



2 Peter

Steady on Course

Living in the Promises

2 Peter 1:1-4

Message #1 of 7 – S696

Sermon given on JULY 17, 2016



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living in the Promises

2 Peter 1:1-4

Opening Comments

- Turn to **2 Peter 1**
- Today, we begin a new series through the second letter from Peter – **Steady on Course**
- In Peter's first letter to the church in Asia Minor, he focused on the destination of their journey
- Because the journey was difficult, wanted them to see clearly that they were headed somewhere, and that somewhere was amazing – heaven
- Here in his second letter, probably to the same group of people, his focus changes
- In his first letter, the threat was coming from outside of the church – persecution for being Christians
- In this letter the threat is coming from within the church – false teachers
- We'll get into some of the things they were teaching as we progress in the series
- Peter is concerned that these false teachers will steer the believers away from a true faith that leads to God and His blessings
- One of the things I enjoy are reality shows where people are placed in survival situations
- They placed in a jungle and then need to make their way out
- Typically, they have very little in the way of equipment to guide them and help them
- And regularly they will make a decision to go in a direction. Only after some time discover that there is an obstacle in their way that they could have avoided if they had gone a different direction
- False teachers and teaching makes it harder to choose the right directions in life
- And Peter, under the inspiration of God, the Holy spirit wants us to know how to choose the best path

- The key verse of **2 Peter 1:3**

...His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...

- And Peter's desire for the people who read this letter, including us is summarized in the last verses of the letter **2 Peter 3:17-18**

You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

- Peter wants them and us to be steadfast, a word which he uses in several forms in this letter
- In the case of the church Peter is addressing, the false teachers were coming into their church
- They taught a different gospel than the one Peter and Paul and the other apostles taught
- But they were subtle and crafty, and gifted at deceiving the unsuspecting
- If you make this your church home it is unlikely that we will allow false teachers to come in
- That's not really the greatest threat is to a modern Christian
- For us it will more likely come through our mobile devices, computers, and televisions
- We need to know how to stay on course, how to be steady or steadfast against the onslaught of false teaching and doctrines
- That's what Peter wants us to get out of this
- And Lord help me, that is what I am going to give you as we study this letter together
- Peter wrote this shortly after 1 Peter and shortly before he was martyred – about 67AD – probably from Rome
- A rough outline for the letter
- Chapter one focuses on knowing God and Christ through His revealed Word
- Chapter two is a warning against false teachers and their devilish doctrines
- Chapter three is a reminder that God has already told us that He is going to send Jesus back – the Second Coming

- That's it for an introduction
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **2 Peter 1:1-4**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living in the Promises**
- Let's look at Peter's greeting
- **2 Peter 1:1-2**
- Peter says some radical things in these two verses
- First, he identifies himself
- 'Simon' was the name he was born with – 'Peter' was the name that Jesus gave him
- This a 'who I was, and who I am in Christ'
- Two titles, 'bondservant' – by choice – chose to be a servant of Jesus – 'apostle' – appointed by Jesus
- Then who the letter is addressed to 'those who obtained like precious faith' = those who have the same faith we do
- Then the source of that faith, 'the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ'
- Not something we did for ourselves **Titus 3:5**
...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...
- Verse 1 ends with a radical statement, 'our God and Savior Jesus Christ'
- The Greek grammar of that indicates that both God and Savior are referring to Jesus
- Peter is calling Jesus God – Peter wasn't only one
- You might remember Thomas didn't believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead
- Jesus showed up – look, hands, side **John 20:28**
And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"
- The first thing we need to do if we want to be steady on course

