

- I. Be Holy In All Your Behavior With A Holiness Like God's Holiness
 - 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. Introduction to II Peter
 - A. II Peter 1:1 . . . 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:
 1. What Peter tells us about himself
 - a. Simon Peter: In I Peter 1:1, Peter introduces himself simply as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." Here in II Peter 1:1, he introduces himself as Simon Peter. Why? We don't know. But what we do know is that Simon (or Symeon in Aramaic) was his given name. We know from Mark 3:16, that it was Jesus who started calling Simon, Peter. And we know that in Acts 15:13-14, James used the name Simon when he was referring to Peter. And so our best guess is that Peter added the prefix Simon for the purpose of identifying which Peter he was.
 - b. A bond-servant: According to the Greek translation of II Peter, Peter did not call himself a "bond-servant," but rather a slave of Jesus Christ. The word "bond" does not appear in the Greek, only the word "doulos," which means slave or servant. It is the translators who added the word "bond" to the Greek word for "slave." And they did the same thing for Paul (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1), James (James 1:1), and Jude (Jude 1).
 - (1) It is my understanding that the translator's added the word "bond" for two reasons.

- (a) First, *doulos* means slave, or one who is bound in service to another, with no rights of his own. And so the word “bound” or “bond” can justifiably be added to the word slave.
 - (b) Second, the word “bond-slave” has taken on the inference of one who volunteers to become the slave or servant of a particular master. Therefore, the translators added the word “bond” for the purpose of reminding the reader that Peter chose to become a slave of Jesus Christ by his own freewill. He was not forced into slavery against his will, or held against his will in servitude to Jesus Christ.
 - (c) Third, they added the word bond for the purpose of taking the negative connotation or the ugly evil out of the word “slave.” After all, we are willing slaves of a loving, just, gracious, and holy God, rather than forced into slavery by a selfish, power-hungry, cruel master.
- (2) Now the important point here is not whether the word “bond” should or should not be used, but the fact that Peter clearly saw himself as a slave of Jesus Christ. And by adding in the word “bond,” the translators are reminding us that Peter was a cheerfully willing slave of Jesus Christ – which is what we ought to be too.
- (3) You see, Peter’s cheerful willingness to be a slave of Jesus Christ is not just a fact in history or a nice part of Peter’s story as a disciple of Christ, it is an example of normal Christianity, and therefore an example of one of the ways we are to relate to Jesus Christ.
- (a) I say one of the ways we are to relate to Jesus Christ, because the reality is, we behold Jesus from several angles and relate to Him in several ways.
 - (b) For example, we see Jesus and relate to Him as our savior, our redeemer, our friend, our advocate when the devil accuses us before God, the one through whom we pray, and our confident hope for an eternity with God – just to name a few examples.
 - (c) But He is also our Lord and Master, for He purchased us with His blood, and he presides over the church as its head, or final authority. In other words, along with all the other ways we know and relate to Jesus Christ, being

His slave is one of them, and Peter affirms this by clearly stating that he, too, is a slave of Jesus Christ.

- (4) To reinforce what I just said about relating to Jesus as a slave to his master, I want to point you to three scripture portions concerning Jesus as Lord and us as His servants or slaves.
 - (a) John 13:13 . . . “You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.” (*Jesus, himself, stated that He is our teacher and master, which infers we are His students and slaves.*)
 - (b) Luke 6:46 . . . “Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?” (*It is important for us to recognize Jesus as our Lord, and it is equally important to relate to Him as our Lord by obeying Him as a slave obeys his master. Saying the right words is not enough, we must do the right deeds.*)
 - (c) Matthew 7:21 . . . “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.” (*Jesus makes it clear that calling Him Lord is no substitute for obeying Him, for without the obedience, we will not enter the Kingdom of heaven.*)
- c. Peter goes on to call himself an apostle of Jesus Christ:
 - (1) An apostle is, in essence, a messenger who has been sent with a specific message to a specific audience.
 - (2) And Peter fits this description because, being one of the twelve disciples, he was specifically sent by Jesus to carry the gospel into all the world (Matthew 28:19-20), and to feed His sheep (John 21:15-17).
- d. Peter does not stop telling us things about himself with the first verse of II Peter, he makes three more statements that I want to include in today's teaching.
 - (1) II Peter 1:14 . . . Peter says that the Lord Jesus had shown him how he was to die. This is confirmed in John 21:18-19, where Jesus says: "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." [19] Now this [Jesus] said, signifying by what kind of death [Peter] would glorify God.

