

II Peter 1

1 ¶ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Verse 1 1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:*

This second epistle of Peter, the same Peter who we read of in the Gospel, is written near the end of his life. He begins by referring to himself as a "servant". The Greek word *doulos* (1401) is used here. It refers to a slave who literally gives himself up to another's will to whom he is devoted to the disregard of his own interest. He also refers to himself as an "apostle" of Jesus Christ, referring to the office he holds in the Kingdom of God (i.e. the church), which is under the administration (i.e. government) of Jesus Christ, our Lord. See I Cor. 12:5 and 12-27, Eph. 1:17-23 and 4:10-16.

The letter is addressed to those who "have obtained like precious faith with us" referring to the fact that these were believers who were of like faith to Peter and the other apostles. They obtained this "faith" not through any righteousness of their own but rather through the righteousness of God and the work that Jesus did on the cross. Jesus is the only righteous one (see Rom. 3:10), we by faith in the sufficiency of His sacrifice for our sins are able to enter into His Body (i.e. the church) by faith. Being hid in Him, His righteousness is imputed unto us by faith. See Romans 4.

Verse 2 2 *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

In verse 2, Peter confirms his authority as an apostle by extending grace and peace unto the believers who had obtained like precious faith. By so doing, Peter is exercising the authority to remit or retain a persons sins that Jesus gave exclusively to His apostles. See John 20:23. One often sees the Apostle Paul do likewise in his various epistles. I Cor. 1:3, II Cor. 1:2, Gal. 1:3, Eph. 1:2, Php. 1:2, Col. 1:2, I Thess. 1:1, II Thess. 1:2, I Tim. 1:2, II Tim. 1:2, Tit. 1:4 and Phm. 1:3.

What is striking in this particular instance is that Peter states that the grace and peace that he is extending will be MULTIPLIED unto those who have obtained like precious faith through KNOWLEDGE. In other words, the multiplying factor – if you think of grace and peace as something that can be measured like flour or sugar and therefore one person may receive one teaspoon and another three cups – is the believer's knowledge of God. The Greek word "epignosis" (Strong's No. 1922) translated knowledge here means "precise and correct knowledge" and derives from the Greek word "epiginosko" (Strong's No. 1921) meaning to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know accurately and to recognize. Therefore it is not the believer's general knowledge, but rather his precise and correct knowledge of who God is (i.e. His nature and His ways) that will determine how much grace and peace the believer receives. In so concluding, I am encouraged and provoked by the following two scriptures:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John 17:3.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15.

On the other hand, I am also cautioned by the following passages:

1 ¶ Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffeth up**, but charity edifieth.

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him. I Corinthians 8:1-3.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:22-25.

From the above scriptures we see that knowledge is not an end in itself, a point that will be reiterated as we continue forward in II Peter.

Distinguishing "us" and "our" from "ye" and "you"

As we turn to verse 3, a distinction between "us" and "our" as compared to "ye" and "you" as used in this epistle becomes important to understand. Specifically, the pronouns "us" and "our" are used by Peter to refer to himself and the other apostles,

whereas "ye" and "you" refers to those who he is addressing the epistle unto, namely those who have obtained "like precious faith." To make this concept explicit, I have restated verses 1 to 4 below, replacing the pronouns as described above.

1 ¶ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with [me and the other apostles] through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto [those that have obtained like precious faith] through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto [me and the other apostles] all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called [me and the other apostles] to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto [me and the other apostles] exceeding great and precious promises: that by these [you who have obtained like precious faith] might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Verse 3 3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

Reading verse 3 with this understanding we see that Peter is referring to himself and the other apostles, not those who have obtained like precious faith when he says that God hath (i.e. has already) given he and the other apostles ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness. This is very important because most people read this as indicating that God has given them ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness. This understanding is incorrect and stunts Christians growth in the Lord for if they have already received ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness, why would they see the need to press forward to secure the fulness of their birthright. Moreover, it causes many to deny the need for and importance of seeking out and operating in obedience to God's line of authority as set forth in Ephesians 4:11.

