

2 Peter 2:1

by Ken Baird

Ken Baird's sermon emphasizes the importance of claiming God's promises for salvation and eternal life as outlined in 2 Peter 2:1.

Duration: 43:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, John 5:24, 2 Peter 1:3-4

Topics: "Divine Nature", "Godly Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by introducing the passage from 2 Peter chapter 1. He emphasizes the importance of knowledge of God and Jesus in obtaining faith and experiencing peace. The speaker highlights the power of God in providing everything necessary for a godly life and the promise of escaping the corruption of the world. The sermon concludes by focusing on the extravagant language used in verse 4, which describes the believers as partakers of the divine nature through the great and precious promises of God.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles, please, to the first chapter of 2 Peter. 2 Peter, chapter 1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained life's precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you 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 grace and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through love.

I'm thinking particularly of verse 4. Here we have some very extravagant language. In verse 4, there are not many adjectives in the Bible. It's a book which is noticeably absent as far as adjectives are concerned.

Now, there's a very real reason for that. The Bible is a book of facts, and you don't have to have adjectives to adorn facts. Facts are facts.

We adorn our language with adjectives. We seek to make things interesting with adjectives. We enhance our subject by means of adjectives, but not the Bible.

The Bible is noticeably short on adjectives, but not in this verse. Did you notice them? "...whereby are given unto us exceeding grace and precious promises, that by these," these promises, of course, "...ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through love." Now, by the means of these great and precious promises, we become partakers of the divine nature. Now, that means that the nature of God is in me.

That is, I may have his nature, I may have his life inside of me. Now, I would like to review some of these promises. The Bible is a book of promises.

There are some 8,800 promises in the Bible. Now, all of those promises are not made to you and me. Part of those promises are made to the nation of Israel.

A good many of those promises are made to the nation of Israel, and we're not Israelites. But there are many, many promises that are made to you and to me. Those promises are just like blank checks with God's name on it.

Did you ever receive a blank check and somebody trusted you to fill in the correct amount? I had the privilege once of receiving a blank check. I think maybe I have told you about it. But we moved to the city of Seattle a number of years ago, many, many years ago, as a matter of fact, and we had to buy a house.

We didn't have much money, not enough to buy a house, and so I sent a plea along to my dad down in California. Dad, I need some money. I need to buy a house, and I really don't have the down payment.

Can you lend me some money? And he did something that nobody else has ever done. He sent me a blank check with his name on the check. Of course, my name was in the case of the order of.

He took that precaution that it would not fall into the wrong hands, but he left the amount blank. Now, he says, he gave me an upper limit. He says, if you write the text for more than that, you'll put me in jail.

But here it is. If you write your own text, that was what we call a blank check. Well, I thought the honor that he bestowed upon me, the trust that he had in me, to give me a blank check.

Did anybody ever do that for you? Yes. God has given you a blank check. You can fill it in for the amount that you need.

God has given us all a blank check. Now, of all the promises that we have in the Bible, many of them concern salvation. Many of them concern our daily needs.

Many of them concern our unspoken needs, the needs of the soul, spiritual needs. Many of them, of those promises, are in connection with those spiritual needs. I wonder if you're acquainted with those promises.

I would like to think tonight, particularly, of the promises that concern God's salvation. I wonder if you have ever cashed one of these blank checks. Now, I may make bold to say, and I do make bold to say right now, that there has never anybody ever been saved.

I'm being real dogmatic. There has never anybody been saved except they claimed one of the promises of God. I mean that.

I got saved through claiming one of the promises of God. You will get saved through claiming one of the promises of God. That is, if you're not already saved.

But to be saved, you must claim the promise of God. Now, one of these promises is eternal life. What would you give for it? They say that the Atheist Voltaire, the French pre-thinker and Atheist Voltaire, who was a wealthy man, incidentally, and preached against the gospel all his life, he was on his deathbed, and he realized that he was going to die.

And Voltaire said, all of my wealth I would give for one more hour of life. But it did not prove a deal with God. God took him.

Money amounts to so little. Eternal life cannot be purchased with money. It was purchased for you with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's yours for the taking. It's a blank check. It's a promise.

John 3.16, I think, probably is the best-known verse in the Bible, and it goes like this. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. That's a promise.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. I'd better say that's a double promise, with a positive and a negative. It promises you what you will not receive, and it promises you what you will receive.

