

Like Precious Faith

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the importance of understanding the book of 2 Peter, focusing on the significance of knowing God and Jesus Christ, the precious faith received through the righteousness of Jesus, and the multiplication of grace and peace through deepening knowledge of God. The speaker emphasizes the need to know God both intellectually through His word and experientially in daily life to truly experience His grace and peace.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:1, 2 Peter 1:2, 2 Peter 1:3, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Knowing God", "Experiencing Grace and Peace"

Description

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Transcript

So we're starting this evening in the second letter of Peter, 2 Peter, and obviously chapter 1 and verse 1. 2 Peter, it's quite easy to find. It's the book straight after 1 Peter. And if that doesn't help you, then it's just before Revelation.

Well, a few books before Revelation. Between Hebrews and Revelation, 2 Peter. And we'll just read the first four verses together.

I'm hoping to deal with verses 1 and 2 this evening. It's certainly getting darker much quicker now. So by the time we start, I can't see many folk anymore.

All right, so 2 Peter, chapter 1, verse 1. Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises. That through these you might be partakers of the divine nature.

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. So I'm not going to give a long introduction into the book. We can talk a lot about the technical aspects of the book, which I'm not going to get into.

I believe that Peter wrote the book. The majority, not the majority, but many. I don't even know what percentage, but a significant percentage of commentators do not believe that Peter wrote the book.

That presents all sorts of problems. Least of all, or not least of all, is the problem that if you don't believe that Peter wrote the book. That someone else wrote the book.

Well, then the book is a lie. Because it begins by saying Peter. And then later on he speaks about the fact that they were the ones who actually physically saw the Lord.

And so there are at least two passages in the book then that are not infallible. That are fallible. That are in fact wrong if this wasn't Peter.

We believe that the scriptures are inspired. We believe that every word is inspired. And that if the scripture says that it was Peter, then it is Peter.

And that's not the only argument. We can talk about many reasons from within the book. That points to the fact that this in fact is Peter who has written the book.

So we accept that Peter wrote the book. We don't know where he wrote it from. We don't know when he wrote it.

There's a reference in the book to the previous epistle that he wrote. Or the previous letter that he wrote. That may be 1 Peter.

But it may be another letter that he has written. So we can't connect those two directly. Because there is no reference when he says the previous letter that I wrote.

He doesn't make reference to something in that letter that can now tie the two together. So there may have been another letter. And remember that this is not a big problem.

Paul writes to the Corinthians at least four letters. That we can find references to in these two letters. So we have two letters.

In those letters there are references to other letters that had been written. And we say, well, you know, is that not a problem? Because now these are scriptures and they've been lost. No, not everything that Paul wrote or everything that Peter wrote is scripture.

The Holy Spirit has inspired specific letters to be retained in scripture. The rest of what they wrote was just writing. And they were writing all the time to the churches.

And so the fact that there were letters that are not included in the canon, that are not included in the 66 books, is really not a problem at all. It's simply that some of the letters were clearly inspired to be part of scripture. And other letters were not.

And so Peter writes the letter. We don't know when he wrote it. And so we can't even go by 1 Peter and say, well, it was subsequent to 1 Peter.

But we presume that it was. It could be at the time. It's certainly later in the first century, because we see that he's addressing heresy.

There are two main things that he's dealing with. And I'll come to the first one in a moment. The second one is that he deals with false teachers.

And false teachers, well, they were there right from the very beginning. But they really became a problem as time went on. And even as today, as we're 2,000 years down the road, we have even more, many, many more false teachers and false apostles, false pastors, false prophets.

And so that seems to indicate that it is later on in the first century, maybe A.D. 60, A.D. 70, thereabouts. Who's he writing to? Again, this letter is different in that he doesn't name the churches that he is actually writing to. So you remember that, let's begin with the first verse then.

And you remember that all of these letters, whether they were Paul's letters or Peter's letters or John's letters, they all follow a basic style, the same way as we have a style. And we've spoken about that recently. We begin with the address at the top.

