

162 – Participating in the Divine Nature

Two quick items to share with you before we get into the meat of our study tonight:

1. Bible Gateway's verse of the day was James 3:17-18. Here it is from the ESV:
But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace **by** those who make peace.

Verse 18 in another version says, ***“And peacemakers who sow seed in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”***

The idea of verse 18 in virtually every English version I found is the same: we are the ones who are responsible for sowing the fruit of righteousness, by virtue of making peace ourselves. In other words, by making peace, we reap a harvest of righteousness – almost like we earn righteousness by making peace.

The CLNT reads this way:

***Now the wisdom from above is first, indeed, pure, thereupon peaceable, lenient, compliant, bulging with mercy and good fruits, indiscriminating, unfeigned.
18 Now the fruit of righteousness is being sown in peace **for** those making peace.***

The point of the original language is that as we make peace, we enjoy the fruit of righteousness; but that fruit is sown FOR us, not BY us. It's like what Barbara says so often, “When we do our part, God does the rest.” All we do is make peace; that's part. Then, righteousness is sown for us.

This is a small distinction, and by itself, it may seem inconsequential; however, if that which is sown depends on your efforts versus God's effort on your behalf, it is a completely different relationship and accountability.

2. Today's Bible Gateway verse of the day was 1 Corinthians 1:10, which I'll read only from the CLNT:
Now I am entreating you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, that all may be saying the same thing, and there may be no schisms among you, but you may be attuned to the same mind and to the same opinion.

I remarked to Barbara this morning as we read this verse together that we are witnessing the fulfillment of this verse among those of us who are sharing this

study live tonight. We ARE saying the same thing; there ARE no schisms among us; we ARE attuned to the same mind to the same opinion. In fact, if ever we AREN'T sharing these characteristics, we fall out of fellowship; what's worse is that when we have fallen out of fellowship, the Father lets us go until we come to our senses and re-attune ourselves so that we don't miss so much that we can't recover! It's a remarkable unity that has been achieved amongst this family of God – this ecclesia – and it must be very pleasing to the Father and to the Lord, because, as the verse says, this unity is achieved THROUGH His name. Notice that it is not IN His name, BY His name, TO or FOR His name, but THROUGH His name. In other words, this unity is OUR achievement THROUGH – or as a result of the agency of the NAME that is above every name. How much have we studied about the paramount importance of His Name, and the differences between In His name, versus BY, TO, FOR, or THROUGH His name.

The Apostle Paul suggests that this unity of speech and of thought is hugely important. He was addressing the Corinthians, who were such a mess, and I said to Barbara that the achievement of this unity among us who gather weekly, and have gathered together for over two years and some more than three years, may be unprecedented in Christian history, which is characterized more by faction than it is unity, in my opinion.

All this to congratulate you who have hung in there through all the numerous shake-and-breaks that have resulted in life as we know it today. Praise His Holy Name!

Now, let's move on with our study tonight:

Last Thursday, May 16, Oswald Chambers' entry in *My Utmost For His Highest* cited **2 Peter 1:4**: "**You may become participants of the divine nature.**" I was captivated by the phrase, "**participants of the divine nature.**" As soon as I got to my computer, I looked up the Scripture in the CLNT and as I began reading **2 Peter**, I discovered a treasure I had missed before. I haven't referred to Peter much in "*Light Up the Scriptures*," mainly because, like the other Apostles to the circumcision, his revelation applies mainly to the kingdom administration, and his ministry was limited to his Hebrew brethren. Nevertheless, I was drawn into this first chapter of Peter's second letter, and a little of the second chapter, and I'd like for us to look at it together.

2 Peter 1

1 Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Yeshua the Messiah, to those who are chancing upon an equally precious faith with us, in the righteousness of our God, and the Saviour, Yeshua the Messiah:

2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the recognition of God and of Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord! [*Peter sounds a lot like Paul so far, doesn't he?*]

3 So has all of His divine power, that tends to life and devoutness, been presented to us through the recognition of Him Who calls us to His own glory and virtue;

Notice what Peter says that the calling is to “**His own glory and virtue.**” We know what “**His own glory**” means; and “**virtue**” is, “*moral goodness*” or “*moral excellence.*” Peter sounds a little like Paul in **Philippians 3:14**:

toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in the Messiah Yeshua.