The critical importance of this latter point is underscored by the fact that doctrinally it is through the laying on of the hands of the apostles that the Holy Ghost is given. Acts 8:14-20 and 19:1-6. One of the reasons that it is the apostles and only the apostles who have authority to lay hands on people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit is because it is only the apostles who have received ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness. After all, you cannot impart unto another that which you do not have yourself! See Heb. 7:7 ("And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.")

God's purpose in doing it this way is not to withhold all things that pertain unto life and godliness from His people – GOD FORBID – rather one of the foremost jobs of the apostles is to impart those things that pertain unto life and godliness unto those who

BELIEVE ON Jesus through their word. See John 17:20-23. Peter is doing just that in this Epistle as will be highlighted hereafter.

The importance of God working through His line of authority, however, must be tempered by the fact that God, in His sovereign power, works with each of His children individually and is not limited in His ministry to each of us, to moving through His line of authority. See I Corinthians 12:4-6. This includes, the right to pour out His Holy Spirit on whomsoever He will without the intervention of His apostles. Examples of this include the outpouring of the Holy Spirit received on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and the baptism in the Holy Spirit received by Cornelius and his household and witnessed by Peter (Acts 10:44-46).

Continuing through verse 3, we see that Peter and the other apostles are "called" to glory and virtue. The "glory and virtue" spoken of here is the same that we see Jesus pray for the apostles to receive at the end of His ministry, as recorded in John 17:6-19, namely that they would walk as one with God the Father and Jesus and go forward in the very same ministry that God the Father had sent Jesus to perform. The fact that Peter refers to himself and the other apostles as being "called" to walk in "glory and virtue" does not mean that all of the apostles will do so or do so equally. The Apostle Paul is a perfect example of this for he said that the other apostles (including Peter) in "conference added nothing" unto him. Galatians 2:6. The reason for this differentiation is once again "knowledge". In other words, those apostles who adhered to the precise and correct knowledge of God's Word partook more abundantly of all that He had given unto them. The difference between Paul and the others is that the others deviated, most notably in their continued adherence at some level to the law of Moses, to one degree or another from pure doctrine.

Verse 4 *4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Turning to verse 4 we see that "exceeding great and precious promises" are given to the apostles for the purpose that others (i.e. those of "like precious faith") "MIGHT be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The "exceeding great and precious promises" are manifold, but include such things as the power to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, perform miracles, impart the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and retain and remit sins. The purpose of God in giving the apostles these "exceeding great and precious promises" was that by these things others (i.e. those of "like precious faith") MIGHT believe the Gospel and become partakers of the divine nature as Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23.

Partaking of the divine nature, is the birthright of all believers. However, most believers, so-called, will never partake of the divine nature because it is reserved only to those who meet two conditions.

Condition 1: YOU must "believe on" Jesus.

Condition 2: YOU must "escape" (i.e. flee) the "corruption that is in the world through lust."

To "believe on" (as contrasted with "believe in") Jesus means that you not only believe in His existence, His atoning death for our sins and His resurrection, but you also believe all that He said (meaning the entire Bible, not just the 4 Gospels). Peter himself makes this clear in verses 16-21 of this chapter. Paul and David do likewise in II Timothy 3:16-17 and Psalm 12:6-7, respectively. This is what it means to have obtained "like precious faith" with the apostles. It is also the pre-requisite for adoption into the family of God. See John 1:12.

To "escape" the "corruption that is in the world through lust" means that YOU must CHOOSE to flee or separate yourself from your flesh.¹ You will only do this if you recognize the utterly depraved, contrary to God, nature of your flesh as did the Apostle Paul.² It is then and only then that you will be properly motivated to FLEE from your flesh because you will understand that your very life depends upon your success. You will never do this so long as you think that your flesh has anything worth saving.³

¹The Greek word translated "escaped" is "apopheugo" (Strong's No. 668). It is an action word or verb, meaning to flee from or escape. It comes from two other Greek words "apo" (Strong's No. 575) and "pheugo" (Strong's No. 5343). "Apo" is a primary particle or preposition meaning "of separation" as in of motion from a place (i.e. of departing or fleeing), of separation of a part from the whole, of any kind of separation of one thing from another which the union or fellowship of the two is destroyed. "Pheugo" is a primary verb, meaning to flee away, seek safety by flight, to flee something abhorrent or to be saved by flight, to escape safely out of danger.