- (2) II Peter 1:16-18 . . . Peter claims to have been an eyewitness of the transfiguration of our Lord – as recorded in Matthew 18; Mark 9; Luke 9. And here in II Peter, Peter says that one of the significant reasons for the transfiguration was to affirm the truthfulness and reliability of the message he, that is Peter, was proclaiming.
 - (3) II Peter 3:15-16 . . . Peter says he is acquainted with Paul’s letters, but he goes beyond that and classifies them as Scripture, equal to all other Scripture – thus providing affirmation that Paul’s letters are to be taken as seriously as any other portion of God’s Word.
2. After telling us a bit about himself, Peter addresses his readers, and says that he is writing to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.
 - a. This statement is important, for in these words, Peter makes two claims –
 - (1) First, the scriptural beliefs, doctrines, faith, and practice which he and his fellow disciples received from Jesus Christ, are what the church is to accept as truth, and then live accordingly.
 - (2) Second, his letter is specifically written to those who have received, believed, and now practice this same truth.
 - b. So what is so important about these two claims?
 - (1) In Galatians 1:6-9, the Apostle Paul shows the importance of Peter’s first, when he says: “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; [7] which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! [9] As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”
 - (a) The important point in these words for us today is that the original teachings, taken from Christ himself and disseminated by the apostles, are the only teachings we are to anchor our faith to. Any teachings that are contrary to these first teachings, or that add to or take something

away from these first teachings, even if told to us by an angel, or by Paul himself, are to be rejected.

- (b) Why? Paul says that the more we alter, or the more we pick and choose some parts over others, or the more we distort in some way the original teachings of Christ and His apostles – as conveyed to us in the holy scriptures and defended by the early church – the more we move away from a proper and spiritually healthy relationship with God.
 - (c) Now I know I have said this numerous times before, but I want to say it once again – the more we put sin out of our lives, and the more we put on Christ-likeness in sin's place, and the more we genuinely strive to be holy in all our behavior as God is holy, the more we will understand the scriptures as God intends them to be understood, and the more likely it will be that we will hold to the beliefs, doctrines, faith, and practice which Peter and his fellow disciples received from Jesus Christ.
- (2) This brings us to Peter's second claim, which is that he wrote his letter to those who have received, believed, and now practice this same truth. Here again, Paul tells us why this claim is so important in I Timothy 6:3-5 . . . If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, [4] he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, [5] and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.
- (a) The reality is, from the beginning of Christianity, there have been and there will be those who do not agree with the same scriptural beliefs, doctrines, faith, and practice of Peter, Paul, and the other apostles.
 - (b) But Paul goes further than just pointing out that some will depart from the true teachings of the church. He gives reasons for such departures from orthodoxy, and his reasons include such things as
 - i) pride,

- ii) a focus on knowledge and debate instead of on godliness of life,
 - iii) and using unique or novel teachings for some form of personal gain.
 - c. Therefore, holding to the original truth, or earliest common and defended teachings of Christ, the disciples, and early church was important then and is equally important now, for we live in an age –
 - (1) where specific teachings of the Bible are widely questioned among those who count themselves Christians,
 - (2) where once normal practices of the Christian life are condemned as too strict, judgmental, unloving, and intolerant,
 - (3) where new twists on 1500 years of established theology have created unorthodox interpretations of scripture and novel explanations of God’s dealings with man,
 - (4) where knowledge of the Bible and theology are more highly esteemed than humility, holiness in all one’s behavior, growth to Christian maturity, and loving others as ourselves,
 - (5) and where Christian service is thought worthy if one is gifted, willing, and faithful instead of holy, willing, and faithful.
 - (6) And all of this because we have wandered from the truth.
- 3. The final statement in verse 1 tells us that this faith was made possible by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - a. There are two truths I want us to see in this single statement.
 - b. First, Peter speaks of God and Jesus Christ, our savior, as being one and the same. In other words, Peter is affirming that Jesus Christ is the fullness of God in bodily form.
 - (1) Now Peter does not answer the question of HOW Jesus Christ could be God, but he does affirm that Jesus Christ and God are one and the same.
 - (2) And as happens so often, Paul affirms Peter’s assertion with these words from Colossians 2:9 . . . For in Him [Christ] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form . . .
 - c. Second, Peter says that it is the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, which makes this faith possible. This is an important truth for three reasons:
 - (1) First, this is important, because of all the gods who have been presented to humanity down through the years as worthy of allegiance and worship, only Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is perfectly sinless, totally impartial, and

completely righteous, just, and fair. Or as John put it, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5).

- (2) Second, this is important because God’s religion, if I can call it that, is the only religion which requires its followers to be holy in ALL their behavior – and the holiness we are to live up to is to be measured by God’s holiness and the principle of love.
 - (3) Third, just as God chose circumcision to be the outward sign of His people in the OT, so God has chosen holiness to be the inward and outward sign of His people in all ages, including the church age. This is why Paul says that we have all sinned and therefore fall short of the glory, or holiness of God (Romans 3:23). And this is why only a perfectly sinless and completely righteous substitute could take our place and pay our sin debt. And that substitute is our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- d. And so it is true that our faith, which certainly includes our life in Christ, our restored relationship with God, our privilege of living eternally with God, and our sanctification is made possible by the righteousness of the one who saves us.

III. Conclusion

- A. This is Peter’s introduction to his second letter. As a quick reminder, it includes willfully choosing to be a slave of our Lord Jesus, clinging to the teachings of Christ and His apostles as passed down to us in the holy scriptures and early church writings, and being eternally thankful for the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, for it is the righteousness of God that makes faith in God and living the Christian life possible. And it is the righteousness of God that sets the standard of holiness for all God’s children.