2 Peter 1

4 through which [*that is, through “His own glory and virtue”*] have been presented to us the precious and greatest promises, that through these [*that is, through these “precious and greatest promises”*] **you may become participants of the divine nature**, fleeing from the corruption which is in the world by lust.

[*actually, the Greek text reads, “corruption which is in the world IN lust,” as in, “in a state of” lust*]

“**Participants of the divine nature**” is the phrase that grabbed me when Barbara and I read it together last week. Think of it: you and I “**may become participants of the divine nature.**” Peter does not say we WILL become, or, more importantly that we SHALL become – participating in the divine nature is not guaranteed EXCEPT THROUGH the agency of the “**precious and greatest promises.**” You have heard me say that this eon is the only one in which grace is offered and where faith is required because we have no hard evidence of its substance. Here in 2 Peter 1:4, we find that becoming a “[**participant**] in the **divine nature**” is likewise exclusive to this eon. How do we know that? Two ways:

1. “**The precious and greatest promises**” in verse 4, are only offered in this eon – just like grace.
2. The last part of verse 4: “**fleeing from the corruption which is in the world by [or in a state of] lust.**” Our flight from corruption is specifically referring to “**THE corruption**” of death. The article appears before the word “**corruption,**” and there is only one “**THE corruption,**” which is THE death suffered by all humanity since Adam. It is the same **corruption** that Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:53: “**For**

this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.

“**Corruptible**” means, “perishable,” and refers, obviously, to our human bodies, which, the Apostle says, “**must put on incorruption,**” i.e., “non-perishable.” “**fleeing from the corruption,**” which Peter addresses in verse 4, is an action we take now, certainly, but when we look at the total context, we are seeing that, just as “**the precious and greatest promises**” await their future fulfillment in the Day of the Lord Yeshua, so does our flight out of “**the corruption.**” At the return of the Lord we will make a final flight into incorruption and immortality, Praise the Lord!

One more point before leaving 2 Peter 4: the context of a future fulfillment is also suggested by Peter establishing how “the corruption” came to be and persists today. He says that it “**is in the world by [or in a state of] lust.**” The corruption arrives in a state of lust. When we review the Genesis account, we recall that Eve experienced a sense of yearning and desire that moved her to take the forbidden fruit. You can read more about that sequence of events in the book, *Go GOD!* For now, however, it’s enough to take note that our own intense yearnings and desires can likewise move us away from the Father’s delight. Human beings, outside of the power and authority of the Holy Spirit working together with *our* spirit, are susceptible to the altogether human state of lust, which brings nothing ultimately, but “**the corruption.**” We could say that in THE lust is THE Sin, and in THE Sin is THE death. We, however, are thankfully “fleeing this corruption” by participating “**in the divine nature,**” now and in the Day of the Lord Yeshua, “**through the precious and greatest promises**” in the Messiah Yeshua.

2 Peter 1 (*read w/out articles, then read again WITH them*)

5 Now for this same thing also, employing all [**or every**] diligence, in your [the] faith supply [the] virtue, yet in [the] virtue [the] knowledge,
6 yet in [the] knowledge [the] self-control, yet in [the] self-control [the] endurance, yet in [the] endurance [the] devoutness,
7 yet in [the] devoutness [the] brotherly fondness, yet in [the] brotherly fondness [the] love.

Notice that we are accountable for all these characteristics and that we are charged to employ “**EVERY diligence,**” to supply them IN our faith, which is THE faith. Read it again with me, and let’s insert the articles, because doing so drives home what I believe is Peter pointing to the Messiah’s own character traits.

Read...

Now consider the Lord when He walked as a man: doesn’t the description we just read sound like Him? Here, Peter says in a lot more words what Paul says in **Ephesians 5:1:**

Become, then, imitators of God, as beloved children,
2 and be walking in love, according as Christ also loves you, and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor.

2 Peter 1

8 For your possessing these and increasing is constituting you not idle nor yet unfruitful in the recognition of our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.

9 For he in whom these are not present is blind, closing his eyes, getting oblivious of the cleansing from the penalties of his [the] sins of old.