If it's a business letter, it will say the subject, what we're writing about. It will have the person that we're writing to. If it's a business letter, if it's a private letter, it will have Dear John.

And then if it's a business letter, it will have Re. In other words, what is the subject? It gets into the letter. It is then signed at the bottom.

Generally, the date is at the top. The date could also be at the bottom. So we have a basic style.

They had a style of writing letters. And remember, these were not written as Bible books. They knew, I believe that these men knew what they were writing.

They were being moved, as Paul says in Timothy, they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. They knew they were being inspired to write, but they were not writing Scripture. They were not trying to write in some kind of highfalutin style to create Scripture.

They were writing letters, and they were addressing specific problems, specific issues in the churches that they are writing to. Maybe sometimes they're writing to encourage, obviously, and addressing problems. So the style then would be that the letter begins with who is writing.

And that's exactly how Peter starts, Simon Peter. Then it will contain who he's writing to. And you remember that first Peter, he says to the churches in Bithynia and Cappadocia and the parts of northern Asia Minor.

And then it will often contain the subject. And it will contain greetings, and it will contain oftentimes, particularly in Paul's letters, a thanksgiving. I thank God for you.

And so this would be the general style. Peter's letter is very short. And by the way, it's only three chapters.

So I'm going to encourage you, as I do every time we start a new book, to read through this book at least once a week. So that when we deal with the minor details, as we do tonight, we're just going to deal with two verses. That you have the overall understanding of the book, and are able to put into context the one or two verses that we're dealing with at that particular time.

So this book is different in that there is no thanksgiving. He doesn't say, I thank God for you. It does have concealed in it, and I'll show that to you in a moment, one of the topics that he's going to deal with.

In other words, what is the subject of the letter? And it also doesn't contain, as I said, who he's writing to. He's saying he's writing to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. So that's pretty general.

We assume that he is writing based on the way that he is writing, and the content of the book, that he is writing to mainly a Gentile audience. He's not specifically writing to a Jewish audience. Remember that if you're writing to a Jewish audience, there would be many references to the Old Testament, and many, even if they're not direct references, but language that comes from the Old Testament, making reference to Jesus as our high priest, and sacrifice, and those kinds of words.

So it doesn't contain any of those kinds of things. So it seems to be written to a Gentile audience. Where they are, we don't know.

Is he writing? And one of the questions people ask, and then I'm going to be done with the introduction. One of the questions that the learned people ask is, is this a Catholic letter? Now remember the word Catholic does not mean Roman Catholic. They've hijacked the word.

Catholic means the universal church. Is this a letter that was specifically written to not to a specific church or churches, but was written to everyone? And the answer to that is no. Peter is writing to a specific church or churches.

He is addressing a very specific situation. But obviously all of the books have a Catholic aspect. In other words, all of the books are for all believers of all time.

And so Peter is writing to us. But we must always remember the context. He is not first of all writing to us.

He is first of all writing to a real situation that he's facing at that time. And then obviously it is also applicable to us. And that's the nature of inspiration.

One of the things about prophecy is that prophecy is true at all times. False prophecy has a very short lifespan. And it's only relevant in a particular situation where you can try and manipulate the situation or the facts to be able to say, well, you see, I prophesied and now it's come to pass.

But true prophecy is proven over a long period of time when it still remains true. And so the example that I've quoted to you before, if you may remember, A. W. Tozer, he died in 1950-something, in the 1950s, just around the time I was born, a little bit after. He is one of the prime examples of a true prophet, modern-day prophet.

And if you read his writings, he's not a prophet in the sense that charismatics speak about a prophet all mumbo-jumbo. He's not predicting anything. He is speaking anointed, preaching anointed writing that addresses the church.

But when you read what he was writing in 1930 or 100 years ago, it is as though he's writing to us today. That is a sign of a true prophet. And that's one of the reasons I'm powerfully blessed by Tozer, because he seems to, while he's addressing a real situation, the way that Christianity was in America, and he operated from Chicago, the way that Christianity was in America 100 years ago is the same problems.

