

Equipped with Hope
Lesson Text: **2nd Peter 1:4-14**
Bible Background: **2nd Peter**
Devotional Reading: **Psalm 130**

Keep in Mind: *“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.” (2st Peter 1:3 KJV)*

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **EXPLORE** biblical ways to lead a more fruitful life; **FEEL** empowered to live effective and fruitful lives; and **DEVELOP** a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In Focus

In today’s lesson, we will see that faith is not equivalent to blind optimism. To live godly lives, we must not succumb to laziness; instead, we must take full advantage of the godly resources available to each of us as believers.

Focal Verses

2nd Peter 1:4-14 ~NKJV

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through desire.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacked these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

I. The Lesson

The People, Places and Times

Persecution of Christians: After the death of Jesus, His disciples were hated and persecuted. Jesus predicted men would “kill and crucify” them (Matthew 23:34). After Pentecost, many believers were threatened, arrested, beaten, and killed (Acts 4:1–3, 21; 5:17–18). The mob’s murder of Stephen and the ensuing wave of violence toward Christians caused them to flee Jerusalem. While this persecution led to the scattering of the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 8:1), this scattering caused rapid expansion of the church within other nations.

Herod Agrippa 1st ordered the brother of John, Apostle James’s execution. The Roman emperor Nero (A.D. 54–68) is most noted for his virulent persecution of Christians. Historians record that Nero falsely blamed Christians for setting a great fire, which destroyed a quarter of Rome. It is widely believed it was Nero who ordered that Paul be put to death.

Saul of Tarsus was a primary persecutor of Christians. Prior to surrendering his life to Christ, Saul “created havoc” on believers, sending men and women to prison (Acts 8:3, NKJV). After his conversion on the Damascus Road, Saul’s name changed to “Paul. He became a target of persecution himself (13:50; 2 Corinthians 6:3–5; 11:23–25; Galatians 5:11).”

By the time Peter wrote this second epistle, Paul may have been martyred, and the church was undergoing fierce persecution. Peter understood persecuted believers longed for knowledge and peace; accordingly, he mentions it in his opening salutation to them. He knows it is only through their intimate relationship with God and His Son Jesus they may experience the grace and peace they sought.”

Background

“Apostle Peter wrote 2nd Peter with a twofold purpose: (1) to warn Christians about the false teachers who were misleading them away from the foundational truths of the faith; (2) to exhort them to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of Jesus Christ—to grow in their faith. Peter knew he did not have long to live and therefore, shared his heart with the believers. He wanted to warn them about what would happen when he was no longer with them and remind them the truth of God’s Word is unchanging.

II. In Depth

1. **Promises to Empower (2 Peter 1:4).** Throughout the Old and New Testaments, there are constant affirmations of the promises made and kept by God. At the dedication of the Temple, King Solomon reminded the people the period of political peace they were enjoying was a result of God keeping His promises. Solomon declared, “Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised” (1 Kings 8:56).

When Peter speaks of promises in this chapter, he uses the Greek word *epaggelma*, which means a promise made voluntarily, rather than the result of a request.

Peter explains the “exceeding great and precious promises” made to His people are a direct result of the natural goodness of God (2nd Peter 1:4). Just as it is natural for us to breathe, it is natural for God to bless those He loves. God also desires His greatest creation be participants in His divine nature and separate from the corrupting forces of the flesh. Peter’s three-year walk with Jesus made him a personal witness to some of these promises. Peter learned to appreciate the faithfulness of God through His Word and through personal experience. Present-day Christians can be assured of the promises of God through regular and prayerful study of His Word.”

2. **Spiritual Growth (2nd Peter 1:5–9)** Our union in Christ and our participation in His divinity provide us with the resources we need to live godly lives. This is not to say, we become gods; instead, we are confident we have the living God within us. Peter is careful to note that as Christians, we must give “all diligence” or do our part, too (2nd Peter 1:5). Our spiritual development is an ongoing process. The idea that our faith, left unattended, will grow is ludicrous.

