

He Has Given You Everything You Need Through Life & Godliness

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[0:00] So, Peter, obviously in his life, when he was a follower of Jesus pre-crucifixion, he was a man of many mistakes.

I think some of us could safely fall into that bracket. But he was also a man that was greatly used by the Lord. Now, in these two letters, especially the second letter, he knows his time is limited. It is, he knows death is coming. The pressure was on. Paul had probably been killed by this point. And Peter knows that the hostility towards Christians at the time was now getting to a point where many of them would be put to death.

So, it was a tough time to be living. And so, he's speaking to five churches at the beginning and in the first letter. And because they are also experiencing a time of great suffering.

So, we're finally here in this bit. And I believe it's saying something very significant to the church today. And I really do want to challenge us as a group.

[1:11] And I get the privilege because I go to a place and I can leave. And I can give out all the problems that came from that preaching to Thomas. Right?

Because I'll be off on the ferry very soon or whatever. Well, enough. Next week. You can catch up on me and call us if you've got any problems. But that's how it is. Right?

So, that's easy. It's easy for me to come and say something. Kind of ruffle the feathers a little bit. I do want to get under her skin a little. Okay? Not too much. Not in that way.

But just enough to make you really think and ask some questions. So, let's just start digging into this. A guy called W.C. Fields was once found reading the Bible.

He was found reading the Bible by a friend. And his friend said to him, what are you doing? And his answer was, what are you doing reading the Bible? And his answer was, I'm looking for loopholes.

[2:11] Looking for loopholes. And actually, that incredible statement in itself. We love having discussions and trying to figure out how we can minimize some of the things that Jesus has said.

You know, we do it. It can't mean that. I mean, love your neighbor. Who is my neighbor? Or maybe your answer might be, you don't know my neighbor.

But there's a lot of things in the Scriptures. We do that. We do that. We just love to look for loopholes in the sense of, does that really apply to me?

And so, before we start, when we're looking through this, I firmly believe that the Lord is speaking to the church today through these words. And I'll say this again in my service.

In this service. My service. If it is true to say, in terms of statistics in this nation, and we use it in the general sense, to remind the Western Isles V, the mainland.

[3:23] In the general sense, if it is true to say that evangelical Christianity only impacts 2% of this nation. Because that's the stats I've heard repeated.

And if that's the case, have we ever wondered how we got here? We, the preachers, ministers, have probably been partly guilty.

Because we've probably had churches that the feeding of the soul takes place on Sunday.

Actually, the feeding of the soul takes place on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

Because that is the life of a disciple. And we're not disciples on Sunday only. Do you get what I'm saying?

[4:34] So, maybe the demise of the church to where we are today. The question we might have, why is God allowing this? Well, I believe that these words will challenge you in a few moments.

The introduction, of course, is what it is. We'll just, we'll do that and then get to the bit that I want to highlight. That he has given us everything we need for life and godliness.

For life on Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and so on. So, he starts with, to those who have received a faith as precious as ours.

In a slightly different verse than I'm reading, it's different, slightly different from the ESV. Again, it's such a powerful statement.

To those who have received a faith as precious as ours. What's he doing? The great man, the great man himself, sees you and me and everybody around him at the time as fellow Christians.

[5:43] He saw there was something precious about faith in Jesus Christ. He was no higher or lower in terms of what was most important. He looked at everybody else who professed Jesus Christ as his equal.

Yes, he was a disciple of Jesus and an apostle after the resurrection. But he was just, he saw himself as equal because that's what faith in Christ does.

That's the most critical thing we can do in life. Place our faith in Jesus Christ. Now, again, with the help of Alistair Begg, in the algorithm that I have on my phone, thankfully, he appears a lot.

And I saw this little clip of his. And he was quoting Ernest Kevin, the first principal of London Bible College.

And he said, Faith is never the grounds of our justification, but only the means of it. The sinner accepts acceptance by God is based not on our faith, but on the merits of Christ, which faith appropriates.

