

2Peter 11-08-19b

Let's pick up our study now in 2 Peter chapter 1. We've seen kind of an overview of the salutation here. I've got some interesting exegetical notes that we'll revisit after we look at the rest of this chapter. But we're going to speed up just a little bit because the stage has been set.

We can see that Peter is talking to these people and he's really made an emphatic point out of what Jesus Christ has done through experiential knowledge of his righteousness, of the glory of God, of God's virtue. This makes a difference. This is something we can see that the world cannot see.

The carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit. They're spiritually discerned. This is our birthright.

This is our inheritance. This is something new and different for human beings. Even the Old Testament saints could not see the things that have been revealed to us in this age of the church.

It's different. It's special. It's unique.

And Peter says, I really want you to pay attention to these gifts that the Lord Jesus Christ has given. So he says, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the epinosis of God and of Jesus our Lord as his divine power has given to us everything, all things that pertain to life and godliness through the epinosis of him, you've got it there again, it's not like it's an accident, who called us through glory and virtue. Many are called, few are chosen.

Why is it that many are called and few are chosen? We know that from another passage. How can it be that many are called and few are chosen? Why wouldn't God call everybody and choose everybody that he calls? Because he knows ahead of time that people are going to decide for and against, why wouldn't he just only call the ones that are chosen? Many are called, few are chosen. If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to myself, but not everybody ends up at the foot of the cross.

How does that work? Well, there are different answers to that question, but here's the thing. Glory and virtue are going to attract some of us. We are going to be drawn to that.

And he says, these are the ones that Jesus wants to give the fullness of heaven to, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises. Now what's the thing about a promise? It is a future thing. Wimpy used to tell Popeye, I'll gladly repay you on Tuesday.

That's a promise. But until Tuesday gets here, you don't have the payment. So intrinsic to a promise is hope.

Hope is the expectation that the promise is going to be fulfilled, right? Be ready always to give an answer every minute and ask you a reason for the hope that is in you. What is the hope based

on? Exceedingly great and precious promises. Those promises are to us as good as gold.

This check is as good as cash. This dollar bill is as good as gold used to be. Remember that? You know, legal tender for all debts, public and private, and used to be a silver certificate or the old yellow backs.

I mean, you could take those down and exchange them for precious metals. It was a promissory note. It was an IOU.

You can carry this piece of paper around. It's lighter and foldable where gold, somebody's liable to knock you in the head for it. So take this piece of paper, but it's the same.

By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature and escape this world that is characterized by human desires, lusts. Now let's speed up just a little bit as we look at verse 5 and following. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue.

Now he's just assuming faith, right? He doesn't say get some faith and then add to it virtue. He says you've already got faith, add virtue to that. So what faith is this? What faith is he talking about? Remember, I'm writing to you who've already got like valued faith with us.

If you haven't got like valued faith, I'm not talking to you, Peter says. I'm talking to you that have got this faith. You've got the foundation.

You've got the starting point. By faith, Abraham, by faith, Noah, by faith, Moses, by faith, all of these Hebrews 11 Old Scripture, by faith, Abraham waited for a city whose founder and builder is God. By faith, they conquered.

By faith, they endured. Those of you who have like precious faith with us, this is what you need to do. Don't just stand pat.

Don't just say, well, you know, I believe the same things that the apostles believed. I believe in Jesus. I've got salvation and I'm set.

Come Lord Jesus, take me to glory. He says you've got this faith. But to this faith and for this reason, because you can be a partaker of the divine nature.

Now, let's think about that for a second. What does it mean to partake of the divine nature? Well, it would kind of be the restoration, wouldn't it? We were originally created. Man was created in the image of God, but we lost it at the fall.

So to be returned and restored, to be Christ-like would be to be restored to the image of God. He's the fullness of deity in bodily form, right? So to partake of the divine nature, this is to get back to what God intended us to be. Now is that an all or nothing proposition? This is really the

question.

You're going to partake of the divine nature. Let's say we haven't got it right now, but we're going to reach out and get it. So if you're going to partake of the divine nature, are you going to be fully perfected all at once? It's really not realistic to expect, is it? This would be progressive.

We would be gradually built up. Be like planting a seed. The mighty oak starts from an acorn.

So you plant the acorn and you say, I hope over time you sprout, get some branches, build a trunk, get some bark, soak up the rain and be planted by the river and bring forth your fruit in your season. So you're going to grow and you're going to become the mighty oak over time, right? This is what partaking of the divine nature is. We don't just instantly become 100% divine nature saints.

