

“The Divine Life” Part 1 continues

Holiness

2 Peter 1:1-3

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Bruce: Gracious Lord, it's with a great sense of anticipation and awe that we assemble here this morning to sit at Your feet. Father, remove all the frustrations of this week, the difficulties that we bring upon ourselves by our improper thinking. And may You be pleased to override that. Father, we have problems. We need Your help. And will You help us? We pray that Your Holy Spirit will be our teacher this day. Open our eyes, that we might see You behind the pages of Scripture more clearly for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Let's turn in our Bibles, please, as we continue our examination of the two epistles of the apostle Peter. We're in 2 Peter chapter 1, beginning at verse 1 of 2 Peter chapter 1.

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, 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, seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." May God be pleased to open our eyes, that we might behold Him for His glory.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Turn with me over to the third chapter of 2 Peter. I want you to see the big context of why we're studying this particular book along with the first epistle of Peter. I'm reading from the New American Standard Version today.

Peter writes in 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 1, *"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you, in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminding, that you should remember the word spoken beforehand by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles."*

The English Standard Version translates that very well when it says, *(paraphrase) "I am writing this second letter and the reason I wrote both of these letters is to stimulate wholesome thinking."* Peter uses the phrase "wholesome thinking." He's basically saying that the reason he wrote the first letter and the reason that he is writing the second letter is *"to stimulate within you wholesome thinking."*

Now how critical it is for us to have wholesome thinking in our lives! That's why Paul writes in Romans 12, *"Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* Jesus said this. *"Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."* You see, one of the great barometers of our maturity in Christ is what we talk about. Listen to your words. Why do you choose that particular phraseology? Why that particular subject? You see, Jesus is saying that, if you really want to know the condition of your heart, you've got to listen to your words.

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Now Peter is saying this. (*Paraphrase.*) "I wrote you the first epistle, the first letter, because I wanted to remind you of certain things. I'm going to remind you of certain other things," Peter is going to tell us in this second epistle.

Now basically he says, (*paraphrase*), "The reason I wrote both of these books for you under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is so that you will develop wholesome thinking by remembering certain things." And one of the great things in all the Scripture is the concept of remembering. "Remind them," Peter and Paul tell their young epistle friends. And Paul oftentimes, talking to Timothy and Titus, his young ministerial proteges, says, "*Remind them of these things.*"

Now notice how Peter starts off in 1 Peter chapter 1. He starts off by reminding us of our gracious and glorious salvation. The degree to which you and I understand how God in His mercy and His sovereign grace brought us into a saving relationship with Himself is the foundation for all of our life thoughts. Do I have the right view of my salvation? Do I understand my role in it? What is my responsibility? You see, when you and I have the right thoughts about our salvation, we're going to have right thoughts we're going to have right thoughts about a lot of other things, because it will give us the basis for our ongoing relationship and development in Christ.

So let's go back to 1 Peter chapter 1. And Peter teaches us about our gracious and glorious salvation. We touched on this last week. In this chapter I read for you, in 2 Peter chapter 1, he's going to describe for us what I call the divine life. In 1 Peter he starts off with our gracious and glorious salvation, and in 2 Peter he starts off by teaching us about the divine life. It's the same concept. He's reminding us that the basis of all of our wholesome thoughts starts with our understanding of our regeneration, our redemption and our salvation. Do you really understand that? Peter says, (*paraphrase*), "I'm going to remind you of certain things."

And one of the reasons that he reminds us of these issues about our salvation is because of spiritual warfare. In 1 Peter, the spiritual warfare, as you recall, is outside the church—the system of this world and its opposition to those who follow Christ. And there is tremendous opposition, resistance and warfare against the church, the followers of Christ. And the first epistle of Peter was designed to warn us how to manage spiritual warfare from outside the church—the opposition we get.

In 2 Peter, he's going to teach us about opposition inside the church. Spiritual warfare now comes from inside the church. Chapters 1-5 of 1 Peter and 1-3 of 2 Peter will be spiritual warfare from inside the church. And that's why it's so important that Peter goes back and in both of these epistles he starts off by reminding us to understand our salvation correctly.

Now we touched on it last week. If you look at your notes, the handouts that I gave you, he's now describing for us what I call the divine life. No longer do we live a depraved life. We live a divine life. And he goes through three elements in describing this divine life.