[7:02] Faith reaches out an empty hand to receive what God has provided in the work of Jesus.

So every single person who has become a Christian, faith changes you when you put your empty hand into the hand of Jesus.

It is in Jesus you are saved. Through Jesus you are saved. Through Jesus you are transformed from day to day as a believer.

It is all to do with Jesus. The faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of God and Savior Jesus Christ.

It's the most important thing you will ever do, recognizing I am powerless. And in faith I raise my hands to you, Lord.

[8:18] Please save me. That kind of spiritual reality. That's what's in front of you. That's what he's saying. Every single one of them who put their faith in Jesus Christ have been redeemed because of the righteousness of Jesus.

You get everything in salvation in this moment. Everything is given to you. And so he says two words that are really important to us. Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Again, I'm not going to say a huge amount on that because they're most often preached and shared with you. But you get this idea. I came up with an illustration myself.

And I'm not entirely sure how effective it is. But anyway, I'll give it a shot. I didn't steal this one from Alistair Begg. I can imagine myself as an apprentice gardener.

It's an important description. An apprentice gardener. I might be able to tell the difference between a rose and something else. I can't even remember the name of many other flowers.

[9:24] But there are. I can tell by the look of them. They're all different. I'm given this bit of ground. Nonetheless, as an apprentice gardener, I'm given this bit of ground.

And the bit of ground looks pretty rough. Maybe some rushes and a lot of weeds. It doesn't look very good.

The good thing is for me, the head gardener comes along and starts doing some work in the garden. Starts cleaning the weeds. Preparing the ground. Tilling the ground. Preparing it for maybe potential fruit to grow there in this ground.

And the thing about the head gardener, he also not only prepares the ground and deals with some of the issues within it and the weeds and prepares.

He gives me the seed. He gives me the tools that I can produce fruit or I can see fruit growing in this place.

[10:27] He prepares me in my life to be able to see fruit in this garden. Now that garden is my heart. That's what Jesus is doing.

He's the head gardener. He's the one who is changing the soil or changing the ground that he's working in. He's saving you, transforming you, changing you each day.

And here's the thing. I think far too many of us, we get into the Sunday thing and we fold our arms and we don't ask the question, how can I work this ground?

Because you're going to see here, that's exactly what he calls you to do. You've been given everything for life and godliness. You've been given everything.

God ain't hiding anything. He has provided you, the apprentice, the disciple of Jesus, all that you need to work it through your life. Not that you become instantly here.

[11 : 31] It's a life of implementation and working and tilling and putting into practice the things that Peter tells them here.

Grace, the beautiful word grace, then is God's blessing. It's a covenant word experienced by Israel and it's his faithful covenant love.

His unfailing covenant love. His gracious love. What an incredible experience and reality that we have in Jesus Christ. And peace, the beautiful thing about peace is that this, again, a covenant word.

God brings peace between God and us through Jesus Christ. God brings peace between us. But he also gives you peace.

And that's the basis of where we go in the text. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Verse 3.

[12 : 40] Here's the challenge for you then. Who would have sat here today listening to these words and thinking, Hey, he's given us everything?

Well, I don't feel like I've got everything. It doesn't feel to me that... He's not saying you've... It's like it's instant. It's pouring right in and right up at the top.

He's giving you the tools to work them out into your life. And you'll see it in just a moment. And it's all through the knowledge of him who has called you by his own glory and goodness.

There it's excellence. But it's the goodness of Christ. And as one writer said, Our struggles as Christians in living as Christians today is not the resources we have available.

Because we have been given everything we need for life and godliness. So the Lord isn't lying to us when he's writing these words through Peter. He's telling you what you have.

[13 : 50] What you've been given. You've been given everything you need. But if we become a static believer, like the apprentice, if he looks at his ground and he folds his arms and says to himself, Why is there no fruit?

