

Effects of Knowing Christ
Harmony M.B.C., January 19, 2014
Robert P. Myers

2Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2Peter 1:3 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:

2Peter 1:4 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.

I think that students of the bible sometimes read this first verse and come to the conclusion that this is only talking about the knowledge of salvation born of faith received from the Lord at conversion. This is certainly the time that knowledge of the Lord begins. The soul is flooded with the power and understanding of the Holy Spirit and we see God and Christ in a new and living way. We are stamped with the name of the Lord and the spiritual understanding of things that was denied us for all the previous time of our lives is suddenly made available for us to think about. The scripture tells us in **1Cor. 2:16** that we have the mind of Christ. Now, while this rendering of the Greek looks like, at first glance, we get Christ's brain at the time of conversion, the actual expression means that we are able to think like Christ thinks. Now, this in itself is phenomenal, and we don't often think about the miraculous thing we have experienced. It's as though we are suddenly allowed into a library that has bookshelves from ground to space and from the surface of the earth to infinity. This could be overwhelming to us if it were not for the fact that God has endowed us beforehand with a wonderful safeguard. It's called IGNORANCE! There's more use for ignorance than just to create stumble-bums and people who need an education! It's one of God's great mercies that keeps us from crashing and burning when we are suddenly brought into His library and given the key to the door! Our very lack of information about the magnitude of what has happened and about the scope of the library of knowledge the Lord has opened to us saves us from catastrophe! This is what happens when we are first brought to the knowledge of our salvation.

But there is more, and that is why I mentioned that some folks may think the benefits of having knowledge of the Lord spoken of in **verse 2** all occur when we get that sudden burst of knowledge at conversion. Really, though, this is the beginning of great things happening in our souls and in our lives. We want to now

think about what happens from conversion onward regarding what the beginning, and the growth of our knowledge of the Lord brings.

I. V.2 - First, grace and peace are multiplied. Think of grace and peace being multiplied.

- These are two invaluable treasures available from the Lord. When they are multiplied toward us we gain things that nothing else can give us. Now, let me say here that grace and peace are multiplied at the very beginning.
 - ▶ We cannot begin to measure how great God’s grace was shown in saving our souls
 - ▶ We can’t begin to measure how great His grace was expressed when he made us to know we were saved at the very moment of conversion
 - ▶ We have a kind of sense about the enormous peace that comes to us when the Lord reveals Himself to us as our Savior; this knowledge of Him suddenly takes away the awful sense of doom and condemnation that overshadowed us. But, peace yet to be had as a result of understanding our Lord more is yet ahead of us...we don’t have it yet.
 - ▶ But this is the start of all this. This is the place where we enter the knowledge repository of God and begin to have the opportunity to expand our knowledge of Christ so as to see and experience more of the Lord’s unmerited favor and more of the peace that comes with it.
 - ▶ Let’s just think for a moment about what Grace multiplied has the power to give:
 - ▶ Sense of purpose
 - ▶ Sense of being loved and valued
 - ▶ Behavioral change
 - ▶ Thought change
- What about multiplication of peace to us? What does it have the potential to give?
 - ▶ Sense of safety
 - ▶ Sense of oneness with the Lord
 - ▶ Sense of orderliness (in your own life; in the affairs of creation)
 - ▶ Stability in turbulence

II. So, we will want to know how grace and peace get multiplied. And our text tells us: (V.2 - “through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord...”)

- As I have said, grace is received and a level of peace arrives when we first trust Christ. So, we know what that feels like. But what about this thing of grace and peace being multiplied? That is the next step. And we start those steps by advancing in our knowledge of the Lord.

- ▶ We need to understand that gaining in this kind of knowledge does not happen automatically just because we live on as believers.
- ▶ See Paul’s understanding of this: **Philip. 3:8-10**
- ▶ Devaluation of all that we had before Christ - “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss (and do count them *but* dung) for the **excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...**”
 - We come into the Kingdom with one first-grade reader in our hand. We have read that little book and gotten as much knowledge out of it as we could. The knowledge in it is limited to human things. But now, we have the vast, the infinite library of knowledge about the Lord at our fingertips. Will we cling to that little first-grade primer, or will we recognize that we have been given access to the largest library of knowledge in the universe?
- ▶ But we also have to acknowledge that there is personal loss in this process - “...for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, that I may win Christ...”
 - We usually have a pretty high value placed on human things. Like Paul, our prestige, our personal knowledge, our influence, a lot of other things that humans consider to be valuable. In our pursuit of the things that come as a result of growth in our knowledge of Christ, there is a demand for these to either be laid aside or to be subordinated to this pursuit.
 - However, let’s look at this process in its proper light. We come into the Kingdom dragging those “all things” that Paul is talking about and we are like a street person rolling a shopping cart full of aluminum cans, pieces of tattered clothing, odds and ends picked up out of the dumpster, and some thrown-away cans of food. These are our “all things” when we compare them to the riches of the Kingdom. We roll this cart into the middle of a heavenly Wal-Mart where we are invited to exchange what we have in the shopping cart for anything we want from the endless selection of items in this infinite store. This is a reality that we sometimes don’t see too clearly. Paul saw it, and that is why he said he counted all those things that he had as nothing more than dung!
- ▶ His reason for dumping all these low rent things should be our reason too. All done for deeper personal knowledge of Christ - **v.10 That I may know him**, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

III. Next, looking at verses 3 & 4, we want to notice the principle of God by which our advancement in knowledge multiplies grace and peace in our lives: 2Peter 1:3-4 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.

