

Ignite My Best Efforts

2 Peter 1:1-10 August 10, 2025

In 1747, after decades of piracy and privateering with the Spanish treasure fleet, Captain Amaro Pargo passed from this life to the next. He left his heirs a fortune of land and money. But in his last will and testament he spoke of a secret box kept in a cabin. Inside was silver and gold, pearls and precious stones. The will said that everything in the box was itemized in a book, wrapped in a parchment, marked with the letter D.¹ But, it was never found. Nor was the cabin. For centuries, hunters have sought the box or the book. Nothing was discovered at the Pargo estate or in the cave Amaro would often use to stash goods.² And so, it seems the Pargo treasure died with him.

2 Peter is the apostle's final testament to us. In chapter 1, verse 14, he says, "Jesus has made it clear to me that I'm about to die." His closing message is full of instruction and warnings and reminders. But here in the opening verses, he speaks to us of a great inheritance - a treasure he's hoping we don't just read about, but lay our hands on.

He says, "Here's the map that leads to *everything you need* for the *rest of your life!*" And after detailing the vast riches of Christianity, he says, "Make every effort to get this treasure."

In Amaro Pargo's story, the box is never found. The twist ending in Peter's story is that, if you're a Christian, you already have the treasure he's talking about. The box was delivered to you! You don't have to hunt for it, you simply get to inherit it, use it, and enjoy it if you are willing.

2 Peter 1:1 - ¹Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter starts right off letting us know what we have *received* from God. We've received a faith from Him. Now, does that mean that God gives *some* people saving faith while denying others that gift?

While there *are* those who hold to that position, the answer is no. God is not a respecter of persons. He's not willing that *any* should perish but that all would come to repentance. The Bible says that Christ is the Savior of *all* men, especially those who believe.³ Jesus said He would draw all people to Himself so they could see the Light and believe in it and become children of Light.⁴

In Ephesians, Paul says that a person is saved by grace through faith, it's the gift of God that is open to all who are willing to accept it. It's *not* that this saving grace is irresistible to some, where they *must* be saved whether they 'want' to or not and others simply don't get the gift. Instead, we hold to the doctrine of *prevenient* grace. That God, by His own power and through His own love for all

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaro_Pargo

² <https://www.timelinefy.com/events/62860>

³ 1 Timothy 4:10

⁴ John 12:32-36

the people of the earth, used His grace to free our wills so that we now have the genuine ability to choose whether we will receive God's gift of salvation or reject it.

Now here's what's amazing *on top of the fact* that God has given us this gift: Peter says we have received a faith *equal to his!*

We see characters in the Bible and are inspired by their stories. But there is no fundamental difference between God's saving work in *your* life versus Peter's or Paul's or any hero of the faith you love to read about. Different activities, but the same God working all of them in each of us.⁵

The Lord distributes to *each* of us a measure of faith⁶ so that we can function as part of the Body of Christ on earth. There may be a difference in *calling*, but not in *quality*.

Every Christian has equal access to God.⁷ Every Christian has equal standing and equal privileges.⁸ Not every Christian has equal *experience* because God's plan for our lives is unique. The situations we find ourselves in are personal. But God does not withhold power and grace from you and give extra to someone else because He thinks they're better than you. In fact, Peter says:

2 Peter 1:2 - ² May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

God's desire is that His grace and peace be filling your life to the fullest possible measure.⁹ Grace and peace which cover the mistakes of the past, our present choices and situations, and our questions about the future.

Peter says grace and peace come *through the knowledge* of Jesus Christ. Now, as humans, we tend to gravitate more toward the experiential. We want to *feel* first. We want to see tangible proof before we believe. But that's *not* the Biblical route to the power of God overflowing our lives. The Lord says if we want more grace and peace for life, the way to get it is to *know* Jesus more. To really know Who He is, what He has done, what He has commanded, what He has said to *us*.

The knowledge of God is a central Biblical theme.¹⁰ That's *why* God sent His special revelation - the 66 books of the Bible - so that we can *know* Him and continually grow in our knowledge of Him.

