

Text: 1 Pt 2.2-3

As I'm thinking about 2 Peter, one thing that I don't think we talked about much in introducing the book was the theme.

1 Peter is an exhortation to Christians who are undergoing suffering.

2 Peter is almost "Peter's Last Will and Testament."

Peter tells us that he is soon to lay aside his earthly dwelling:

2 Pt 1.13-15 I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,¹⁴ knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.¹⁵ And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

What do you suppose a pastor would like to say to his people if he knew he only had a short time to remain with them?

I am sure there are many themes one could imagine, but Peter's theme is quite appropriate, I think. His objective is to prepare them for his absence by promoting growth and exposing false teachers.

What could be more appropriate than that?

Satan is relentless in his attacks on faith (and on the faithful). If outright persecution will not sway people, what about subtle distortions of truth taught by persuasive teachers?

We need to think that context as we work through 2 Peter. Two things will overcome it: a deepening spiritual maturity and a clear-eyed view of false teachers.

Today, we are still in the beginning of Peter's second epistle, but even in his greeting, Peter stirs up our spiritual growth.

Read 2 Pt 1.1-3, text 2-3

I've called this message:

Grace and Peace Multiplied

How are "grace" and "peace" multiplied in a believer's life? By true knowledge. Our message will focus on what that means.

I. The sphere of growing Christian graces (2)

A. A word on structure

1. Our translation puts a semi-colon at the end of v.2, some put a period
2. The issue comes about because there is no main verb in v. 3, or v. 4 — do they go with v. 2 or with the following vv.?
3. A bit of an even split among my commentaries, but NAU, ESV, KJV all have v. 3 connected to v. 2
4. One commentator says the verses are meant to do double duty, bridging the gap between the greeting and the first exhortations
5. In any case, the shared word: “knowledge,” v. 2, v. 3 makes something of a connection

B. A normal greeting expanded

1. Grace and peace are typical first c. greetings
 - a. Grace (χάρις, *charis*) is the Gentile greeting
 - 1) Comes to have a technical meaning in Christianity
 - 2) But Greeks meant “everything good to you” or “joy to you” or something like this
 - b. Peace is the Jewish greeting (Heb: *shalom*)
2. Peter wants his readers to experience this “multiplied”
 - a. The verb is in the *optative* mood, a wish
 - b. Commentators call it a “prayer-wish” — Peter prays for the multiplication of grace and peace to his readers

C. The multiplying meant in a specific sphere

in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

1. Peter wants them (and us) to grow in knowledge (“true knowledge” v. 3)
 - a. The word for knowledge has an intensifying preposition added to it (but doesn’t always mean something different from ordinary knowledge)

- b. The wish of Peter must be seen in light of the danger of false teachers
 - c. False teachers offer false knowledge
 - d. Peter wants his readers to have true knowledge
 - e. Esp. he wants them to experience multiplied grace and peace in the true knowledge
2. Knowledge of God and Christ, not just an education!
- a. It is in the knowledge of God and Christ where grace and peace lie

Note: God and Christ are seen separately here

“These blessings become ours as we get to know God intimately: by reading His Word and abiding in Him. The false teachers could offer nothing better than this.”¹

“God cannot be rightly known except in Christ.”²

Mt 11.27 “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

II. The gift of maturing Christian graces (3a)

As all things to us His divine power (the things pertaining unto life and piety) hath given [YLT]

- A. The Lord himself gives what is needed to grow in grace
 - 1. The verb “hath given” comes last in the phrase (in Gk)
 - 2. But the source of the gift is the Lord’s *divine power* — from the great God to his people

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 2 Pt 1.2.

² John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Galaxie Software, 2002), 2 Pt 1.1.

“The word typically implies the granting or ‘gifting’ of something without compulsion, constraint, or necessity. Some of the secular usage suggests that it was especially used of the gifts of kings and gods. In other words, it is a magnanimous gift, always carrying ‘a certain regal sense describing an act of large-hearted generosity’ (Strachan 124).”³

B. The gift is “everything necessary” for life and godliness

1. No one needs anything more from God to grow spiritually
2. All the resources are available:
 - a. Scriptures
 - b. Prayer
 - c. Church (pastors and people)

C. The object of the gift is the progress of spiritual life

1. Life = salvation
2. Godliness = sanctification

“‘Godliness’ (*eusebeian*) is linked to life because the latter is not gained without the former. Eternal life is not merely the experience of bliss but also involves transformation, so that believers are morally perfected and made like God.”⁴

III. The instrument to grow Christian graces (3b)

A. Peter wanted his readers to grow in knowledge: knowledge is the instrument of growth

1. Notice the translation “true knowledge”
2. The emphasis is on accurate, orthodox, biblical knowledge of the One who called us

³ Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Peter,” in *James, 1, 2 Peter, & Jude*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 1992), 234.

⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 291–92.

Either Jesus or the Father or all the persons of the Trinity, individually and collectively, are comprehended by “Him”

B. The motivating power of the true knowledge is the virtues of our Saviour

1. Glory: the “splendor and majesty”⁵ of his divine being
2. Excellence (KJV “virtue”): “goodness magnified”
 - a. In Christ, it focuses on “the beauty of his goodness”⁶
 - b. For us, both glory and excellence spur us on...

His glory and excellence call us, and the more we know them, the more we want to imitate them.

Conclusion:

How well do you know God? How well do you know Christ?

The preparation for false teachers (the “heretic antidote”) is the true knowledge of God.

You have what you need to grow. (Scriptures, Prayer, Church)

May God multiply grace and peace in you as you grow.

“When we go to the multiplication table, we not only multiply by two and by three, but we can multiply by a hundred, we can multiply by ten thousand. Oh, that God would thus multiply to us the grace and the peace that he has already given to us!”⁷

⁵ Schreiner, 292.

⁶ Schreiner, 293.

⁷ Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 2 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 2 Pt 1.2.