We Have Everything We Need

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[0:00] Open your Bibles with me to the book of 2nd Peter. It's going to be back in Elvades with you all.

I hope you enjoyed your Christmas break, but I've missed you dearly on Wednesday nights. And you are officially, if you started school today, officially over halfway done with the school year. Closer to summer, baby. One more step closer to summer. So tonight we're beginning our series through the book of 2nd Peter. We'll be covering verses 1 through 4 this evening.
We looked at 1st Peter last spring, so I thought it would be helpful to look at 2nd Peter this spring. Peter's writing to the same group of Christians, same group of churches that he wrote the first letter to, so these churches that are scattered throughout Asia Minor.
But there's been a problem in these churches. False teachers have arisen from among their own ranks.
[1:03] And these false teachers have come from their own. They've grown up in this church, so to speak. They became Christians under the ministry of these pastors here. And now they themselves have started to teach false doctrine.

They've started to bring in destructive heresies. And one of their most destructive teachings that Peter zeroes in on in his letter is they deny the bodily return of Christ.
So we believe that Christ died for our sins, was buried on the third day, was raised in accordance with the scriptures. He's ascended to the right hand of the Father, and one day will come again to judge the living and the dead, as we sang about just this evening.
And these false teachers denied that Jesus would come back again, even though he promised that he would. They thought he was not going to return in the future.
And so that was their biggest doctrinal, that was their biggest theological problem. They also had another corruption that they brought in. It kind of goes hand in hand with that. They thought it was okay to pursue sin.
[2:15] And these two things go hand in hand, because if you deny that Christ is coming again in judgment, there's no accountability for how you live this life here and now. And so these false teachers themselves were incredibly immoral men.

They taught false doctrine, but they also lived false lives. And so if we could summarize all of 2 Peter in just a few words, Peter's message is that we as Christians need to believe in the return of Christ and live lives of godliness while we wait for him.
We as Christians need to believe in the return of Christ and live godly lives while we wait for him. What you believe is incredibly important.
Because what you believe determines how you will live. If you believe wrongly, you will live wrongly. If you get Jesus wrong, you will not live a life that is pleasing to him.
What you believe determines how you live. And so this is why our church is riveted to God's word. We need to know what the Bible says so that we can live a life that's pleasing to him.
[3:39] If you believe wrongly, you will live wrongly. And these false teachers are a perfect example of that. They deny something that's essential to our faith, and so they live in a way that is completely false to what Jesus calls us to be.

And as Peter is kind of attacking these false teachers, as he's exposing them, all he's doing is really reinforcing something that Jesus himself said.
Jesus talked a lot about false teachers, and one of the places he talked about them is in Matthew 7, verses 16 and 20. And he's talking about these false teachers, and he says you will recognize them by their fruits.

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And so in other words, these false teachers are going to come among you. They're going to be wolves dressed in sheep's clothing. They'll look like shepherds, but they'll talk like wolves. And the way you'll recognize them is because their life will not be in step with what Christ has called his people to be.
And so false teachers will always have a corrupt life. This is how we can recognize them. They may go different paths in their corruption. They may pursue money or sex or power or prominence, but there will always be, in a false teacher's life, unrepentant, grievous sin.
[5:01] This is how, this is one of the ways we can recognize them. And so this semester we're going to talk a lot about false teachers because Peter spends over half of this letter talking about false teachers or addressing their life or what they've been teaching.

And this is going to be good for us, I trust, because I think sometimes we can be in a bubble, which is a little bit of a good thing. We belong to a healthy church. People who are committed in it are reliable and solid and trustworthy.
But the tendency for us can sometimes be, okay, false teaching, like I can see that being a problem back then, but is that really a problem today? Yes.
There's a reason why every New Testament letter, except for one, mentions false teachers or false teaching. This was a problem in the early church, and in God's wisdom, he's provided God's word for us in the New Testament.
To go to war with false teaching. This was going to be a problem as long as the church exists on earth. And what makes false teaching so dangerous is that it does not come from the outside.
[6:14] Now the world will try to deceive us, the world will lie to us, but the world does not pretend to be Christian. False teaching is so dangerous because it comes from inside the church itself.