- First, as I mentioned at the start, we have everything we need for life and godliness (hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness). But access to it comes through the knowledge of Christ (v. 3 through the knowledge of him). I want to emphasize again that they are all there and available when we come to a knowledge of Him as Savior. They are in reserve for us to draw out and use. **But**, without growth in knowledge, we hardly know where or how to begin getting access to them, and using them in our daily lives. As babes in Christ, we just get started learning about our Lord, so we have very limited knowledge about using the things of the kingdom.
 - ▶ Illustrate: Donald Trump has a 7 year old son, Barron. He is heir to Donald's empire along with Donald's other children.
 - ▶ **Everything Barron is given right now is provided by his dad and mom.** But, there are **a lot of things in the Trump kingdom that Barron doesn't know he owns right now.** They are held in trust for him.
 - ▶ As he needs them, or even wants them, Donald may give them to him. **Right now, he doesn't know what to ask for.** As soon as he learns what to ask for, he might ask for it. The possibilities are almost limitless!
 - ▶ There will be **things that he will learn he needs.** He may need them right now, but he doesn't know they are available, and he may not know that he needs them. So, he lacks the knowledge of what he needs or has available for the asking, so he doesn't ask.
 - ▶ There are **things** in Donald's home...possessions...that **Barron doesn't know how to use.** There may be a data analysis program on the family computer that Barron doesn't know how to use, but it is right there for the using. Barron sees all the ritzy cars out in the garage, but he doesn't know how to drive them. When he finally learns how, and everything is in order, he can use these things.
 - ▶ Barron **watches his dad do things and say things** that he doesn't understand right now. As he gets to know his dad more, he will learn why his dad says things and does certain things. He will then be able to use that **knowledge to improve his relationship with his dad**...to get his dad's approval about how he does things because he has learned how to do them as a result of coming to a knowledge about his dad.
 - ▶ Just so, learning Christ gives us insights into what is there in the kingdom for us to have and use. Learning about Christ will reveal to us the value of behaving like Him.
- So, as we think about Barron watching dad and learning how he acts, and being taught by that to mimic dad, we have to realize that there is something else

about getting hold of this knowledge of the Lord that is so important to us in regard to our Christian conduct. He has promised and provided these things **so that we might be more Christ-like** - And the reason we can be more Christ-like is because we have power over, and an avenue of escape away from, the drawing power of carnal, worldly longing (**v.4 - that by these** ye might be partakers of the divine nature). How does this work?

- ▶ First, longing after worldly things is death to climbing the staircase of increasing spiritual growth. Increasing spiritual growth comes through learning more and more about our great Savior
- ▶ Then again, longing after worldly things is a staircase that leads downward to a dungeon of imprisonment. The bars of that dungeon are thick steel and are made of our own commitments to worldly effort to get those things we lust after
 - **1John 2:15** “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world.”
- ▶ But, we are not bound by these carnal longings. If we would be free from them, there is an avenue to be free. It is simple. Just study Christ.
- ▶ Being partakers of the divine nature of Christ means more than just being a new creature. The nature of any creature expresses itself in thinking and doing. That thinking and doing is shaped by the creature learning from a model how to appropriately express its nature.
 - Illustrate: watching squirrels in side yard. - They hop, they dig, they stand on their hind legs and gnaw on an acorn they have found; they run up a tree, they run down it, they bark at me. They are acting out their nature. But why does all this use of energy show itself as hopping, digging, climbing, barking? Because these squirrels grew up learning from their parent. In the same way, all creatures act out the fundamentals of their nature based on a combination of having the actual nature to be able to do certain things and then coming to know about those things through studying a model.
 - Interesting side note: Some animals who imprint on a substitute parent, not of the same species, will behave like the substitute parent in a lot of things (not like their own species). Ed has a couple of geese which have done this very thing (do you ever wonder if those geese have a longing to drive that Gator and act like Mama??!!)
 - I want to say something about the last phrase in **v. 4** (having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust)
- ▶ The great end of getting to know Christ is that we learn how to turn the capabilities of our new nature into thoughts and acts that mimic Him. By doing that, we escape the snares of the world.