First of all, it is an *allotted* life. It's by divine allotment, as we saw last week. Secondly, today we will see that it is an *equal* life. There is an equal status that we all have. And thirdly, it is a *developing* or an *acquaintance* life. Peter describes the divine

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life in three understandings or three issues—first, an allotted life. Secondly, he describes it as an equal life. And thirdly, he describes it as an acquaintance life. And that's what we want to examine today.

But let's go back to 1 Peter chapter 1. And notice how he reminds us of our gracious and glorious salvation. If you look at the first twelve verses, basically this is what Peter reminds us of. He's going to teach us the same thing in 2 Peter chapter 1, in the verses I just read.

First of all, God the Father chose you. That's where I get the definition of an allotted life. The sovereign God chose us before the foundation of this world so that we would come to saving faith. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies.

So God the Father chose us for salvation. Then we notice next in 1 Peter 1:1-12 that God the Holy Spirit brought you to the act of faith.

Why is it that you believe? Is it because you and I are smart enough to figure this out? No. The Holy Spirit acted upon those whom God chose from before the foundation of the world to bring them to the point of belief. So what is the first evidence of your salvation?

Participant: Belief.

Bruce: Belief. Belief doesn't save you. It's the evidence that God has regenerated you, that something has happened to you, that supernaturally, God in His grace, who allotted you by divine allotment to come to saving faith—the Holy Spirit acted on that and brought you to the act of faith. So faith is the first evidence.

Remember this. In God's divine allotment, He didn't save you because you believed. He saved you so that you would believe. That's the acting work of the Holy Spirit.

And then thirdly, we saw last week that God the Son cleansed you from your sins through the blood of Christ. The way I phrase that is the same thing. My phraseology is this. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies.

So, very basically, when somebody says to you, "When did you become a Christian? When did you become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ?", you and I need to understand this. In both 1 Peter and 2 Peter he talks about the same thing. You and I have what I would call a Trinitarian salvation.

There are three elements of our saving grace. First of all, we became believers when God chose us from before the foundation of the world. That's what the Father ordained. Secondly, we became Christians when Christ accomplished your salvation and my salvation at the cross. He didn't make it possible for you to believe. He accomplished it so that you and I would believe. So what the Son had accomplished the Father had ordained. And thirdly, you and I became Christians in the present-day reality when the Holy Spirit had someone present the gospel of Jesus Christ to you, and you repented of your sins and believed.

You see, we have a Trinitarian salvation. I became a Christian when God chose me. I became a Christian when Christ accomplished my salvation. And I became a Christian when the Holy Spirit applied the gospel to me and I believed and repented of my sins. Do you understand that?

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That's the importance of what Peter says. And it all starts right there. If you don't have that basic understanding of your salvation, you're going to try to fill in all the holes of the things that you and I don't understand and try to concoct your own way of religiosity. That's what the church does. They create their own method of religiosity, because we have lost the basics of our understanding of our salvation.

And so in 2 Peter, Peter starts off with another description of the divine life. It's the same thing that he talked about in 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 1-12—our gracious and glorious salvation. Now he talks about our divine life. We talked about that last week. It's an allotted life. God chose us before the foundation of the world so that we would believe. And the Holy Spirit acted upon us and we did believe and we repented and became followers of Christ.

Today I want to give you the second description of the divine life. The first one deals with the sovereignty of God and His divine allotment. Now we want to talk about the second description that Peter gives us. And that's what I would call an *equal* life.

Notice what he says in verse 1. "*To those who have received.*" Now notice. He doesn't say, "those who have achieved." He doesn't say, "those who have earned, those who warrant it, those who deserve it." He says that something supernatural happened to you. That's the sovereignty of God, when God, by divine allotment, was pleased to appoint you to saving faith.

Now do we understand the magnificence of all of that? Of course not. We don't understand all the intricacies between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. That's not something that you and I can figure out. We're not designed to. It's a secret. Let it be a secret. We just need to believe it and trust it and base our lives on it.

Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us this. "*The secret things belong to God.*" The things that He has revealed are for us and for our children so that we can be obedient in future generations, to be obedient to the law.

You see, men, let some of these things be mysteries! Just let them be there. That's the magnificence of our walking by faith and not by sight.