It comes from people that you thought were reliable. It comes from people that you did learn from, that may have claimed to be a Christian even before you were alive. And they begin to deviate from the path.
We need to be on alert to false teaching because as is the case with these churches, these false prophets arose from within these churches.
And so the question for you is, do you know God's word well enough to spot a false teacher? Do you know the gospel well enough to notice when someone is deviating from it?
If you don't, you're susceptible to being deceived by some of these false teachers if they were to arise within our church. And so this letter, though it's combative, though it's aggressive towards these false teachers, is incredibly helpful for us and we need to be prepared to contend for the faith like Jude calls us to, to make a defense for what the scriptures teach.
[7:37] And the reason Peter's writing this letter is obviously to combat these false teachers, but he's also about to die. And we'll see that, he spells that out in the middle of chapter one.

We'll see it in a couple of weeks. He's about to die. And he wants these churches to be able to continue on the path of truth after he's gone. And so what we have here in this letter are the last recorded words of Peter.
These are his last words. And when someone knows that their time is near, when someone knows that they're saying or writing their final words, they speak about things that are the most urgent to them.
They speak about the things that are most important to them. And what we have in this letter were the most important things to Peter. Who Christ is, living lives that glorify God, and protecting the church.
Those are the themes that dominate this letter. We'll have two main points tonight. The first one is simply the greeting. The greeting.
[8:43] We see this in verses one and two. As is the case with most of the New Testament letters, there's a personal and formal greeting to start the letter off.

This one is fairly typical, but there are a few things that are worthy of our attention. So verse one says, Simeon and Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.
Simon was Peter's given name at birth. Peter was his nickname given to him by Christ. And Simeon is actually the Hebrew form of Simon.
And so Simeon or Simon was his given name. Peter is his nickname. And I was interested in that he calls himself Simeon here. In the first letter, he just called himself Peter. There's only one other time in the entire New Testament that he's referred to as Simeon.

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And that's in Acts chapter 15. And so some people will question the authorship of 2 Peter, saying maybe it was someone pretending to be Peter. But this here is just Peter's personal touch on this letter.
[9:48] It is Simeon Peter who is writing this. If someone was forging this, they would not call themselves Simeon Peter. And so this is a very strong mark of authenticity of this letter.

And he identifies himself primarily as a servant, or maybe your translation says, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. Now Peter was the ringleader among the apostles.
And so Jesus has 12 men around him. Peter is the leader of those 12. His name is always mentioned first in the list of the apostles in the gospel narratives. There's an inner circle within that 12 of three men, Peter, James, and John.
Peter is always listed first among those men as well. Peter's the spokesperson for the apostles as well. But look at how the primary way he identifies himself is.
A servant of Jesus Christ. He recognizes that he has no inherent authority within himself.
[10:53] Any authority that he has is derived from the authority of Christ. He is simply someone who obeys what Jesus says.

I'm a servant to him. I do what he tells me. He also identifies himself as an apostle. And an apostle just means the one who is sent.
And so he was officially sent by Jesus to proclaim the gospel. And so as an apostle, he's not just sharing his opinion with us in this letter. He is sharing authoritative truth coming from Christ himself, from the risen Christ.
And so Peter does have authority as an apostle, but all of this authority comes from the fact that Jesus himself commissioned him and sent him.
And he's writing, This word obtained is literally the word received.
[11:56] So to those who have received a faith of equal standing with ours. And the New Testament universally attests to this fact. Faith in Christ is itself a gift from God.

Faith itself is received, not achieved. Faith itself is given to us by God. It's not something we can earn. It's not something we can will ourselves to.
It's not something that once we have enough information, then we can make a decision. This faith itself is given by God. And when you think about how this applies to my job as a pastor, or your job as a Christian to share the gospel with other people, maybe you have people in your family or in your friend group who are not Christians, I cannot make someone a Christian.
I cannot make anyone believe, and neither can you. And we can sometimes get in this rut where it's like, if I can just give them enough good arguments, if I can just say it well enough, they'll believe. But that's not true. All we can do, all I can do, is preach the word, share the gospel, and pray.
[13:20] And that's actually doing a lot. That's what the Lord has called us to. That's faithfulness. But salvation itself is God's work. Salvation itself is a gift from God.