While we say, well, everything has changed, the basic problems are still the same. And he addresses those same problems. So Peter and Paul and John and the other writers do the same thing.

What they are writing, and the people who received the letters at the time, recognized this as the Word of God. And we'll come to the end of the letter. In the third chapter, Peter makes reference to Paul's letters, and he calls it scripture.

So Peter was able to read Paul's letters and recognize this is scripture. This is God who is speaking by inspiration through Paul. So they were able to recognize that then.

Then about 100, 200 years later, when they formed the canon, in other words, when they sat down, and this was a long process, and it took many, many years, decades, for them to say, well, do we include the book of Enoch, for instance? Anyone heard of the book of Enoch? Do we include the book of Enoch? Is that part of scripture, or is it not part of scripture? Do we include the other disputed book, the book of James? Remember, many people don't like James, because it says, you know, you need to put your money where your mouth is. Show me your face by your actions, by your life. And so, do we include, is this scripture? So when they did that, they recognized Peter as writing scripture.

So they recognized the anointing of God upon it then. And even today, as I was preparing and studying in this last week, working through the letter again, and looking at it fresh, I recognized its relevance to us today in 2020 in Los Angeles, 2,000 years later, in a totally different cultural environment, in a totally different political environment. It is very relevant to us today.

That is a sign of something that is supernatural. It is able to last for thousands of years, and still be as relevant then as it was originally. All right, so much for the introduction.

Let's deal with the text. So, Simon Peter, this was his full name, and I'm not going to get into that in more detail. He says a bond-servant.

Remember, the New King James uses this word, bond-servant. Some translations use the word servant, but the Greek word is slave. Remember that there are two different words for servants in the New Testament, and this word is the word *doulos*, which literally means a slave.

And so, the translators don't like that word, because it's politically incorrect to begin with, and secondly, nobody wants to see themselves as a slave. And you remember, this is what Paul is saying, that we are slaves of God. He has bought us with a price.

We are not our own to do what we want to do. We are His, and Peter recognizes that he is a bond-servant, he is a slave, that he has been bought by Jesus, and that he belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is not a hireling who works for wages, but he works because he has been bought, and he has been bought by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, he is a bond-servant, and the same way as— and this is not just for apostles— and the same way we are slaves, because each one of us has been bought, and has been bought at a terrible price, and therefore we are not our own.

We don't have the right to do with our lives what we choose to do, because we have not paid the price for our own freedom, but He paid the price for our freedom at the cross of Calvary. And so, Simon Peter, a bond-servant, and an apostle of Jesus Christ. So, remember, Paul uses the same language in many of his letters, an apostle.

Now, remember, there are different kinds of apostles, and I'm covering— I know I'm covering a lot of ground for those who are new with us, or those who haven't been with us for a long time, but remember that there are different kinds of apostles. There is the Twelve, and you'll see that he says he's an apostle of Jesus Christ. Remember, the word apostle means someone who has been sent out on a mission.

There are three important components to an apostle. There is who has sent him. Secondly, what mission has he been sent on? And I've forgotten the third one.

I'll come back. So, the Twelve apostles were sent by the Lord Jesus. They were trained by Him, and we saw on Saturday night that He sends them out initially, the first Twelve, on a training mission, if you will, and then later on He leaves them to take charge, to take care of the church.

So, there's the Twelve. Then there is Paul. Paul is not one of the Twelve, and this is a big thing, and if this is the first time you're hearing me on this, you can look at my book, *Building Blocks of the Church*, where I deal with this in great detail.

Otherwise, I do deal with it in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 and 12. You can go back to the recordings for those. So, Paul is not one of the Twelve.

Judas falls away, and he is replaced by Matthias in Acts chapter 1. And so, Paul is not one of the Twelve. Paul did not qualify, because to replace Judas, you needed to have walked with Jesus from the beginning and been a witness to His death and His resurrection. Paul had not been with Jesus from the beginning.

