

## **Peter's Farewell Testament How Can I Know I'm Going to Heaven?**

**Intro:** For several months we've looked at Peter's first epistle in which he instructs God's people as to how to live in a hostile world. Before his death Peter blessed the church with a second letter that is also of great benefit.

It has the features of a genre of literature called "testament," that is, something written shortly before one's death for the benefit of those who remain behind. As Peter comes to the end of his life, there are things he wants God's people to remember, things that of paramount importance to them as disciples of Jesus.

The first thing Peter writes about is something every Christian needs. It is His answer to the question, "How can we know that we will enter the eternal kingdom?"

Though we've often studied the Christian graces of this text, it is also helpful to put them in the great context of Peter's theme. So let's take a big picture view as we look at this great paragraph tonight.

### **What God has done to call us**

*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Peter 1:2-4)*

#### ***He has given us the information we need.***

He has given us the knowledge of Himself. Peter begins with God, a God of glory and excellence (virtue). Through his power He has revealed himself to man through his word and in the person of Christ, so that we can have a true knowledge of Him!

In knowing him we have all things to have spiritual life and to practice true piety or godliness.

God has not failed to reveal anything we need to know to grow spiritually. His revelation is sufficient to guide us.

#### ***He has given us the motivation we need***

God has given us great and promises

The forgiveness of sins

He answers our prayers

His provision for every spiritual need

Eternal life in the world to come

These supply the motivation to leave sin and obey Him--"to escape the corruption that is in the world by lust."

***And so Peter wants us to see that God has done everything He can to save us; but he also wants the disciples to know that what we must do something to make our calling sure.***

**What we must do to make our calling sure**

*Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; (2 Peter 1:10)*

***There are things we must do in order to make certain that we are among the called and chosen.***

***First we must respond in faith to the gospel***

By faith we are justified.

In the introductory greeting Peter writes to those:

*who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ*

Peter wants us to understand that salvation is by grace, not works. That is it is God's gift and not merited by perfection. It depends not upon "works which we have done in righteousness" but rather "the righteous of our God and Savior Jesus Christ."

This is the heart of the gospel message. We are forgiven by faith in Christ. When we respond to the gospel our souls are purified and we escape the corruption of the world that comes by means of lust or evil desire. Have you?

We can never be considered among the called and chosen if we do not obey the gospel, no matter how well we might live. We haven't dealt with the issue of sin in our lives.

***Second we must supply or add to our faith the qualities that make us have the divine nature.***

*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. (2 Peter 1:5-8)*

For Peter the goal of salvation is to not only escape the corruption of the world, but to partake of the divine nature, i.e. put on the characteristic/qualities of God as He has revealed himself. The objective of salvation is "godlikeness"!

We might have expected Peter to say something like read your bible every day, pray, attend church. This is not to say that these are unnecessary or unimportant. They are means to an end--to produce the divine nature in us! And that gives a special emphasis to the phrase "in all diligence." We must do everything in our power to become the person God wants us to be.

But now with faith we must supply! "epichoregeo" (to supply a chorus) the qualities of the divine nature:

moral excellence--(KJV "virtue") a military term for excellence, particularly courage.  
knowledge--meaning self-evident, knowledge of God  
self-control--mastery of self  
perseverance--"to abide under", endurance in problems  
godliness--"well devoted", piety, personal devotion to God  
brotherly kindness--philadelphian, Care for brethren  
love--agape, seeking the highest good of others  
We have often spent sermons looking at each one and that is a worthy goal, but Peter's interest is to give us a portrait of the complete person God wants us to be.

***God is not looking for perfection, but rather conscientious growth!***

We will always need God's grace for our failures and short-comings.  
That's why salvation is by faith from beginning to end.  
However we cannot be people of faith and stay where we are. We must keep learning and growing.

### **Our response to God's provisions determines our assurance!**

*Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2 Peter 1:10-11)*  
***No one goes to heaven with a casual and lackadaisical attitude. Our response to God has serious consequences. When we don't supply these things...***

#### **We are blind**

*For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. (2 Peter 1:9-10)*

The first word means "blind", the second is the word the eye doctor uses when we can't see far way. We have "myopia", short-sightedness!

Perhaps Peter is saying this with reference to the past.

The person who does not continue to grow spiritually cannot "see" back far enough--to the time when he became a Christian and the blessings he received. He is "blind" to what God did for Him. He has forgotten "his purification".

Perhaps Peter is saying this with reference to the future. The person who is not adding to his faith the qualities of the divine nature is not looking far enough ahead--to heaven and the blessings that will come to the faithful.

#### ***When we do supply these things***

*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**We are useful.**

Those who are growing spiritually are useful to God (not useless to God).

A growing Christian is a Christian God can use!

**We are fruitful**

Just as we were called to God, attracted to Him by his glory and excellence; others now are attracted to Him through His qualities in us!

We are fruitful; our god-like life reaches out and saves others. But these things that bring blessing to others will at last also assure ourselves!

**We will never stumble!**

A promise that we will not apostatize!

Wouldn't you like to know that sometime in the future you will not quit serving God? Well you can know that if you commit yourself to God's plan for growth?

**Entrance into the eternal kingdom will be abundantly supplied!**

We are in the kingdom of God as Christians. But there is future aspect to the kingdom--the eternal reign of God in heaven. Entrance will be abundantly supplied! (Same word as v. 4, when we supply spiritual growth, God supplies abundant entrance into heaven).

**CONCLUSION: As Christians today we need Peter's parting words of assurance. Can we so live so as to be certain that we are called and chosen? Yes!**

**If we are confident of success, then we will not easy give up. Are you willing to make the changes you need to be sure?**