

## A Greeting to the Saints

2 Peter 1: 1-2

This second epistle of Peter is very similar in tone and intent to the second epistles of Paul. In large part, the second epistles were written to follow up on the first, and particularly to combat apostasy and false doctrine. Having written the first epistle, being moved by their suffering and difficulty, Peter now felt compelled to write to them in order to challenge their departure from truth, and address those who taught doctrine contrary to Scripture. The first epistle dealt with challenges from without, and the second one addressed dangers from within.

While we do face adversity from without, one of the greatest dangers the church faces today is the prevalence of false doctrine and universalism. In order to be all the Lord desires of us, we must build our lives and our faith on a solid foundation. The best approach to ensure such a foundation is to immerse ourselves in the truths of the Gospel. Sound, biblical knowledge is the best defense against apostasy and false teaching. When we know what the Scriptures teach, we can readily spot a counterfeit. Regardless of where we are in the journey of faith, we all need reminded of the fundamentals of the faith while being challenged to expand our knowledge of biblical truth.

Over the next few weeks, I want to examine the first chapter of Peter's second epistle as we seek to learn and apply the fundamental truth it teaches. As we discuss the opening [aspirations](#) within this chapter, I want to consider: [A Greeting to the Saints](#).

### **I. The Introduction Presented** (1a) – [Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ](#).

Here we find the opening remarks of Peter as he addressed the saints within the church, likely the same recipients of the first letter, scattered throughout Asia. He spoke of:

**A. His Person** – He began the letter by identifying himself as Simon Peter. No doubt those within the early church were familiar with Peter. He had quite a resumé, being one of the original apostles, walking with the Lord and being part of the “inner circle.” Most had likely heard of the struggles he faced during that time as well. While Peter held a strong personality, he also battled insecurity and doubt. He had taken his eyes off Jesus and sank beneath the waves while miraculously walking on the water. Having shared such an intimate relationship with Jesus, he had denied any association with Him during His arrest and trial. Peter had faced great spiritual battles, but he had overcome each of them through the Lord. Being able to relate to similar struggles, those who read these words would surely have been challenged and encouraged by them.

- As we read the inspired words, penned by these giants of the faith, we often fail to realize that they were human, just as we are. Peter and Paul struggled with doubts and fears. While I do not insinuate that we possess the faith or commitment they had, it is encouraging to know that we are not alone when dealing with adversities and hindrances to our faith.

**B. His Position** – Surely most were aware that Peter was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, he reminded them of his position in this opening statement. This speaks of “*one who was sent out or sent forth.*” It carries the idea of “*being a representative or an ambassador of the Lord.*” Along with the other ten (excluding Judas) and Paul, these men shared a common position – being apostles of Christ. Most generally agree one had to see the living Lord to be an apostle.

- As we will discuss in a moment, Peter was not guilty of throwing his weight around or having an attitude of arrogance regarding his apostleship, but he did expect the church to heed his words as one who had walked with the Lord and sought to deliver a word from Him. Those who received this letter would do well to honor Peter’s position and heed his instruction. We too must submit to the inspired Word, allowing it to guide and transform our lives.

**C. His Posture** – It is interesting to note that Peter identified as a servant of the Lord before he acknowledged his apostleship. It seems apparent to me that Peter felt his service to Christ took priority over being an apostle. Before he mentioned that he was an apostle, he admitted that he was nothing more than a servant of Christ – literally a bond-slave to his Master and Lord.

- We will lack influence with others and the power of God upon our lives apart from humility. None of us have anything to boast in other than the grace of God. We are what we are and enjoy our current position within the church due to His marvelous grace. Regardless of the position we hold, from the pulpit to the back pew, we are all servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are unwilling to submit to His leadership, willing to serve at His leisure, then we will not accomplish anything of lasting value within the church!

**II. The Association Described (1b)** – [to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.](#) Surely this encouraged the hearts of those who read these words. Peter reminded them of their association in Christ. He referred to:

**A. Their Faith** – Peter spoke to those who had obtained like precious faith. There are a couple aspects of that statement we need to consider. These had obtained a like precious faith. This has the idea of “*being received by allotment; to be given a share or portion.*” This was not faith they

had earned or even deserved. It had been allotted to them by the Lord. Through the abundance of His grace, He had provided their portion of faith.