Therefore, he does not qualify to be one of the Twelve. But Paul is a different apostle to the Twelve. He says, I'm as one born out of due time.

The Twelve are sent by Jesus. Paul is also sent by Jesus. While the church is recognized, and the church of Antioch sends Paul out, Paul is very specific that the one who commissioned him, the one who made him an apostle, is Jesus Christ.

And that's that. So, there's Twelve plus One. Then there are other apostles.

Barnabas and Silas and Timothy are all called, and Junius, they're all called apostles in the New Testament. But they were not sent by Jesus. They were sent by the churches.

And in the same way as an apostle was sent by Jesus on a mission, and that's why today we use the word missionary. A missionary is sent on a mission. He is sent to a particular field to go and preach the gospel and establish churches.

And apostles do exactly the same thing. They are sent by the Lord Jesus into the world, the first Twelve plus Paul, and their job is to establish the foundation of the apostolic universal church. Other apostles are sent, and they have the same mission, to establish churches.

They are sent by the churches and not by Jesus. So, we can still have apostles today. Now, that's part of the problem, is that every Tom, Dick, and Harry likes to call himself either bishop or apostle.

That's absolute nonsense. You're only an apostle if you have, number one, been sent, and number two, have proven your ministry by establishing churches and taking care of those churches and bringing those churches to maturity. That's another long story.

You cannot be an apostle over churches that you have not personally established. And so, we can go on and on about that. But what Peter is saying, then, is that I am an apostle of Jesus Christ.

In other words, I am unique in the sense that I'm one of the Twelve. He is not an apostle of the churches. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ.

And so, there's a difference between Barnabas, who is an apostle of the churches. The churches had commissioned him and sent him out. And Peter, who Jesus had commissioned and sent out.

So, why does he use this? Because remember that in 1 Peter, he presents himself. He says, I am a fellow elder. He doesn't emphasize his apostleship in 1 Peter.

Whereas in 2 Peter, he emphasizes his apostleship. Well, the reason is exactly the same as when Paul emphasized his apostleship. They emphasized their apostleship when they were dealing with problems, when they were dealing with false teachers.

Now, remember one of the things about a false teacher, all false teachers have this in common. And that is that they will point to the true teachers and say they are false teachers. That's just by definition.

That's just what false teachers do. Because if they don't discredit the true teachers, well, then they themselves are discredited. So, Paul has to emphasize and say, look, I was, what I received from the Lord, he says, I've delivered to you.

In other words, I have received this directly. Now, other apostles, modern-day apostles, don't receive directly from the Lord in the same way. They receive it through the scriptures and so on.

So, he is emphasizing his apostleship because he's going to now deal in the letter with the false teachers. And he's saying, because here's the problem. You don't need to use your title if you're dealing with people who are in the right spiritual place.

Because they will recognize your gift, whatever that may be, whether it's an elder or whether it's a teacher or an apostle. People recognize your gift. But when it comes to dealing with the gainsayers, when it comes to dealing with false teachers, when it comes to dealing with wolves that have come in amongst the flock, you need a title.

Yeah, a title. Because the point simply is, who are you? You're just one of the brethren. Peter says, no, I'm not one of the brethren.

I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ. So, I have certain authority to speak. And so, again, we don't want to get into the title thing, but you'll notice that he doesn't say Apostle Simon Peter, but Peter an Apostle.

Remember, there's a difference between Apostle Peter and Peter an Apostle. The one is a title. The other is a job description.

And so, you will never see me, even if I'm writing formal letters to business on behalf of the church, I will never sign those letters, Pastor Anton Bosch, because I don't have a title. We don't have titles in the New Testament. But to explain who I am, I will write my name, Anton Bosch, and in brackets, Pastor.

That's my job. It's not my title. Today, we've got this whole thing mixed around, and people have these titles, Pastor so-and-so, and Prophet so-and-so, and Apostle so-and-so.