Now, you will not receive judgment. It is passed for one who puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But on the other hand, you will receive everlasting life.

That is a positive. That is a promise. John 3.16 is a promise.

I suppose that more people have been led to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through John 3.16 than any other single verse in the Bible. John 5 and 24 is probably next. Matthew 11 and 28 is probably next, although I never compile any statistics on these promises.

But they are all promises. I wonder if we have claimed these promises. I wonder if you are interested in these promises.

Now, if I made you a promise that I would give to you a million dollars, you would have real reason to doubt whether I could carry out on that promise. But of the promises of God, we never need fear that he will have to renege or fail on any of those promises. What God promises, he confirms.

And he promises eternal life to the person who will believe, who will trust, who will have the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her own personal Savior. Do you want it? Well, you can have it. You can have it through accepting it.

That is what you must do with a promise. That is what you must do with a blank check. You must cash it.

You must claim it. All of the promises of God, all 8,800 of those promises, will be absolutely of no profit to me if I don't claim them. If I don't put God to the test.

If I don't make God live up to his word. And I can do that. And you can do that.

You can make God live up to his word. Give him the test. And you'll find out that he means what he says, and he says what he means.

Now, there is that promise of eternal life in John 3.16. There is the promise of eternal life in John 6.47 and 51. I'm not going to turn to these verses. And then there is the promise of eternal life in John 11.25 and 26, where the Lord Jesus says in that great chapter, John 11, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believeth on me shall never die. I think I'm misquoting that, and I'm going to quote it correctly, because I don't want to mislead anybody. Here are the words.

I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Now, that's promise.

Dead in trespasses and sins, and yet if I claim that promise, I'll live and live forever. Look at the words. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.

Jesus believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Now, that's his promise. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Believest thou this? Now, think about this for a minute. He whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Now, I have believed in the Lord Jesus.

I have believed in the Lord Jesus. Now, does that mean that I'll never die? No. It means that I'll never die spiritually.

That's what it means. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Now, I will never die spiritually.

I have been given eternal life through John 3.16, and I will never die in my soul and in my spirit. Now, my body will die, but that's not what the Lord's talking about. He's talking about the most important thing about me and the most important thing about you.

Your soul, your precious soul, your precious spirit. They will live forever. The body only lives for 70 years, according to the scriptures, on the average, three score and ten years.

The possibility is held up that you will live four score years, but there will be lots of pain connected with it. Now, you and I, if we will only believe in the Lord Jesus, we have got his promise that we will never die. I wonder if we have put God to the test.

I wonder if we have tried enough to see if he means what he says and see if he says what he means. Now, there is the promise of rest in Matthew 11, verse 28. Another lovely promise in that eleventh chapter of Matthew.

Matthew 11, verse 28. Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Is that a promise? It is a promise.

You come to me, weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

That is a promise. You come to me, and you will have rest. How can I come to the Lord? The Lord is up in heaven.

Now, how can this be made good to me? Does that mean that this promise concerned the Lord and concerned his people only as long as he was here? No, I don't believe that. He says, come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I think that it applies right now.

I know it applies right now, because I talked to the Lord through this verse. I came to him. Someone can say, we hear the expression, come to the Lord Jesus.

Come to Christ. What do we mean? He's up there in heaven. I don't know how many millions of miles away.

Now, I have an open line to heaven. I can talk to the Lord, and so can you, incidentally. He is up there.

Now, to come to him simply means to talk to him. If, for instance, you were some distance away from me, and I wanted to talk with you, I would have to walk over to where you are. I would have to come to you.

Well, now, if I come to the Lord, it simply means to talk to him. When the Lord says, come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, it means that I come to the Lord and tell him, Lord, I am laboring, I am heavy laden, heavy laden with a sense of my guilt and my sin. I am laboring under discouragement.

I am laboring under the fears and the misgivings and the unhappiness of this life. Oh, so many people have to find that in this life, it isn't exactly what they thought it to be. It isn't exactly what they thought it to be.

They have such hope for the future. I remember of an experience with a young lady, a group of us were visiting together, and this young wife, she had the greatest desire in the world to get married when she was a girl, and she could not wait until she got away from the old man and got married. Well, she got married, and there were some children and some responsibilities came along.