- Acknowledge and believe that Jesus is God, and make it personal, like Thomas did – Jesus, you are my God – say it with me – out loud!
 - Verse two opens with the common greeting, ‘grace and peace’
 - This is not a trick question, who wants more grace and peace in their life?
 - Peter says the better you know God and Jesus, His grace and peace are not just increased, but multiplied
 - One of the themes of the letter is the knowledge of God and of Jesus
 - Peter opens the letter with that thought, and ends it with the same thought, and refers to it regularly throughout
 - I think Peter thinks it is important that we get to know God and Jesus, what do you think?
 - He refers to this in verse 3 also
 - **2 Peter 1:3**
 - God’s divine power, the power that created and sustains this universe, has given to us all things
 - Notice that ‘given’ is in the past tense – not future
 - We are not waiting for these things, they are ours today
 - What things – the ‘things that pertain to life and godliness’
 - God has already given you everything you need to be steady on course
 - He has already given you everything you need to finish well
 - Everything you need to live a life that glorifies God, blesses others, and grows in faith
 - Paul said something similar **Colossians 2:9-10**
- For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**
- Our problem is not that we are lacking something from God, it is that we do not know how to access what he has already given us
 - Peter tells us that we access everything that God gave us for life and godliness ‘through the knowledge of Him’
 - That word knowledge = ‘epignosis’ = precise and correct knowledge
 - This is why false teaching and doctrine is so dangerous to us
 - As Christians we are exceedingly wealthy spiritually
 - And we have much to lose if we wander from a true knowledge of God

- Many Christians are impoverished spiritually because they have accepted what the world is telling them, instead of what God promised them
- It was this reality that inspired Paul to write **1 Corinthians 2:2**
For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
- Our greatest prayer ought to be that we would grow in our knowledge of God and Jesus
- Not only does knowledge of God and Christ unlock everything we need for life and godliness
- Peter goes to say it unlocks something else
- **2 Peter 1:4**
- It is estimated that there are over 30,000 promises in the Bible
- **John Bunyan**, writer of Pilgrim's Progress said
The pathway of life is strewn so thickly with the promises of God that it is impossible to take one step without treading upon one of them.
- God has given everything we need for this life and godliness
- Everything we need to be like Christ is already ours
- And with that truth is the promise that God has given us 'exceedingly great and precious promises' so that we can live the life He created us for
- We unlock those promises through an intimate, precise, and correct knowledge of God, Christ, and the working of the Holy Spirit
- I was going to read off a bunch of promises but decided for the sake of time to print it out for you
- But let's look at one **2 Corinthians 12:9**
And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- To fully unlock the promises in this verse, I need to know and understand God's grace, strength, and power
- I need to understand intimately how God operates in my insufficiency, weakness, and infirmities
- The better I know Jesus, the more powerful a verse like this becomes
- It releases power in my life that sustains and carries me through whatever comes into my life

- Each verse on this list is like that, get to know God better and the power of these promises is released into your life through faith
- There is a promise in the middle of verse 4 – ‘through these you may be partakers of the divine nature’
- Peter is not saying that we will become divine, like the Mormons believe
- Other words for ‘partaker’ = associate, partner
- By growing in our knowledge of God and unlocking His promises to us, we experience the very nature of God
- This happens through the operation of the Holy Spirit **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

- If you are not experiencing the working of the Holy Spirit in your life, get to know Jesus better, find His promises for you and your life
- Peter closes this section with another promise ‘having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust’
- One of the promises on your list, Romans 6:14, says we are no longer slaves of sin
- It is the promises of God unlocked by a knowledge of Him that lifts us out of the mud and muck of this world
- This world is getting increasingly difficult to navigate
- There are so many distractions like Pokemon Go drawing us away from getting to know God better
- And there are daily tragedies like the Dallas shootings and the terrorist running over men, women, children, babies in Nice, France
- And the world is preaching gun control, or race equality, or waging war on terrorism
- The answer to all those things, as well as to the issues of each of our lives, both great and small is simple – we need more of Jesus, the world needs more of Jesus
- If you want to be steady on course, get to know Jesus better and better, and stand upon His promises, and invite the Holy Spirit to work in your life to make you more like Jesus

- Amen–Pray

God's promises to keep us steady on course

1. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 6:14
2. He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9
3. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13
4. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4:7-8
5. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*. 1 Corinthians 10:13
6. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9
7. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:34
8. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me. Psalm 50:15
9. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. John 6:37
10. Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28
11. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:12

These are just some of thousands of promises in God's Word. Make it a part of your daily devotions to identify at least one promise in the Bible. Meditate upon it and allow it to become a part of the knowledge of God that keeps you steady on the course that God has determined for your life.