

## Taste and See that the Lord is Good!

2 Peter 1:1-4 (NKJV)

**Vs. 1 - “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ...”**

- Notice that Peter identifies himself as a bondservant, a slave to Christ.
- He also clearly identifies Jesus Christ as Savior and also, without question, as God.

**Vs. 2-3 – “...grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...”**

- When you think about the attributes of God, one that we as Christians benefit greatly from is that God is generous. It is a part of who He is. It is His nature to give.

“For God so loved the world that He gave...” John 3:16 (NKJV)

- In Exodus 34:6, God gives a first person assessment of His character, His nature...

“And the Lord passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...’” Exodus 34:6-7 (NKJV)

- In Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah says this about the Lord...

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23 (NKJV)

- Listen to what Paul has to say about the generosity of God towards us in 1 Corinthians chapter 3...

“Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 (NKJV)

- Whatever Christ possesses, we possess. We possess the world, God made it for us. We possess life—God has given us the amazing gift of life and God has given us spiritual, eternal life in Christ on top of that. We possess death because to die is actually to our benefit.

“...to die is gain.” – Philippians 1:21 (NKJV)

“We possess things present, that encompasses every element in life, everything in this life, everything we experience, the good, the bad, the pleasant, the painful, the joys, the disappointments, health, sickness, God gave it all to us to work together for our good. And on top of that we possess things to come...Eternity with the Lord, eternal reward, the glories of heaven.” – John MacArthur

- Paul said that we are joint heirs with Christ and all things were made by Christ, and so we share in that amazing inheritance.
- The Lord has given us everything that we need to live life skillfully and to succeed in this life in a way that brings the greatest glory to Him.

We all want to succeed at this thing called life. No one in their right mind, if asked if they wanted to succeed at life, is going to say “No. I would prefer to fail miserably at everything I attempt. That has always been my aspiration in life—to be a “Class A” loser. I want to lose financially, in my marriage, in relationships, as a parent, in my work, and physically I want to be a complete wreck. That’s my goal in life.”

- For most of us, we don’t want to survive in this life, just getting by, we want to excel. We want to maximize this life for all that God has for us, for His glory.

I sometimes think that out of fear over the “health and wealth” prosperity doctrine, we miss out on taking hold of and appropriating the promises of God in our lives. I don’t advocate a prosperity doctrine—I think it is a false doctrine. I mean, God might want you to be absolutely poor to the world’s standards, or in failing health, but in His standards to be rich in the things of God.

- With that said, God has given us everything that we need to maximize this life in a way that brings the greatest glory to Him, and for us to be absolutely rich in the things of God.
- Paul said it this way in Romans 8:32...

“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32

- Sometimes we are tempted to think, “I know that the Lord has forgiven me of my sins, but I’m not sure that He is going to give me what I need to make it through this situation.”
- Paul says, “Wait a second. If God gave you His best in Christ, is He going to hold back the least?”

**Vs. 4 – “...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”**

- There are several thousand promises that the Lord makes to us in the scriptures. I mean, when you start to take a look at the sheer volume of the promises that God makes towards us and the magnitude of what is offered in those promises, it is mind-blowing!
- Consider just a few of the promises that the Lord has made toward us...

“...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:30 (NKJV)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

“...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4 (NKJV)

- And the list of promises goes on and on.
- The magnitude of what is being promised is shocking, almost scandalous because what is being promised is so outlandish—it’s crazy!
- And about these promises, Paul said...

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen...” 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV)

- So, with all of these promises comes an absolute guarantee!

There are a whole lot of people that make promises: bankers, politicians, presidential candidates, salespeople...but you can’t count on any promises that anyone makes like you can count on the promises that God makes towards us.

“Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar.” Romans 3:4 (NKJV)

- *If and how* I appropriate the promises of God is critical to how I experience and understand Him. It is how we experience the different attributes of the divine nature of God.
- If you just take a look at the 7 “I AM” statements that Jesus said of Himself, you can clearly see how Jesus interconnects a very specific aspect of His divine nature with a specific promise...

“...I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” John 6:35 (NKJV)

“...I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” John 8:12 (NKJV)

“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” John 10:9 (NKJV)

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.” John 10:11 (NKJV)

“...I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” John 11:25-26 (NKJV)

“...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6 (NKJV)

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5 (NKJV)

- When I partake of and trust in these promises that God has made towards me, I gain a greater understanding and appreciation for different attributes of the divine nature of God, and I become a partaker and benefactor of them.
- But with the promises of God comes a challenge. As Christians, we know the Bible teaches that we are in a spiritual battle.

“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 (NKJV)

- The promises of God are challenged by the enemy and, as a result, we are often tempted into believing that the Lord will somehow fail in His promises to us, or that somehow we have disqualified ourselves from receiving them.
- But we know that Satan is a liar and the Father of Lies, and he also is the accuser of the brethren and wishes to steal, kill, and destroy us and our understanding and grasp on the promises of God (see John 8:44, Revelation 12:10, and 2 Corinthians 10:5).
- Why? Because when we take hold of the promises of God, Satan knows that we are partaking of the divine nature—we are finding a deeper, richer understanding of who God is in His very nature and Satan wishes to rob us of that.

