

## **PRECIOUS FAITH II PETER 1:1-2**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Simon Peter is more a brother than he is a pope. At least this is the perspective that he had on his on life. He opens this second letter to those early Christians by indicating that it is written to those who share his faith, and thus are his spiritual equals before the Lord. This statement by Peter concerning faith is one of the most statements in all of the New Testament.

Most of us would be inclined to see others as having greater faith than ourselves. You wouldn't single out a pastor, a missionary, a outstanding lay leader in the church as embodying what faith really means. You would be reluctant to present yourself as person of faith. Would all of God's children have faith. We have not understood what it means really to be people of faith in many cases. Exploration of this statement by Peter should help us understand what it means to be a true Christian, or a person of faith.

### **I. FAITH AS A GIFT.**

Peter's statement reads, "To those who the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours." The word translated "received" has an interesting background. The word actually means to "obtain something by the casting of a lot." This indicates that faith is something that was allocated to us by God as a gift. It is come to us because of the mercy and generosity of God.

Peter may have been remembering his own faith. He did not set out to become a person of faith on his own. Rather Jesus Christ came seeking him. Jesus had the initiative in the life of Simon Peter at every point. It was Jesus who called him out of the crowd into discipleship. It was Jesus who included him in the chosen circle of the twelve. It was Jesus who privileged him by allowing him to see things that the others did not get to see. When Peter finally came to the place that he gave his great confession at Cesearea Philipi. Jesus indicated that he had come to such a confession because of the work of the Father. The Father had revealed these things to Simon Peter. Peter's experience is no different that ours at this point. We too have become persons of faith in God because God was pleased to give us the gift of faith.

1. God creates faith in us by revealing Himself to us.

Faith is the result of coming to know God. While we have the capacity to know God, we walk in darkness concerning the knowledge of God until God comes to us and makes Himself known to us. God chose to make Himself known to Simon Peter through the ministry of His incarnate son. God has been pleased to make Himself known to us through the preaching and the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul declared, " Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." That's the way faith came to being in my heart. God used the word as it was taught and lived by Christian parents, as it was taught by godly Sunday School teachers, as it was proclaimed by faithful pastors, to produce in my heart a confidence in and a trust on the Lord Jesus Christ as my savior. The faith that is in me today is there because God has been pleased to reveal Himself to me. The faith is a gift from God.

2. God takes the initiative in bringing us to faith.

Simon Peter never went on a search for Jesus. Rather God was in Christ seeking Simon Peter. I never went on a search for God. Rather God by His Holy Spirit came searching for me. If God has waited for me to come to Him, I would have never come. There was nothing in me inclined to seek Him and to trust in Him. Every inclination was to trust in myself and in the things that I could do. But God took the initiative to help me realize my own moral and spiritual bankruptcy and my utter dependence on Him. He took the initiative in bringing me to an understanding that He Himself is absolutely and eternally trustworthy. So this precious faith that we share in common is a gift of God.

## **II. FAITH AS A TREASURE.**

The word translated in our text, “precious” is an interesting word. The word itself actually means “equally precious.” Peter does what Biblical writers often did, he made a word by combining two words. He took the word equal and the word precious and put them together. The point he is emphasizing is that the faith of the believers who are to receive this letter is just as precious and as important as his own faith. Instead of putting himself on some high plateau above them and speaking down to them, he stands along side of them as a fellow believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are as blessed with faith as he is.

This concept needs some explanation on our part. It is not really the faith itself that is so precious as it is that which the faith produces or brings about in the life.

1. Faith is the door to the presence of God and the provisions of God.

The great Baptist Expositor Alexander McClarin helped me see this point. He called my attention to the reference in the sermon of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles in which he refers to “the door of faith” (Acts 14:27). In itself a door is of little value. You probably would never speak of a door as being precious. But obviously a door can be an entrance into things that are extremely precious. You can go through a door in the palaces and into treasures of all kinds. This is the nature of faith. It is the channel through which we enter into the things of God, the precious things of God. All of God’s riches and provisions for life come to us through faith.