Well, we were talking about this one day, a group of us, and I said, I don't understand why some of the young people are in such a hurry to get married. I said, those that rush the thing, about ten years after, they begin to wonder what the big rush was. She spoke up and she said, they don't have to wait for ten years.

She knew what I was talking about. Now, life is full of disappointment. Life is full of those blasted dreams.

Things did not turn out. They were not as rosy as we contemplated. We were going to build our own utopia, and it didn't work.

Now, the Lord says, you've got another chance. You've got another chance for a true utopia, for something that will last, something that will live up to all your expectations. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Rest of heart, rest of soul, satisfaction of soul is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that's a promise. And I'll guarantee you one thing, you'll never be sorry you did. It is one of the greatest experiences of life to come to him and to claim the promises of God, and to know that he's truthful, and that he doesn't lie, and he doesn't hold out his promises in one hand, and then hold something else behind his back, that you have to consider when you take his promise.

Not at all. The Lord means what he says, and says what he means. Now, there is a promise of satisfaction that we find in John chapter 6, and I'd like to look at this precious, exceeding grace and precious promise.

John chapter 6, verse 30 of the 6th chapter of John reads this thusly, and they said therefore unto him, What sign shallest thou them that we may see and believe thee? What doest thou? Our father did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Now, the Jews require a sign. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world as their Messiah, as that great Deliverer that they had looked for down through the centuries.

The Jews came to the Lord Jesus one day, and they said, Now what great thing are you going to show us to prove your credentials? And they said, Now Moses, our fathers did eat manna in the desert, and I think they were going to give the credit to Moses for giving them manna, because the Lord repudiates that idea immediately. He says, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my father giveth you the true bread from heaven. Now, what they were saying was this.

Moses was a great leader, but he proved his credentials by showing us how powerful he was, and he gave us bread. Bread to eat in the wilderness, the manna. That manna lasted for 40 years.

The supply never ran out. Somebody made the effort to calculate how much it would require to serve the children of Israel for a single day. They calculated that it would take 40 carloads on a train to take care of the needs of the children of Israel for one day.

40 carloads of manna, a whole trainload of manna. That kept up day after day, year after year, for 40 years. Now, the Jews made the mistake of attributing this all to Moses.

Moses was a great leader, and look how he proved it. Now, how are you going to prove who you are? Well, the Lord says, I'll prove it. I'll prove it.

And he does prove it. Here's how he does it. Then when he said, verse 33, For the bread of God, as he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Now, the Lord has led them along now. Get the picture here.

Get the picture. The Lord led them along, and he says, God has got some bread for you, and if you eat it you'll have everlasting life. He said, all right, we're ready.

Give it to us. Okay, he did. Verse 35 reads, Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.

He that believeth on me, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. There it is. They were wanting a sign, they were wanting proof of who he was.

Now, who could say this but the Son of God? I can't say it. Would you attempt to say it? Listen to the words. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.

He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. All right, that's promise, isn't it? Isn't that a promise? How about it? I say it's a promise, don't you? Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Somebody says, that means if you get saved you never get hungry and you never get thirsty. We're not talking about physical things now. I can get just as hungry as I ever got before I got saved.

I can get just as thirsty now as I ever got before I got saved. I'm proving it. It means the hunger and the thirst of the soul.

That part of me that longs. Now, human desire is seen under the figure of hunger and thirst in the scriptures. It's seen under that figure.

Hunger is something that you long for. How do you feel when you're thirsty? Do you know when you're thirsty? Well, I'll say you know. How do you feel? How do you know you're thirsty? Well, you just say, I'm thirsty.

Well, what does it feel like to be thirsty? Well, it feels like I want some water. Oh yes, okay. But what are your feelings? Let's get down to the nitty gritty here and say, what does it feel like when you're thirsty? Can you analyze it? You can't quite put your finger on it, can you? I know when I'm thirsty and I know when I'm hungry.

But I just can't tell you how I know. I just know I am. Human desire is seen under the figure of hunger and thirst.

Now, my soul has a need to be filled. A need to be filled. My soul gets hungry.

And let me tell you how some people try to satisfy that soul. That soul hunger, that soul desire for happiness in the soul. They try to satisfy it with pleasure.

They think that if they will go in for pleasure that they'll be satisfied. They're never satisfied. They think that if they go off on a hunting trip, maybe to Africa, maybe to Alaska, and go in for adventure, that that will satisfy the hunger of their souls, that that will make them happy.

But they go and they come back with an empty feeling. I'm reminded of a story just at this moment that I think I'll tell you. If I've told you before, don't stop me.

Down at the youth camp in New Mexico, at Kingston, New Mexico a number of years, I was there as the speaker at the camp. And there were a number, oh there were, oh there was a great crowd of young people, high school and college age. And there were two young Swedish boys that came to the camp that year by invitation of one of the counselors.

He met them on the bus. The counselor was going up to the camp, and he was taking the bus going up to the camp. And he stuck up in a plane for these two Swedish boys, and he said to these fellows, he says, what are you doing? And he said, well we're just traveling around the country, seeing the country.

It was, of course, in the summertime. And they said, we just travel until we get out of money, and then we stop and we get a job, or maybe send a hurried call home. I don't know how they got their money.

But he said, we work for a while, and then we hit the road again and we travel. And this fellow, this counselor said, hey fellow, he says, I want to tell you something. I'm going to Bible camp up here in the mountains, and it's a beautiful spot, and there'll be a lot of college and high school young people up there.

Why don't you go with me? And these fellows looked at one another, and he said, it won't cost you anything. And these fellows looked at one another, and they said, what can we lose? So up they came. Now one of these boys was a Christian, and one was not.

Now I think probably it was a Christian boy that said, look, this is the opportunity that I've been waiting for. And he may have been the one to put on the pressure to go to the camp. I'm not sure about that.

But to the camp they came. Well, Odin, that was his name, Odin Engelking. Does that sound Swedish? Odin Engelking.

Well, Odin was a ping pong player, and he loved to play ping pong. And he played, and he was good, incidentally. He was good.

But do you know, the Lord had a boy in that camp who was 15 years old. Now, Odin was a Minnesota, a University of Minnesota student. Odin was a University man.

The Lord arranged to have a 15-year-old boy at that camp that could play ping pong. And he played ping pong with Odin, and to use a common expression, he beat the socks off him. Odin was absolutely deflated to have a 15-year-old boy with him in ping pong.

But you know, I wasn't doing Odin any good either, though I didn't realize it. I was up there telling them what they could have in Christ, telling them the dangers of going on without Christ. We were talking about the Lord, the different ways in which we could know the Lord.

Odin was listening. And I didn't realize what was really taking place during that week at camp. On Friday night, we had our campfire and witness meeting.

And a number of the young people got up and they witnessed, telling what the Lord had done for them. And of all people, Odin got up. And I said, uh-oh, what's coming now? For he was an exceedingly proud and arrogant young man.

But Odin said something that made us all sit up and take notice. He said, I want to tell you people at this camp something. Well, everybody was all ears.

He said, It has been my ambition to see this world. It has been my ambition to do exactly what I wanted to do. And he said, if I wanted to go to a place, I went.

And he said, I was invited to this camp. He said, however, I must confess to you, after I had achieved every goal that I ever sought to achieve in my life, there was an emptiness inside that asked the question, well, what next can I do? What next? He said, I always had an emptiness inside of me. I want to tell you people that that emptiness was sealed this week at camp.

Say, that sounded pretty good to me. And I went to Odin after the campfire, and I said, Odin, I was very interested in what you had to say. Odin, you're not a person of religious background, and you don't use our nomenclature, you don't use our means of expression.

And I said, that told me a lot. Odin, I said, I'd like to ask you a question. Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you, to take away all your sins? And he said, I believe that Jesus died for me.

And then he got to thinking that that wasn't as strong as he wanted to put it. He said, I know that Jesus Christ died for me on the cross. And I said, Odin, would you make bold to say that you were saved? He said, I believe I'm saved.

And then he didn't think that sounded strong enough. And he said, I know I'm saved. Well, by then he had dissipated all of my doubt.

That void in his heart had been filled at last. He had been to John 6.35. That's where he'd been. And here it is.

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But that isn't the whole story.

That was toward the end of the summer, and he went up to visit an aunt in Albuquerque. And it came time to go home to Minneapolis to enter the University of Minnesota for the fall session. As Odin was going to the airport to board his plane, the car in which he was riding suffered an accident, and Odin was killed.

