

Called, Collect

2 Peter 1:3-4 January 18, 2026

Phone calls used to be awfully expensive. Who here remembers putting off long-distance calls until nights and weekends?

The younger among us may have never *seen* a payphone in the wild, let alone used one. But in the era before everyone had a cell phone with flat monthly fees, you might find yourself needing to make a call, but without much change in your pocket. In such a case, you could place a *collect* call. When you did so, the person on the other end would be notified that someone wanted to talk to them, but they would have to agree to pay the charges for the call.

For decades, AT&T had a monopoly on collect calls, but in the 90's, other, smaller companies were finally allowed to provide collect calls to customers.

Once there were options, when a person wanted to make a collect call, they would pick up a phone, dial 0, and an operator would ask them *which* company they wanted to use. That's when a phone company called KTNT had a stroke of genius. They opened collect call provider subsidiaries under the names, "I Don't Care," "I Don't Know," "It Doesn't Matter," and even "No Me Importa."¹

All well and good until you find out that KTNT charged 50% more for collect calls than AT&T. And just to connect you, they'd add a surcharge that would cost more than \$20 today.

In our text this morning, Peter reminds us that we have been *called* by God. And it's a *collect* call - not because we *pay* to accept it, but when we answer, we are able to *collect* amazing, spiritual supplies from God. Great and precious promises. Power to live a *Godly* life that pleases our Savior.

The Lord *could* charge us for the connection - saying if we want His help or His attention or His intervention in our lives, it will cost *this* much for the first minute and then a little more every minute after that. But Peter explains that *through* this call, God lavishly gives to us moment by moment.

Last week we began our study with his opening greeting in verses 1 and 2. We've already seen some of the wonderful things God has done for those who believe Him and receive salvation. As we begin verse 3, Peter dives right in to his message. And from the get go it is dense and urgent.

It took Margaret Mitchell a *decade* to write *Gone With The Wind*. Peter doesn't have that kind of time - he's about to be martyred. He has a *lot* to say and very little time to say it.

The themes of his letter break up right along with the chapter divisions. In chapter 1, Peter talks about the character of the Christian life and commands us to live it well. In chapter 2, he switches to warning us about the corruption of false teachers, but then comforts us with the reminder that

¹ <https://nowiknow.com/the-i-dont-care-collect-call-scam/>

God knows how to rescue us from their attacks. And in chapter 3, Peter closes by addressing the coming of Christ and correcting those who say He won't.

Today we continue what he started in the intro - a discussion of the *nature* of the Christian life. What does it mean to *be* a Christian? This faith that Peter said we've received - how does it operate? How should it look and feel day to day? What does it really accomplish *other* than getting us out of hell and into heaven? Is it really anything more than fire insurance?

That's what chapter 1 is about. How Christianity is the richest, most empowered life you could possibly have. How this faith can change *everything* about your life experience. As Peter explains it, we sense his breathless excitement. Verses 1 through 11 are one long sentence in the Greek.²

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.

Let's start on the phrase: Him who called us. Every person listening today has been *called* by God. He calls to you because He loves you. He calls each of us in two ways: Into *faith* and into *fellowship*.

That first call, into faith, is God reaching out to you with the Gospel, asking you to believe in Him so that He can save you. He calls us to come to Him, to be born again, to turn from our sin and receive His robe of righteousness. The Revelation illustrates it as God standing at the door of your heart, knocking, and that God hopes you will hear His voice calling, answer the door and let Him in.

But after you get saved, the calls continue. You're not only called to *faith* in Christ, you're called into *fellowship* with Him.³ Fellowship means sharing and participation and close mutual association.⁴

Do you screen your calls? You look at the phone and think, "I can't do this conversation right now." Peter reminds us that it is very important to answer these calls - not *just* the first, but all that follow. In verse 10 he's going to tell us, "Make every effort to *confirm* your calling."

We most often think of calling as the kind of service we do for the Lord. And we do want to respond to God and understand the tasks and assignments and opportunities He gives us as His disciples and as members of His Body on the earth. But we want to remind ourselves of this *fundamental* call of God into a life of *faith* and into a life of *fellowship* with Him.