It is interesting to me that in the story of the Promised Land, in the Old Testament, it is a story of an incomplete conquest of the land. They had some incredible victories, but God had intended so much more for them. Remember the promise that the Lord gave to Joshua? He told him that “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given you.” God gave Israel 300,000 square miles of land and the most they ever claimed was 30,000 square miles. They took possession of about one-tenth of what God had given them. They failed to possess all their inheritance—all the promises.

- Remember on the Road to Emmaus when Jesus came alongside the two who were talking about and reasoning about what happened to Jesus, and it says that...

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27 (NKJV)

- So, all the stories of the Old Testament—from Moses and including all the prophets—they reveal something about Christ. They are “typologies.”

- We are going to take a look at the prophet Samuel and specifically a promise that Samuel made to King Saul, and how the pressures of the circumstances around Saul caused him to give up hope on Samuel's promise and to give in to his fears...

“You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do.” 1 Samuel 10:8 (NKJV)

- The people of God had demanded a king, like the other nations, and here the prophet Samuel anoints Saul to be the first King of the people of Israel.
- Notice the promise that Samuel makes to Saul—“...surely I will come down to you...”
- Look at what happens next...

“Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent. And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, ‘Let the Hebrews hear!’ Now all Israel heard it said that Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.” 1 Samuel 13:1-4 (NKJV)

- Gilgal is an incredibly important place in Bible history.
- It was the first campsite of the people of Israel, after they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land (Joshua 4:19–20).
- They took stones from the Jordan and set them up at Gilgal, as a memorial to God's deliverance.
- The first Passover (reinstated) in Canaan was held at Gilgal, where the manna ceased and they began eating from the land, which was a supernatural provision to a natural one (Joshua 5:9-10).
- Gilgal was where circumcision was renewed (renewed covenant).

- It was the base of military operations for Israel during the conquest of Canaan—from Gilgal, Joshua led Israel against the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:11 and 14) and conducted his southern campaign (Joshua 10).
- It was there that Joshua began allotting the Promised Land to the tribes.
- Gilgal was also the site of King Saul’s coronation as he was declared King before all the tribes (1 Samuel 11).
- As much as it was a place commemorating and establishing authority, it was also a place of great testing.
- It had been approximately 2 years since Saul had been given the standing order to go to Gilgal and wait, if there was a crisis.
- Jonathan, flexing his military muscle, picked a fight attacked a garrison of Philistines.
- And Saul toots his own horn—“Let the Hebrews hear!”

“Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.” 1 Samuel 13:5-7 (NKJV)

- So the Philistines camp at Michmash, ready to fight, and the men of Israel in Gilgal seeing the danger, hide in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, pits, and some even crossed back over the Jordan—not a great showing for these “mighty men” of Israel.

“Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring a burnt offering and peace offering here to me.’ And he offered the burnt offering.” 1 Samuel 13:8-9 (NKJV)

- Saul waited for Samuel to come and offer sacrifice, as he had been told to do two years earlier, but on the seventh day, the day Samuel

was to arrive, Saul could wait no longer and unlawfully took on himself the priestly task of offering community sacrifice.

“Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. And Samuel said, ‘What have you done?’ Saul said, ‘When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, “The Philistines will not come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.” Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.’ And Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.’ 1 Samuel 13:10-14 (NKJV)

- When Samuel came and realized that Saul had taken liberties by offering the sacrifice, he rebuked him with the words, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord...”
- Because of this deed, Samuel said Saul’s dynasty would come to an end (“your kingdom shall not continue”), and that another man would take its place, a man after God’s own heart—David.
- Saul’s only words of defense were, “*I felt compelled* by my circumstances—things were stacking up against me, the people were scattering, my enemies were gathering, and you were postponing.”
- I believe the test the Lord was confronting him with was, “Saul, what will compel you to action: My promises and My commandments, or your feelings, your fears, your circumstances?”
- Will we trust in the promises of God and the commandments of God, or will we take things into own hands when we don’t see the fulfillment of His promises according to our timetable?
- Saul was tested and he failed.
- Gilgal represents the place where we are tested and tempted to give up hope in the Lord’s promises to us, and give in to our greatest fears or doubts (1 Sam 13:7).

- “Lord, I don’t see You showing up in the time I expected—it’s been 7 minutes, 7 hours, 7 years!”
- Fears about your current circumstances stacking up against you, as you watch others hiding in pits, rocks, caves, and you don’t see Lord showing up.
- Concerns about what others might be thinking or saying—the voice of the people.
- Gilgal is a testing ground where daily we must choose to trust in the promises of God and submit to God’s will in spite of the circumstances—over finances, in relationships, marriages, in areas of self-control, over addictions, fears, depression, our health.
- “God, today I cling to your promises, and I submit myself to Your will in my life.”
- Now, I want to compare Saul’s response to the promises of God in a difficult situation, with that of David.
- Turn with me to Psalm 34...

“A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.”

- David fled from Saul to Gath but servants of King Achish (Abimelech) recognized him, and so David pretended to be insane so he could escape with his life (1 Samuel 21).
- This is the context for when David penned this psalm.

“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue

from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.” Psalm 34:1-22 (NKJV)

- Even in incredibly difficult circumstances, when he would have been tempted to lose hope in the promises of God to him, David held tightly to and had partaken of God’s promises.
- As a result, he had a deeper understanding of the divine nature of God.
- Many of the psalms reveal David’s dedication to God’s promises and his rich understanding of the nature of God (Psalm 16 and 34).
- David had partaken of the divine nature by trusting in the promises of God and as a result, David was able to say with authority, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”