So, he's not using a title. He's simply giving a job description. And he is also saying who has commissioned him.

Who has commissioned him. When I became an officer, and I've made reference to this before, so forgive me, but when I became an officer in the South African Air Force, I received a deed of commission. I think my daughter still has it back there.

A deed of commission. Signed by the state president. And one of the things that guys would just joke around with is, who signed your deed of commission? Oh, it was Ronald Reagan.

Obviously, we didn't have Ronald Reagan, but I'm just... Oh, no, no, yours was signed by... No, let me not use any more names. But it was a formal recognition that you have been commissioned to do a job. And that gave you certain authority.

And it wasn't signed by the local sergeant major, or some corporal down the road. It was signed by the president of the country. I don't know how it works here today, but I guess it's probably very much the same.

So Peter is saying, who commissioned me? Who sent me out? Who sent me on this mission? He says, I was sent by Jesus Christ. And you'll see later on, we'll get down to it further down, where he says, we didn't tell you things that we sucked out of our thumbs. I'm telling you stuff that I got directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

All right. So then he says, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us. This is the only description of who he's writing to.

So to those who have obtained or received like precious faith with us. The word like there is... means of the same quantity, the same quality. In other words, the same precious faith.

And he says, those that he is writing to receive the same quality faith as us. You see there, to those who obtained with us. Who's the us? The us is the apostles.

And what he is saying to them, and what he is saying to us, is that the faith that we have received. Remember, Jude says, earnestly content for the faith that he once received. The faith that we have received in 2020 or whenever you got saved, is the same faith that the apostles had 2,000 years ago.

We do not have an inferior faith. And if he is writing to Gentiles, and I think this is one of the reasons I believe he's writing to Gentiles, is because he's saying there's not... the Jews don't have one... the Jewish believers don't have a better quality faith as the Gentile. Was that something some people believed? Yeah, it was.

It was very much a problem. Remember, Paul contends with this problem all the time. Oh no, but Gentiles can't be real... you know, they can't really be saved because they're Gentiles.

And maybe, you know, we can sort of let them in the back door, but they're not really the same. And Peter is saying no. He says it doesn't matter whether you live in AD 60 or live in AD 2020, it doesn't matter whether you're Jewish or Gentile, you have received the same faith that the twelve received at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this faith refers to everything that we have received, our doctrine, our understanding, our salvation. To those who have obtained like precious faith. So our faith is a precious thing, and therefore it must be guarded, it must be protected.

And so when he begins to deal with the false teachers, why does he deal with the false teachers? Because our faith is precious. And remember we saw on Saturday night that you don't throw what is valuable to the pigs. Things that are valuable need to be treasured.

They need to be protected. They need to be guarded. They need to be cherished.

And so the faith that we have received is precious, and it can't be thrown away. And we cannot allow false teachers to walk all over it and to tread it into the mud as a pig would do that. And so to those who obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

What gives us our faith? Jesus' righteousness. How do we get into the faith when He gives us His righteousness? Remember here's the doctrine of imputation. That He gives us, we give Him our sin and He gives us His righteousness.

He takes our sin upon Himself on the cross of Calvary and in exchange He gives us righteousness. And so how did we get our faith? Because of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus that was imparted to us. He doesn't give us our faith and say, well, you know, there's your faith now.

And remember when we use the word faith here, we're not specifically referring to believing in order to be saved. We're talking about our faith in the sense that we speak about the Christian faith. What is the Christian faith? It is everything that we hold dear.

It is our doctrine. It is our traditions. It is the way we practice our faith.

There's that word again. And so the faith that we have, everything that we have in Christ, we get because of the righteousness that He has given to us. Not that we have earned that righteousness, but because He bought it for us at the cross of Calvary.

All right, then He says, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a very, very important verse. It's so easy for us when we read these letters to ignore the first few words because we say, well, that's just the greetings Peter's writing, telling us who he's writing to.