And so I can't manipulate anyone into being saved. If I wanted to manipulate someone into making a superficial decision, I could do that, but that's not the same thing as salvation. Salvation itself is a gift from God.
And now look at how he describes these Christians. They have received this faith that is of equal standing with ours.
Peter is saying, Peter is saying, these Christians all throughout Asia Minor have a faith that is equal in rank and equal in class to the apostles.
And so Peter is saying, I'm writing to you as an apostle, but you guys have a faith that is of equal standing with ours. And so these Christians, these average, ordinary, normal Christians in Asia Minor have a faith that is on par with the apostles.
[14:29] How can Peter possibly say this? Peter saw Christ. Peter saw his glory. Peter saw him after he was risen. How can these people actually have a faith that's on equal footing with his?

Because Peter is again emphasizing, none of us has done anything to earn this standing. None of us has done anything to earn this faith.
Peter is a Christian and Peter is an apostle because God was gracious to him, because Christ had mercy on him. And so these Christians have a faith that's equal in rank and class with the apostles. And all of us who have faith in Christ are also in this faith that is of equal standing with the apostles as well. Now, how have they received it?

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By the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The source of this saving faith is not in themselves.
[15:35] It's in the saving righteousness of Christ. Now, it's interesting that it doesn't say that it was received by the grace of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, or by the mercy, or by the love of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Why does he say righteousness? Because Christ promised that those he died for would be saved. And so he is righteous to save those who have faith in him.
He is righteous to keep his promise to those who turn from their sin and place their faith in him. And look at how he describes who Jesus is.
He calls him God and Savior. God and Savior. And now the New Testament is always telling us that Jesus is God.
But it usually does so indirectly, by showing us his power over creation, by showing us his power in working miracles, by quoting the Old Testament. There are only a very few references where it says just straight up, Jesus is God, and this is one of them.
[16:45] Peter says he is our God and Savior. He is God and man. He is God because he created us. He is our Savior because he died for us and paid for our sins on the cross.

And then Peter prays to conclude this greeting in verse 2. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. They've experienced this grace and peace already in salvation.
And Peter's praying that what they've already begun to experience, they will continue to abound in, that they will continue to be multiplied in this experience.
And how does this growth in grace and peace happen? In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The way you grow in grace, the way you grow in peace is through a deeper knowledge of our God and of his Son, Jesus Christ.
Now when we think about grace, grace is free, unearned favor. And so it's really a one word summary of everything that God has done for us in Christ.
[17:54] It's his free, unearned favor. Peace is a result of grace in our lives. And so we have peace with God because of what Jesus has done and we have peace with one another as that's worked out in our lives.

And interestingly, by combining these two in this greeting, Peter's borrowing from a Jewish greeting and he's borrowing from a Greek greeting. The Jews would greet each other by saying shalom or peace.
The Greeks would greet each other by saying tyrain, which is peace or grace to you. And so Peter's saying grace to you and peace. May grace and peace both be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
This relationship we have with Christ is personal, but it requires us to know him. It requires us to believe rightly about him.
And this knowledge isn't just knowledge about him, it's knowing him. Just because you can tell me the facts of the gospel, just because you can tell me that Jesus was a real person and that he died on the cross does not mean that you believe that message.
[19:08] The demons believe all of those details. True faith is this knowledge of Jesus himself and we know him through his word.

And so this greeting, verses 1 and 2, really highlight major themes that Peter's going to cover throughout the rest of the letter. He's going to continue to come back to faith and righteousness and knowing Christ and grace.
And if you look with me at the very last verse, chapter 3, verse 18, Peter ends exactly where he began. He says, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So that's first, you go back to chapter 1 of 3, those are the greetings. Secondly, we see Christ's power and promises.
Christ's power and promises. In verse 3, we see Christ's power. It says, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.
[20:25] And when we read life and godliness, think eternal life and god-centeredness. Life is eternal life, godliness is god-centeredness.

And so Jesus has given us everything through His power for eternal life and for a life focused on God. When we think about godliness, think about loving the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

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That is a life of godliness. It's a life that's centered around who God is and what He's called us to do. Now who is the He in verses 3 and 4?
It just says His divine power. And our tendency might be to think of God the Father here, but the nearest reference back up in verse 2, the last name He's mentioned is Jesus our Lord.
And so in verses 3 and 4, the His and He's referred to Jesus Himself. And so Jesus' divine power has granted us these things.
[21:31] And that word power is actually where we get our word dynamite from. So you think about dynamite, massive power, lots of explosions causing chaos, all things like that. Dynamite comes from this word used for His power.