²The Apostle Paul recognized this expressly multiple times, saying:

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

³The Apostle Paul addressed this latter point, most powerfully when he wrote:

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which **worship God in the spirit**, and **rejoice IN**

Thankfully, in requiring that we flee, God has also provided us with a place of refuge, namely the Body of Jesus Christ. We (meaning our soul and spirit) dwell by faith in the Body of Jesus Christ, through the power of God. This is what water baptism (see Romans 6) is all about. It is also what the Apostle Paul was referring to when he wrote to the Colossians that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness" (i.e. this flesh and the spirit in us that lusteth to envy, see James 4:5) "and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (referring to the Body of Jesus Christ). Colossians 1:13.⁴

Christ Jesus, and have **NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH**.

4 ¶ Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 ¶ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Philippians 3:2-11 (emphasis added).

⁴Rather than digress into the Apostle Paul's parallel discussion of the same subject matter, let me simply recommend that you read Colossians 1:12-23 as a second witness to what Peter is stating in this epistle. Briefly, in that passage, Paul makes clear that escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust is fulfilled in two steps and maintained by a third.

Step 1: By faith you must come to trust wholly in the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ to wash away all of your sins, making you (by His merits alone) meet to be a partaker "of the inheritance of the saints in light".

Step 2: Having no confidence in your flesh, you trust wholly in the power of the Holy Spirit to deliver you from the power of darkness (referring to your cursed flesh and all the power that Satan and his cronies have in this world) and translate you "into the kingdom of his dear Son" where you partake of His divine

Partaking of the Divine Nature

Having lifted up the promise that those of "like precious faith" can partake of the "divine nature" (as contrasted with our corrupt human nature), Peter explains how it is that we can do so in the next three verses:

- 5 ¶ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
- 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
- 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

In these verses, Peter begins with the words "and beside this." These words highlight the fact that achieving "like precious faith" unto the Apostles is not an end in and of itself. Rather, it is simply a foundation upon which to build.⁵

As we have discussed in other studies, the criticalness of building upon these

nature.

Step 3: You must continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

It is worth noting that this is the exact opposite of what the pharisees did and what passes for holiness in most churches today.

⁵In so saying, Peter's words remind me of the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, Chapter 6, where Paul writes

- 1 ¶ Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,
- 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

In other words all of these foundational principles -- namely repentance from dead works (i.e. the works of the flesh), faith toward God (for all things, including righteousness unto salvation, material needs, health, etc...), reception of the three baptisms (blood, water and Spirit – the latter being received by the laying on of an apostle's hands), the power of Jesus' resurrection operating in your life and the fact that all men (including, most importantly, yourself) are going to have to stand before God and be judged with your eternal destination hanging in the balance – are just the pre-requisites for admission into the Kingdom of God where you then learn to walk in, partake of and make manifest unto the world His divine nature.

foundational principles and moving forward unto perfection is underscored by the fact that we (i.e. our soul and our spirit) enter into Heaven in the same condition that we leave the earth. This is a strange concept to many Christians, who believe somehow that if you make it to Heaven you presto chango – could it be that they look at God as a magician? -- are made perfect and can never fall. The scripture is clear that Lucifer (Isa. 14:12-15 and Luke 10:18) as well as other angels (Gen. 6:1-4 and Jude 1:6) have been cast out. Why then, do we think that we will be exempt?

The fact of the matter is that if we sin, after entering into Heaven and partaking of the powers of the world to come, we will be cast out as profane, just as Lucifer was. See Hebrews 6:4-6.⁶ This is one of the primary reasons why in God's plan for man we (by Adam's sin) were all made subject to sin. Romans 5:12-19 and 8:20-21. For if we can learn to serve God faithfully on this earth where we cannot see Him and our mortal bodies and most everyone around us are trying to pull us away from Him, then we ought to be able to stand in perfect peace with Him for eternity.