We add, we grow this, and this is what Peter is now going to describe. How do you do that? What are the elements of it? Now if you ever remember, again some of you that have got this old theme background, that's my background so you're stuck with it. You remember he used to have what he called the edification complex.

I was fascinated by that thing. I thought, I've read my entire Bible, I've never seen that edification complex anywhere. Where is that thing? Because he said, well you start out with grace orientation, and I thought, well that kind of makes sense.

You know God's got grace, you figure I'm going to point myself in the direction of God's grace. Okay. Then he said, you've got to get that first, then you can work on mastery of the details of life.

You've got to quit being distracted and sinning all the time and falling off the log into the murk of, you know, the pig, it's not a waddle, what is it, what are you, yeah the pigs die, but what do they do in the mud? Wallow. I couldn't get waddle out of my head. You don't waddle, they wallow.

You've got to get out of the pig wallow. You've got to quit falling back into the muck. So mastery of the details of life.

And then the next one was relaxed mental attitude. Once you've got a hold of God's grace and you've learned to keep the details of life, you know subjectivity and all that out of your hair, you can begin to relax and roll with the punch and be flexible and start to really kind of get moving. Then you have capacity for life and love and happiness, remember that? And then the top floor, the penthouse of the edification complex is occupation with Christ.

You can really focus on Christ because you've got all the rest of this stuff taken care of. Well, it was a real interesting model and there is scriptural support for those various aspects but it's kind of an artificial construct. I would suggest, I would submit, I would offer to you that if you want to find an edification complex in scripture, we're looking at it right here.

This is what Peter gives you for the edification complex and I want you to notice that it builds the same way. You've got to have one floor before you can add the next. You cannot put the third story up if you've got no foundation and no first floor and no second floor.

We're watching a building going up across the street from our office and I don't know if you all saw that thing but it's going to be, I wish Kenny was here, I think it's going to be 42 stories high but they started with floor one and we've watched over the last few months and they are throwing that thing up like you cannot believe. They've already got the glass on the bottom and the thing, this crane gets higher and higher and the floors go up and up and up and I wish I'd done one of those time lapse things so I could just play the thing in fast motion and just go and build all the way up to the top. But floor by floor by floor, they have to start at the bottom and work their way.

Look at this. For this reason, because of what he's just described, with all diligence, you've got to be consistent, you've got to pay attention to this thing, it's not just going to happen on its own. It's not going to do it by osmosis.

You can't just kind of float and somebody else is going to build this thing. Giving all diligence. Put some thought into it, have a plan, pay attention, add to your faith, your like precious faith, virtue, I'll give you some illumination on each of these words but just get the big idea here.

Virtue is a decent translation. To virtue, knowledge. And I thought we were already up in knowledge up above.

But this is kind of a cyclical thing, right? You can't just stick with the knowledge that you started with. Knowledge is going to get you oriented to grace. Knowledge is going to let you lay hold of righteousness.

Knowledge is going to let you understand the glory and the virtue of God. But you've got to add some more knowledge. We've got to keep on growing.

This is why it is so important after evangelism to have some sort of program of growth. Billy Graham has understood this for decades. That's why he tries to enlist local churches in the community.

When he goes and does a crusade, Franklin does the same thing now. After people walk the aisle and come down and get saved and get the literature, he says, look, find a local church. You need to grow.

You need to get the milk of the word. You need to start sinking your teeth into some meat eventually. Get some more knowledge.

You cannot stagnate. You can't stop. And ultimately, the evangelistic effort will stop if the believers doing it are not growing.

Because we have got to stay healthy ourselves. You can't go fight the battle if you yourself are not healthy. So add to your faith, virtue.

To virtue, knowledge. To knowledge, self-control. And here's the thing.

If you've got knowledge without self-control, well, go back to the beginning. If you've got faith without virtue, that means I believe all this stuff, but it doesn't reflect. People look at me, they don't see anything out of the ordinary.

I'm about as non-virtuous as the next guy. So your faith ought to start working itself out in virtue. Your virtue ought to start working itself out in, I need to learn some more.

I've got the humility to be teachable and to recognize that my knowledge is limited and I need some more. I need to grow. I need the meat and not just the milk.