When we *answer* God's call, we're met with this reality: "His divine power has given us *everything* required for life and godliness."

By the way - Peter once again identifies Jesus Christ as God Himself. His *Divine* power. If you deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, you are *not* a Christian.⁵

² Dick Lucas & Christopher Green *The Message Of 2 Peter & Jude*

³ 1 Corinthians 1:9

⁴ *Dictionary Of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*

⁵ 1 John 2:22-23

Power is one of Peter's favorite words.⁶ Here he references the power that *only* God has. And *what* does the all-powerful God do with His limitless, unrivaled power? He uses it to *give* things to you.

In just 3 verses, we've already seen the incredible generosity of God. We *received* a saving faith from Him. He *gives* us grace and peace in multiplied abundance day-by-day. In verse 4 we'll see He's *given* us promises. And here, Peter says God has given us *everything required* for life.

Now wait, Lord. I've got a wishlist with quite a few un-checked boxes. Does Peter mean we always get what we want in the *physical* life? Does he mean that if we have *enough* faith, God will always give us enough health, enough money, enough comfort, enough success, enough of whatever we'd really like to experience in our day-to-day lives?

That's *not* what God promises. He gives us everything required *spiritually* speaking. We have every *spiritual* blessing in the heavens in Christ.⁷ That *doesn't* mean God ignores empty stomachs or cancer diagnoses. God loves and cares for every sparrow that falls and He cares much more for you. You are invited and *commanded* to cast your cares on the Lord *because* He cares for you.

The life Peter is talking about here is the *everlasting* life offered by Jesus. The Lord will not withhold the peace you need, the grace you need, the joy you need, the wisdom you need, the endurance you need. He *gives* it by His power. The Christian faith means you receive everlasting life now.

But notice: We don't only receive everything you need for *life*, but also for *Godliness*. Christianity is not only about what we *experience*, it is also about *exercise*. The *outworking* of this faith.

When people hear the word Godliness, many think of it as a list of things we *don't* do. But before understanding what God *doesn't* want us to do, we should recognize that Godliness is actually about how we *please* God. It's a term that means "worshipping well."⁸ It refers to our reverence for God, our loyalty to God - that we do our duty in our relationship with Him.⁹

If you're a Christian, Godliness is not optional. It's needful. It's *required*. God has called us and says, "I'm calling you into fellowship with My Son, Jesus Christ - a growing relationship of love and devotion." How can we say we're answering that call if we think, "It doesn't matter if I please God. It doesn't matter if I live out Godliness. I don't care about worshipping well?"

But the second reason Godliness is so necessary is because of what we'll find in chapter 2: False teachers who were coming into the Church with immorality. They came teaching *totally* different standards of what Christians should do. And their un-Godliness was destroying lives. They were exploiting Christians. They were robbing people of the good gifts God wanted to give them. Those who followed in their un-Godly ways were becoming enslaved to corruption. We *need* Godliness.

⁶ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

⁷ Ephesians 1:3

⁸ D. Edmond Hiebert *Second Peter And Jude*

⁹ Gene Green *Jude & 2 Peter*

Now listen to what Peter says: *Everything you need* today for life and Godliness has been *given* to you. You don't accomplish Christianity in your own strength. Instead, we learn what God has given and we live out of those resources.¹⁰ We have received grace upon grace from *His* fullness.¹¹ God has given you access to His limitless "bank" account and you can use it for your daily needs. You have continual access to *everything* required.

So, how do I actually draw from that account? How do I become empowered with the power I've been given? "Through the knowledge of Him who called us." Once again, it's about growing in knowledge. And, as we talked about last time, it's not just academic knowledge. It's intellectual *and* personal *and* relational. Studying, internalizing, and practicing what God has revealed in His Word.

