

# Escaping The Corruption

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)

May I begin today by reminding us that God's word is so filled with meaning and promise and hope that we cannot afford to just skim over any portion of His scripture. Too often, we do that. Too often, our minds are doing the thing that we speak about in today's culture, we "multi-task", half our mind is on our reading and the other half on some interest that we have just been involved in, or one that is coming up next.

And unfortunately also, sometimes our bible reading is just one of several items on our morning checklist, that agreement that we made with ourselves to perhaps read one chapter a day or some other reading schedule. And so, we read, or quickly scan some words, then check "bible reading" off our list and then go on to the next item on the list.

But please, may I plead with us to not let that take place with our daily bible reading. Each verse is so filled with precious words of promise and we dare not miss out on them.

And such is especially so with these words of our text today, words rich with meaning and application, and words that are essential to our having confidence that the promises given in verse 4 will actually take place. Listen, first to the words of 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 excellence.  
(2 Peter 1:3)

And then the precious promises in verse 4,

<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)

Verse 4, promises us that we can actually participate in the very nature of God, His divine nature; and that we can actually escape the corruption in the world, because we will no longer be controlled by our own evil desires. But none of that will be possible without the promises given to us here in verse 3. It is God's divine power that stands

behind all of these promised blessings that we desperately need, power beyond any other power that we could ever imagine, and especially beyond any strength or power that we ourselves are able to muster within our own will.

It is His power, God's power that enables us to have "life and godliness", the very breath of Christ flowing through our lungs and bloodstream, the very thoughts of God flowing through our minds, the very desires of God heart energizing our thoughts and emotions, enabling us to "be" as we have never been before and to do things that we have never done before, surprising our souls with hopes and dreams and behaviors that delight our hearts.

That's what it's like to have God's "divine godliness" flowing through us. It is all part of the "promise" that God is making to us here, a promise that is one-sided, His promise to us, a promise that He cannot "not" fulfill. In other words, God is bound by His own promise to do these things that He tells us about here.

Here in verse 3, He words it that He has "called us by His own glory and excellence". What does that mean, to be "called" by God? In Romans 8:29-30 we read,

<sup>29</sup> For those whom he (God) foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30 (ESV))

This is what it means to be "called". It is an irresistible unction, a "drawing" that is implanted within our souls by God Himself to come to Christ and be "justified", to be "saved" and "sanctified". This is the complete pathway, all the way from being a wretched sinner into salvation and then eternal life with Christ in heaven. And it is a "guaranteed" promise. And all that you and I have to do to have this blessed promise come true in our lives is to surrender our hearts to Christ.

And yes, that is a requirement on our part. We cannot have one without the other. We must have Christ as our Savior. Recall the words in 1 John 5,

<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))

To have all of the great and precious promises of God, we absolutely must do the first part.

<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 5:12 (NASB))

But once we have received Christ, then all the rest of these promise are ours and they are “guaranteed” by the “divine power” of God Himself. And this is His promise to us that . . .

<sup>4</sup> Through these (through God’s divine power and glory and excellence and through the life and godliness that He puts into us) 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)

What are the “great and precious promises” that God is here making to you and me. He is promising that if we will give our hearts fully to Him and receive Him into our souls, then immediately we will begin to “participate” in His own divine nature, actually take part in His nature. And that is a very important word for us to grasp, “participation”.

In the last message, we closed by saying that this word “participation” is a very, very precious promise, and very different from the confusion that many Christians have about who we become in Christ. Sadly, many, many believers in Christ, receive Him and then go about trying to “imitate” Him. We saw that with the “what would Jesus do movement” of a few years ago, a very good thing but often lacking the real power of God. Why would that be so? It is because when we are just trying to “imitate” Him, we are much like an actor playing a part, or like a child who puts on a costume and tries to pretend he is some super-hero.

Again yes, imitating Christ is often “good”. We are instructed to do that in Ephesians 1. But because we are coming out from a nature that is filled with sin, our “imitations” can be fraught with the dangers of “self” taking back over again. Here, God is giving us a better opportunity and promise. Here, He tells us that we can actually “participate” in His very own nature. His nature is divine, and perfect in every way, satisfying and rewarding our souls as we “participate” in Him.