To that knowledge, if I just get knowledge and I don't have self-control, I'm going to be puffed up. I'll be like a Pharisee. Knowledge puffs up.

I need something else. So I need self-control. I need to know how to not use my knowledge as a big bat to beat other people on the head with.

Or to stand there in some supercilious, arrogant attitude toward others, looking around saying, well, you don't know what I know, you poor, silly believer. Your doctrine is messed up. Your application is messed up.

You don't understand this verse right. Looking down at other denominations or other churches or whatever. When we start getting knowledge, we need to quickly add self-control.

There is a time to speak and a time to shut up and let other people follow the same path that we've followed. People were kind and gracious to us and let us make our mistakes and bump into things while we were growing. When we get some knowledge, we need to be gracious.

We need to be as accommodating and as encouraging and as not putting out the spirit's fire, not quenching or grieving the spirit. When we get a little bit of knowledge, we need some self-control to contain and direct and apply this knowledge effectively. To self-control, perseverance.

Got to stick with it. Got to have some consistency. Got to have a long-term thing.

It's like in Ecclesiastes. It's not standing tall at the beginning. It's that long spirit that's going to endure and be consistent and cross the finish line.

It doesn't matter how fast you sprint from the start. It's, did you cross the finish line? Did you run your race well? That's what Paul says. I have run my race.

I have finished the course. You cannot finish if you don't have perseverance. It doesn't matter

what your lap time was if you don't cross the finish line.

Perseverance. To perseverance, godliness. Didn't we say that partaking of the divine nature was one of those things that comes to us through that grace thing that Jesus has given us? Well, look at the foundation you've got to build before you can really start laying in that godliness.

You can't just, you know, three days after you're saved be godly. There's got to be a foundation under it. We need some virtue.

We need some basic life skills. We need to basically change our mind away from dead works and faith toward God. That's part of the foundation.

That's what virtue is. Change of mind away from dead works, faith toward God. We need to add to that some additional knowledge.

We need to start building a new paradigm for our life, a new scale of values, a new frame of reference, a new set of priorities, new goals, right? That's what that knowledge is going to do for us. We need to add self-control so that we can stay on that path. We need perseverance so that we stick to that path, even when it gets a little rough and rocky.

And then godliness. This now is starting to lift our eyes. Notice that a lot of these things are real earthbound.

You've got your light, precious faith that is communicated usually by another person to us. It's communicated one-on-one. Dr. Krizzle makes a point quite often that the way that Jesus has chosen for the gospel to be spread, he doesn't send an angel.

He doesn't send a vision. He doesn't send miraculous bursts of divine omnipotence. It is people talking to people, always.

He illustrates it out of Acts, where Cornelius is over there praying and saying that he's a Gentile. He says, Lord, I'm really interested in finding out about this faith. He gets a message from God and he says, send for Peter.

Dr. Krizzle asks a great question. Why doesn't that messenger just give him the gospel right there? He's already talking to a divine messenger. The divine messenger says, you need to talk to Peter.

Why? Because the paradigm for communication of the gospel is people-to-people. It's on this earthly plane. That's how it happens.

So here you've got adding these things. And godliness, now we're starting to get more vertical. Now we're starting, after we've gotten our earthly life straightened out, and this is Bob's grace orientation, mastery of the details of life, relaxed mental attitude, you've gotten to where earthly

life is not an impediment.

Now we can start reaching for capacity for life and love and happiness. Now we can start reaching for occupation with Christ. Now we can really start entering into the divine nature.

It has to have a foundation. You can't build a house with no slab or no pier and beam or something to hold the thing up. Godliness.

To godliness, brotherly kindness. Now you really have God's attitude toward the brother. This is why we can forgive.

This is how we can love our enemies, do good to those that hate us, pray for those that spitefully use us, and do it genuinely and from the heart. Because we have started to partake of that divine nature and it starts to dwell in us. God has made his home with us and his love is shed abroad in our hearts, like it says in Romans 5. To godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love.

And love is omnidirectional. It is love for God and love for one another. That is the first and greatest commandment and the second that is likened to it, sums up all the law and the prophets, sums up our Christian faith.

Now you have really gotten to the place of fruitfulness and function. But it's a building. And each of these, I was going to make a diagram and hand it out, but if you can imagine like the side of a pyramid.

Let's say you were going to build a pyramid. And so you lay the first floor. And that's going to be your faith, your like precious faith.

