

Title: Enjoying God  
Text: 2 Peter 1.3-4  
Theme: The promises of God  
Series: 2 Peter  
Prop Stmtnt God's promises (Word) give us all that we need to live as we should in anticipation of life with him forever.

Read Text:

You do not have to be here this morning, unless your parents made you (that's a bit a different). But no one made your parents come, right? There is no law that says you have to be here. It always amazes me that you do. You come and for the most part, you seem happy about it. I am grateful, very grateful. And, you know what you are going to hear, and again, you still come. Therefore, I am assuming that for the most part, you have a desire to please God. You want to live a godly (God-like, God-reflecting) life. This is a fundamental desire that you have. You are people with convictions. And yet, I will state the obvious. Living godly is hard. Our world does not encourage us to live godly. Our own inclinations make it such a struggle and of course, the Devil does all that he can to oppose us. As much as we want to live godly, our progress is, for the most part, painfully slow and full of obstacles. I am speaking as if you have trusted in Christ as your Savior and have committed your life to him. Some of you have not done that. But since this text is written to followers of Christ, that will be my primary focus.

You want to be like Christ, right? You want to love freely and generously. You want to forgive without finding fault. You want to be merciful. You want to be faithful to your promises. You want to be considerate of others. You don't want to be a slave to sinful desires or trapped by dark thoughts. You don't want to doubt God. You want to freely share the gospel. You want to do things with your life that really matter for eternity. You want to be like Christ. And yet, here you are – you. And there is a really big gap between you and Jesus. It's hard isn't it? I want you to stop and try to think why that is for you. What makes it so difficult for you to make progress in godliness? What holds you back from growing in Christlikeness? Are there circumstances that seem to tilt the table against you? If so, what would some of those be? Are there people who have too much influence on you who do not push you to follow Jesus well? Are there habits in your life that feel like a ball and chain that you give in to time and time again? What do you think that you need in order to pursue godliness at a better pace than you are currently going?

I have some very good news for you. God does not leave your spiritual growth up to chance. God is committed to getting you home before dark and is committed to providing you with everything you need to get home safely.

1. **God exercises his power to give us everything that we need for godliness.** (3a)

A little bit of power can be dangerous in the hands of some people, right? When I was about 8 years old, I got a BB gun. Of course, it came with some rules, like, don't shoot it in the house. But I was the man with that BB gun. That summer at camp I received a marksman award for my accurate shooting. Well, one day I was posing in front of the mirror in my bedroom with my BB gun, admiring how I looked. I couldn't resist pulling the trigger, but it was of no consequence

since I knew that there was no BB in the gun, except that there was and I shot the mirror. Life as I knew it ended in that moment. I was in a complete panic because I knew that when my parents saw that mirror I would lose the gun and be grounded until I was 36. What was I going to do? In my panic, I took my marksman award from camp and put it over the hole in the mirror. I just proved my parents concern about giving an 8-year-old a little bit of power by letting him have a BB gun. And we can all tell those kinds of stories and many of them are a lot more serious than a hole in a mirror, so naturally we distrust those who have authority. But, look at how God uses his authority! *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.”*

God exercises his authority for our good. Look at this carefully. His divine power – probably referring specifically to Jesus, leverages his divine power to grant, to generously give you all things that pertain to life and godliness. Life and godliness are to be taken together. He gives us everything that we need to live a godly life. And by the way, that’s the goal. Jesus knows what the goal is. He knows more than we know and knows better than we do. He knows what is the absolute best for us. Let’s say that you play on a soccer team and it is your goal to be the leading scorer on your team. However, your coach doesn’t share your goal because he has a better one. He wants your team to win the league. He wants you to learn to play as a team so that you will accomplish the better goal. You may have some goals for your life that are, honestly, not worth pursuing from an eternal perspective. God’s goal for your godliness is the greatest and he provides you with all things that pertain to it. What are some of those “all things?”

## 2. **God gives these things by means of knowing him.** (3b)

Knowing God is the portal through which we receive his power for a godly life. Knowing God is the means and the conduit by which we receive what we need for godliness. Here’s why that is the case. The more you know God, the more you know who he is, meaning you know his character.

### a. **We know who he is.** *“through the knowledge of him”*

God is faithful to his word. God makes promises and he keeps them. He cannot lie. He cannot fail to keep his promises. Let’s say that you are applying for a home loan or trying to refinance the one you have. It all comes down to this: You are making a promise to a lender that you will pay back what you borrow according to the terms that you agree to. All of the investigation that the lender does is an attempt to determine if you will keep your promise. They want to know if you can keep your promise and how good you are at keeping other promises. So, they are looking at character and circumstances. It is no different here, except God is the one who makes the promises to do you good. He doesn’t come to us and ask us to him a favor. We aren’t helping him out by believing on him. That is part of what makes it so amazing. We are the ones who need God, and yet we don’t even know that we need God until God opens our eyes to that reality. Then God reveals to us how much he provides for us. God reveals to us what he has done for us in Christ and God gives us the entire record of the Bible to prove to us that he is worth trusting our entire lives to. Studying the character of God causes our faith to grow because we see how big, how good, how powerful and infinite God is. But, in our study of the knowledge of God, we see what God does.