He's giving salutations. We ignore the last few verses. In the case of Romans chapter 16, we ignore a whole chapter because it just contains greetings.

Greet this one and greet that one and so on. And yet every word is important. Every word has truth.

Every word addresses issues. And this verse is very, very important. And it is important for everything we've said up to now.

But it is also particularly important for these last few words. Our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Not God and Jesus.

But Jesus is our God and He is our Savior. This is one of the few verses, it doesn't appear in Paul, but it's in John and in Peter, where Jesus is specifically called God. Right through Paul and through the Old Testament, we can prove that Jesus is God, but we have to prove it by association and so on.

In John's gospel, we can see, and also in Luke, that Jesus does certain things that is unique to God, that only God can do. Remember in Luke, last week, week before, Jesus forgives sins, and they say, who can forgive sins? Only God can forgive sins. So by forgiving sins, He's proving that He is God.

But here Peter is telling us in plain language, in plain Greek and English for us, that He is our God and He is our Savior. So Jesus is God. And obviously, we're not saying that there is no Father.

Obviously, He's not dealing with a trinity here. He's not giving us a full exposition of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that all three are God, that there is three in one.

Not three gods, one God. But He is our God, and He is our Savior, Jesus Christ. And that's a wonderful thing.

And of course, that sets the gospel apart from every other religion, because no other religion has a God who saved His people, and particularly who died for His people in order to save them. All of the other religions have a God who tells you how to live. And if you do this and do that, then maybe you'll get to the next level, or whatever their construct is.

But it's only in Christianity that we find our God dying for us and saving us. No wonder He says it's a precious face, because it's not a face that we just received at the hands of a prophet, or a face that somebody conjured up and sought up, like Scientology, where L. Ron Hubbard got tired of writing science fiction and decided to write a religion. And I mean, that's literally what he did.

No, our face came because our God died for us. What a precious Savior. What a precious face.

Now, let me see. I don't know that I'm going to get through verse two. All right, let me introduce verse two, because the next section, I need to deal with sections that fit together, and it's difficult to stretch it.

So let me introduce verse two. I'll take another five minutes, and then we'll move on. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

So just notice there at the end, he has those words again. The knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Now, the construction of the language is different here.

The previous verse, he is saying that our God is, that He is our God, and He is our Savior. This verse is dealing with two. This verse is dealing with God and with Jesus.

In other words, the Father and the Son. I trust you can see that. All right, so grace and peace.

Remember, this is a popular greeting in Paul's letters. Many of the letters will begin with grace and peace. They'll end with grace and peace.

Those are the things that we need desperately today, more than anything else. Yeah, we need a vaccine, and we need to get back to normality, but more than anything else, we need grace and we need peace. We need those things.

Now, how do we get those things? And that's where the problem is. The problem is, we say, well, you know, God just needs to give me grace. But Peter tells us, and I love Peter because he's so practical.

Remember, 1 Peter was very practical, and that's one of the reasons people don't like it, because it really gets down to the basics. How do we get grace and peace? And obviously, it's not just grace and peace, but grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. We find grace, obviously, at the throne of grace, but we find a multiplying of grace and of peace as we get to know Him, as we get to know Him.

We're going to speak about this word knowledge a lot, because it appears seven times in the letter, five times in this first chapter, and then once in chapter two, once in chapter three. So remember, I said that the letters, he starts the letter, and there is a hidden statement of intent, a hidden statement of what his subject matter is. And part of his subject is, and I said to you, the second one was dealing with false teachers.

But the first subject is knowing God, knowing God. When he speaks about knowing Him, the knowledge of God, knowing God, it depends on your tradition, what you understand by that. If you are from a traditional Calvinistic kind of background, and if you read the commentators who come from that background, what they will say is that knowing Him is knowing Him through the word.

In other words, knowing Him intellectually. Those who come from a more Pentecostal or charismatic background will say, no, you don't know Him that way. You know Him in your heart, through your heart, in an emotional way, in a touchy-feely way.