And then your second story on that thing, a little bit higher, is going to be virtue. And then you're going to add to virtue knowledge. And you're going to add to your faith knowledge.

But you don't stop building the first floor. You're going to add to your faith virtue, but you're also continuing to add to the faith, because virtue and faith are going to grow together. So that foundation is going to continue to expand.

And along with expanding those two, you are going to add your knowledge. And as those three, all three, continue to expand, you're going to add self-control. And as those four continue to expand, so instead of being a pyramid, it's really more like something that starts on a slope.

And as you add each new layer, they're all building and all getting larger in sort of an infinite extent. And this process, by the way, will go forward into the kingdom of the Son, into the kingdom of the Father. We will never stop this process.

This is one of the great things we have to look forward to in eternity, is we don't just arrive in

some golden perfection. We will learn and grow and enter into things that eye has not seen and ear has not heard, hasn't entered into the heart of man. We've got a little text Bible of 66 books.

We're going to have all of human history as our Bible, as our textbook, and as the reflection of God's glory and character to educate us. And we will continue to build all of these things, our faith and our virtue and our knowledge and our godliness and our perseverance and so on. So this is just the beginning of a lifelong process.

And for us, our life is eternal. If these things are what, in verse 8? If these things are yours, and if they abound, that's how I know that they continue, they're going to multiply. Each one of these things continues to grow.

You don't get enough faith. You don't get enough virtue. You don't get enough epinosis.

These things have to be yours, and they have to be growing, all of them. You will not be barren or unfruitful in the epinosis, third time now, of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not enough to know Him.

That knowledge has to be fruitful, has to be producing. Remember in Romans 9, 10, and 11? And you get to chapter 11, and Paul says, you Israelites, the Israelites, of which I am one, were in the tree, but the tree branch was fruitless. And God snapped it out, not because it was unsaved.

You wouldn't be in the tree if you weren't saved, but it bore no fruit. And he said, I'm snapping it off, and I'm grafting in these Gentile branches, because they will bear fruit. And he says, don't boast.

This is how I know they weren't unbelievers. Because he says, don't boast about the Israelite branches that were snapped off. Don't boast about the Jews who are temporarily sidelined in God's plan, because if they wake up, they can be grafted in again.

This is our post-salvation experience. And God says, I want to make them jealous. They're all coming back in the Millennial Kingdom.

They're going to see the example of the Gentiles and say, wow, now we've got the Holy Spirit. Now we've got the Word of God. Let's get with this program.

And they will be grafted in again. But those branches have to be fruitful. Same thing in Hebrews chapter 6. Remember the field that's out there, and the rain falls many times upon it.

If it only brings up thorns and briars, it is fit for burning and near to a curse. It's supposed to bring forth 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold. The rain is coming on it.

So we don't want to be barren and fruitless. Well, I say, okay, I don't want to be barren and fruitless. How can I avoid that? I've just been told.

I've got to take that basic core of faith and start building these things on it in order. Looking for

those things. Cultivating those things.

Praying about those things. Looking to heaven for those things. And that way I will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For he who lacks these things is what? Short-sighted. Look toward heaven? Can't see that far. I'm nearsighted.

All I can see is what's immediately in my periphery. I can only see my circumstance. I can only see my finances.

I can only see my relationships. I can only see my job. I can only see my education.

I can't look beyond that. I can't look to heaven. I can't look to the future.

I can't look to the kingdom. I can't look to the return of Christ. I can't look to the judgment seat.

I'm short-sighted. He who lacks these things isn't looking where he's supposed to look. So what is the first thing we've got to do in order to cultivate these things? We've got to look in the right direction.

We've got to be objective instead of subjective. What is subjectivity? Eyes on self. Eyes on people.

Eyes on circumstances. Lift your eyes onto the hills. Lift your eyes to the horizon.

Lift your eyes to what's coming. Look heavenward. He who lacks these things is short-sighted even unto blindness and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

The first basic thing you learn at faith is that Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. It's an essential of the gospel. And without that, we can't progress.

Why have I been cleansed from my old sins? Well, this now is starting to turn toward Peter's message in this letter because there is a false message out there that says you don't have to worry about your sins. You don't have to worry about building this growth edifice. He says, therefore, brethren, be even more diligent.