"*To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.*" Now the English Standard Version says "*equal.*" Both of those are good translations—"the same kind" and "*equal.*" "*By the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*"

Now Peter says that you and I have a faith that is equal to that of the apostles. He refers to himself as an apostle. And he says that you and I have received the same kind of faith.

It's the same or equal in two aspects. It is equal in the fact that it is precious *to* God, and it's equal in our position *before* God. Let's explore this.

First of all, the word *equal* means precious. It has the idea of "alike in honor and value; equal in honor and privilege." Peter is saying this. The faith that you have received is as equal in value and equally as precious as the faith that I have received, which I and the other apostles have. We're not greater than you. We have an equal faith because God is the Author of it.

He's basically saying that first of all you need to understand that the faith that you have received because of God's sovereign grace in your life is a very precious element of

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your life. And it is equally precious to God, just as mine, Peter and Paul, and the other apostles. There is no hierarchy of faith in the Scripture. It's all equal. It's very precious.

The theologian Vincent, who has *Vincent's Word Studies*, defines the word this way. "Not in the same measure to all, but having equal honor and value to those who receive it, as admitting them to the same Christian privileges."

Now take a look at this. Go back and read that first word. "*Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.*" The faith that God has given you because of your Trinitarian salvation—what the Father ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies—is of equal value to that which Peter has. It's of equal value in its preciousness to God as what Paul has, what John has, all of the people who followed Christ previous to us. You see, he's saying this. You all are admitted to the same values and the same honor and the same privileges. It's equal. We all have a preciousness to God.

In the Greek culture this word was used in connections with strangers and foreigners who were given equal citizenship in a city where they were strangers and aliens. They see you as equal. The faith that you have is as precious as the one sitting right beside you, the man in front of you, behind you, to your right or to your left. There is an equal degree of preciousness. God holds us all in His sight because He is the Author of our salvation. Therefore it's precious in His sight. So you and I have an equal faith, the same kind of faith as the apostles do because it is precious in God's sight.

What Peter is saying is this—that the Gentiles, the nonbelievers, the Non-Jews, now have equal and precious citizenship with the Jews as God's chosen people. And you can cross reference that with Ephesians chapter 3 verse 6.

Transcriber's Note: Ephesians 3:6. "*That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.*"

Bruce: So the first thing that he says is this. You have received by God's sovereign grace a faith that is precious to God. Peter's faith is as precious to God as yours. It's equal; it's the same kind.

Peter describes himself as a servant. Let's take a look at the second reason we have an equal faith. First of all, our faith is precious to God. It's equal in its preciousness to God. We all have the same rights and privileges. We were strangers and aliens, and now we are no longer. We have entered into the Kingdom and have those rights and privileges.

But he says that there is another reason that you and I have the same faith. Not only is it precious *to* God, but it's our position *before* God. Notice our position before God.

Peter describes himself in two ways—as an apostle of Jesus Christ and as a servant. Now the word *apostle* describes his unique function because of God's grace in his life and the position he was given in the church's development. That is not our position. You and I are not apostles. That is not what he is saying that is equal. That is not what he is saying that is the same kind. What he is saying is the same kind of faith he has, that you and I have, is that of being a servant.

Notice that he uses the word *bondservant*—apostle and bondservant. That word *servant* is a beautiful Greek word. It's the word *doulos*. It literally means *slave*.

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Now there were five Greek words that described a slave or servant in their culture. And this particular word *doulos* was the most abject and the least meaningful of all of those words describing a servant. Yet the Bible gives this word great honor.

It's very similar to the word *humility* that we discussed several weeks ago. Remember that the word *humility* was always a term of derision—it meant weakness? It meant that you were a coward. For somebody to have humility meant that you were a coward. Christ redeemed that word, just like He redeemed you and me. When He began to use that word *humility*, it took on a position of privilege and prestige because it became the character of citizens of the Kingdom. He redeemed the word *humility* and gave it His honor in its prestige and its dignity.

The same thing happens with this word *doulos*. When the Scripture uses it, it gives it honor and dignity and great prestige.

Let me give you some examples. In Deuteronomy 34:5, Moses is referred to as the *doulos* of God, the servant.

Transcriber's Note: Deuteronomy 34:5. *"So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD."*

Bruce: In Joshua 24:19 Joshua is described as the *doulos* of God, the servant.

