

“The Divine Life” Part 1A

Holiness

2 Peter 1:1-4

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Bruce: Good to be with you, men. How are you today?

Men: Very good.

Bruce: Ted, I do want to thank you. Where are you, Ted? Thank you very much, brother, for your good word. We really appreciate it very much.

Ted: Thank you.

Bruce: You honored the Lord greatly and we are very, very edified by it. Thank you very much. Let's go before the Lord. Don, do you want to set the tone for us, brother? *(Music.)*

Father, we come into Your presence again in the glorious and powerful name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. Father, we pray that you would take the frustrations and consternations of life and lay them at Your feet. You tell us in Your word that we are objects of Your mercy. We just pray, Lord, that You'd be pleased to open our eyes once again, that we might understand that mercy that You give us through Your grace. And may it be so for Jesus sake and His honor. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to the book of 2 Peter. I have a confession for you, men. You have the wrong notes. *(Laughter.)* Just turn that page over and take other notes. *(Laughter.)* Bring that back next week and we'll probably be there. *(Laughter.)*

But I was studying this in preparation over the last couple of weeks in anticipation of being back with you. And there is so much more that I want to cover in the first four verses. So we're going to continue in verses 1-4 before we get into verses 5-10. So I would encourage you just to turn the sheet over and take notes on what we're going to talk about today.

I call your attention to the reading of God's word from 2 Peter chapter 1, looking at the first four verses only.

"Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Well, men, there are two vital ingredients in our Christian walk, in our life in Christ. And they are our faith and our conduct—faith and conduct. If you don't believe the right things, you're not going to act the right way. As we have learned from Peter already, doctrine precedes practice.

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But today we want to talk about the combination of how your faith implicates and how it dictates our conduct. Faith and life are two vital points for a Christian. And they possess an intimate and synergistic relationship with each other that can never be separated.

You'll never find true faith unattended by true godliness. In other words, your faith is going to determine your conduct. What you believe is vital to how you act. You act upon your belief and value system. And Peter is going to teach us about that this morning.

Secondly, on the other hand, you'll never discover a true holy life that does not have as its foundation a living faith in the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, if you don't think right about Christ, you're not going to act right in your life.

And why is it that the church is so weak? Perhaps it's because we don't have the right understanding of the righteousness of Jesus Christ as the foundation of our faith and our conduct.

You see, one of those—faith without conduct—will produce a couple of things: cold orthodoxy or Pharisaism.

That's why Peter begins his second letter by reminding us of what our divine life is in Christ. We talked about this two weeks ago when I was with you, about the divine life in Christ. Peter goes into greater depth, and that is what I want to explore with you today.

Now notice the description of the divine life as we discussed it a couple of weeks ago. There are three features to it. It's an allotted life, it's an equal life and it's an acquaintance life. Those are the three things that Peter introduced to us in the first couple of verses. Let me review that with you.

You may have all the right belief, but none of the heart's right expression for conduct in holiness. Or you may have all the right external conduct, but none of the internal motive that leads you to a faith in Christ. Either way, when you have one of those things imbalanced, people will open themselves up to the heresies which plague our culture today, in which you will pull away from the life of Christ. Those things need to be in perfect balance. And that's what Peter is going to teach us today—the balance of your faith and your conduct.

It's an allotted life. The first description is that the source of our faith that we have received is this. Notice that you have obtained a faith, or that you have received a faith. Faith does not grow in a person's heart by nature. It is a thing that is obtained. It is something that is received. Faith doesn't spring up because of education. We don't get it because of example. It is obtained. It is received—not received by imitation but by regeneration. It's obtained and received not by development but by conversion.

If it is to be obtained, which the Scripture says—and Peter reminds us of our divine life—then it must be given to us. Something that you receive must be given to you. Something that you obtain must be given to you. It's not something you develop yourself. As the Scripture says, (*paraphrase*), "*Faith is not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.*" You and I obtain that faith because God has been pleased in His grace and mercy to give it to us.