And the head gardener says, Did you plant the seeds? Did you till the ground? Did you water it? No, I didn't.

I just thought you would do that. Now if you look at the packet of seeds, your carrots will remain seeds. Or am I wrong?

Don't tell me your carrots are grown in the back. The seeds. You see what I'm saying? And that's the challenge. I think it's in front of us. So instead of us become arm folded.

If you're good, you're arm folded. Don't worry. I'm not having a go. But if you become like this as Christians. Okay? Just looking. God will provide.

[15 : 04] He just read that he did provide. What are you going to do? Well, of course, that's the reality of the situation for us.

We are to engage in him. If you have an ear to hear, hear what the Spirit is saying. This is for you. This is for the church. This gift of eternal life. And eternal life isn't just then. The words of Tom Schreiner, the commentator said, when Peter refers to life, eternal life is intended. Believers have eternal life. Now and yet await the day when such life will be fully realized when Jesus returns.

Godliness is likened to life because the latter is not gained without salvation in Jesus. Eternal life is not merely the experience of bliss, but also involves transformation, meaning we will continue to be transformed.

[16 : 21] So, being a disciple of Jesus isn't sitting, coming to church on Sunday alone. It is fantastic that that takes place. It's a critical, central part of your life.

And it should be a real blessing to you. But the call for the disciple isn't to go into the shadows, to have no public engagement, no relational engagement with people who need this very love, mercy, salvation that Jesus Christ has given us.

Now, being a disciple of the gospel, the disciple of Jesus Christ, St. Claiborne Ferguson, in his book, Devoted to God, to God's church, wrote this.

When we become a church member to take communion, we are saying, I too am a disciple of Jesus. He is not only my savior, he is also my master.

I am committed to serving him, learning from him, and imitating him, so that I can grow and be like him. In fact, in the New Testament, being a disciple essentially involves becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

[17:48] And again then, this is the great challenge for you to understand. And I think we all, once we realize that this is one of the central calling for you after you become a Christian, becoming more like Jesus, we know it's a challenge.

And I think we're all pretty honest. We can say, I don't think I'm very much like Jesus, especially when I'm behind a camper van. But anyway, there are times when you can clearly see when we're not quite there.

There will always be these moments, but if it's true to say that he has given you everything you need for life and godliness, the question then is, are we using all of these things that he has given us?

And like I said, it doesn't just happen on Sunday at an hour and a half or three hours in this case today. It just has to be much more.

This is the groundwork for your life. It has to be. And this is where we're challenged. This is where we're encouraged. This is where we know the love of God. We know forgiveness.

[19:12] It should be a place, central place of forgiveness. Far too often the church becomes a hostile environment. And when a brother falls, we hear the words, love one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

That's what this fellowship should be. That's what all fellowship should be. There'll always be people who leave it, but they shouldn't be leaving it because they haven't experienced some of the central things in the scriptures of what should take place in the life and the body of the church. But here he says, for this very reason, verse 5 to 8 now, make every effort. Now, just go back to the gardener, the apprentice.

If you saw, I mean, we give council workers, hopefully there's none in here today, but if we see a council worker holding onto the shovel, you know, some of us will be going past them going, ah, look at that typical council worker, you know, he's holding the shovel.

If you were like that, regarding your relationship to Jesus, and just fold your arms like the apprentice gardener, when you hear these words, what comes to your mind?

[20:36] We're not doing the right thing. If all you are receiving in knowledge of Jesus is from a minister on a Sunday, we've got to understand, we need to engage deliberately, willfully, ourselves.

And there are ways and means you can do that. But just listen to what takes place here. For this very reason, make every effort to add, now, add to your faith in the sense that these things are provided for you, given to you.

You need to work these things out. You need to, like bread, knead it into your life for it to become something that is edible in terms of bread, but here for your life.

Make every effort to add to your faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

To add, to work out, to knead out into your life these gifts that God has given you as you receive Jesus.