Transcriber's Note: Joshua 24:19. *"But Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.'"*

Bruce: In 2 Samuel 3:18 David, who was the greatest king in Israel, was referred to as the *doulos* of God.

Transcriber's Note: 2 Samuel 3:18. *"For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.'"*

Bruce: In Romans chapter 1 verse 1 and in Philippians chapter 1 verse 1, Paul is described as the *doulos* of God.

Transcriber's Note: Romans 1:1. *"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God."*

Transcriber's Note: Philippians 1:1. *"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."*

Bruce: Do you see how this word is being elevated? It's no longer a word of derision, like the word *humility*. Christ has redeemed the use of that word. And what Peter is saying is this. Not only is your faith equally precious to God as my faith, but your position before God is equally as important to Him as mine is, being a bondservant.

In the New Testament the believer's title is the *doulos* of Christ. We're the servants of Christ. Take a look at Acts 2:18, 1 Corinthians 7:22 and Ephesians 6:6.

Transcriber's Note: Acts 2:18. *"And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy."*

Transcriber's Note: 1 Corinthians 7:22. *"For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave."*

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Transcriber's Note: Ephesians 6:5-6. “*Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eye-service (NIV “when their eye is on you”), as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*”

Bruce: You see, friends, there is a deep and meaningful significance to what Peter is telling us about ourselves in this word *doulos*, tremendous significance. And what I want to do is I want to take the understanding of this word, what it meant in the Greek culture, and take that and put that into the right mindset of how we understand this Biblically. So here are the insights we can gain from the use of this word and understanding its cultural use at the time of the Biblical writings.

First of all, a *doulos* or a slave was one born as a slave. You were born as a slave. You were bound to somebody by birth.

Now in our original sin, sinners are born into slavery to sin, at our physical birth. But at our rebirth, at our regeneration, we are born into a loving, willing, glad servitude to Jesus Christ by the new birth. When God regenerates a person, he takes you from being a slave to Satan to a slave to Christ. You now become a *doulos*, and you're bound by birth. And that means that the result is this. You belong to God.

The first thing is this. You now belong to God because of your rebirth, because of the salvation that we just talked about, about this divine life. It's an allotted life. You need to understand that. As a result of that, of God's regenerating you, you have now been reborn and you are now slaves, and the result is that you now belong to God.

You did belong to the evil one, the prince of the power of the air. But because of your regeneration, you now belong to God. And that little word *doulos* means that now you belong to Him, because a *doulos* was born into that relationship. He was born a slave.

We have now been reborn to be the slaves of Christ. You belong to God.

Secondly, a *doulos* was one whose will was swallowed up in the will of another. A slave was someone whose will was swallowed up in the will of another person. The master of the slave could do what he liked with his slaves. He had the same power over his slaves as he did over all of his inanimate objects—his furniture, his animals and all of his property. Slaves had no rights of their own because their wills were swallowed up in the will of someone else.

Now consider before your salvation and your status as regenerated believers in Christ. The sinner's will before salvation is swallowed up in the will of Satan. Afterwards, because of regeneration and our glorious salvation, the believer's will is swallowed up in the will of God. Do you see the difference—what you were and what you now are? That's why it's so important, friends, that you and I understand the basics of our salvation. After our regeneration, our will is swallowed up in the will of God. That means that we no longer have rights. We have responsibilities.

And the result? You and I are now at the disposal of God. As a result, we belong to God because we're *doulos*. Secondly, as a result of being a *doulos*, we are now at the disposal of God.

Thirdly, a *doulos* was one who was bound to another, which only death could break. The master had the power of life and death over his slaves.

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Now consider this. As a sinner, I was bound to Satan, which only death could break. The believer's identification now with the Lord Jesus Christ and His death at the cross broke the bands which bound him to Satan. And now we're bound to Christ, which only death can sever. Because Jesus will never die again, neither will you and I. Do you understand that? It's all wrapped up, guys, in that one little word *doulos*.

And Peter is saying this. You have the same position before God that I do. "Yes, I'm an apostle," but that's not what he's talking about. He's saying that you now take on this wonderful relationship, that you now belong to God because you're a *doulos*. You're at the disposal of God because you're a *doulos*. And now you live eternally with God because you're a *doulos*. You're a servant. Positionally, you're equal to all of the other apostles and disciples. You're precious in God's sight. But you're positionally equal. You have the same kind of faith that Peter is talking about.