Faith we can say, friends, is man's act, for we are commanded to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. But also, at the same time, we can say that it is God's gift.

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And whenever we find faith, we must know that it is not something that we did. It is something that we received.

It is an allotted life. It doesn't come because of our own nature. It comes because of a work of God's divine grace. That's the first thing that Peter wants to remind us about our divine life in this passage. You've got to realize that it is a life obtained by the grace of God. It is a life that you have received by the grace of God. It is not something that you earn. It is not something that you achieve. It is something that you receive. And that is a function of God's grace and His mercy.

That's why the Scripture says to us that one of the descriptions of the believers and followers of Christ is "*objects of His mercy*." Did you ever look at yourself that way and think that in spite of my sin, God used me as an object of His mercy? And why is that? It's because He granted you saving faith. He gave you saving faith. It is something that you received. Faith is not of our own works. It is the gift of God.

The second thing he reminded us of is that it's an equal life—equal in it's preciousness because it is based upon the precious promises of God. It is based upon the precious sacrificial blood of Christ. It is based upon the precious redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the preciousness of the Person and work of Christ Himself.

You see, it is an equally precious life. It is the same type of life in that you are as precious to God as the apostles were. That's what Peter is saying.

"To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing." If the divine life of faith were an act of man, it would be unequal because we could compare it with somebody else. Oh, he or she has more faith than I do! You see, if it is something that you and I achieve, or something that you and I worked at, you can compare it to somebody else. And it would not be equal. Faith would be unequal.

In other words, your faith is equally precious in God's sight as Peter, Paul, and all the other apostles. It's one of equal status.

But Peter says this. Your faith is equally precious to God as my faith is. You see, that's part of the divine life. And that is because you have obtained, you have received a faith that is as precious as the apostles. And therefore your life is an equal life. It is not only an allotted life, but it's an equal life. But because it is from God it is equally precious for all the believers.

We are also equal in our positioning, as we are the servants of Christ, because we have obtained a faith through God's grace in bestowing saving faith upon us by His Holy Spirit to His own. Now get this. We are equal because we belong to God. We are precious to Him because we are at the disposal of God. We are precious to Him because we live eternally with God. And we are precious to Him because we are in continual service to God Himself.

So it's an equal life. It's an allotted life. And there's one more—an acquaintance life. In other words, there is a personal relationship that you and I can have with the Lord Jesus Christ because of our allotted life and our equal life of faith.

The nature and the object of our faith is verse 1—"the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to notice something. Take a look at verse 1.

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"Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." Now I want you to notice one thing. In the King James Version's translation of this passage, they have the article before the words "Jesus Christ." The original Greek does not contain that. The New American Standard does not contain that article. And what that literally means is this—that Peter is referring to only one Person, not two. He's referring to one Person spoken of here already. And he is actually calling Jesus God. That's what he is saying.

He is saying that Jesus is God. It's the same thing that Thomas said in John chapter 20 verse 28. *"My Lord and my God!"* He is referring to one Person, not two. Not Jesus *and* God. He's referring to Jesus *as* God, because there is no article in front of the words *"Jesus Christ."* That means that he is speaking about one Person only.

So you can go back and see that this is one of the powerful texts in the Scripture where the Scripture teaches that Jesus Himself is God. That's a critical component for us to understand—our divine life.

Because God is both the Source of our faith and the Object of our faith, indeed we do have a divine life in Christ with the living God.

Now Peter has used his description of the divine life in those three attributes that I've just described for you—an allotted life, an equal life and an acquaintance life. That becomes the ground for his appeal for holy living. In other words, if you don't understand the quality of the divine life that you have, you're not going to be able to live the holy life that you're expected to live because of Christ and your relationship to Him.

That's why Peter goes through this. First of all, it says, "I want you to understand your divine life so that you can express your divine conduct." Faith and conduct are never separated. If you don't believe the right things about the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not have the right conduct that expresses your faith in Him. That's the critical component that Peter is going to teach us in the next couple of weeks.