[21:55] goodness. That idea of goodness, we've seen it in verse 3 when we are called by Christ's own goodness.

Here, I think the word is understood in terms of benevolence. Or the word is often understood of benevolence. But a lot of commentators think it is more like becoming Christ-like in character. and some of these words here equate to the fruit of the Spirit. Some of them are the same. And to me, again, the fruit of the Spirit is bearing the character of Christ, love, joy, peace, patience, and the likes.

So goodness, putting on Christ-like character, working on it, thinking about it, having the knowledge of Scripture, and working it out in your life.

What is Jesus like? How did Jesus say things, do things? Knowledge of Jesus, it's there in the text. This knowledge is not the knowledge that is spoken of in verse 2 and 3.

[23:02] Here, it has to do with the Christian's development of understanding and having a discerning mind. Discerning, knowing what is good, what is not good, avoiding what is, having the

discernment to avoid what is evil, and to do what is good.

Self-control should be fairly evident about self-control. It is very difficult at times to be self-controlled with the tongue, whatever.

There are, all of us have no doubt weaknesses in certain areas, but here is such a great challenge. Work self-control into your life.

Self-control becomes a very important part so we don't veer off, but also it gives you a steady mind when the pressure is on. I'm not tempted to go and do the wrong thing.

Perseverance, holding fast in difficult times, withstanding temptation, doing all of the things that are really difficult, but with the help of God, because He has given you all these things.

[24:14] Godliness. Again, that idea of the character of Christ in your life, doing, living life for the glory of God.

Godliness in your life, Christ-likeness in your life. And these final two, brotherly kindness. Now, some translations don't use the word brotherly or Philadelphia kindness, brotherly kindness, but I think that's what stands out.

And one of the ways that the church stands firm and tall in times of trial and times of testing is brotherly love.

Work it in your life. Think about it in your life. Need it into your life. Why? Because love covers a multitude of sins. And there is sin in church. We do sin.

We come across sometimes, I have to say sometimes, holier than that. But if Peter and others have already said love covers a multitude of sins, it's in this previous letter.

[25:27] It means that there's still sin in the church. Still that happens. But what do you do when it appears? Brotherly love. It covers a multitude of sins. Love covers a multitude of sins.

Love one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. And of course love finishes off with again this in your life.

It's so easy to shift away from the centrality of love and end up and veering off in different directions. The biblical call to love is very often different from society's call to love.

As one writer said, three characteristics distinguish agape from earthly forms of love. Because it originates in God's sufficiency rather than human need, agape can be given freely and generously without fear of waste.

If you think about that, far too often our love is conditional. We want something back.

[26:37] Okay? Not this. Add this form of love. Giving it's no fear of waste.

It's given. It requires no reciprocation. Offered as a one-way gift with no expectation of return. Most instinctively, this writer says, agape directs itself towards the unworthy and the unlovable.

Finding its purest expression when loving those from whom nothing can be gained. This love remains precise in its focus.

Concentrating in particular on particular individuals and their particular needs rather than abstract ideals. Agape transcends human capacity because it requires the Holy Spirit's enabling power to overcome the limitations that we put on it.

Wow! You see this incredible love, of course, in John 3.16 for God so loved the world. This is the root of it, this divine love, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

[27:57] But in 1 John 3.16 that's the letters, this is how you come to know love. He laid down his life for us.

We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. So it's a great challenge for each and every one of us as we're looking at this, as we're thinking about it, for we possess these qualities in increasing measure.

These things have been, when you need them and work them out in your life, they will increase in your life. They will give you a stability that nothing else can give. Jesus will keep you effective.

Now here's the thing, when you hear that, the call to increase and grow in these things is for a reason, so that you can be fruitful.

Fruitful. I think it's verse 8, these qualities in increase and measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of the Lord.

[29:05] Fruitful in your life. life. And you have to engage in that. You have to engage with the difficult people, you have to engage as a missional people.