Verse 8 suggests that “**possessing these**,” that is the list in verses 5-7, is not enough by itself, as Peter adds the word, “**increasing**,” which seems to mean, *Don't stop at possessing, but keep going and growing, because it is the increasing that keeps you focused and fruitful “in the recognition – the correct and precise knowledge – of our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.”*

In verse 9, we discover what happens to one who is not in possession of the list in verse 5-7, let alone one who isn't increasing them: Peter describes one who is blind BECAUSE he or she has closed his or her eyes. They aren't blinded but they are blind by their own choosing; not only that, but they are, as a result, oblivious of the cleansing – the freedom that the blood of Yeshua provided us all if we but open our eyes and receive it. This picture of someone walking around deliberately with his or her eyes closed is truly an image of foolish pride. What a futile life that would be! I thank God for eyes to see His face, even if only figuratively and ears to hear His voice, even if it is only in part at present.

2 Peter 1

10 Wherefore, rather, brethren, endeavor through ideal acts to confirm your calling and choice; for, doing these things you should under no circumstances be tripping at any time.

11 For thus will be richly supplied to you the entrance into the eonian kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Yeshua the Messiah.

This is NOT a call to works; rather, “**ideal acts**” that confirm our calling and choice spring naturally and spontaneously from within us, simply out of hearts that are so grateful to the Father that we do ideally as a matter of course throughout our daily lives.

2 Peter 1

12 Wherefore I shall ever be about to be reminding you concerning these things, even though you are aware of, and have been established in, the present truth.

13 Now I am deeming it just, for as much time as I am in this tabernacle, to be rousing you by a reminder,

“I know you know this stuff,” Peter says, “but I’m going over it again to remind you, and I’m going to keep reminding you for as long as I’m alive, which won’t be much longer...”

14 being aware that my tabernacle is to be put off swiftly according as our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah, also makes evident to me.

15 Yet I shall endeavor to have you, after my exodus, to make mention of these things, ever and anon, also. [*“You teach this after I’m gone!”*]

16 For not by following **wisely made myths** do we make known to you the power and presence of our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah, but by becoming spectators of His magnificence. [*myth: the rich man and Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom*]

17 For He got from God, the Father, the honor and glory of the voice, being carried to Him in such a way by the Glory Magnificent [*splendid, majestic, magnificent*]: “This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight!” [*Notice Peter quotes Matthew’s gospel account and not Mark’s which was earlier, or Luke’s (I don’t know if Luke’s was finished at this writing)*]

18 And this voice **we hear** being carried out of heaven, being together with Him in the holy mountain.

19 And we are having the prophetic word **more confirmed, which you, doing ideally, are heeding** (as to a lamp appearing in a dingy place, till the day should be breaking and the morning star should be rising) in your hearts,

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture at all is becoming its own explanation.

21 For not by the will of man was prophecy carried on at any time, but, being carried on by holy spirit, holy men [and women] of God speak.

There’s a lot of wisdom and revelation packed into verses 19-21, Let’s read them again:

...

1. True prophecy is perhaps characterized by it’s being not just confirmed, but “**more confirmed.**”
2. Heeding true prophecy is “**doing ideally.**” To do otherwise is, as Paul wrote, “**Quench not the spirit. Scorn not prophecies. Yet be testing all, retaining the ideal.**” (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)

3. The analogy Peter uses is wonderful, comparing a lamp in a dingy place to sunrise and the “morning star” is a direct reference to the Messiah. Without saying it directly, Peter presents a clear choice: you can have one light or the other, and here’s the difference between the two. Decide which you want.
4. Verse 20: “**no prophecy of scripture at all is becoming its own explanation.**” This is a startling statement, but it sure does explain why prophecy is so often enigmatic and easily mistaken. How many of us can identify with how we have recognized our own misinterpretations of what various prophetic words over our own lives have meant? I sure can!
5. Verse 21 is the landmark, to me, of how true prophecy can be judged: it is carried on by the Spirit of Holiness and is spoken by the Father’s ambassadors. I’m not opposed, by the way, to His choosing whom He will to be that ambassador, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Chapter 2

1 Yet there came to be false prophets also among the people, as among you also there will be false teachers who will be smuggling in destructive sects, even disowning the Owner Who buys them, bringing on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will be following out their wantonness, because of whom the glory of the truth will be calumniated [*slandered*],

3 and in greed, with suave words, they will traffic in you, whose judgment of old is not idling, and their destruction is not nodding.