

## Text— 2 Peter 1:2-11

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

There's a lot of talk about "faith" in a rather generic way as people remark that there are numerous faiths throughout the world which are simply different paths to God who goes by many different names. Nevertheless, 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 teaches us, "though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Accordingly, all sincere Christians hold there is only one true God, the Triune God: three distinct Persons, yet one divine essence – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (the Son also being known as the living Word) – for 1 John 5:7 clearly states, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

However, just acknowledging the true God is the Triune God is NOT saving faith, for James 2:19-20 remarks, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Hence, simply knowing who the true God is does NOT save a person; rather, faith in the true God must be heart-deep, living, and active if it is to save a person, which includes not merely knowledge of the true God but also trust and confidence in Him in how He has provided salvation, for John 3:16-18 reports, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Thus, saving faith has Jesus Christ and His

redemptive work as its object, for Holy Writ states, "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (1 John 5:20; Romans 3:23-26)

Furthermore, regarding Jesus Christ, Colossians 2:9 remarks, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." So, God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is NOT merely 1/3 of God, He is God entire; likewise, the Father is God entire, and the Holy Ghost is God entire; and yet, the three Persons are NOT three Gods but one God. We cannot comprehend the mystery of the Trinity, but we believe it since Holy Scripture teaches it.

Fellow Christians, as we've briefly touched on the mystery of the Holy Trinity and on the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we should certainly highly value the faith we have in Christ our Savior. Therefore, our Scripture selection can be of help to us in growing in appreciation of God's gifts as it informs us concerning:

### "PRECIOUS FAITH"

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What is precious faith and how it is obtained
- 2) How precious faith is to manifest itself and why

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Verses 2-4, ----- (2 Peter 1:2-4)

Just prior to our text, we read in 2 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.” Then, in verses two through four of our text, we are informed that the precious faith Simon Peter had and all other Christians have supplies us with *Grace and peace... through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 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: 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.*

Hence, precious faith is revealed knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, a knowledge by which we personally obtain life, godliness, glory, virtue, and exceeding great and precious promises. And what are such exceeding great and precious promises? The Gospel promises of the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life, for the Holy Bible informs us: “the gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (Romans 1:16-17; Romans 10:17; 1 John 1:9; John 3:36)

Realize that by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord we become *partakers of the divine nature* since Jesus’ perfect righteousness is imputed to us by God, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe,” as Romans 3:22 reports. Oh, fellow Christians, our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord is indeed precious.

Observe the words of the first verse of our text carefully, for there we see that precious faith is not only knowing God and Jesus our Lord: precious faith is *the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord*. Yes, God and Jesus Christ our Lord is not only the object of faith but is the SOURCE of faith, for Ephesians 2:8-9 declares, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Fellow Christians, God has gifted us with faith in the Lord Jesus as He has worked through His Word, the Gospel of Christ in particular.

Note well in the second verse of our text that we are informed that God by *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*. Thus, it’s NOT by our own works in whole or in part that we obtain precious faith and are sustained in the same, but rather by God’s gracious and powerful work, *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises*. It’s as 2 Corinthians 4:6 reports, where we read, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Fellow Christians, let us thank and praise God for the gift of precious faith, for He has called us by the Gospel, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Romans 8:29-30) Praise be to God and our Savior Jesus Christ the Lord!

Looking at the third verse of our text, 2 Peter 1:4, observe that it is by the great and precious Gospel promises that we *might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*. The phrase “partakers of the divine nature” refers especially to what is known as the “mystical union” of all true believers with the Triune God, in particular the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the believers in a special manner, for Holy

Writ relates, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16)

Thus, precious faith is God-given faith by which one personally receives the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation— priceless treasures obtained for us by the redemptive work of God’s only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, because 1 Peter 1:18-21 states, “ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.” Accordingly, faith in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord is a gracious gift of God which is indeed highly valuable; it is precious faith, by which we Christians have escaped the corruption that is in the world— the world which follows the devil and the sinful lusts of the flesh.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see how precious faith is to manifest itself and why.

Verses 5-7, ----- (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Here we see that precious faith is to manifest itself in good works, works done in full accord with God’s Word which here instructs us to be fruitful in the faith, for our text says: *giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.* Yes, it’s as we also learn in Ephesians 2:10, which teaches, “we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Thus, we are to be diligent in

doing works pleasing to God because He instructs us so to do in His Word; and, doing good works is a way for us to show gratefulness to God for the precious faith He has graciously given to us.

Looking again at our text, observe that it says: *giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.* So, notice we are to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18) And, we are to increase in fruitfulness of our precious faith.

Virtue refers to uprightness of life, goodness in one’s conduct, which can only be had by following God’s Word, since 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” Temperance refers not only to avoiding overindulgence in alcoholic beverages and food, but exercising proper control of all of one’s behaviors in accord with God’s Word. Patience is cheerful and hopeful endurance in all types of situations. Godliness is uprightness of life in accord with the moral-code given by God in Holy Scripture. Brotherly kindness is brotherly love, while charity is Christian love. Hence, we are to strive to imitate Jesus Christ in how we conduct ourselves toward others.

Fellow Christians, let us think about Jesus’ perfect behavior which He exhibited when He visibly dwelt upon earth, for 1 Peter 2:21-24 declares, “even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” Accordingly, we are to

strive to live a sanctified life in honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for that is how precious faith is to manifest itself.

Verses 8 & 9, ----- (2 Peter 1:8-9)

Note well that an abounding godly life, holiness of living as displayed in the fruits of faith we just considered in verses 5-7 of our text, make us that we shall *neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. On the other hand, *he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*. Indeed, an unfruitful faith is a dead faith and indicates spiritual blindness, for James 2:17 declares in no uncertain terms: "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Observe then that our text warns against falling from precious faith when it says in reference to the aforementioned good works: *he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*. Let us never forget what it cost Christ Jesus to redeem us: He willingly and lovingly gave His life for us and paid for our sins with His own holy and precious blood. Let us therefore show the Lord Jesus our thanks by being fruitful in the faith, striving to live in full accord with His Word.

Take it to heart that genuine, living, precious faith always manifests itself in good works, works done in full accord with the dictates of Holy Scripture, for every true Christian confesses to the Lord from the heart, as did the psalmist, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." (Psalm 119:89, 103-106) God grant that we show our faith by leading a sanctified life to His glory. Let us beware of backsliding and falling.

Verses 10 & 11, ----- (2 Peter 1:10-11)

Fellow Christians, by the grace, mercy, and power of God we have precious faith, saving faith, for through faith we have the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation. Hence, we would be foolish to throw our faith away by forgetting its immense value and becoming unfruitful. So, our text closes with the apostle Peter by inspiration of God saying: *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*.

Thus, we need to take matters of Christian faith seriously, earnestly endeavoring to grow in our faith and in fruitfulness thereof. My friends, we can only make our calling and election sure by giving attention to God's Word, the Holy Bible, for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ says, as He once said to some early Jewish believers in Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) Doing so, we can be sure that we will not fall from faith, but rather, when we depart the transitory life we have in this world, we will enter eternal life where we will forever enjoy being with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in bliss and glory.

Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord; let us strive to be fruitful in the faith in accord with God's Word; and, let us thereby show we know we are blessed with having precious faith. Amen.

m.e.l.