You've got to understand that, men, because that forms the basis of our wholesome thinking. If you don't understand who you are in Christ, you're not going to have wholesome thoughts because you're just trying to fill in the pieces that the world will teach you that you need to think.

So we belong to God because we're servants. We're at the disposal of God because we're servants. And we live eternally with God because we're servants.

But there's one more thing that you can find in that one little Greek word *doulos*. A servant was one who served another to the disregard of his own interests. A servant was one who served the interests of another with disregard for his own interests. Ancient slaves had no time off. They had no holidays. They had no union benefits. No unions settled their disputes. They had no working hours. They had no leisure.

Now before your salvation and my salvation, we served Satan to our own detriment. We were under the control of the prince of the power of the air. Now as a result of our salvation, our regeneration, all of our time belongs to our new Master. We have no leisure time in the service of God. Do you understand that? That means that you don't compartmentalize your life. You don't say, "On Sunday I'm a follower of Christ and I go to church. Monday through Saturday I'm in the world." No, because we've been bought with a price, with the salvation that God created for us in the allotted life, which is the same that Peter had. You and I have no leisure time. Our whole lives are now serving Christ. You do it at work. You do it at church. You do it wherever you are. When you go play golf today, you're serving Him. No leisure time. You don't compartmentalize your lives and say this, "I'm part of the secular world and I'm part of the spiritual world."

That's why we define ministry as who you are, where you are.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: I remember when I came to Pittsburgh and began to work at PNC. Some of my pastor friends said to me, "What's it going to be like to be in the secular world? How come you're going into the secular world?"

And I said, "I didn't know there was a secular world." (*Laughter.*) As a follower of Christ, everything is in the spiritual world.

Participant: Amen.

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Bruce: We have no leisure time! We're slaves to Christ because we belong to God. We're at the disposal of God. We live eternally with God. And we're in constant service to God. We don't compartmentalize our lives. And now we are in constant service to God.

You see, Peter reminds us of this. And friends, this is so basic, but it is so powerful because it is the basis of our having wholesome thoughts. It's the purpose of this book and the first epistle of Peter—to give us wholesome thoughts. (*Paraphrase.*) "Remind them of these wholesome thoughts." When you think correctly about your salvation, you're going to think correctly about everything else.

And Peter reminds us of this. Not only do we have an allotted life—God's sovereign grace—something that we've received, not something that we've achieved. We also have an equal life, the same kind of life that He has with the Father. Equal in our preciousness to God, equal with every other saint, including Peter and Paul and John and all the disciples. But it's also equal in our position *before* God, being a slave of Christ because you now belong to God. You're now at the disposal of God. You now live eternally with God. And now you are in constant service to God.

What a beautiful picture of who you and I are in Christ! That one little word, which was such a demeaning word in the Greek culture. God has now redeemed it and elevated it to be the stature of the position that God gives you in His relationship with you. He views you as His servant. You belong to Him. You're at His disposal. You live eternally with Him. And you're in constant service. Yes, Ted?

Ted: Could you unpack that word *wholesome*? I guess my immediate reaction, when I hear that word *wholesome*, I think it would probably be to look at a woman lustfully, that would be unwholesome. A wholesome thought would be to look at her as a beautiful creation of God. I'm being somewhat facetious here.

Bruce: If you can do that, I commend you for it. (*Laughter.*)

Ted: I mean, that would be kind of my way of thinking of something as being unwholesome or wholesome. I mean, if you could just unpack that for me.

Bruce: Sure. It's a good question, Ted. I've thought about that this week. I think that what Peter is referring to when he says, "*wholesome thinking*" is correct Biblical thinking. And it starts with your salvation. That's why I'm spending so much time on the divine life. Wholesome thinking starts with how I view myself in relationship to God. A cross reference would be Matthew chapter 5—the Beatitudes.

"*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*" When I see myself as a spiritual beggar—that I have no spiritual resources that are pleasing to God—when I see myself that way and see myself wholesomely thinking of that, that's what begins to transform my life. So my understanding of the concept of wholesome thinking would be this. It's correct Biblical thinking in how I view myself in relationship to God.