Returning to Peter, we see that he underscores the importance of what he is commanding by saying give "all diligence." In other words, doing what he is saying has to continuously be the most important thing to us – recognizing that our very life depends upon it. If we hear him, then we will begin immediately to proceed with all haste, earnestness and striving to add to our faith the following seven (7) things: (1) virtue, (2) knowledge, (3) temperance, (4) patience, (5) Godliness, (6) brotherly kindness and (7) charity. Taking each in turn, we find as follows:

1. **Virtue.** The Greek word translated "virtue" is arete (Strong's 703). It comes from the Greek word arrhen or arsen (Strong's 142) which is translated "male" or

⁶It is this point that Paul is referring to in Hebrews 6:4-6 when he writes:

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
5 And have tasted the good word of God, **and the powers of the world to come,**
6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Emphasis added.)

Only those who have passed from this life and into God's heavenly Kingdom will have tasted of "the powers of the world to come." Unto these, "if they shall fall away," it is impossible to "renew them again unto repentance." In other words, there is no more grace to cover sin in Heaven and the time to be perfected that you may stand with the Lord eternally is NOW. This should be a provocation to us all to FEAR GOD, flee from the corruption that is in the world through lust, and continuously and diligently press toward the mark until the day we go to be with our Maker.

"man." And those words come from the Greek root word "airo" meaning to "raise from the ground ... elevate ... or move from its place." In the sense it is used here it means to take your place in the Body of Jesus Christ and go forward in His power (i.e. faith with works). In so saying, it is referring to the same concept that James, the Lord's brother, refers to when he says that "faith without works" (referring to the works of God, not man) is dead. See James 2:14-26.

2. **Knowledge.** The Greek word translated "knowledge" here is "gnosis" (Strong's 1108). It comes from the Greek word "ginosko" (Strong's No. 1097) meaning to come to know or perceive something. In the sense it is used here it means to know or understand what is going on around you. Given the fact that we are to engage in spiritual battle, it is useful to think of it from the perspective of one who is in the midst of a war. In warfare there are those who are in fox holes who cannot see the entire battle and there are those who are seated in a high place or who have intelligence from many sources who are able to see the motions of the enemy as well as those of his own army. From such a place, you can not only fight the battle in wisdom, but give "direction" (and often "perspective") to those who may be in the fox holes. This is what "officers" in an army do and what the Lord's officers (i.e. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) are to do. You cannot gain this "knowledge" nor "see" what is going on in the spirit, however, if you are yet in the flesh. Rather you must first escape your reliance upon your natural senses for guidance and direction if you are going to begin to exercise your spiritual senses and thereby begin to "perceive" or discern what is occurring in the spiritual realm. It is only in this place where you will be able to report as did the Apostle Paul: "so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." I Cor. 9:26. Furthermore, it is only in this place that you can come out of the fox hole to take your place as an officer of the Lord who operates in obedience to the Lord (our Commander-in-Chief) in the battle.
3. **Temperance.** The Greek word translated "temperance" is egkrateia (Strong's No. 1466). It comes from the Greek word "egkrates" (Strong's word 1468) meaning having power or dominion over. In the sense it is used here it means to not be moved by your flesh at all, but rather to let your spiritual senses be your guide no matter how you may "perceive" the situation naturally. You can only do this when you have your "body" under "subjection" as Paul preached. See I Cor. 9:27. Then you will yield to and be moved only by the Spirit of God.
4. **Patience.** The Greek word translated "patience" here is hupomone (Strong's No. 5281). It comes from the Greek word "hupomeno" (Strong's No. 5278) meaning to endure, tarry and to not flee from trials. Hupomeno comes from two Greek words – "meno" (Strong's No. 3306), meaning to remain, abide, sojourn, to be kept continually, and "hupo" (Strong's No. 5259), meaning to be of, by or under. In the present instance patience refers to a person who remains steadfast and constant in the faith, no matter what may come against him

because he knows that there is a Son (Jesus) who is able to keep him. In this sense, it is akin to Jesus' testimony of the type of faith that a mustard seed has.⁷

