

II PETER

Partakers of the Divine Nature

November 03, 2013

- I. His Divine power has granted us everything necessary for life and godliness
 - A. II Peter 1:2-4 . . . 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. These three verses give us a summary picture of what God does for us, especially in relation to growing to Christian maturity and Christ-likeness. And what God does for us – as stated in these three verses – forms the foundation and the infrastructure of the Christian life.
 - C. And these things that God does for us form the foundation and infrastructure of the Christian life because without them we have no hope of eternal salvation and no hope of becoming holy like God is holy in ALL our behavior.
 - D. Pray
- II. Precious and magnificent promises
 - A. II Peter 1:4a . . . 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.
 1. The first three words here in II Peter 1:4 are “For by these,” which refer back to God’s glory and excellence from verse 3.
 2. In other words, it is the glory and excellence or virtue of God that makes available and guarantees the fulfillment of His precious and magnificent promises regarding our spiritual growth – a spiritual growth that begins at salvation and takes us all the way to that time when we see Him face-to-face.
 - B. II Peter 1:4b . . . (By God’s glory and goodness), He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises. . .
 1. The promises spoken of here are directly related to growing in godliness – to the degree or extent of becoming a partaker of God’s nature. And it is this incredible, maybe even hard to believe outcome that makes these promises precious and magnificent.

2. So what are these precious and magnificent promises that have the power to bring us into the spiritual condition of being a partaker of God's nature? To answer that question, I will point out some of these promises, though this will not be an exhaustive list. But it should be enough to get you started searching for and thinking of other promises from God that you will want to claim and put to use.
 - a. Matthew 6:33 . . . God promises to provide for all our physical needs as we focus our attention on living as a member in good standing of God's kingdom, and as a member who longs to be as holy as He is holy.
 - (1) This does not mean we can neglect our responsibilities as a child, student, spouse, parent, worker, or Church member.
 - (2) But it does mean that we can focus sufficient attention on becoming holy in all our behavior and on some form or forms of Christian service to make commendable headway in fulfilling God's intentions for us in this life.
 - (3) For example, as we give our first or priority focus to God's kingdom and His righteousness, God will provide what we need, whether it is bringing provision to us, or increasing what we have – just as He did with the 5 loaves and 2 fishes, or with the oil and flour for Elijah, the widow, and her son.
 - b. I John 1:9, 2:1-2 . . . If after having sinned we come to God and confess what we have done, He will both forgive us and stand as our advocate before God when Satan – who tempted us to sin in the first place – accuses us before God for having sinned in order to turn God against us.
 - (1) This is a marvelous promise, for it enables us to regain good standing with God in spite of a momentary lapse or careless act or even a rebelliously selfish decision to do what we know is wrong.
 - (2) And when you long to please God and feel broken-hearted over displeasing Him, this time of confession offers an intimate occasion to heal the damage done between you and affirm your commitment to get back up and return to moving toward godly maturity, purity of heart, and holiness of life.
 - c. Romans 8:1 . . . God promises that there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - (1) This too is a marvelous promise for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Why? Because one of the natural outcomes of hungering and thirsting for righteousness is

drawing near to God. And one of the outcomes of drawing near to God is seeing yourself worthy of condemnation because the nearer you get to God, the clearer you see yourself as you really are.

- (2) So how do we keep from being consumed by a deep sense of unworthiness or discouragement or even hopelessness as we see ourselves more nearly as we really are? By clinging to this promise of no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - (3) Will clinging to this promise stop our heart from breaking when we reflect on our past and current sinfulness? No! But it will keep us from getting bogged down in discouragement or despair. And this is important, because when we are free of unnecessary discouragement or despair, we can rise from our broken heart and tears and focus on actively and purposefully growing in godliness of heart, mind, and life.
- d. John 14:26 . . . Jesus promises that the Helper, that is, the Holy Spirit whom the Father sends in Jesus name, will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance what you already know. (Note also I John 2:27) This promise of a divine teacher who knows the mind of God because He is God, is an incredibly useful promise for anyone wanting to understand God's word as God intends it to be understood.
 - e. Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4; I Peter 1:6-9 . . . God promises to use the difficult times, the disappointments, sorrows, irritating people, undesirable circumstances, and even persecution to build our faith, improve the quality of our Christian character, and strengthen our commitment to persevere in doing what we know is right. The interesting part of this promise is that we must first demonstrate faith, quality of character, and perseverance under pressure in order for this promise to take effect and make our faith, character, and perseverance grow larger and stronger.
 - f. John 14:23 . . . When you love Jesus and validate your love by living according to His word, Jesus promises that God will love you, and that God and Jesus will dwell within you – thus setting up the conditions for intimate communion between you and them. In other words, love driven obedience on your part leads to intimate fellowship between you and God. (Note also: Revelation 3:20)

- g. James 4:7; I Peter 5:8-9 . . . God promises that if we resist the devil, he will flee.
 - (1) This does not mean our strength is superior to the devil's, for not even Michael, the great angel of heaven, dared to pit his strength against the devil, but rather resisted the devil in the name and strength of God (Jude 9).
 - (2) Therefore, when we resist the devil in the name of Jesus and with the power of God's word, he flees – which sets us free to focus on clinging to God and doing what we know is right.
 - h. Philippians 1:6 . . . God promises that He will continue to perfect and bring to completion His sanctifying work in us. This means that no matter how sinful we've been, God's power to change us is greater. And if we continue to do our part in pursuing holiness in all our behavior, we can confidently count on God to do His part in bringing us to Christ-likeness.
 - i. And finally, one of our hope-filled promises is found in II Peter 3:8-9, where God's promises that Jesus will come again. This promise ought to encourage us to persevere, for this life with its troubles and trials and temptations will not last forever. One day this will all be over and God's kingdom will be the only kingdom.
3. The point I am wishing to make here is that God spreads out before us a host of promises that we can call on and depend on in our pursuit of growing up in the faith and becoming holy just as He is holy. And it is in the pursuit of this kind of holiness that we become partakers of His divine nature.