That's the basis of everything that we have. That includes how you look at women, in your illustration. It includes that. But it's not limited to that. It's basically how I view myself in relationship to God. The degree to which I understand God more clearly will be the degree to which I understand myself more clearly. How I see God determines how I see myself.

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We're not talking about self esteem. Self esteem is not the cure; it's the disease.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: A person who has self esteem problems is thinking too much about himself! Wholesome thinking says that I need to think of myself in terms of who God says I am.

One of the things that God says is that you are His beloved. Do you view yourself that way? When somebody treats you disastrously, do you look at yourself and say, "You know, I'm God's beloved?" That's a wholesome thought. He says that you're an oak of righteousness. You're strong; you've got great strength. You're an oak of righteousness. Do you see yourself that way? That's a wholesome thought. Wholesome thinking would be how you see yourself in relationship to God. That's the basis of everything. That's the whole purpose of these two epistles.

(*Paraphrase.*) "I write this epistle and the previous one so that you will have wholesome thoughts about yourself in relationship to God." That's why he starts off with the divine life.

He has told us so far that we have a divine life. It's described as an allotted life in the sovereignty of God. Secondly, it's an equal life, with the same kind of value, preciousness and position that he and all the other apostles and disciples have. And there is a third element as he describes our divine life.

I refer to this as an *acquaintance* life. Look at verse 2 of 2 Peter chapter 1. "*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*"

I call this an acquaintance life because it's based on a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, a very personal relationship. The word *knowledge* here in the Greek text is the word *gnosis*. And it literally means "imperfect or partial knowledge." Now that's not the word that's used here in this particular passage. The word here is the word *epignosis*. It has a different meaning. It means "towards the direction of." You're moving in the direction of something. It implies the idea of growth. It's not impartial; it's not partial knowledge. It's a growing knowledge. It means knowing by experience. And it implies a more intimate and personal relationship with the object being known or experienced. That's the word *epignosis*.

Now notice this in verse 2. Grace and peace are multiplied to the believer. When? When they increase in the knowledge of Christ. See that? "*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

You see, the more you know about Christ, the more you know about yourself. And the more you know about Christ, the more you're going to experience God's grace, and you're going to experience His peace. The more Christians realize the meaning of Jesus Christ, the more they realize the meaning of grace and the experience of peace.

We talk about peace in this world. We talk about peace as some political arrangement. Peace is a Person. And the more you experience that Person—*epignosis*—the more you experience the acquaintance relationship with that Person, the more you're going to understand two things. You're going to grow and increase in the knowledge of His grace, His unmerited favor, directly related to your knowledge of the Person and work of Christ. But secondly, this. You're going to experience something that passes all understanding.

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You're going to experience peace. Peace is found in a Person, men. It's not some political document that we sign.

Now that doesn't mean that we don't work for peace. That's not what I'm saying. Ultimately, I'm saying this. If you want peace in your life, get to know Christ more. Grow in grace. Look at this. It's an acquaintance life—*epignosis*. You're moving in the direction of knowing more and more about the Person of Christ. You're moving in the direction of experiencing more about the knowledge of the Person of God in the work of Jesus Christ. You're growing in that direction. And that is called *growth*.

What is the role of the church? To teach people to grow in Christ! That's the role of the church—to teach us to grow in Christ. The better we know Jesus, the greater the wonder of grace and the peace that will pass all understanding.

Now here's where I mentioned before. I have a little bit of an issue with a misunderstanding of two words in relation to the church's life—church growth and church expansion.

Now what has Peter just said? Church growth is defined as what?

Participant: Knowledge.

Bruce: Knowledge.

Participant: Knowing God more.

Bruce: Knowing God more. Knowing Christ more. That's church growth! What do we say church growth is? Let's go out and have some systematized program of getting people to come.

Now I'm not opposed to that. Understand what I'm not saying. All I'm saying is, understand the difference between the two words. If you want more people to come to your church, that's called church expansion! Church growth is more knowledge of the Person and work of Christ. And the more you understand church growth, the more you're going to understand the magnificence of God's grace and experience the magnificence of His peace that passes all understanding. That's the role of the church—to teach people to grow in Christ and go deeper in the Word.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: One thought that just came to mind when you say that is that it's difficult for me in our culture to think that my growth in Christ would be about learning about Him, as opposed to knowledge that I would build so that I could share that knowledge with other people to show them how smart I am. But the reality of it is that it's not about what I learn. It's about what I know about Christ.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Participant: It's not so much that I have knowledge or wisdom. But I know more about Him and I can point people to Him.

