone close to an apostle – like Mark.

Well, that seems easy with this letter, right off the bat it says it’s written by Simon Peter, an apostle. Case closed. Not so fast. You see, there were many letters written in the first few centuries after Jesus, purporting to be by an apostle but not really. Some of the reasons for doubting Peter wrote it are listed here:

- **Lack of citation by early church fathers (none before 3rd century)**

- **Not included in the Muratorian Fragment (earliest list of canonical – meaning divine - books of the NT)**
- **Style and literary differences between 1 and 2 Peter**
- **Significant similarities with Jude**

For all these reasons, and others, the authorship of Peter has been debated to the point that it almost didn't make it into the New Testament...but it did. Now you don't want me to go into all the reasons why, trust me! What's important to know is that the early church fathers debated long and hard knowing how crucial this decision was and it was accepted as God's Word. We can and do trust their finding.

Second, assuming, as we will, that this letter is indeed written by Peter, let's remind ourselves of **(LCD) who he was**. He'd met Jesus thirty years before writing this letter. He was a regular guy like you and me trying to make ends meet when one day Jesus came along and invited him to follow Him. What an adventure Peter was in for! Here's a quick look at his **(LCD) resume**:

- **Jewish Fisherman from Galilee named Simon**
- **Called and renamed by Jesus**
- **First to perceive Jesus as Messiah**
- **One of the three “inner circle” friends of Jesus**
- **Walked on water**
- **Denied knowing Jesus 3x**
- **Restored by Jesus – “Feed my sheep”**
- **Bold preacher of the Gospel**
- **Miraculously released from prison**
- **Martyred – tradition says crucified upside-down**

Supposedly it was because he didn't believe he was worthy of dying as His Savior did, **(LCD) so he insisted on being crucified upside-down**. Wow. **(LCD) What a journey** Peter made from an impetuous, prideful, ambitious young man to a wise, humble, sacrificial servant of the Lord Jesus. That's how he describes himself, “*a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ*.” The word for “servant” is not the one for a typical household servant, but rather the same word for a slave. A slave was one who did the will of another. That's Peter – completely given over to Jesus as Lord. He's also an “apostle,” someone sent on behalf of another with their full authority. Peter knows that he's an **(LCD) ambassador of the kingdom of God clothed in immense power!** He is a lowly servant, yet also an exalted ambassador with authority to speak on behalf of Jesus.

Peter's union with Jesus transformed him completely and enabled him to fulfill his kingdom calling on earth. And that is all true of us too as Peter says next, “*To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours*.” Peter seems to be writing to a general audience. As opposed to 1 Peter which was written to specific people, this one seems generic. In chapter 3, he does mention a previous letter, but based on many factors, it's probably a different letter than 1 Peter as we'll see when we get there in a few weeks.

What is important is how Peter describes these ones. He says they've "*received a faith as precious as ours.*" The word for "received" is very rare and literally means to "receive something by casting lots." In other words, this faith wasn't something they earned, it was a gift they received, like the random roll of the dice. Think about that. The faith that saves us, trusting and believing in Jesus, isn't something we carefully plan out, it is a gift from God! Salvation is from God from first to last – even our faith itself comes from God! That's not to say we're robots, the Bible also tells us to choose to follow Jesus, but somehow in the mystery of God, it is a gift at the same time. How great our God is!

And this faith of theirs, Peter says, is "*as precious as ours,*" meaning Peter and the other apostles who knew Jesus. Other translations say, "the same kind as," or "equal standing as." Those are better. Peter is telling them that they are equal with even the apostles in their standing before God. The ground is level at the cross of Jesus! I love that! And all this comes to us through "*the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*" We're made right with God because of the rightness, the perfection, of Jesus. He died on the cross, offering a spotless sacrifice, to pay for our sin and enable us, by faith, to be clothed in His righteousness. This faith of ours is from God, by God, for God. It's all God...and that God, according to Peter, is Jesus!

Don't miss the significant claim Peter makes here! Notice that it says, "*our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*" That is significant. This is one of the clearest verses in the Bible that supports the deity of Jesus Christ. Some like the Jehovah's Witnesses, translate this to make it two persons, but that's not right grammatically. Something called the Granville Sharp rule makes it clear as crystal that this is talking about one person who is both God and Savior – and that person is Jesus! We need to watch out for false teaching in our day just like Peter did in his! Jesus is God. Any religion or church that teaches otherwise, like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons, is a false one. Avoid them.

Peter then shares a typical greeting to these ones, verse 2, "*Grace and peace be yours in abundance...*" Peter wishes us grace and peace, shalom, blessing, in abundance. The exact same greeting was in 1 Peter. But here he adds something important, "*...through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*" Why does he add this? All the commentators point out that he is beginning to highlight his main concern with this letter – "knowledge." Peter is going to use some version of this word 16 times in this short letter. He's very concerned about believers having true knowledge and rejecting false knowledge. Why? Because our grace and peace depend on it! Anyone here need some grace? Some peace? Jesus has them in abundance...if you know Him! But even if you do know Him, are you living in His fullness? Full grace? Full peace? That's my question this morning, **(LCD) are you living in the fullness of God?** How full is your glass? Is there abundant grace and peace in your life? It all comes down to knowing Jesus.