Didn't he already say something about diligence once in here? Wasn't it at the beginning of taking your faith and putting all those other things on top of it? Be diligent. Now he says it again. What are the things that we're starting to see repeated here? You have got to have this experiential knowledge, this active knowledge, this knowledge that is like going to a place you haven't been before and seeing it and soaking it up and taking it in and having it seared into your memory and having it affect you and change you for the rest of your life.

That's what epinosis is. And he's repeated that three times in one paragraph. Now he says you've

got to be diligent.

You've got to be diligent. You've got to be diligent. You have to care.

You have to want it. It has to be an objective. It has to be a compulsion.

It has to be a hunger. You've got to want it. You don't just float.

You don't just wait. You don't just drift, blown about by whatever the current wind is. This has to be, this is what I'm rowing toward.

Anytime my boat starts deviating from this, I've got to pull with one or the other and get back on line. I've got to get back on the narrow path. Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure.

Now this has been talked about in a lot of different ways, but what does the context tell us? What is the call? What did we just have right up above in the context? How are we called? By his glory and virtue. Remember that? It attracts, it draws us. Well, if we are those who are drawn by that, let it show.

How do you make your calling sure? It shows. If you're an iron filing and somebody puts a magnet near you, your attraction shows. You are drawn.

You can't help it. And he says, look, if you are drawn by God's glory, if you are drawn by God's virtue, then quit messing around and let it show. Show the certainty of it.

Make it sure. If you are secure by the promises of God, it's not like making your salvation more certain. It is the evidence.

It is the manifestation. If somebody says, you know, I don't really know if that person is a growing believer or not, because I don't really see. Somebody ought to look and say, you see the meteoric comet trail going behind that person? They are drawn toward heaven.

That person is full out, 100% gonzo on this path. You know, I am sure. You know how people are always saying, well, we don't really know if people are saved.

Only God in heaven knows. Well, who are the people that we're questioning? People that don't seem to have anything going on. We say, well, you know, they say they were saved as a child, but you wouldn't know it now.

They are lackadaisical and indifferent and don't go to church, don't care about the things of God, don't want to talk about anything. Well, you know, people say, are they saved? Are they not? I don't care about that. You know, when you're talking to somebody, people look at it and they say, I don't know about these people over here.

I can tell you one guy that's saved. That guy right there, he is definitely saved. He is definitely a believer.

He is sold out. He is on fire. He cannot get enough of the word of God.

Make your calling and election sure. That's what it's talking about. Let there be no doubt who you are.

If people can't tell who you are, what's the matter with you? Get on with it. Be diligent. Even more diligent.

You're diligent to build this edifice of faith and virtue and knowledge and self-control and so on. Be even more diligent that it shows that people are sure of who you are. For if you do these things, you will never stumble.

You don't have to worry about why I wonder and wake up in the middle of the night, wonder if maybe I'm just fooling myself, maybe God's not there. You won't have time to stumble. You're going to be busy putting one foot in front of another because the terrain is going to be coming so fast and the opportunities are going to be so great and so interesting and so compelling that you'll never stumble.

You'll never be delayed. You'll never falter. An entrance will be supplied to you abundantly.

Here's another thing we keep seeing. There is grace and peace be multiplied to you. There is an abundance of grace.

There is an abundance of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you're worried about the kingdom, there's going to be a kingdom and not everybody is in it. It's a shocking thing.

The Christian world doesn't know that not everybody is going to be in the kingdom. But look at the description of the Millennial Kingdom. There are nations outside during that thousand years that bring tribute and bring glory to the kingdom which is defined by those tribal areas that Ezekiel talks about.

And there is the rod. The Israelites that are resurrected pass under the rod. You're in.

You're out. You're in. You're out.

You're in. You're out. What's it based on? How faithful were you? How dedicated were you? Did you catch fire? Did you make your Old Testament calling and election sure? You're in.

Were you a Pharisee? You're going to be outside. Jesus said you're going to see all these people coming from every compass direction sitting down with Abraham in the kingdom and you yourself will be outside the kingdom. They wouldn't see it.

They wouldn't be there to observe it and weep and wail and ash their teeth over it if they weren't resurrected. They'll be there. They're believers.

They believed in God. But they missed the Messiah that was standing right in front of them. We don't want to be those people.

Calling and election sure. You'll never stumble. And an entrance will be supplied to you.

It's going to be, look, get that velvet hook thing aside. Get these people in. Here's the on fire ones.

An abundant entrance. Blow a trumpet. Announce their names.