Peter uses two different terms for knowledge in this letter. One refers to the fundamental knowledge that makes you a Christian. Your belief in the Gospel. The second term refers to the ongoing knowledge you develop as a Christian.¹² So, to get what I need for my life - whether my circumstances are clear or cloudy, in triumphs or trials, whether I'm a sinner seeking salvation or a veteran follower of Jesus, the way forward is through the *knowledge* of Christ. Because, in reality, the Lord has *already given* me what I need. I don't have to go *get* it. I *have* the Holy Spirit. I *have* grace and peace. I *have* all this and more. I don't need to grow in access, but in understanding.

At the end of the verse, Peter reminds us that the Lord accomplishes these things by His own glory and goodness. God is kind, He is compassionate, He is present with us. All that He does for us flows from the glorious goodness of His character and nature. We can cheerfully answer His calls because we *know* He is always good.

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.

What are the promises God has made to His people? Peter will focus especially on the return of Jesus Christ to rule and reign a new heaven and new earth in righteousness. But that is certainly not the only promise God makes to us.

Page through the Bible and you find many, many more. The promise of resurrection - that physical death is not the end, but that we will live forever. The promise of forgiveness and the cleansing of our sins. The promise to always give us a way out of temptation. The promise that He will never leave us. The promise that He hears our prayers. The promise to give us rest. The promise to work all things together for the *good* of those who love God and who are *called* by Him.¹³ Great and *precious* promises - yours and mine to discover and anchor our lives on.

¹⁰ Richard Bauckham *Word Biblical Themes: Jude, 2 Peter*

¹¹ John 1:16

¹² Bauckham

¹³ Romans 8:28

But God's promises are not only for a far off future. The accomplishment of His promises has already begun. Through them, Peter says, we share in the divine nature. Now, this does *not* mean that we become gods. What the New Testament teaches is that, as we answer God's calls to faith and fellowship, He then is able to transform our hearts and minds, conforming us into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. We become more and more *like* Him, until the work is finally completed and we are perfected and finished in eternity.

As we *know* God in a true, Christian sense, our hearts become purified from the evil desire that is endemic in this world. Evil desire - the sin nature - which corrupts and tears down and infects and pollutes our lives and the lives around us. The knowledge of God is the antidote to evil. It is the cure to the disease.

So, one day, Christians will be *perfect*. The finish line is when we pass from this life to the next. Meanwhile, we are continually being *perfected* on this side of eternity. Now, I'm not perfect. Neither are you. But Christianity means that we are able to participate in the moral, loving nature of Jesus Christ. In fact, we're *commanded* to live out that Godly holiness. We'll do so imperfectly, but we *can* do it. After all, we've received *everything* we need for life *and* Godliness.

Here at the end of the verse, Peter starts to set up what he's going to talk about in chapter 2. You see, the false teachers of the time were coming into the Church and were saying, "You don't need to live by *calling*. You can live by *craving*. Do what you want to do. Indulge your desires, even when they contradict the commands of God. Live according to human nature."

But human nature craves that which is in *contradiction* to the will of God.¹⁴ Being a Christian means being called *out* of darkness and into light. It means we believe that God is true and so we allow Him to change our nature to be like His. That we live by calling, not by craving, because when we answer God's call to faith in Him and fellowship with Him, we're able to collect the treasures of *true* life - eternal life - and all these other gifts Peter has been referencing.

Back when people used to get collect calls, you'd hear who was trying to reach you and then presented with a question: Do you want to accept the charges? God is calling. Calling you to *know* Him. Do you want to accept the promises? The advantages? The charges? If you answer, He has many things that you can start to collect - the things you really need to navigate this life and become who God made you to be.

Now, don't get me wrong - it *does* cost you something to accept these gifts God wants to give you. The faith we've received does require that we give our life to Jesus. That we turn from whatever direction we had charted for ourselves and follow Him in faith-filled devotion. It requires obedience, submission, confession, and surrender. But don't think for one minute that we're missing out on anything. God is calling. If we *don't* answer the call to know Him, we cut off the flow of all He wants to supply. So today, answer His call to faith and fellowship, and collect what He has for you. He has *everything* you need.

¹⁴ Hiebert