But, this is important: It's not just *academic* knowledge. It's not just intellectual knowledge. Yes, we *must* have intellectual understanding, but with the head knowledge must come heart knowledge. With the intellectual there *must* also be the personal and relational.¹¹

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

⁶ Romans 12:3

⁷ Frank Gaebelin, et al. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 12: Hebrews through Revelation*

⁸ Thomas Schreiner *The New American Commentary, Volume 37: 1, 2 Peter, Jude*

⁹ *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*

¹⁰ Gaebelin

¹¹ Schreiner

Someone will say to you, "Do you know So-And-So?" And you'll say, "Yeah," but you only know that they exist and maybe their name. But do you have a *personal, relational* understanding and connection with that person? It's two very different definitions of "knowing."

I once met Alice Cooper. I spent a few hours with him and ate pizza with him. But do I *know* him? I know a few things about his history and what God has done in his life, but we have no relationship.

The question here is: Do you *know* Jesus in the way He wants you to know Him? You see, Jesus often said to people, "He who has ears to hear, let him listen and understand." But the understanding He wanted was never just technical, factual understanding. Biblical understanding, Biblical *knowing*, is to hear and to obediently conform. To hear what God has said, to believe it, trust it, and change accordingly.

2 Peter 1:3 - ³ His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

So, not only has God given us *salvation* as a gift, on top of that, He sent us a treasure chest of power so that we might have *everything required* for life and godliness.

How do we get it? Once again, through the *knowledge* of Christ. That we go to the Word of God, see Who He is and what He has done - that we realize more and more what God has saved us from and what He saves us for. That we grow from the basic knowledge of, "God exists," to then, "I'm a sinner who needs to be saved," to then, "I *can* be saved through faith in Jesus, Who will give me everlasting life," to, "Oh, I have a *new* meaning and purpose in life and I have a hope and a future," to, "Oh I have callings and opportunities *right now* to live out the power of God in the world around me," to, "Oh now I know how God wants me to live this life." We *grow* in knowledge.

And let's not pass by without looking squarely at this phrase: *Everything required*. Everything! Now, there are *temporal* needs in life. You need air and food and clothing. But there is no question in your life that God's word cannot answer. There is no problem you face that God's power is insufficient to equip you. The question is not in God's *competence*, but in our *confidence*.

2 Peter 1:4 - ⁴ By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

So not only has God sent us salvation and grace and peace and everything required for yesterday, today, and tomorrow - not only do we have this life-changing spiritual information and all the helpful *navigation* for the lives we lead - God has also given us access to the Divine nature. He connects us to the power of His Spirit. And He *promises* to keep granting us that access.

AND, on top of *all* that, there's yet another item on the list here. By the good grace of God, we now can *escape* the corruption of sin in this world. Meaning, God will repair what's broken in us and protect us from the decay of sin and death which dominates the human experience.

One of the major works God wants to do in your life is to *purify* you. This world is totally polluted by sin and that pollution spreads to our thoughts, our attitudes, our natural desires. So God says, "As part of My salvation treasure, I'm going to heal your heart and purify you." He *rescues* us from that corruption, as if we're being healed of a deadly disease - because sin *is* a deadly disease.

Human beings generally have a yearning for purity, don't we? If you are served a milkshake and when it comes to you there's a big, thick hair in it, *most* people send it back. We want an *unpolluted* milkshake. The same goes for the air we breathe and the water we swim in, our glasses' lenses.

Now the Lord says, "I plan to purify your heart, your mind, your worldview, your reactions, your desires, everything, so that you can enjoy more and more of the goodness of God and the glory of His will in your life." Think of inheriting an estate free of thorns or termites or mud puddles.

2 Peter 1:5a - ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort...

So, this gift God gives us is an incredible deal. We have the book, listing what's inside, and that's not even *all* of it. Peter's last will and testament should make us say, "How do I lay hold of all this?"

That's what comes next. Peter says, "Ok, *here's* how you put this power into practice. Here's how to not just have these riches in an account somewhere, but actively in your life."

A number of years ago we got new bikes for the kids for Christmas. They opened up their other presents and then we said, "There's one more present in the garage, why don't you head out there to see it." And then the kids had the choice to take hold of that gift or ignore it.