C. II Peter 1:4c . . . so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature . . .

- 1. When God created mankind, He made us in His own image. (Genesis 1:27). However, this does not mean that we are created just like God in every way.
 - a. To begin with, we are born as humans, not divine beings, and as such, we have limitations – such as gender, time, place, travel, and span of life. In contrast to us, God has no limitations.
 - b. And yet, God made us in His image – a likeness that includes such things as life, intelligence, creativeness, the ability to develop and maintain relationships, love, emotions, and living forever once we are born.
- 2. However, as a result of Adam and Eve's choosing to rebel against God, we are born in sin, which means that though we are physically alive,

we are spiritually dead and therefore unable to have a reconciled relationship with God. And neither are we able to live forever with Him in His kingdom. To be reconciled to God and live forever with Him, we need to be reborn, that is, to start all over with a new life that is spiritually alive and able to live with God forever.

3. Therefore, when we repent and come to faith in Jesus Christ, God redeems us and gives us new life in Christ. We are born again. We become a new creation.
 - a. And though our bodies look the same, we are different in ways that make us capable of growing in Christ-likeness to the point of becoming a partaker of God's nature.
 - b. To partake of God's nature is to share some of His qualities and attributes or characteristics. Of course so share anything with God that belongs to God, He must make it available to us, and that is why some translate the Greek word for "PARTAKERS" with the English word "SHARERS." In other words, though we are partakers, we partake of what God shares with us.
4. This truth is not only found here in II Peter 1:4. It is spoken of in several other scriptures, even though it is referred to in different words. For example:
 - a. Ephesians 4:22-24 . . . that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, [23] and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24] and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (*The new self has divine qualities.*)
 - b. Colossians 3:9-10 . . . Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, [10] and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— (*The new self is growing and taking on some of God's likenesses.*)
 - c. Hebrews 12:9-10 . . . Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.
5. There are several points being made here about God's promises which we are wise to consider.
 - a. First, God's precious and magnificent promises enable us to become partakers or participants or sharers in God's nature.

- b. Second, this partaking is a becoming. In other words, it is not an all at once and a once for all partaking of God's nature.
 - (1) Just as we grow progressively in becoming holy in all our behavior as God is holy, and just as we grow into being conformed to the likeness of Christ, so we progressively grow into partaking of God's nature.
 - (2) In other words, we go from repentant, born again sinners to mature Christian saints who share in the nature of God over a period of time.
 - c. Third, though such choices and actions are incredibly foolish, we can resist or slow down the process or get lazy about doing our part in becoming a partaker of God's nature. The presence of the promise is not a guarantee of the results. We must do our part to gain the intended results of the promise.
- D. II Peter 1:4d . . . having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.
1. The word "corruption" speaks of a slow form of destruction, like rust destroying a car or a slow acting cancer destroying the body such as Parkinson's disease.
 - a. Though the process is slow, the destruction is inevitable, even though at first it is barely discernible.
 - b. Yet once the corruption reaches a certain point, its destructive effect becomes obvious. And though it continues to slowly corrupt, from that point on, it is obvious to all that destruction is near.
 2. This is the way the devil and sin work their corrupting affects in our world. And how do they bring about this corruption? By stimulating and feeding and encouraging ungodly, undisciplined, uncontrolled, excessive, selfish desires, longings, cravings, interests, and fears.
 3. In fact, starting with Eve, then Adam, and coming all the way down through history to me, the corruption that is slowly destroying humanity and the world is as much my doing as the devil's.
 4. Now sadly, in Peter's day as in our own time, the church has helped this corruption work its work in our world.
 - a. How? In Peter's day, a certain group of theologians and religious thinkers, along with their followers, were claiming that sin no longer mattered, because the grace of God was wide enough and deep enough to cover every sin and win forgiveness for every sinning Christian. And this teaching led church folks to feel comfortable giving way to their fleshly desires and worldly ways.

- b. And yet, is it not true that those who teach and believe such claims want to excuse their sin rather than submit to God, die to sin, and purposefully pursue Christ-likeness?
- 5. The truth is, those who are truly born again have escaped the corruption that is working in our world as a result of evil desires. They have died with Christ to sin. They have risen with Christ to newness of life. They have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. They no longer knowingly and willingly practice sin, or at least they are doing their part to put an end to any known practice of sin. They long to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. They have made it their goal to love their neighbor as themselves. They want to please God, for He is their most precious treasure, and fellowship with Him is their greatest joy. And they are somewhere along the way to becoming partakers of God's nature.
 - a. Would such Christians look for ways to excuse their sin?
 - b. No, because they would be broken hearted and looking for ways to repair the damage done by their sin and regain good standing with the God they love and long to please.

III. Conclusion

- A. In II Peter 1:2-4, we have a wonderful picture of God's part in bringing us from the first moments of repentance and faith to the place where we are, in thought, word, and deed, a mature Christian with a maturity that is of the measure of the stature which belongs to Christ.
- B. But God does not stop there. He does so much for us that we are able to come to the place where we share in His nature.
- C. May we long for and treasure the results of these promises so that we too can say, from the heart, that these promises are precious and magnificent.