Bruce: Notice. What is multiplied to you the more you grow in Christ?

Participant: Grace.

Bruce: Grace and peace. What is it that people need? Grace and peace. It's multiplied when they have a greater understanding of Christ.

“The Divine Life” Part 1 continues

Now follow this logically because Sig just hit on a good point. What is the definition of ministry that we've been saying for twenty years? Ministry is giving away to somebody else what God has given you. If you do not grow in grace, growing in the understanding of peace, you have nothing to give away. Ministry is giving away to somebody else what God has given you. The more you and I grow in the knowledge of Christ, moving in the direction of that, taking on this acquaintance and personal relationship with Him, the more we grow in that, the more we're going to have to give away, because God has given you two things. What has He given you?

Participant: Grace and peace.

Bruce: Say it like you mean it.

Men: Grace and peace!

Bruce: That's what He gives you. Now you've got something to give away. Yes, Brian?

Brian: To tie this up with your previous point, while it says *doulos*, we're also under His protection and provision, because if we're His slaves, we're absolutely 100 per cent reliant on Him for everything.

Participant: Amen.

Brian: Food, clothing, shelter, knowledge, everything is from Him and His protection, because we are His. He bought us at an expensive price and He's going to protect us. So that's one peace. And the other peace tying into that is—it just went away, but it's-- (*Laughter.*) It's a brilliant point; I'll tell you later. (*Laughter.*)

Bruce: So far, you're very good. (*Laughter.*) Let's go to 1 Timothy 1:12.

Sometimes it's important to say what the Scripture does not say, just as much as what the Scripture does say. Notice what Paul does not say in 1 Timothy 1:12. He does not say, "I know what I have believed." He says, "*I know Whom I have believed.*" There's a difference. It's not *What* we believe. It's *Who* we believe.

The more you know of the Person of Jesus Christ, and your wholesome thoughts are directed that way,--Biblical thinking about the Person and work of Christ in your salvation—what God the Father ordained the Son accomplished and the Holy Spirit applies—that's wholesome thinking. And when you think like that, the emphasis will be, This is *Who* I believe," not what I believe.

The divine life is a personal acquaintance life with the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a growing life. It's knowing Christ as a Person and an ever deepening relationship with Him. It's an acquaintance life. And that's what makes the divine life.

It means this—to experience the Savior. You and I begin to experience Him because we're in Christ. That's the divine life. If you're in Christ today, friends, it's because of God's impartation of His holy life in you by divine allotment. It's no longer a depraved life; but a divine life. You also have an equal life, a life equally precious in God's sight with every other saint, a life that is equal in position as a slave to King Jesus, because through divine allotment you now belong to God. You're at the disposal of God. You live eternally with God. And you're in constant service to God.

“The Divine Life” Part 1 continues

But you also have an acquaintance life, Peter says—a life of personal intimacy, of moving in a direction of a more personal experience of the Lord Jesus Christ and beginning to be multiplied in the grace and the peace in your own life.

It's an allotted life. It's an equal life. And it's an acquaintance life. That's how Peter describes the wholesome thinking of your salvation.

But I must add this, men. If you're not in Christ today, you don't have a divine life. You have a depraved life. You're headed not in the direction of the Savior, but you're headed in the direction of death and eternal damnation. You don't have a divine life; you have a depraved life.

If that be your case, then flee to Christ this day, who is your Savior. Repent of your rebellious attitudes of unbelief and place whatever faith you have in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him and Him alone to give you saving faith. And God will not only save you, friends, but you'll know of His peculiar love and affection for you that existed before you were ever born.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: May it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen. Let's pray. Father, thank You for giving us wholesome thinking about our salvation, that it really is about You and not about us. It's not about what we get; it's about what You give. It's not about who we are and what we need; it's about who You are and what You give. It's about Your sovereign grace and Your magnificent glory. Father, do a work of grace in all of us today, that we would develop wholesome, correct thinking about our relationship to You through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. May it be so for His sake and His glory. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen!"