

# Life And Godliness

2 Peter 1:3-4

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and (virtue). <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

I believe that it can be said of most all people, that as they awaken each morning, though they may not verbalize it, their hope is that they will have a good day, a day filled with good things. And for those of us who are devoted followers of Christ, I believe that it can be said of us that we not only desire to have a good day, filled with good things, we also desire to have a day like that which is spoken about here, a day filled with “life and godliness”. And dear friends, you and I can do that! We really can do that! God has promised it to us here in these words. And the only requirement of us to have a day that is filled with “life and godliness” is that we reach out and receive it from God’s hand.

I know that that sounds too easy, too simple. But such is the mysterious interaction of “God’s will” and “our free will” intertwining together, God’s “foreordination” and man’s “free will” working together to bring about God’s plan.

As believers, you and I have already done the essential part, the foundational part. We have surrendered our hearts to Christ and we have received His salvation. But as we have reminded ourselves so many times before, salvation is only the beginning, the “doorway” into the kingdom of God. And too often, we get just safely inside that “doorway”, but then go no farther. And all through these scriptures our loving Father keeps inviting us to step on forward, to “move in” with Him, to bring all that we are and all that we possess with us, and to join ourselves with Him in His family; and to begin enjoying all the blessings and benefits of being a blessed child of God. As King David said in Psalm 27,

<sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

Is this not just the most wonderful possibility and opportunity that we can imagine, to live and “abide” continually in God’s presence. And should this not be the earnest desire of our hearts?

And again, it not only “can” be ours, it really already is ours. If we have Christ as our Savior, all we have to do is reach out and “receive” it. As these words of our passage tell us, this is a great and precious promise from God, that we can and will have “Life and Godliness”.

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and (virtue). (2 Peter 1:3)

Consider these two words for a moment, “Life and Godliness”. They truly do have within them about all that you and I could ever imagine and hope for as we go through each day and then on out into eternity.

I appreciate so much my Greek and Hebrew lexicons, where I can go and search the depths of meanings of God’s words; because when I do, I find that they are filled to overflowing with “rich” meanings that I would not otherwise know.

Here, this word for “life” is the Greek word “Zoe”. And it is filled with special inference and meaning about “life”, “life in its fullest”, “life given to us by God Himself”, “but life that must then be surrendered back to Him”, “life” lived not only in our mortal flesh but also “life” in an eternal spirit”.

Consider the account in Genesis 2 when God first gave “life” to man. You’ll recall that until He created man, God had simply spoken and creation came into existence, the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth. But with man, God chose to get more intimately involved. Listen to those words in Genesis 2!

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)

This is intimate and it is loving. In my imagination, I can see the Lord Jesus, (recall from John 1 that it was Jesus who created all things) who with great might and power had created everything that has been created. Then as He looked around upon the earth, He knew that it needed more. It needed to have “life” walking upon it, “life” of all kinds, but especially “life” much on the order of His own.

And so, reaching down, the Lord Jesus picked up a handful of dust, and with it He carefully began molding the features of the first man, Adam, the same features and attributes that He Himself would later take on as He would come to earth to redeem His beloved creation. And in His great wisdom, Jesus knew that flesh and blood alone would not complete a man, man needed to have “life”. And so, the Lord Jesus then cupped Adam’s face in His great hands and with great love He breathed into his nostrils

“the breath of life”, and Adam became a “living soul”, a “living soul” that would be from that first moment on forward, eternal.

And I can say without hesitation that the “life” that Jesus breathed into Adam’s nostrils was pure and holy “life”. How can that be so? It is because in those first moments, sin did not exist on the earth. Sin would come later. And so, Adam had a pure and holy heart, a pure and holy character, with none of the “evil desires” that would later come to him.

And being pure and holy, Adam not only had “life”, he had within him an inborn “godliness”, something that is no longer inborn within man today, but something that man can regain, if we truly want it. And that is the meaning of these words of today’s passage. Jesus can once again breathe His precious life into every man’s nostrils and we can again be the pure and holy “living souls” that Adam once was.

An unbelieving person will not comprehend these words that I am saying, because unfortunately the unbelieving mind is only able to perceive natural things, the visible and the obvious things. They look into the face of a newborn child, or of an 80-year-old man, and if they see breath, then they believe them to be “alive”. But we know better. We know that now all people are born into this life in a very “dead” condition. And if a person never invites the Lord Jesus to breathe His life-giving life into them, then they will remain forever dead.

