

In just two weeks we have seen a lot in our study of 2 Peter. After Peter introduces himself and gives his credentials, as it were, he tells us something very important – that we have the same faith as Apostles. We are not 2<sup>nd</sup> class Christians, just because we never saw the Lord Jesus Christ. I said this was an incredible statement – we have the same faith and the same spirit of those first Christians!

He then pronounced a blessing on his readers – and if you remember, they are the Christians of the dispersion – those who had to flee because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He then tells them the privileges and blessings that they have as Christians – the beginning of which we looked at last week in 2 Peter 1:3: *“as 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...”*

What he is saying is that by the power of God we have been given all things for life and godliness – that is, God has given us, through His Word, all that we need to live our lives here on the earth that He has created and in the world to come. We have all this because God has called us to Himself – it is God, who through the power of the Holy Spirit caused us to come to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The 1<sup>st</sup> two sermons will be available on St. Timothy’s website this week, and if you don’t have a computer and need a copy, let me know.

As we continue today we will just be looking at verse 4: *“by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

We see that verse 4 is really a continuation of verse 3 – so, if we read them together we have: *“as 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, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

We see three things here, which we will look at for the next few minutes. Through Him who has called us through glory and virtue, we have been given exceedingly great and precious promises, that we are partakers of the divine nature and that we have escaped the corruption of the world, through lust.

Again, remember that Peter is talking to those Christians in the mid-60’s A.D. But, he is also talking to us. Just as those 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians were recipients of the great and precious promises of God, so are we.

Now, people have come up with various totals on the number of promises in the Scriptures – one commentator came up with the number of 8,810 promises in the Bible. Another commentator says every verse – all 31,000 plus are promises. Maybe that is why Peter says we have been given *exceedingly great and precious promises*. You really didn’t have anything else to do for the next month or two, did you?

Obviously, then we cannot look at all the promises of the Scriptures, but I’d like to us to consider briefly a one of the main promises of the Scriptures and what follows from it. In my mind, one of the most precious promises is that which God made to Abraham, when he called him. That promise is summarized in *“I will be your God,*

*and you will be my people.”*

We know this as the Covenant of Grace. We also know initially that this promise referred to Israel as the people of God. However, today, the Christians are the people of God, so this promise applies to us – *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”* All the other promises of God flow from this promise that God made to Abraham and us.

To me, this can only be described as a awesome statement. Awesome is a word that is used a lot today. In my mind, it should only be used of God – because only He is an awesome God – *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”*

Think about the implications of this for a moment – we belong to God and through the Lord Jesus Christ we have a personal relationship to God. This is only true of the Christian.

But more than that – what we have – and this is why it is an awesome statement – is that we have the creator and sustainer of the Universe – the one who created the Heavens and the Earth ... the one who created all the planets and the galaxies ... the one who created all the stars and knows them by name – we have this God coming down to us on a personal level.

Again, as I have said on other occasions – all religions have a list of does and don'ts in order to gain access to God, or their definition of God. It is from man to God or their concept of God. Whereas Christianity is different – it is from God to man. It has God saying: *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”* It also has God sending Jesus Christ, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity to die for the sins of those who believe in him, and hence, we then have that relationship to God – where He is our God and we are His people.

It is because of what God has done – come down to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and called us to Himself by faith, that we can have this personal, intimate relationship with God. He is our God and we are His people. It is any wonder why this is considered one of the most precious promises of the Scriptures!

Think about the implications of this – we can call God Father. Today is Father's day. One of the closest relationships that God has blessed us with is that of Father to his child. It has been about a year since my Father died. And I have to tell you, that barely a day goes by that I don't think of him. It could be song, or a smell, or a person – something inevitable reminds me of him – because we had a long, close relationship.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ we can have a close relationship to the God. He is our Heavenly Father. And think of what flows from that – all part of the promises of God. We can pray to Him ... we can call on Him in time of need ... we can worship Him, as we are doing this morning. It is because of that 1<sup>st</sup> promise: *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”*

The bottom line of it all is that we belong to God! This one of the *“exceedingly great and precious promises”* that we have been given.,

There are multitude of other promises that flow from this one promise — for example, we know that we have forgiveness of our sins, we know that we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we know that we have a place reserved in heaven for us, we know that He will never leave us forsake us and I could go on and one.

But as we continue in our verse we see the result of this relationship to God – *“that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...”*

Let me say right off, that this does NOT mean that we become gods, as some cults and religions teach.

What this does mean is that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior we have received the Holy Spirit and we become sons of God. John 1:12 says: *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”*

Romans 8:14-17 says: *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”*

These are some of the privileges that we have based on the promise of God of *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”* We are sons of God ... we have been adopted into the family of God and we are joint heirs with Christ of the all the blessings of salvation. This is what it means to be *“partakers of the divine nature.”*

And one of the things that makes this possible is in the concluding words of verse 4: *“having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

The world is corrupt ... it is sinful. Anyone who denies that either doesn't live in the real world, or doesn't know what they are talking about.

But because of the promise of God of *“I will be your God, and you will be my people.”* we have escaped the corruption of this world. We no longer belong to this world. Remember what we saw in 1 Peter that our inheritance is in heaven and that we are just pilgrims of this earth passing through on our way to heaven.

This is what we have waiting for us. All as a result of the promises of God.

So, as we think about what God has given us, let us remember His exceedingly great and precious promises, especially the fact that He is our God, and we are His people and what that all means to us, as we have seen today. Praise be to God!