Now dynamite isn't a super helpful image because it just kind of leaves chaos in its wake. Excuse me. Because it just causes explosions and destruction. And so think not so much of dynamite as much as like the engine in your car.
Your engine is a lot of explosions happening in a controlled way, in a good way. Don't be scared.
And so it's driving your car along. It's dragging it along through those explosions that are taking place, through that power that's generated from it.
And so it's Christ's power that has granted to us all things. Everything you need for life and godliness has been given to you by Christ.
How? Through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence. It's through knowledge of Him that He grants this to you.
[22:46] And this truly is eternal life. In John 17, 3, Jesus said, this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

And so eternal life isn't just a blissful paradise in the future. Eternal life is transformative here and now in this life. This life breaks into the present age and begins to make us like Christ.
And we pursue Him through knowledge and this is a lifelong pursuit. So I want you to write this down if you're taking notes. Christ's power gives us what He commands of us.
Christ's power gives us what He commands of us. And so this power enables us to live for Him.
And there's a great book from church history called Confessions written by a guy named Augustine.
And it's a really a prayer summarizing his life.
[24:02] And in that book he says, Lord, give what you command and command whatever you will.
And so what he's recognizing is I don't have the ability to obey your commandments.

So you have to give me the power to obey what you command me. And if you give me the ability to obey it, you're free to command me to do whatever you want from me.
And a prayer like that is birthed out of verse 3. We have absolutely everything we need. You don't need to look anywhere else for resources to live the Christian life.
If you know Christ and continue to pursue Him, you have everything you need. And here's where Satan will lie to you. Satan's lie from the beginning has been your life would be better if you had blank.
Fill that blank with anything. You're a Christian. I thought a Christian should have more joy. Maybe you're missing something from your life.
[25:14] You're following Christ and you have to give up all this joy and all this pleasure in this world. Wouldn't your life be better if you had this? And when we think back to Satan's very first temptation, this is exactly how he tempted Eve.

Satan convinced her that she did not have everything she needed. Satan convinced her that God was holding out on her, that he had withheld something from her that she needed.
God and so we in our trials and in our difficulties can be tempted to think that God hasn't given us what we need, that he hasn't given us enough to navigate this life or to become Christ-like or to have joy in this life.
This verse shows us that God did not save us and say, alright, good luck, see you in heaven. He continues to be with us and he has given us everything we need.
He's provided everything for us. If you've ever gone on a vacation where there's something that's all inclusive, whether it's a cruise or an all-inclusive resort, one, you're lucky.
[26:28] Two, all-inclusive means they provide everything. If you can just get there, they've got the food, they've got the place to sleep, they've got the entertainment, yada, yada, yada, they've got everything. It's all included in this price.

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If you can just get here, all the rest is included. And if you're a big back like me, I only think about the food. I mean, I'm eating like six or seven meals a day, baby.
And, thanks for sharing. They've got everything you need. They provide everything. And so with verses like this in verse three, Christianity is all-inclusive.
Jesus has given you everything you could need. Anything you need to live a godly life that's pleasing to him, Christ has provided for you.
But Satan and his false teachers will always play on this feeling that we're missing something from our life. Maybe it's money, maybe it's influence, maybe it's joy, maybe it's happiness.
[27:31] They will always exploit that feeling of emptiness that we have. And so we need to remember and take verse three to heart that Jesus has given us everything we need.

And it's from him who's called us to his own glory and excellence. Jesus has savingly called us to experience his glory and his excellence or his moral virtue.
So we see Christ's power and in verse four we see Christ's promises. promises by which, so by his own glory and excellence, he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.
When you think of Christ's promises, when you think of God's promises, these are critically important to us as Christians. promises. The promises of God carry along the story of scripture until you read of multiple covenants happening throughout the Old Testament and then the new covenant culminating in the New Testament.
These promises or these covenants carry along the timeline of history, they carry along the biblical story, but these promises also carry us along as well. We need to know what Christ has promised us because these promises sustain us to heaven.
[29:01] They put wind in our sails on our journey toward being with Christ. He's promised to save us. He's promised to sanctify us. He's promised to return again and bring us into everlasting life with him.