Our faith is like a seed. Faith is what brings us to Christ in the first place. We have become part of Him, we want our faith to blossom and grow so we can reflect the very character of Jesus. Just as seeds need watering, our faith needs nurturing in the Christlike characteristics Peter lists in 2nd Peter 1:5–7: “virtue” (goodness), “knowledge”

(understanding), “temperance” (self-control), “patience” (endurance), “godliness” (goodness), “brotherly kindness” (love toward humankind), and “charity” (godly love).”

During this period, Peter’s emphasis on knowledge is important because a great portion of this epistle addresses the false teaching undermining the church. Peter understood the only protection the believers had against the false doctrines cropping up was “knowledge,” or a firm grasp of the truths of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (2nd Peter 1:3, 5–6). As we grow spiritually, so too should our knowledge of spiritual truths. Not only is knowledge critical to Christian maturity to “the development of a godly lifestyle, it is, as Paul claims, our “sword of the Spirit,” an integral weapon in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:17).

Equally important is Peter’s emphasis on “love” or “charity” (2 Peter 1:7). The Greek word used here is agape or godly love. This is the highest form of love and the one expressed by God Himself when He “so loved the world, He gave his only begotten Son” (from John 3:16). Love is essential to the Christian community’s growth, maintenance, and work.”

- 3. Confidence in Our Calling (2nd Peter 1:10–11)** Peter now directs his attention to exhorting believers to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). Peter is urging the believers to have confidence in their salvation. This confidence is based on living to exhibit Christlike characteristics. It should not be surprising that Christians who are not growing in faith will typically lack confidence in their choice of beliefs. It is not enough we confess Christ. We must grow in Christ in order to gain assurance of our salvation.

Peter’s reference to “an entrance ... ministered unto you abundantly” (2nd Peter 1:11) may be a description of the triumphal heavenly welcome that awaits believers who hold the course. Similarly, his reference to the “everlasting kingdom” reminds us that confidence in our calling encourages us to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (from Philippians 3:14). Christians who lack confidence in their calling cannot enjoy the promise of the “prize” of a glorious and eternal life in the presence of God.”

- 4. Remember (2nd Peter 1:12–14)** Peter now turns his attention from teaching and focuses on himself. All that he has said he also has learned for himself. It is not enough that believers learn; we must be willing to share, as Peter does. Peter stresses that he “will not be negligent” in presenting these learned truths to other believers (2 Peter 1:12). The apostle is probably about 60 years old when he writes this epistle. He may be recalling the painful time in his life when he was negligent in speaking on behalf of Christ and

denied even knowing Jesus (Luke 22:59–62). But Peter is not the spiritually immature apostle we first encountered in the Gospels. His priorities have shifted from self to Christ. In this epistle, it is a spiritually mature man who now emphasizes his solemn duty to witness and who seeks to “stir... up” the believers (2nd Peter 1:13).

Peter is thinking his death may be imminent when he writes, “shortly I must put off this tabernacle” (2nd Peter 1:14). Some scholars believe Peter may have been imprisoned during the time this letter was written. Although he speaks of his death, he is more concerned the believers be put “in remembrance” or be reminded of what he has taught them, after he is dead (2nd Peter 1:15). Because we know that the young disciple, Mark, was with Peter (1st Peter 5:13), we may assume Peter taught him and intended to have John Mark record these teachings. Mark’s record is what we now know as the third Gospel, or the Gospel of Mark. This theory is likely, considering Mark’s Gospel includes facts about Peter are not mentioned in any of the other Gospels.

III. Take Aways

IV. Closing Prayer



Our Read-Ahead for: 14 May 2023

“Equipped with Hope”

Monday: Full of Goodness and Knowledge (**Romans 15:14-21**)

Tuesday: The Beginning of Knowledge (**Proverbs 1:2-7**)

Wednesday: An Example in Self-Control (**Titus 1:5-9**)

Thursday: Enduring to the End (**Matthew 24:9-14**)

Friday: A life of Godliness and Dignity (**1st Timothy 2:1-7**)

Saturday: Love for One Another (**1st Peter 3:8-12**)

Sunday: Standing on God’s Precious Promises (**2nd Peter 1:4-14**)