

Calling & Election

2 Peter 1:1-11

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Some have said that Peter didn't write this letter because the subject and style is somewhat different than 1 Peter. Yet the purpose of the two letters is quite different...

- 1 Peter was written to encourage Christians under the threat of violent persecution;
- 2 Peter was written to warn those same believers of the danger of false teachers and harmful influences.

Convinced that the best antidote for heresy is a mature knowledge of the truth, Peter exhorts his readers to:

- have a proper appreciation for prophecy,
- live holy & godly lives while awaiting Christ's coming
- grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

2 Peter 1:1-11 (NIV)

*Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: ² Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³ 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. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your **calling and election**. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

v1 – Why did Peter introduce himself as *Simon Peter*?

Perhaps, since he wrote this letter later in life, he didn't want to forget where he came from and that sometimes he was still more like the old **Simon** than the new **Peter**.

- We remember that **Simon** was his given name at birth; **Peter** was the special name given to him by Jesus, to call this man to “rock-like” thinking and behavior.

Is there any significance to the order of Peter's titles he uses, *bondservant and apostle*?

Peter considered himself *first a bondservant*, and *then an apostle*. His standing as a **bondservant** was more important to him than his status as an **apostle**.

To whom was Peter addressing in this epistle?

Peter wrote to those who had the same salvation he had experienced, which he called “a **like precious faith**.” This faith was **obtained**, and not by the efforts of man but **by the righteousness of our God**.

- **Like precious faith** probably speaks to the fact that the Jews and Gentiles enjoyed the same **faith**, and therefore the same benefits in Jesus.

How is it our faith is precious?

It is from God who is precious. And it is what leads to our salvation... having faith in God's provision for eternal life, believing that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross.

How did Peter describe Jesus?

Our God and Savior Jesus Christ: The grammar of the ancient Greek makes it clear that Peter said **Jesus Christ** is both our God and Savior.

v2 – How is grace and peace connected?

Peter indicated that **grace and peace** — those two most precious of gifts — are ours **in the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord**. As we know God we gain these essentials foundations for salvation and living.

v3 – What else besides grace and peace is a gift of God?

Everything we need for a godly life – All things that pertain to life and godliness (NKJV) are ours through the knowledge of Him.

- Knowing God is the key to *everything we need for a godly life*.

What is this *divine power*?

Divine power was what created everything and holds it all together. Speaking of Jesus...

Colossians 1:16-17 – *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

What do most people pursue rather than turn to the knowledge of Christ?

Most people will try almost anything except the **knowledge of Him**.

- They trust in the schemes and plans of men instead of **the knowledge of Him**.
- They believe it is more important to know themselves instead of **the knowledge of Him**.

Instead, it is to our benefit...

Philippians 3:10 – *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings*

The ancient Greek word **knowledge** doesn't refer to a casual acquaintance... it means an exact, complete, and thorough understanding.

How do we come to a knowledge of Christ?

We come to **knowledge of Him** as we learn of Him through His Word, through prayer, and through the community of God's people.

- God does not meet us only in our solitude but also in the community of His people.

To whom does the knowledge of God come?

The knowledge of God comes to those who are **called**. It is not mere intellectual understanding or intuition.

- It is the knowledge that comes by the experience that God's people have of God Himself.

What does it mean we were called?

This refers to the Holy Spirit convicting us of our need for Jesus Christ in our lives.

Is everyone called?

Yes, even if all they have is a general revelation of God (if there is a creation, there must be a Creator).

Matt 22:14 – *For many are called, but few are chosen*
Only those who respond to God's call are chosen.

Why did God call those He called?

Who called us by glory and virtue: It is Jesus' **glory and virtue** that motivated Him to call us, and it is His **glory and virtue** that draw us to Him.

v4 – How did God's glory and goodness benefit us?

It led to Him giving *us exceedingly great and precious promises*: This means that the promises of God are based upon His **glory and virtue**, and therefore perfectly reliable because God can never compromise His **glory and virtue**.

Psalm 138:2 – *I will... praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*

God honors His word even above His name.

- We never have to doubt any promise of God.

What does it mean that the called of God get to participate in His divine nature?

There are many ways we are already participants in His divine nature since we are in the image of God. But we will be even more like Him when we are resurrected...