5. **Godliness.** The Greek word translated "godliness" here is "eusebeia" (Strong's No. 2150). It comes from the Greek word "eusebes" (Strong's No. 2152), which in turn comes from the Greek words "eu" (Strong's No. 2095) meaning to be well off, fare well, prosper and to be acting well and "sebomai" (Strong's No. 4576) meaning to revere or worship. The word Godliness here refers to our prospering in the Lord and all the good things of His Kingdom.⁸ It has nothing to do with prospering in the things of the world or in the flesh, but rather the things of His Kingdom which are spiritual things – i.e. the power to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, perform miracles, discern spirits, etc.... Both a pre-condition and a consequence of this prospering is a reverence for and worshipful attitude towards the Lord. You can only have such an attitude when you recognize your own depravity and utter incapacity to do anything good, but by Jesus Christ. With such a mind-set you then come to recognize and become extraordinarily grateful to God for His grace and that by it, He allows you to partake of His divine nature (i.e. operate in His Kingdom as a member of the Body of Jesus Christ) in ministering unto others just as He did.
6. **Brotherly Kindness.** The Greek word translated "brotherly kindness" here is "philadelphia" (Strong's No. 5360). It is used 6 times in the new testament variously translated brotherly love, brotherly kindness and love of the brethren. It comes from the Greek word "philadelphos" (Strong's No. 5361) which is used

⁷Briefly, what makes the mustard seed's faith so remarkable is that the mustard seed knows that there is a sun. Therefore, you can sow it under a boulder, pave a highway over the place where you sowed it or put in its way any obstacle and it will not give up because it knows there is a sun. The mustard seed will keep going until it finds a crack in or a way around the obstacle so that it can make its way to the sun. It is this type of faith that can move mountains. See Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6. And it is this faith that we are to operate in for we can do "all things through Christ which strengtheneth [us]" Phi. 4:13.

⁸Unfortunately, "godliness" is one of the most misunderstood words in the scripture as most Christians twist the word to be something that is observable in the flesh. It is not. As we have discussed above, our flesh is cursed and will remain cursed until the day we die. In this way, we are different from Jesus, whose father was the Holy Spirit and therefore His flesh, in contrast to ours, was not cursed. This is why he could keep the law and therefore be the perfect sacrifice. All of us, by contrast, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and therefore are saved by the sufficiency of His sacrifice in paying the price for our sins on the cross – i.e. saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9).

only once and translated love as brethren. "Philadelphos", in turn, comes from two Greek words. "Philos" (Strong's No. 5384) referring to friendship and "adelphos" (Strong's No. 80) meaning brethren or brother, meaning one who is born of the same father, belonging to the same people or the like. In other words, we are family – each an adopted child of our Heavenly Father – and therefore are to enjoy a kinship one towards another. The kinship or affection, however, that we are to have one toward another is much greater than we have ever enjoyed in our natural families because as Christians we dwell together (i.e. in the Body of Christ) in unity, each of us subject to our common father. Some of the attributes of this kinship are: (1) we prefer or put one another before all others (including our natural families, ethnic or racial groups) in all things (see Luke 14:26, Acts 10, Romans 12:9-10, 2 Cor. 6:14, Eph. 5:11), (2) we enjoy fellowship in the Spirit with one another in Christ Jesus (I Cor. 1:9, Phi. 1:5, I John 1:1-7), and (3) we minister one to another the gifts of our Heavenly Father's Kingdom (I Cor. 12). In sum, we enjoy true brotherly affection as the Lord envisioned it from the beginning. It is critical that we learn this lesson well because He will expect us to live it daily for all eternity or else be cast out of His Kingdom for His perfect peace, which can only exist in love, will not be compromised for anyone.