And of course, both are right. Except that both are wrong, because they exclude the other possibility. Both of these things are true.

We need to know God experientially. We need to know Him by experience. And I'm not talking about some kind of feeling Him, you know, I really feel God, and I've got goosebumps, you know.

No, knowing Him because we walk with Him, because we talk to Him, because He talks to us through the Spirit, through the still, small voice of His Spirit, and through His word. But we also know Him through His word. Somebody sent me a YouTube today and asked my opinion on it, and it's a testimony of a guy who got saved.

And he tells of the fact that he was an atheist, and then God spoke to him through a dream about a parachute, and this and that. And it's a very compelling testimony. The problem is that after listening to this thing for 17 minutes, you know, and that was the end of it, was that at no point did he point to the word of God and say, this is what God says.

In fact, at no point did he speak about salvation. At no point did he speak about the cross. At no point did he speak about believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

At no point did he speak about the forgiveness of sins. He's just talking about the fact that he went into a museum, and there they played the same song that his grandfather, who had a lot of faith, used to play the same hymn. And so this is God speaking.

Now, God can speak that way, I accept that. But that's not the only way, and if that's the only way you know God in that sort of touchy-feely visions, dreams, experiences, then you are open to deception, because you can very easily follow the wrong Christ. But if the only way you know him is through an intellectual understanding of the scriptures, you also don't know him, because all you know is an academic understanding of him.

And there are many people, as I've said to you before, who understand the Bible academically, people who will write books on the Bible, theologians, but they don't know God. They have no relationship with him. He's just a God who wrote the Bible.

So we need to know him. We need to know him through his word. And what our experience is can never be different to what his word says.

If your experience tells you something about God, and that is not what the Bible says, well, then your experience is wrong. I'm not making experience the main thing. But it needs to be a very real part of our faith and of our relationship with God.

It needs to be more than an intellectual thing. It needs to be more than an emotional thing. It needs to be both of these things.

Both of them need to be true. I need to know him as he reveals himself through his word. But I need to know him in my daily walk, as I live my life, as I struggle with the stuff that I struggle with, as I deal with temptation, as I deal with discouragement, as I deal with questions and decisions that I have to make, that I know his presence, that he is walking with me, that he is talking with me, that he's communicating with me.

And even in the reading of the scriptures, they become alive because I know who I'm... because God is speaking to me. And I'm not using that word speaking to me in some extra biblical way. God will never say something to you which is not confirmed or backed up by the word of God.

But what he does is he reminds us of what he is, what he has written. All right, now I've run out of time, and we'll pick it up there next week. So how do I get grace and peace? By knowing him.

You see, you can't... you won't have peace if you don't know God, because you don't know if you can trust him. And so if you're not... if you're not sure, if you're not comfortable in the fact that he is... he will never... he will never leave you. He will never fail you.

That he will always do what he has said. You will never have peace until you know him as someone who is reliable, who is trustworthy, who can be trusted with all of your heart. It's only when we know him that his grace becomes real because we understand his plan and his purpose in our lives.

Anyhow, Father, we thank you for your word, and we thank you for Peter who wrote these things to us 2,000 years ago, and all that they're still real and relevant to us today. I pray, Lord, that you would... you would help us to understand. Help us, Lord, to know you.

And, Lord, as we're going to speak about knowledge a lot in these next few weeks, I pray, Lord, that that knowledge may be translated into... into an experiential kind of knowledge, but, Lord, that it may also be backed up with scripture. And, Lord, that at the end of the day it may be evidenced in the fruit of our lives. And so, Lord, I pray that you'd help us to understand, help us, Lord, to grab hold of these things.

And, Lord, we pray that you would... that you would harness it to us personally, those things that we need to hear, Lord, that we may be able to... to cherish that precious faith that you gave to the apostles and now have given to us through the righteousness that comes as a result of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Lord, we thank you for these things. Bless us as we continue in the rest of the service.

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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