- Eternal, imperishable bodies.
- No sin nature
- May be where He is (anywhere)
- Will have a capacity to act in His authority (rewards)
 - Staff officers: "for the commander"

This is a remarkably generous and loving of God. He could rescue us from hell without even inviting us to be **partakers of the divine nature**.

- It shows how deeply God loves us and wants to share His life with His people.

What has God's children escaped?

God is above and beyond the **corruption** of this world. It should also be that way with those who are the **partakers of the divine nature**.

- The **corruption that is in the world** expresses itself **through lust** — the ungodly desires of this world.

v5 – What should the partakers of God's divine nature be doing?

Once we are made spiritual sons and daughters, we should be growing. And growth in the Christian life doesn't just happen to us. We are supposed to *make every effort* (give *all diligence*) to our walk with the Lord.

v5-7 – What should we seek to add to our faith?

Goodness (virtue, NKJV): We begin our life with God with **faith**, but faith progresses into **virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love** — love being the capstone of all God's work in us.

- *Add to your faith*: Literally in the ancient Greek, *lead up hand in hand*; alluding to the *chorus* in the Grecian dance, who danced with joined hands.

How do we come by these godly qualities?

These are not things that the Lord simply pours into us that we passively receive. Instead, we are called to give **all diligence** to these things, working in partnership with God to **add** them.

- Be intentional about pursuing them
- Seek God's help with them

v8 – What do these qualities reveal about our Christian walk?

If we have these things, and **abound** in these things, it is evident to everyone that we are not *ineffective and unproductive (barren nor unfruitful, NKJV)* in our **knowledge** of Jesus.

Why does being *ineffective and unproductive* often characterize the lives of many Christians?

They have these issues because they lack in their knowledge of God, that is, knowing Him relationally in an increasingly fuller and deeper sense.

What does it mean that these qualities should *abound (NKJV)* or *be in increasing measure (NIV)*?

Some may feel good that these qualities are seen in us from time to time. But Peter says they should **abound** in us.

v9 – What should we recognize about Christians who lack these qualities?

Those who lack these qualities have “eye trouble.” They are nearsighted, unable to see God, only ourselves. This makes them virtually blind, showing they have **forgotten** that we were cleansed from their past sins.

Why is nearsightedness a problem?

It is the same affliction unbelievers have... no vision for eternity. Having an eternal perspective avoids many consequences even in the here and now.

Why is forgetting we were cleansed from past sins a problem?

- Guilt keeps us from having the abundant life Jesus came to give us.
- Not remembering the great cost it took to make possible the forgiveness of our sins keeps us from being grateful.

v10 – Can we be sure God has called us to be His?

Yes, we can be sure that God called us, and that we are His elect. It is by doing **these things** spoken of in 2 Peter 1:5-7 (*faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love*).

- As we see these things in our life, we know that our lives are becoming more like Jesus. It shows that we

are being *conformed to the image of His Son* (Romans 8:29).

Can't unbelievers also exhibit these godly qualities?

Certainly, but the “**these things**” Peter wrote of are matters of the heart, and should be evident in anyone *born again*.

- If we are called as the elect, we are born again — and if we are born again, it shows in the way that we live.

What does it mean to stumble?

To act like an unbeliever in the world; to make a bad decision without any regard to an eternal perspective.

How may we keep from stumbling?

In pursuing these godly qualities, we keep from stumbling.

- Continual growth and progress in the Christian life is the sure way to keep from stumbling.

What is election?

It is God choosing us to be His children before we were even born.

If only the elect will be in heaven, why make disciples?

God commanded us to... He wants us to participate in what He is doing both now and in eternity.

Is there a significance to calling being listed before election?

While our election happened before our calling, from our perception, we were not aware of our election before we were called.

v11 – Why should we seek to grow in our Christian walk?

Peter here reminded his readers of the great reward of a **calling and election made sure**. They would enter heaven gloriously, not *as through fire* (1 Corinthians 3:15).

What should we want our entrance into heaven be like?

Will you enter it, saved so as by fire, or to receive a reward?

- Will you hear from the Lord, “*Well done good and faithful servant*” or not? (see Matthew 25:14-29)

Will you come unrecognized and unknown, or be welcomed by those to whom you have been a blessing?

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- The knowledge of God comes to those who are called.
- The called will be partakers of God's divine nature.
- Adding godly qualities to our saving faith is evidence of our saving faith.