The promises of God are critically important. There's a missionary by the name of Adoniram Judson who was a missionary to Burma, which is now Myanmar, and he was a great missionary because he was a Baptist.
but he went there to share the gospel, preach the gospel among these unreached people. What he did was particularly dangerous because the people he went to preach to were cannibals.
People warned him against it, you can't go. They will literally eat you, you can't go. He goes, learns the language, and begins preaching the gospel to them.
Something he repeatedly came to over and over again was the promises of God. God has made promises to us. That was the main theme of his preaching. Finally, the people had had enough of him, so they were going to cook him and eat him.
[30:15] They strapped him to a stick, and we're going to roast him over a fire like a rotisserie chicken. As he's strapped to that pole before they put him over the fire, the chief gets in his face, says, what do you think of your God now?

And he said, my future is as bright as the promises of God. And with that just unflinching, no fear of death, the chief cancels the whole ceremony and believes in Christ.
And I'm not saying that that's always guaranteed to happen, but in that particular instance, the promises of God not only sustained Abner and Judson through a great trial and a great difficulty, the promises of God also convicted this chief and brought him to salvation.
Christ has given us precious and very great promises so that through them, through these promises, you may become partakers of the divine nature.
This does not mean that we will become gods. This doesn't mean that we ourselves will become divine. The word that Peter uses here is a word used to describe what something is like, to describe characteristics.
[31:36] And so he is saying we will be like Christ. We will be morally perfected like Christ. We will not sin anymore when we see Jesus because of the promises that he has made to us.

and will participate in his divine nature having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
The path to God's presence is the path of purity. Christians should be defined as those who have escaped the corruption in the world because of sinful desire.

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Or that word could literally be translated as lust. a desire, an intense desire to pursue sin. In saving us, Christ has gotten rid of the chains that Satan had on us.
He has set us free. And so in one sense we have already escaped this corruption. We are servants of Christ and not servants of sin any longer.
[32:45] And so if you're a Christian, your desires have been transformed, they've been changed. And so sin should not be dominating you anymore. That doesn't mean that you'll no longer sin.

That doesn't mean that you won't still struggle with sin and temptation. What that does mean is you have a new master in Christ. And so if your life has been marked by slavery to sin and you claim to be a Christian, there's a problem.
And this could be one of two problems. Either you are a Christian and you're not being obedient to Christ or you're not actually a Christian.
Christ died to set us free from our slavery to sin. And so do not play with sin. Sin will lead you to hell.
We've been set free from sin and need to put it to death and we have everything we need to live a godly life. And so if we have everything we need to live a godly life and yet we still sin, where's the disconnect?
[34:06] What's going wrong with us? Well, we've been set free from our slavery to sin, but we still have sinful temptations and desires arising from within us that we need to put to death.

So the path of the Christian life is declaring war on your sin. And if I were to ask you, what's the most important thing in a war?
In a military conflict, what's the most important thing? And I think we all say number one would be highly skilled, highly trained soldiers. I think that's clearly number one. Shortly behind it would be supplies.
You can have the best, most highly trained military force in the world. If they don't have the supplies they need, they will soon be defeated. And so supply chains are incredibly important when it comes to war.
power. And in our life as Christians, we are engaged in a battle and we have everything we need through Christ's power and promises.
[35:18] And so we need to live like it. We need to live boldly and courageously. We need to live confidently. We need to pray with conviction, prayers like, Lord, use my life in whatever way you want to glorify yourself.

love. And that's a scary prayer because it could take you to some dark places in this world to be a light. But that's a prayer that God loves to answer.
And it comes from the conviction that we have everything we need. And so wherever Christ calls me to go, he will equip me for the task. So we need to live boldly and courageously, live confidently to pray with conviction and we need to kill our sin.
Do not hide your sin. Do not coddle your sin. It will destroy you. And we as Christians, through Christ's blood, have been set free from slavery to sin so that we, like Peter, can identify ourselves primarily as servants of the risen Christ.
Lord, pray for us. Father, I pray that you would impress on our hearts tonight that we have everything we need. in the difficulties in life, it can be very easy to become discouraged and to think that you are holding out on us and that you haven't given us what we need for the day.
[36:41] Lord, give us our daily bread. Lead us not into temptation, but help us to glorify and honor you for your sake. We thank you for Christ.

We thank you for his power that's granted to us everything we need. And I pray that we would live like it. I pray for students who are small groups that would be edified and helped and encouraged as they reconnect after Christmas break and further discuss some of these truths we see in this passage.
In Saint Christ whom we pray. Amen. min."

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