7. **Charity.** The Greek word translated charity is "agape" (Strong's No. 26). It comes from the Greek word agapao (Strong's No. 25). Both of these words are variously translated love or charity, most typically when referring to God's love towards man or the love that man is to have towards God. The same word is also used in reference to the love we are to have for our enemies (Matt. 5:44 and Luke 6:27). As we have discussed many times before it is a love of preference, in the sense of preferring another before yourself. It has nothing to do with feelings, which are tied to man's cursed flesh. The Greek word "phileo" (Strong's No. 5368) is used to refer to such love. In short, it is putting others (first God, second our fellow believers and finally everyone else) before ourselves. Unfortunately, many people confuse the two and therefore never learn to walk in the agape love of God. The purest expression of agape love is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁹ The fourteen (14) attributes of this love, which is the bond of

⁹Many speak of the Gospel of Jesus Christ impersonally. The fact is the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that the only way for me (wretched man that I am) to be saved was for God Himself to come to earth in the form of man (i.e. as the second Adam), live a perfect sinless life amongst people just like me - i.e. a wicked and perverse people who rewarded all His goodness by falsely accusing Him, convicting Him and crucifying Him. He then willingly allowed Himself to be nailed to the tree where He became a cursed thing – taking upon Himself the sins of all the world (i.e. all the past, present and future sins of every human being who would ever walk on this earth - believer and unbeliever alike). The full measure of His sacrifice may never really be known by us, but the scripture teaches that He was so disfigured by the experience that He could not even

perfectness, are set forth in I Corinthians 13:4-7 below:

- 4 ¶ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
- 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
- 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
- 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

I will leave a more detailed analysis of these attributes for another study, but for now let me simply suggest that you meditate upon these.

So what is the end of giving all diligence to add to your faith these seven things -- virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity? Peter answers that question in II Peter 1:8-11 below:

- 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.
- 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:
- 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Breaking each verse down in turn we find as follows.

Verse 8 *8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Verse 8 says that if these seven (7) things be in you and abound (i.e. exist in abundance), these seven (7) things will make you that you shall neither be "barren" nor "unfruitful" in the "knowledge" of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated barren here is "argos" meaning to be idle, slow, lazy or one who shuns the labor which one ought to perform. The Greek word translated unfruitful here is "akarpos" (Strong's No. 175), meaning to not yield in the sense of fruit that one ought to yield. In this sense, it refers to those who receive the Word of God amongst the thorns where the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choked them out that they BECAME

be recognized as a man. He then died (even to the tasting of hell fire and therefore the second death) to pay the price of our redemption from Satan's grasp that we might, should we choose to receive His free gift by faith, live eternally with Him in perfect peace and love.

UNFRUITFUL (in other words they were not always this way). See Matthew 13:3-8 & 22, Mark 4:7 & 18-19, and Luke 8:7 & 14. Finally, the Greek word translated "knowledge" is the same one used in verses 2 and 3 above of II Peter 1. In other words, if you add these seven (7) things to your faith you will not be one who takes the name of the Lord in vain – i.e. one who wastes his knowledge of sound doctrine by shunning to do that which he ought to do and therefore not bringing forth fruit unto perfection as the good seed (i.e. the Word of God), which he received, ought to yield.

Verse 9 *9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

Verse 9 gives the contrasting example. If you "lack" these seven things you are "blind" and "cannot see afar off" and hath "forgotten" that you were purged from your "old sins." It is interesting to note up front that the contrast between verses 8 and 9 is between those who "abound" and those who "lack". In other words you can have some of these seven things and still be a person who is "blind", "cannot see afar off" and who has "forgotten" that you were purged of your "old sins." This is a strong provocation to give "all diligence" to add these seven things and to never allow yourself to think that you have "attained."

The two Greek words that together are translated "lacketh" are "me" (Strong's No. 3351) and "pareimi" (Strong's Word No. 3918). "Me" represents a qualified negation as opposed to the Greek word "ou" (Strong's No. 3756) which means an absolute negation. The Greek word "pareimi" (Strong's No. 3918) means to be at hand, ready and at another's command. Thus we find that the Greek word translated "lacketh" does not indicate that the person has none of the seven things needed, but rather the person does not abound in these things and cannot be relied upon to make use of them when called upon. The consequences of such "lacking" is devastating.