Now the knowledge Peter is referring to here is very specific. The word here **(LCD)** "**epignosis,**" according to Chuck Swindoll, means, "**Similar to the general term for knowledge (gnosis), this term refers to 'true' or 'intimate' knowledge. This deeper knowledge refers not to mere intellectual awareness or theoretical knowledge but to 'heart knowledge.'**" This is crucial. Peter is referring to what happens when we go "all

in” with Jesus - conversion. As I shared last week, I grew up going to church and knew a lot about Jesus, but I didn’t know Him personally. When I did surrender to Jesus, His Holy Spirit came into my life and all of a sudden Jesus became so real to me, I had known Him in my head but now I “KNEW Him in my knower.” There’s a big difference between knowing about someone and actually knowing someone personally.

And this new life of knowing God personally is what Peter explains in the next two, astounding verses, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”* There is SO MUCH here! First of all, we see Peter’s other great concern in this letter: godly living. Those are the two things he’s going to be talking about: **(LCD) beware false teaching and pursue godly living.** Keep those two main themes in mind over the next few months.

He wants them to live a godly life and they can only do that if they receive power from God that comes from truly, deeply knowing Jesus. The phrases Peter uses in these two verses begin to tell us what he’s concerned about. Look at this cultural note, **(LCD) “Divine power’ and ‘divine nature’ had been important phrases in Greek thought for centuries...many Greeks in this period wanted to escape the material world of decay around them, believing that their soul was divine and immortal and belonged in the pure and perfect heavens above.”** What this means is that there was a lot of teaching going around that one could reach perfection, become like God, by detaching entirely from this world. Buddhism and New Age philosophies teach something similar today. Peter is warning them against this false teaching.

As opposed to assimilating into God and becoming nothing, Peter suggests a different route. He says, end of verse 4, that we as believers in Christ can (1) *“participate in the divine nature,”* and (2) *“escape the corruption in the world”* – two things that people were searching for in Peter’s day - and in our day too. Why do we search for these, why do people want to be like God? The same reason Eve ate the apple in the garden – control. We want to be in control of our own lives. Look at a baby. Do you need to teach them to say, “Mine!” or “No!” Even they want to be in control! We want to be in control, and, if we’re like god, then we can be.

We are not meant to be rivals to God or independent of Him; we are called to “participate” in the divine nature. That word is one you’ve heard, **(LCD) koinonia.** It means “sharing in a common life.” As I’ve shown before, it’s like stalks of broccoli. Each one is individual, yet they share a common root, a common life, and therefore they look similar to each other. Same with us. When we come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, and are grafted into His life, become one with Him, we begin to become like Him.

That’s because God’s divine power, the same mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead, courses through our spiritual veins and transforms us. It changes everything...our thinking, our feelings, our desires. It’s what enables us to escape the corruption in the

world caused by evil desires. The gospel, knowing Jesus, changes our desires. It gives us godly desires. Now that doesn't mean we no longer sin. We still do because we have a human nature within us, but it doesn't dominate us anymore. The difference is that we now have a stronger power at work in us that enables us to live a full life in Christ. So let me ask you again, **(LCD) are you living in the fullness of God?** How full is your glass? Is there abundant grace and peace in your life? It all comes down to knowing Jesus.

If you think that's impossible for you, then you've missed God's Word this morning. Look again, *"His divine power has given us EVERYTHING WE NEED for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."* You don't make yourself holy, God does! He has everything you need to experience His fullness of life, love, joy, peace, etc... It comes through knowing Him, the One who has called us by his own glory, meaning His divine excellency, and His goodness, meaning His impeccable character. There is NONE like Jesus! He's perfect! Do you know Him?

There is nothing more important than knowing Jesus. In maybe the most impactful book ever written on discipleship, "Knowing God," J.I. Packer said this about knowing Christ, **(LCD) "What were we made for? To know God...What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God...What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else? Knowledge of God...What, of all the states God ever sees man in, gives him most pleasure? Knowledge of himself...Once you have become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place..."**

Amen and amen! God wants you to have **(LCD) His fullness**. Do you have it? Which glass represents where you're at with the fullness of Jesus this morning? What's hindering you? Sin? Confess it! Christ died for it! Stop hiding it! What's hindering you? Pride? Humble yourself! Admit you're not doing great! Be honest! What's hindering you? Doubt? Look what Peter says activates all this damned-up power of God, verse 4, *"Through these, His glory and goodness, he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."* What promises is he talking about? The ones he'll mention throughout this letter, **(LCD) Participation in the Divine Nature (1:4), Entrance into God's Eternal Kingdom (1:11), Judgment is Coming for the Present World (3:7), and A New Heaven and A New Earth (3:13)**

All this is promised to the one who believes in Jesus? Do you believe it? If you do, are you experiencing fullness? Maybe you need to do what Vince Lombardi did, get back to the basics. Friends, this is a Bible. It tells you that Jesus loves you. Let's get back to the basics so that we can begin to flourish in the fullness of all God has for us. Let's read together a verse that pulls all this together and then pray together. **(LCD) "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!...Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure."**