Give them a seat in the front row. These people belong in the kingdom. Not just the kingdom of the Son, but also the kingdom of the Father.

Who's got the access card to go through the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem? Either the 12 apostolic gates or the 12 tribe gates. The city that is built four square is a city. It is not the entire kingdom.

You've got the river of life. You've got the leaves coming off the tree of life for the healing of the nations that are outside. How can you have nations inside a city? You've got a city with citizens, and you've got nations that are outside in the eternal kingdom of the Father.

What does that tell you? Not everybody lives in the city. Why? Because some of them chucked their inheritance, their meros, their portion, into the lake of fire. Who lost their meros, their inheritance, their portion? Dogs, liars, fornicators, those who love and practice a lie.

That's believers that didn't get this message, were not drawn, didn't partake of the divine nature. They're saved, but they're going to need healing even in the kingdom of the Father. The leaves off that tree are going to have to come out.

We don't want to be those people. I would rather be a leaf carrier than a leaf receiver. Wouldn't you? I would love to walk in, even once, to the side of the tree of life, grab a handful of leaves, and be detailed to go out and minister those leaves to people outside.

To have that privilege, to have a dwelling place. Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you so that you can dwell where I am. Jesus is not going to be dwelling among the nations.

You know they've got a place here in Dallas, Christ, for the nations. He's going to be the light. The Lamb is the light.

He's going to be at the center of that temple precinct. I want to live in there. Well, if you want that, if that's your goal, then all of these things come alive and have meaning.

That's what we want. So, brethren, be diligent to make your calling and election sure. If you do these things, an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly.

And so Peter concludes here, and he says, look, for this reason, I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know them and you're established in the present truth. Remember, like precious faith, I'm writing to you that believe the same things I believe. I think it is right, as long as I'm in this tent, as long as I'm in this body, in this world, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that pretty soon I'm going to put off this tent and I'm leaving.

Just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. Now, just a shout out to the Catholics. What did Peter not say? I know that I'm soon going to be leaving, so let me tell you who the next Pope is.

I'm leaving, so let me tell you that I'm setting up the church, and that's going to be the place where you can go and get this motivation. Peter says, I'm leaving. Here's the word from Jesus Christ, and this is all you need.

I have to believe that if Peter had set up the apostolic succession and he said, look, I'm about to depart. Let me tell you my last, let me give you my last message here. This would have been a real convenient place to mention it.

I'm afraid you're going to forget after I'm gone, so I'm going to set up another guy, and he's going to wear the pointy hat, and you listen to him. He just doesn't say that, so I'm being a little bit facetious, but you see my point. Peter says, look, the way I'm going to stir you up by way of reminder after I'm gone is this letter.

This letter is going to be your apostolic motivation, your apostolic message, and this is all you need. It's inspired by God. Well, this is where we're going to have to break off for this evening, but you can really begin to see Peter's heart here.

He knows that he doesn't have much more time to fulfill the great commission that Jesus Christ gave him. Make disciples after I'm gone. Teach them to observe the things that I commanded you.

So that's what Peter is doing here, and it's a tremendous, tremendously meaty message. In these three short chapters, he is going to build on what he wrote in his first letter, but he's going to turn his attention. There it was, here's how you can get along in the milieu of your diaspora life.

Stay together, keep your humility, observe the authorities that God has put in place, get your house in order, learn how to function. Now you can really hit the ground running with your spiritual life, and you've got to stay committed to the Epinosus Pistis faith message. Because now the attack is not going to be circumstances.

You've mastered that. You've got life down. Now the attack is going to be on the message.

It's going to be on your faith itself, on the reality of God and his plan and the return of Jesus Christ. False teachers are going to come in and try to preach you into something else. It is going to be a philosophical attack instead of a circumstantial attack.

That's what he's going to focus on, because he says, you know what? This is what you need to know after I'm gone. So that's where we'll pick up when we resume our study next week, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the gracious provision that you have made for us of these great statements of faith and of truth. Thank you for the ministry of your Holy Spirit that makes it understandable to us, and who reminds us of these things in the time of application, the time where it is practical, the time where it makes a difference in how we decide, how we think, and how we live. We pray that as we meditate on these truths, as we see our lives reflected in the mirror of your word, that we will be motivated, we'll be encouraged, and that our lives will reflect ever more fully that divine nature that is so eloquently portrayed for us in the life and in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

We pray these things in his name. Amen.