**b. We know that he called us. “who called us”**

The doctrine of God’s calling is an awesome source of encouragement and strength in our fight against sin and in our pursuit of godliness. Let’s define what this doctrine is, and then we will see how it is such a powerful weapon in our fight for godliness. The doctrine of calling is all throughout the Bible. God called Abraham to be the father of the nation of Israel. God called Moses to lead them out of Egypt. God called David to be head of the dynasty from which the Messiah would come. God called Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah and the rest of the OT prophets. Jesus called the disciples and called Paul. All of these are examples of how God is the who takes the initiative in our lives to cause us to follow him. In Romans 8.30 we read that those whom he has predestined, he called and those he called he justified. 1 Corinthians 1.9, God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. This doctrine is literally all over the NT. Luke 14.23; Romans 1.7; 4.17; 8.30; 9.12, 24-26; 11.29; 1 Corinthians 1.23-24, 26; Ephesians 1.18; Philippians 3.14; 1 Thessalonians 2.12; 2 Thessalonians 2.14; 2 Timothy 1.9; Hebrews 3.1; and many more. Plus this is exactly how Peter uses it in 1 Peter 1.15; 2.9, 21; 3.9; and 5.10. These are all referring to our conversion to Christ, when God called us from darkness to light and we responded. God’s calling is not like a wedding invitation where you may wonder if you are going to go or not. The calling of God is a divine summons and it refers to the act of God by which he arranges for you to hear the gospel and he enables you to respond in repentance and faith to the gospel and he causes you to do it willfully and happily. God does not leave your salvation up to chance. Honestly, he didn’t even leave it up to you because on your own, you wouldn’t believe. The calling of God is so good and so powerful that it blows apart the walls of resistance that you built around your heart. There is a famous picture that depicts Jesus standing outside of a door and knocking and asking if he can come in. This is supposed to represent Jesus standing at the door of someone’s heart asking them to let him in. That interpretation is a misapplication of Rev. 3.19-20. When you came to faith in Christ, it wasn’t because you finally did Jesus a favor and opened up the door of your heart and let him come in from the cold. You came to faith in Christ because Jesus kicked the door down and came in and took over. That’s the point that Peter is making. Peter loves this doctrine of calling and election. Back in his first letter to them he calls them the “elect exiles.” God is the one who did the electing. God elects. God chooses and then God acts on that choosing by calling us at a point in time to believe and we do. We believe because God overrules our unbelief with faith and we believe. That is how good God is. That is how awesome of a savior he is.

So here’s the point that Peter is making. If God is that good to call you and has gone through all of the effort to ensure that you will believe, then don’t you find that encouraging? Remember from last Sunday? Jesus is the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega. He finishes what he starts. The one who calls you will get you home. You are going to get home, so act like it.

I read the story of a little boy who had cancer and was having a rough go of it and was in ICU. For a while it was touch and go, but the staff was hopeful. In fact, they seemed more hopeful than the boy. After all, his life had really been disrupted and for one, he was missing a lot of school. The hospital arranged for a tutor to start coming in every day to help him get caught up and after a few days, he not only started to really engage in his school work, but his entire attitude seemed to change and he made it. Later on, he said that it dawned on him that if he was just going to die, the hospital would not have given him a tutor. After all, if he was going to die it

wouldn't matter if he knew multiplication tables. They must think I am going to live, so I might as well live. That's kind of the idea Peter is reminding us of. Look at who God is and look at what he has done. If he didn't leave your justification up to chance, he is not going to leave your sanctification up to chance either. The one who called you is faithful, but look at what he has called you to.

c. **We know that he had a motivation for calling us** (glory and excellence)

Jesus called us to follow him because of his own glory and excellence. How many of you kind of shake your head and think, I just can't believe that Jesus would love me. I am such a mess. I am such a failure. I am such a disappointment. Well-meaning people try to prop you up and say, oh no, that's not true. But, actually it is true. It is true of all of us. Jesus didn't call us because there is anything worthy in us, but in calling us, it reveals what a glorious and excellent Savior he is. He did this amazing act of grace to us because he is glorious and excellent, not because we bring anything to the table. His honor overwhelms our dishonor and makes us honorable. His excellence overwhelms our shame and makes us royalty. But I think there is another angle we should consider. What happens when you come to faith in Christ? You trust in Christ because you consider him to be worth it. You consider him to be glorious and excellent. His glory and excellence that is displayed through his death on the cross in your place, is amazing and compelling. When you consider his great mercy for you, Jesus is attractive. His grace is beautiful. You desire to be with him AND you desire to be like him. This is one of the fundamental distinctions between a genuine believer and a fraudulent one. A genuine believer truly desires to be like Christ.