But listen folks, this requires surrender, real surrender, nothing half-way, this is complete and utter surrender to Christ. If we are willing to do this, then the precious “life-giving breath” of Christ truly will flow continually through our lungs, enabling us to be and to do things that we have never done before. We will think and behave differently from anything that we have ever experienced before.

Have you ever wished you could be different? I know that you have. I have myself so many, many times. Why is that so? It is because God has graciously poured out His Holy Spirit on us, making us to know that we can and should be different from the wretched sinner that we are.

It is not just some preacher story that us that we came into this life “completely dead”. We really were dead. Our souls were “still born”. Turn with me and listen to the way God words it in John 3. These words begin with those most precious words of John 3:16. And then, God explains why we need Him so desperately. Listen!

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (and listen carefully to these next words) <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:16-18)

“Condemned already”! Folks, those words cannot be any more clear and plain. As you and I are born into this world, we come not at all believing in Christ. And if we do not make an intentional choice to believe in Him, then we are condemned already. The condemnation is already in place and we must do something about it.

<sup>18</sup> . . . whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:18)

And listen then, to the next words of John 3, beginning in verse 19 . . .

<sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (John 3:19-20 (ESV)

Those are words similar to those warned about in the passage we are studying here in 2 Peter 1, words that tell us that we need to

<sup>4</sup> . . . escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:4)

Here in John 3, Jesus speaks about a prevailing darkness that engulfs this world that we live in. It is a very special kind of “darkness”, a “spiritual darkness” that literally blinds our hearts and minds to real truth. Listen again!

<sup>19</sup> . . . people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (John 3:19-20 (ESV)

Recall when we studied the Book of Ephesians, we read about this mysterious “darkness” and about the evil that lives within it, and about how we so easily join in with it and become a part of it. Listen!

<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. (Ephesians 6:12)

Look around you for a moment. Do you see “light” or do you see “darkness”?

The quote that I often give to you from Billy Graham that perhaps as many as one-half of the people in every congregation are still lost and unbelieving brings a terrible reality to light. It means that if this church had 500 people in it, perhaps as many as 250 of them would be sitting in a mysterious kind of “spiritual darkness” and not even know that it is taking place, a realm that is filled with those evil beings that we just read about in Ephesians 6. And those 250 people have no protection from the attacks that come from within that darkness, from the

12 . . . principalities, (and) powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, (the) spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. (Ephesians 6:12)

Remember, the “heavenly places” spoken about here are not out there somewhere, far separated from us. No, they are right here, all around us. And that is a frightening thing to consider. Just because a person is sitting within the walls of a church does not mean that they are safe from those principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness. Our only hope, our only protection is to have Christ and His blessed “light” shining within us and then we can see to navigate our way through the “darkness” and through all of those evil principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness.

Else, if we don’t, then we will forever remain in our lost condition and our daily lives will remain in the condition that is spoken about here in our text, filled with the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

And may I remind us that these words are written to believers. These words tell us that even after we have walked forward and prayed that “sinner’s prayer” that our ties to our old sin nature are not immediately severed. Too often, our habits are still strong in us. And even as believers we continue to live under the control of the sinful desires that once corrupted our hearts. That is why immediately after salvation, you and I need to begin to take these next steps. It is then and only then that Christ can work His “divine power” and can finish the good work He has begun in us. Listen 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 excellence. <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)

Don't you just love this "precious promise", that we can quit being the jerk, the up-and-down Christian that we so do not want to be, that we can escape the corruption caused by our "evil desires"?

Folks, may I again remind us, as I have done so many, many times before, salvation is only the beginning, the first step, the "doorway" into the kingdom of God. And too often, we get just safely inside that "doorway", but then go no farther. But these scriptures are crying out to us to step on forward with Christ, to bring all that we are and all that we possess to Him, and to join ourselves with Him and begin enjoying all the blessings and benefits of being a blessed child of God.

Before we close, may I give us one more word of warning? The world, the flesh and the devil are very jealous "lovers" of our souls. And they won't turn loose of us without a fight. So, as we step on forward into God's salvation, we will probably feel some strong reluctance. Just as a "battered wife" is reluctant to leave her husband, so we will be reluctant to give up the miserable comforts that we have lived with within the darkness. We don't have a good life, but it is all that we know.

But God is saying to you and me that He has a "better way" for us, one that is filled with great and precious promise, a life where we can participate in His own divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

May I leave us with these words from 1 John 2.

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV))