

Why Is Your Faith Precious?

Introduction. We live 2,000 years from the events recorded in the New Testament, and many people appropriately question their relevance. In 2 Peter, the apostle writes to reassure his readers that despite their remoteness from the New Testament events, they (and we) are as privileged as the apostles.

In 2 Peter 1:1, he referred to their “like precious faith.” “Precious” embodies what’s valuable, esteemed, privileged, and honored. This word was used in connection with foreigners who were given equal citizenship in a city with the native inhabitants.

In the opening four verses, Peter gives three reasons why your faith can be precious. These reasons will build and increase your faith so that the promises upon which they are built can be yours.

I. Because It’s Centered in Christ

- A. New Testament faith isn’t founded in a philosophy, human creed, adherence to doctrinal dogma, or devotion to a cause; it’s founded in the person of Jesus. Peter affirms his apostleship from Christ, and his servitude to Christ.
- B. Furthermore, our faith is derived from who Jesus is — the Christ, the Son of God. Our quest to draw close to God begins with Jesus because He’s the only way to the Father (John 14:6).
- C. But what makes Jesus so eminently qualified? What makes Him rise above other religious leaders in the world? There’s five key arguments that show why we can have so much confidence in Jesus:
 1. His unique nature and preexistence.
 - a) Jesus had no beginning in time or space, existing eternally as God the Son before His earthly birth. In contrast, all other religious leaders began their lives at birth.
 - b) Jesus is the only religious leader who’s both fully divine and fully human, making Him uniquely qualified to be the mediator between God and man.
 2. His sinless life.
 - a) Jesus lived a completely perfect and sinless life. While followers of other religions may revere their leaders, none of them claim their founder was completely without sin.
 - b) Because Jesus was sinless, He alone had the authority to offer forgiveness for sin, rather than merely teaching a path to morality.
 3. His resurrection.
 - a) Jesus is the only major religious founder who died as a sacrificial atonement for the sins of the world, and subsequently rose from the dead to prove His power.
 - b) While the tombs of other religious leaders are occupied, the gospel centers on a living Savior. The resurrection is viewed as historical proof of Jesus’ divinity and His ability to grant eternal life.
 4. His grace.
 - a) Almost all other world religions are based on “effort” — reaching God through rituals, meditation, or enlightenment. The New Testament is

- superior because it's based on "grace" — God coming down to mankind to provide salvation as a free gift.
- b) The salvation through grace that Jesus provides by having become the sacrifice for the world's sin teaches us to have a godly life.
- 5. His historical reliability.
 - a) The claims about Jesus are cataloged by eyewitnesses and supported by a large amount of early manuscripts compared to other ancient literature.
 - b) Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies from the Old Testament, proving His identity was foretold centuries before His birth.
- D. Moses couldn't see God (Exodus 33:20), but we can see God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:3). We have "precious faith" because we see a Man whose power changed the world.

II. Because It's Grounded in Knowledge

- A. Our faith isn't wishful thinking, whistling in the dark, or a superstitious, subjective feeling. It's objective and based on the truth of God's revelation.
- B. Twice in 2 Peter 1, Peter speaks of the importance of what we know. Grace, peace, and the path of a godly and virtuous life can be learned, obtained, and enjoyed through the "knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue."
 - 1. In the parable of the sower, the "noble and good heart" allowed the Word to take root (Luke 8:13, 15). This can't happen without a base of knowledge.
 - 2. And Peter said that knowledge can be added to or grow by being better informed about God and His revelation (2 Peter 1:5).
 - 3. We can have that kind of knowledge by understanding Bible passages, reading good books, and being well taught, especially among the saints.
- C. However, we want to be more than well informed. We want to have the knowledge of a husband or wife or good friend that goes beyond knowing things about them and actually knows them.
 - 1. The priests in Jeremiah's day didn't know God, even though they knew the Law (2:8). God would send His people away but then bring them back several decades later so they could really know Him (Jeremiah 24:7).
 - 2. Hundreds of years later, in John 7:25-29 Jesus told the Jews that He had come from God, but they didn't know God. They thought they had a handle on the nature of God and His Messiah, but they missed that Christ was God's answer to sin.
- D. Such an amazing gift of grace and peace can be realized because we have "precious faith" through an individual knowledge provided by the authentic gospel (Psalm 46:10; John 17:3).

III. Because It Allows Sharing in the Divine Nature

- A. This begins with God's "divine power" that can change and transform us to be "conformed to the image" of Jesus (Romans 8:29). It's wonderfully expressed in the sentiment of the hymn "O, to be like Thee."
- B. Peter reminds us of the Father's plea to those who share in His nature: "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

1. Fourteen times in Peter's two epistles he speaks of our call to holiness. We're a "holy priesthood," a "holy nation," to be engaged in "holy conduct" (1 Peter 2:5-9; 2 Peter 3:11-13). Thus, we can become partakers, partners, and sharers in God's divine nature, equipping us to overcome temptation, persevere in trials, and reflect God's character in an ungodly world.
 2. Jesus Christ sets high standards in a godly life. Those high standards were apparent throughout His life and teaching, and nowhere more clearly than in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:20, 43-48). With the power of this teaching, we can crucify the flesh with its passions and desires, and walk according to the Spirit (Galatians 5:24-25).
- C. We have "precious faith" because our lives are defined not by a list of dos and don'ts, but by sharing in the divine nature of God.

Conclusion. Let's return now to 2 Peter 1:1-4. It's easy to tell that Peter liked the word "precious," for he not only wrote about the "precious faith," but also about the "precious blood" (1 Peter 1:19), the "precious stone" (1 Peter 2:4, 6), and the "precious Savior" (1 Peter 2:7).

The people who have "precious faith" will receive "exceedingly great and precious promises." These include:

- The forgiveness of sins.
- The privilege of prayer.
- The comfort of the Holy Spirit.
- Communion with the Creator.
- An exclusive relationship with Jesus.
- Fellowship with those of "like precious faith."
- The hope of eternal life.

If you'll obey the gospel today, then you can grab hold of the strength, fortitude, and courage that God offers.

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