First, you are or become "blind". It is interesting to note that the Greek word translated "blind" is "tuphlos" (Strong's No. 5185) which comes from the Greek word "tuphoo" variously meaning to be proud, highminded, or puffed up. It is a derivative of the Greek word "tupho" (Strong's No. 5188) meaning to cause, emit or raise a smoke. In the sense here it means to become beclouded, dim or unable to see as a consequence of the smoke, which is pride.

Second, you cannot see afar off. The Greek word so translated here is "muopazo" (Strong's no. 3467), meaning to see dimly or only what is near. It is from a compound of the base of "musterion" (Strong's No. 3466) and "optanomai" (Strong's No. 3700). "Musterion" is translated mystery all 27 times it is found in the New Testament, where "optanomai" means to see, look at, behold. Together, the sense is that you cannot see what God is doing. In other words, He is mysterious to you.

Third, you "forget" what God has done for you. The two Greek words, which together are translated "forgotten" here are "lethe" (Strong's No. 3024) and "lambano" (Strong's

No. 2983). "Lethe" is only used this once. It comes from the Greek word "lanthano" (Strong's No. 2990) variously translated be hid, be ignorant of or unawares. "Lambano" is translated principally as "receive" or "take". Together, the sense of these words is of one who has lost or had taken from him, without his even knowing it, the true significance of Christ's sacrifice for him. Consequently, the person shrinks back from going forward in the Lord, becoming unfruitful as referenced in the parable of the seed and the sower referenced above.

Verse 10 *10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*

In verse 10 Peter, building upon the contrasting examples of what becomes of one who "abounds" in these seven things as opposed to the one who "lacketh" these things, commands us to "give diligence" to make our "calling and election" sure promising that if we will do "these things" we shall "never fall". The Greek word translated "give diligence" here is "spoudazo" (Strong's No. 4704). It comes from the Greek word "spoude" translated diligence in verse 5. Basically, it means that this must be our first priority. We must begin immediately (i.e. operate in haste), exert ourselves most earnestly and do so continuously, lest we fail to abound in these seven (7) things thereby becoming unfruitful and falling after the example of those who "lacketh" these things. The "calling" here does not refer to predestination, rather it may best be thought of as an invitation in the sense of "many are called". Similarly, the "election" here has nothing to do with "predestination" but rather with our "election" of (or perhaps better stated our choice or preference for) God as referred to in I Thessalonians 1:4. We make our calling and election sure by giving all diligence to add these seven (7) things to our faith. His promise to us is that if we will do these things we "shall never fall" for the reason set forth in verse 11.

Verse 11 *11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

In verse 11, He promises that if we add the seven (7) things to our faith and abound in them, that "an entrance" shall be "ministered unto" us "abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The "entrance" that shall be "ministered unto" us is that door spoken of in Revelation 3:7-8 referring to the "open door" that He sets before us that no man can shut. The Greek word translated ministered here is "epichoregeo" (Strong's No. 2023) means to supply, furnish or assist. When coupled with the word "abundantly" it means to richly provide us all that we need to enter through that open door that He has set for us into His Kingdom.

Conclusion

So, what then is the sum of the matter? Briefly, it is that in order to make your salvation sure you must -

- (1) Attain unto like precious faith with Peter and the other apostles.
- (2) Recognize your own utter depravity that you may be properly motivated to flee, put off, mortify your flesh and choose to dwell by faith in the power of God in the Body of Jesus Christ having put off the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- (3) Give all diligence to add to your faith these seven things: (1) virtue, (2) knowledge, (3) temperance, (4) patience, (5) godliness, (6) brotherly kindness and (7) charity.

Finally, you must never be satisfied as though you have already attained but strive with all your might daily to walk in these seven things that they may be in you and abound, for it is only when you walk in this place that your calling and election are sure and God sets that open door before you to enter into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.