The Christian life is a life of movement *toward* God. It isn't a passive faith, it's cooperative. A faith that is *exercised*. A faith that takes the yoke of Christ on and then moves with Him, as He leads.

Peter says up front, "Make every effort." That means we should diligently dedicate ourselves to...

2 Peter 2:5b-7 - ...to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, ⁶ knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, ⁷ godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Benjamin Franklin famously made a plan for himself called the "moral perfection" project. He listed 12 virtues he thought were important and then would focus on them, one at a time, and try to master each one. He showed a friend the list and the friend said, "You realize 'not being proud' isn't on your list, right?" So then Franklin upped it to 13 virtues.¹² There was no charity or benevolence

¹² Walter Isaacson *Benjamin Franklin*

on the list. But, even with his own, custom made list, he failed his own test. Franklin said he was surprised to find himself “so full of faults.” In the case of humility, he settled for the *appearance* of it.

Peter’s list isn’t like Franklin’s. It’s not a connect-the-dots, go-in-order list. I don’t try to master endurance and only *then* move on to godliness. So don’t worry about the order. Instead, look at the person described here. This, as John Stott noted, is what a productive Christian life looks like.¹³

Notice it *starts* with faith, it’s culmination is love. In-between, we see any aspect of life addressed.¹⁴ Our behavior toward God and others and ourselves. Both internal and external virtue. Constant growth in heart, in head, in hand, all flowing from God and conformed into the image of His love.

There where he says, “supplement your faith,” he doesn’t mean we need new doctrines that are outside the Bible. It means we add *doing* to our *knowing*. A faith that works. A faith that operates.

Now remember verse 3: You have all you need for godliness. You don’t have to go out and discover mystical, hidden things that only a few Christians have ever figured out. *You have it!* You have love in your heart. You have the fruit of self-control. Will you use it?

2 Peter 1:8 - 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you know you can be a *useless* or *unfruitful* Christian? That’s a frightening thought, but one we should take seriously. The truth is, God expects and is looking for fruit in our lives. This is a major theme in the parables. Are we growing spiritual fruit in our lives? It’s not good soil He really wants, it’s the harvest *from* that soil. What good is all my knowledge and my spiritual gifts and God’s providence and all the promises God gives me if I don’t bear fruit in my life?

Instead, as God’s grace multiplies to me, my spiritual fruitfulness should increase toward Him.

2 Peter 1:9 - 9 The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.

The person described here cannot see the world around them and they certainly can’t see what’s ahead.¹⁵ And they have lost touch with why they were created and why God saved them.

Why were you saved? You know, there was a day when Jesus healed 10 lepers. They all went off and only one returned to thank Him and to worship Him and to follow Him. Jesus said, “Where are the other nine? Why don’t they give God the glory He deserves?”

¹³ John Stott *The Message Of 2 Peter And Jude*

¹⁴ Schreiner

¹⁵ Stott

If you are saved, you were washed, you are sanctified - set apart for certain purposes. You are called and specially gifted and appointed to be a part of God's ongoing work.

2 Peter 1:10 - ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble.

Peter is *not* suggesting that if we don't "Christian" hard enough we'll lose our salvation. Stumble here means to suffer misfortune or to experience a reversal in progress.¹⁶

So, here's Peter, at the end of his race, about to finish. And he wants us to finish well, too. He says, "Listen, *here's* the treasure that's been left for you. Here's how you not only experience power and purification and purpose and provision and all you need, but this is also the way to live out your faith so that you make forward progress, not *backward* regress as you run your race." Backward is never the right way.

I was on my high school basketball team briefly. I was terrible, very rarely played in the games. Finally one game I was put in. And *right* after I went on the floor, they passed me the ball, I had a fast break, I ran and put in a layup, uncontested! It was uncontested because I ran the wrong way and scored for the other team.

That's *not* how we want our spiritual lives to go. So Peter sent us this reminder - and that's what it was, a *reminder* of what we know is true. A call to wake up and lay hold of what God has so graciously, so generously provided.

¹⁶ Gaebelien