He went into the presence of the Lord. He had written his mother. His mother had told his friends about it.

She said, Mother, he says, I have found God. That's the way he put it. I think probably to be more theologically correct, he would have to say, God has found me.

But I think everybody understood what he had to say. Odin didn't have much time, did he? Time was running out for Odin, and he didn't even know it. But thank God for that testimony.

I'll never forget it. Odin believed the promise of John 6 and 35. Odin's heart is filled and will be filled.

His soul will be satisfied for all eternity. Now, I do believe that if one does not lay over this promise, that he will hunger and he will thirst forever. The Lord is the only one that can satisfy the human heart.

It has been well said, and I will take up the word. God has created the human heart hungry that he might satisfy the hunger of that heart with himself. And he can do it.

He is the only one that can do it. People who try to satisfy their hunger with the pleasures of this life are going to find an emptiness that Odin so wonderfully explains. They're going to find an emptiness.

And if that emptiness is not filled, they shall be empty forever. Thank God for the testimony of a Christian counselor that on a bus said, look, fellas, I'm going to a Bible camp. Why don't you go along? If that counselor had not been on that bus, Odin Engelking would be in hell tonight.

I think of these little details that we overlook in the matter of our testimony, and I think of that dear boy, that Christian counselor that persuaded those young men, and I thank God for the prayers of his companions who knew the Lord, and I thank God for the testimony that Odin knew the Lord before he went into eternity. Now, we have the promise of material supply. You and I have been promised by God that he will meet our needs.

He is not going to save us and then let us go on our own resources. I'd like to turn you to the 8th chapter of Romans, if you please. Romans chapter 8. God just doesn't save us and then say, look, I extricated you from that horrible mass of morass of sin.

Now, you go out and see if you can make something out of yourself. That isn't the way that the Lord acts. Many people are afraid to be saved for fear they can't live up to it.

I'll guarantee that when we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, he'll give us the power to live up to it. He is the great shepherd of the sheep as well as the good shepherd of the sheep, and he can do that. Now, in Romans 8 and 32 we read these words.

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Now, the word shall here makes this verse a promise. It makes it a promise. Shall and will are the words of promise.

This is a promise. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, that means up to the cross, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Freely give us all things. Now, he has given us the best, but won't he give us the rest? If God gave us his son, what is he going to withhold now? Our material supply? Is that more precious to God than his own dear son? No.

He gave us his son, and he will give us the rest. He may not give it to us in the abundance that perhaps we think we deserve, but he'll give it to us in the abundance that we can stand, that we can assimilate, the abundance that we can use without becoming independent of God who gave the blessing. He will not have us occupied with the blessing he would have us occupied with the blessed offering.

So he freely gives us all things, that which he needs, but he is wise in his giving. So we have the promise of material supply. We have the promise of his presence.

Matthew 28, verse 20. Think of what this means, the promise of his presence. Verse 18 of the 28th chapter of Matthew, And Jesus came and spake unto them all, spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.

Ye therefore increase all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age, and unto the end of the world. Amen.

Now, that's a promise. Now, Hebrews 13, if you please. This means that the Lord is my companion after I get free.

He goes with me, and if I do not pull my hand out of his and take my own course, he protects me. In Hebrews 13, verse 5, we read, Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have. For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Think of having this promise, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Now, I'm not a great student, but I'm told that this word never has a triple significance.

I've been told that if we read this verse literally, we'd have to read it this way. I will never, never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee. That's the promise of the Lord.

When we get saved, he is our constant companion. Now, I do not say that we can't turn our back on him, for we can. Even as Christians, we can turn our back on the Lord.

We can get away from the Lord. We can be occupied with the things of this world, but he's there. And he'll shine on our back.

His love will shine on our back. If it won't on our faith, he loves us. And he promises to be with us, to undertake for us.

So we have the promise of his presence, we have the promise of his coming. He has promised that he's not going to leave us in this world forever. In John 14, we read these words, And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may also.

The Lord has promised that he's coming again. You know, I believe that promise. I believe that if he came tonight and shouted that I would be caught up into the presence of the Lord Jesus, and every other child of God would be caught away from this earth.

Now, that means this. Now, this could happen. Now, don't get excited.

Well, I'm about to say something that might upset you, but don't get excited. I say now that if it's possible...

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