But thanks be to God, for all of us who have taken that step, who have surrendered our lives to Christ, He has done exactly that for us. He has breathed His life-giving breath into our nostrils, and we have become “living souls”, truly alive. Some of my favorite verses that speak about the life that Jesus gives are,

<sup>10</sup> . . . I came that they (you and me) may have life and have it abundantly.  
(John 10:10 (ESV))

And

<sup>36</sup> "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36 (NASB))

And at the top of my favorites,

<sup>11</sup>And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. (1 John 5:11-12 (NASB))

Simply having breath does not mean that we have “life”. Life is more, far more than simply breathing. There is a “fullness” to life that must be present and the only way to have that “fullness” is to have the “life-giving breath” of Christ flowing through our lungs.

There is a popular contemporary Christian song being sung in a lot of worship services today that speaks of the “life-giving breath” of Christ. It is called “Breathe”, by Michael W. Smith. I love its words.

It speaks of Christ’s holy presence living in me, being the air that I breathe, and about me being “desperate” for Him. . . . Do you, right at this moment, have a sense of “desperation” for Christ and for His presence in you? Unfortunately, I fear that most Christians would have to confess that they do not.

Being such a literal thinker, my mind takes me back to one of those times when, as a young man at the beach, I was caught by an undertow and was deep under water and completely out of breath. I was “desperate” for a breath of air.

Another vivid memory was of a time when I was inside a building that was on fire and filled with smoke, with no air to breath. I quickly became “desperate” for air. And I did everything I could do to get out of that building and to find air to breathe.

That is the essence of the words of this song “Breathe”. In this world, yes, you and I are breathing air that fills our lungs. But God is making us to know all day every day that there is so much more to “Life” than just breathing this natural air. We need the “breath of life” that can only be breathed into us by the Lord Jesus.

And may I say that I can look around me at any crowd of people and see many, many of them that are “desperate” to find air to breathe, but can’t. And sadly, some of those are in my own family. Yes, they breathe their natural air, but their spirits and their souls are starving for the precious life-giving breath of Christ, their lifestyles show it, their habits show it, their behaviors show it, their crippled marriages show it, and on and on. They are desperately clinging to life, gasping for their next breath, but do not realize what they need to save them.

Folks, everything that God desires for us to be, begins with this one thing, the “life-giving breath of Christ”. We cannot go a step further without this blessed “breath of life”. But once we have it, the door is open to all of the next blessings that are found in God’s promises, the first of which is spoken about here, “godliness”. . . . Verse 3, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness”.

What does God mean and what is His purpose in this word “godliness”? The effects of “godliness” can be wide-ranging and have many applications, but its foundational meaning is found in the very character and person of God. “Godliness” is simply to be “like Him”, “like God”, but not just “imitation” of Him. “Imitation” can be helpful at times, but simple “imitation” is not enough.

The answer to finding how we can actually be “Godly” is found in these next words, the same words that we studied just a week or two ago, the “knowledge of God”. Verse 3,  
<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and (virtue). (2 Peter 1:3)

The word “godliness” has as part of its meaning, a devout and diligent effort and commitment towards having the very same kind of holiness that God Himself has. And yes, that is a very tall order, but listen . . . it is “commanded” of us. God tells us in 1 Peter 1 to “Be Holy as I am holy”. And the only means of us knowing what God’s holiness is to “look like” in us is through truly getting to “know” God. Verse 3 again,  
<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and (virtue). (2 Peter 1:3)

Recall in our earlier study that this word for “knowledge” is one that not only includes a “learned understanding” of who God is, but is one that is also “experienced” and “felt” and “comprehended” through a deep, intimate, abiding and loving relationship with Him, similar to the kind you would experience in an intimate loving relationship with your wife or husband.

So, in order for us to have “godliness”, we will need to have and experience an ever-increasing knowledge of who God is, His nature, His character, His will, and to allow His nature and His character to freely flow through us.

I know that these words can sound strange and foreign to our natural minds, that God’s Spirit would flow through our minds. But that is exactly what He will do and what is necessary, else we will simply do a “practiced imitation” of Him, of His principles and concepts, good things, but lacking His power.

And that is the reason why God gave us these next words here in verse 4, not imitation, but participation in His “Divine nature”.

<sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:4)

“Participation” in God’s divine nature is so much, much more and better than our simply attempting to imitate Him. And I need to say so much more about this “participation”, but my time has run short. I’ll hope to pick up from here the next time that we meet.

But before we close, may I remind us again that this “life and godliness” spoken about here really “can” be ours. And in reality, already is ours. If we have Christ as our Savior, all we have to do is reach out and “receive” it. I challenge each one of us to take this step, to “reach out” and receive God’s promised “life and Godliness”.

Write these words upon your heart . . .

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