And if it is true to say that our nation is now in such decline spiritually, we have to ask the question, why again? Are we like people who are nearsighted and blind and forgotten what we have been saved from?

How have we forgotten what we have been saved from? And so the challenge for you and me today is how do we sit here? How do we engage on a day-to-day basis?

Okay, you might not see each other, but you can call each other. In fact, you can call a neighbor. You can have a coffee with them. Ask them how they're doing. If you know they're struggling, reach out.

Bless them. Love them. Show them the fruit of Christ in your life. Don't be afraid because the Lord has given you all of that if you're in Christ.

[30 : 12] If you're not, he's calling you to trust him, to start the process where he brings change and transformation into the life of the Christian. You see, ministers have a calling, but he has called the whole church to go and make disciples of all nations.

And that's the calling of the church, to go and make disciples. He said it to the apostles, go and make disciples.

Go and reach out to all people groups in this world and make disciples. That's your call as a follower of Jesus Christ. That's why you need to engage in this truth.

I want to finish with a quote. I'm going to skip a few verses, but maybe you have a question about 10 and 11 and you're asking what then does this have to do? We're very good at the theological questions.

As soon as we see these words in verse 10 and 11, especially verse 10, we bring it up. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

[31 : 24] The word therefore is the giveaway here. therefore always goes back to what he has just said. Your faith in Jesus Christ, your engagement with Jesus Christ demonstrates your calling an election, if you want to put it like that.

For if you do these things, you will never fall because you will have the power of God and the strength of God and the wisdom of God and the love of God working in your life and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I want to finish with this quote then. And it's from Alistair Begg, but I'm just going to use part of it because our time is passing so I don't want to keep you too long. He talks about an old saying that was often used and he says this, the old saying goes, sow in thought reap an action sow an action sow in action reap a habit sow a habit reap a character sow a character reap a destiny.

Now of course that can be used just in the context of life itself but I want to take it and apply it in the Christian sense. that moment you place your empty hand by faith in Jesus the righteous one the savior who reaches down in that moment and pulls you up and takes you into his kingdom into his into the family of God listen and think of it this way that when we are in Christ and we are working and needing the truth and the blessings that he has given us sow in thought sow in biblical thought and Christ likeness sow in thought reap an action and as you sow in that action reap a habit a healthy gospel Christ like habit and as you sow that habit reap a character a

Christ like character and as you sow that character in Christ likeness you reap a destiny because you know believers you know that you have the gift and blessing of eternal life in Christ it is all yours because of what Jesus Christ has done for you and so therefore your calling now in every aspect of your life is to grow and be transformed and it's a struggle it will always be a struggle because I still sin I still think wrong but when in Christ and we start deliberately doing that sowing a thought reaping an action reaping an action reaping habit sowing a habit reaping a character become more like Jesus Christ and know the wonderful destiny that is yours in him as he or once he calls you to himself and once he makes all things new now if you're scared about thinking of heaven with the old caricature of floating around in a cloud the destiny for a believer is he will make all things new it will be a new heavens and a new earth there will be similarities of course but it's perfect there will be no more pain no more sorrow no more death no more corruption no evil nothing nothing that is in the sense of what it's like in this world now that brings everything to corruption and decay it will be a new heavens a new earth it will be completely perfect and our struggle is always

[35 : 39] I don't want more of this I don't want more of this struggle well it's not going to be more of a struggle when Jesus fulfills everything and calls time on this world he will make all things new it will be glorious it will be profound and believe me it will be worth every moment and every struggle and every trial we face in life and the other thing is this that as you do all of that in Jesus name and

live in honor for him each day lives will be blessed that's your calling go and make disciples of car away in car away of car away people and incomers doesn't matter every single one of them matter to god that's our calling to be the light of the world so go and imitate him fulfill that calling in your life and seed working out and being poured out into your community and trusting that god will do great things in car away and beyond all right may