Another expositor has likened faith to the pipe that comes into your house. The pipe is not the water that meets the need of your family, but it is the conduit through which the water comes. So it is with faith – faith is not the supreme blessing, but it is the conduit through which the great blessings come.

Another likens it unto the electrical wire that comes into your house. The wire is not the electricity, but it is the medium through which the electricity comes in to your home to work its wonders. So it is with faith. It is precious because it is such an effective conduit through which the presence and the provisions of God can come to your life.

I read just a few days ago about some recent studies that are providing evidence that faith is a wonderful conduit into life. Most of these studies have focused on the part faith plays in health and in healing. They have verifiable evidence that people who attend church regularly have lower blood pressure than non-church goers. They also have verifiable evidence that men and women who attend church regularly have half the risk of dying from coronary artery disease as

those who rarely go to church. Another study found that it has a definite impact on the aging process. Those who attend religious services regularly are less depressed and physically healthier than those who do not attend at all as they get older. Another study has indicated that a group of women who were recovering from hip surgeries were impacted by their faith. Those who religious services regularly were able to walk further upon discharge from the program with lower rates of depression than those who had little or no faith. On and on I could go. There is mounting evidence that faith is the door to the presence and the provisions of God and is thus a precious thing in your life.

2. Faith is the shield in the battle of life.

This is another point that Dr. McClarin called to my attention. He reminded me that the apostle Paul spoke of faith as being our shield in the spiritual battle. Now again obviously faith itself is not the shield, but faith is the hand that makes the presence of God our shield. God is our shield and protector, but He becomes our shield and protector experientially as we trust in Him and rely on Him.

Do you not see the wonder of this? Faith in your life is a treasure. It's a treasure that you share with God's children. It's a treasure because of the spiritual, moral, and physical blessings that it brings into you life.

### **III. FAITH HAS A MARK.**

This is a logical conclusion that you reach from this word of Peter. Those who are to receive this letter are the Christians of the ages. The thing that will set them apart and identify them as the

true Christians of the ages is the faith that they share. They may not all be from the same culture, worship in precisely the same manner, approach the Christian life along the same patterns, but they will share a common faith in the living God as He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ our Lord. This faith that's in them is a part of His work in their lives.

1. Faith is in the heart of each Christian.

This is a given! You can know that you are a child of God because you have faith in God's son. It is an identifying mark in you life. All of God's children have faith.

You will remember the word that John would later write to the Christians of the first century, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so you may know that you have eternal life." This faith in us is a basis for comfort and assurance.

2. We equally have faith, our faith may not be equal.

We must not misread this word of Peter. Each child of God has faith. The fair and equitable God through the Lord Jesus has seen to it that we have faith. However this does not mean that we're all equal in faith. In some faith has grown and matured. In others faith has been stunted and neglected. In some faith is strong, while in others faith is weak. In some faith is fruitful, while in others there is very little fruit. But still there is faith there.

One of the burdens of this second letter of Peter will be for us to grow in our faith and our walk with God. You have faith but that faith that you have can grow and mature and develop.

Someone may be asking, "How can I be sure that I really have this precious faith?" Let me ask you a question or two that may help you determine whether or not there is saving faith in you right now. Let me ask you this question, "If you found yourself standing before God this afternoon, and He ask you why should I let you come into my Heaven? What do you think you would say to Him?" In other words, what is the basis of your hope of eternal life? You would refer God to your church membership, your good works, your keeping the ten commandments, your honesty and integrity, your attempts to live by the sermon on the mount, your regular church attendance, or any other such thing, you probably do not have the faith to which Peter refers. But if you would answer, that your confidence is in the Lord Jesus Christ, that you have entrusted to him your life and your hope of eternal life, then you have this precious commodity of faith. If you could say with Paul, "I known whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Then you have the faith.

Has God been working ion you to bring you to faith? He has brought some of you to that very point where it is time for you to step out and to give a confession of your personal faith. Peter himself was able to say, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" What will your confession be?