3. **God displays his glory by making promises to us.** (4)

a. **They are precious and great.**

The word that Peter uses for "promise" appears only 2 times in the NT. It appears in this verse and 3.13. Think of this as a bookend for the book that frames the rest of the letter. The promises of God are of exquisite worth because they are from God. They are exceedingly valuable. Peter does not explicitly say here what the promise is. He does focus on the benefits of the promise. But I think we have a really big clue as to what it is that we are promised because in 3.13 Peter says, "*We are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*" We are waiting for that which has been promised to us by God and he will deliver on his promise. The best of things in this life do not last. But the promises that God makes are of a world that will never end. The promises of God are our greatest treasure.

The readers of these letters (1 and 2 Peter) were displaced and were trying to make a home in a land that had not been their home. They were exiles. That is us. Sometimes I refer to us as pilgrims. We are passing through. You may have a home in the family for several generations, a farm that has been passed down to you, a classic car that belonged to your grandfather, an heirloom that has been in the family for over a century. These are nice. They are meaningful, and there is nothing wrong with them, but remember, they will not last. At some point, they will be gone. War, flood, human and natural disasters are the story of our world. Anything that you have, you have to guard. I remember in my early 20's hearing people talk about giving

everything they had to the Lord. That was easy for me because I didn't have anything. But, the more you have, the more you have to worry about. And yet, what is it that really lasts? It is promises of God (His Word) and the people of God (His church). The promises of God help us focus on what is eternal one of the things that God has promised is that by means of his promises we will partake of his divine nature.

**b. They enable us to enjoy him.**

Partaking in the divine nature is another way of saying that we are going to be like God. We do not become a god, or become God. We share in his godliness. We will love like he loves and live as he lives. Our capacity for goodness, for joy, to love and be loved will be so expanded that we will be able to contain so much more and give so much more. This means that our enjoyment of God and our enjoyment of others will be exponentially increased.

Local weatherman, Sonny Elliott used to say that visiting relatives was like fish. After 3 days they begin to stink. There's probably some truth to that. There are some people that you are glad to be around, but after a while they get on your nerves and you get on theirs so you place a limit on your time together. Is it them or is it you? Yes. Neither will be an issue in glory. Partly because we will all have escaped from the corruption that is in the world.

**c. They enable us to escape the corruption of the world (due to sinful desire)**

The point is this. God has given his people his promises so that we can escape the corruption that is in this world because of sin. This is true in a general sense. We live in a sin-cursed world and we live with the affects of that in our bodies. Our bodies are slowly dying. The eczema on my skin reminds me that my immune system is not working correctly. The grinding in my shoulder reminds me that my joints are wearing out. My requests for you to repeat yourself reminds me that my hearing is not as good as it used to be. The list of people on our weekly prayer sheet who are diagnosed with cancer and the ongoing challenges of Covid are all part of a world that is decaying. But there is a corrupting (think of decay, pollution, death) influence of sin in a personal sense. Sin is destructive and it just takes more and more and more of you and leaves you with less and less as a person. What do we do with this? That is what verses 5-7 focus on, but I want to leave you with this.

I began the message asking you to identify some of the things that get in the way of you growing in godliness. And I told you that God has given you what you need for a godly life, which of course are his promises, one of which is God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth. That promise helps me not be surprised by present day struggles. That promise helps me see these struggles for what they are. They are griefs, for sure, but they are not griefs forever. They are griefs that help us look beyond this life. If this life is all that there is, then you can see why people fall for the lie of "party like there is no tomorrow." But, there is a tomorrow. And when you party like there is no tomorrow, then your life is a mess tomorrow. Sin is easy to do, but it is hard on you. Sin takes your life away from you piece by piece until there isn't much left. The more you live for today, the more you live for yourself, the smaller your heart gets, the smaller your world gets, and your life just shrinks in all around you. Think of God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Think of that when your new car gets dented, when you don't make the

team, when you don't get accepted into that program, that job, that school, when you are dealing with a chronic disease and all you can do is manage symptoms. This life is not the end-all. The one that is coming – is. Live according to that promise from the God who cannot lie and in that day, your faithfulness in this day will be worth it beyond your imagination.