- The choice of Peter's words paints a beautiful picture. These had obtained (been allotted and given a share of) *like precious faith*. This is the only time this word precious is spoken in the New Testament. This speaks of those who possess this faith, sharing a faith that is identical. *It is a faith like everyone else's, being equal in value, honor, and privilege*. He referred to saving faith here, not individual faith that varies. Those who are in Christ have been allotted an equal faith! Those to whom Peter wrote shared the same faith he possessed. God was no respecter of persons and allotted each an equal measure of faith. These were loved of the Lord as much as Peter. I am certain this brought great encouragement.

**B. Their Fellowship** (1b) – [to them that have obtained like precious faith with us](#). Peter reminded them that they were part of something greater than they imagined. They shared this precious faith with Peter and all the saints. These were never alone in their struggle and were included in the family of God.

- This had to bring great comfort to their hearts, knowing they were part of the fellowship of the saints. They did not face their trials alone, having the assurance of support and prayers from fellow believers. Surely this also served to challenge those struggling with doctrinal purity. Their actions and beliefs not only affected their individual lives, they affected the entire community of believers, throughout the world. (It has been said that membership has its privileges. I will agree with that, but it also comes with great responsibility, especially in the body of Christ!)

**C. Their Favor** (1b) – [to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ](#). Peter also reminded them of the abundant favor they had received in Christ. They shared like faith in a precious fellowship through the righteousness of God and their Savior, Jesus Christ. The blessing of being within the body of Christ, part of the church, had been provided through the grace of God. Their righteous acceptance came through the provision of God and the atoning sacrifice of His Son! Apart from God's grace, none would have enjoyed their current position.

**III. The Acquisition Desired** (2) – [Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord](#). Peter closed his greeting by revealing a desire for all to obtain. Notice:

**A. The Supplication** – Peter desired each of them to enjoy and possess the grace and peace of the Lord. We know that grace speaks of “*unmerited favor*.” Peter also desired they possess peace. This speaks of “*being bound, woven, and joined together with God and those within the body of Christ*.” Peace affords assurance, security, and confidence – knowing the Lord will care and provide for those who belong to Him. (I am thankful for grace and peace in my life.)

**B. The Multiplication** – Peter didn’t seek a small measure of grace and peace for the church. He desired them to have these in abundance. He prayed for grace and peace to be multiplied within their lives. Peter had experienced both in his life and desired the church to have them in full measure. (We could enjoy much more than we currently possess if we would only submit to the Lord and seek Him in our daily lives. He is able to provide all we need in abundance!)

**C. The Appropriation** (2) – Finally Peter revealed the means by which they would receive grace and peace in abundance – through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. This too is quite interesting. It speaks of “*an intimate acquaintance with God, possessing a thorough knowledge of His will*.” Bear in mind the focus of this letter. Peter sought to combat apostasy and false doctrine. What better way to overcome these dangers than an intimate acquaintance with God through a thorough knowledge of His will. As these grew and matured in their faith, better understanding the Scriptures, their likelihood of denying the faith or embracing false doctrine were significantly decreased. Intimacy with the Lord would enhance their faith and defend against heresy.

- This fundamental truth needs proclaimed from every pulpit and teaching lectern in the world. The church needs to develop and maintain intimacy with Christ. Walking in fellowship with Him, and abiding in His Word with an understanding of His will, would solve the problems found within the church. We need to make it a priority to seek an intimate relationship with Christ!

**Conclusion:** I think you will agree that we have discussed simple truths today. However simple they may be, these truths are very profound. If we would learn to practice what we have discussed, we would see a transformation in our churches and lives. I will admit there is room for improvement in my relationship with the Lord. Are there needs in your life? Are you walking with the Lord in a way that pleases Him? Do you possess this like precious faith? If not, come to Christ today. He is willing to extend this faith to you as well.