Our divine faith means a divine life. And divine life is based upon a divine faith. He has described our divine life in terms of faith. Now he describes it in certain privileges that we have.

I want you to understand the privileges that we have as we begin to pick up in verses 3 and 4. Now there are several privileges of the divine life. It's a life of provision. It's a life of participation. It's a life of deliverance. He now says that there are certain privileges that you have because you are participating in the divine life. It's a provisionary life; it's a life of provision. It's a life of participation. And it's a life of deliverance.

Now here is where we get that. *“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”*

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He is now going to say that, as a result of your allotted life, as a result of your equal life, and as a result of your participatory life, you are now going to have certain privileges. And that is this. You're going to have a life of provision. You're going to have a life of participation. And you're going to have a life of deliverance. That's what we find in the next couple of verses. Let's examine these points. These are very powerful things that he is saying. These are the privileges you have because you've been given an allotted divine life.

First of all, *a life of provision*. It's a provided life. Many an army has lost a great battle not because of personnel, but because of lack of provisions. They don't have the right materials. They don't have the right supplies.

But that is not the case in the army of God. We live a provided life. We're supplied with everything we need for life and godliness. Now take a look at that phrase. Do you really understand what Peter is saying? He's saying that because of the divine life you never run out of supplies. And you will have enough supplies to do two things—everything needed for life and godliness. We have as our source the very divine power of God. That's why we have a provided life. It is a life of provision. You will be provided everything you need to do to live life to its highest quality.

Let me explain these words. The word *life*. You see it in the passage. "*His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life.*"

Now there are two Greek words that describe life. One word is the word *bios*. And that means the necessities of life or the time of life. But the word *zoe* means the vitality of life or the fullness of life. In other words, it means this. It's the quality of life. The first thing that you will always be provided with because of the power of God is this. Because of your divine life, you will have all the things you will ever need to know to live life at its highest quality. You'll be given everything you need to know to live life at its highest quality—not the necessities of life, but life at its highest quality as defined by God.

If you don't understand that, men, you're always going to be seeking something else. You're always going to say, "The grass is greener on the other side, because this is what I want because they had that." You've got to understand this. Because of your divine life, you have a life of provision. You will never run out of provisions for you to live life at its highest quality.

Now he defines that. The Scripture defines that. We don't define that. The world doesn't define that. Scripture defines life at its highest quality, and you'll never run out of supplies. You'll always be equipped to do that.

Everything needed for life, and the second word is *godliness*. What's the other thing you're supplied with? The word *godliness* is a word that literally means this—*worship rightly directed*. He gives us exactly what we need in order to live a godly life, which is an act of worship.

Now you tie those two things together. Worship is not an activity that you relegate only to the Lord's Day at eleven o'clock. Peter tells us that worship is a function of the high quality of life that you live.

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And you will have a provided life. It's a life of provision. And you will be given everything that you will ever need to live life at its highest quality. And when you're doing that, you'll be realizing that your life is an act of worship. Those two things fit together.

Notice what comes first. All the resources to live life at its highest quality, and that is expressed by understanding this—that my life is now a constant act of worship. Worship is not something that you just flip on and flip off. Worship is a style of life. It's based upon your understanding of the divine life to which you have been allotted, the equal status that you have. And you participate in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you see, men, when you understand that, something changes radically in your conduct because you realize this. I am given, through the power of God and His provisions for me, everything I will need to live life at its highest quality, living a life that is constantly worshipping Him.

What more could you want? What more could a believer want? God gives you Himself, men, through His great power. He provides you everything that you will ever need for life and for godliness.

The promises of God are all accomplished in Christ. Now notice. *"His divine power has granted to us all things"* that pertain to the highest quality of life and to worship God correctly *"through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises."*

Now let's take a look at that phrase. Great, great promises! The promises of God are all accomplished in the Person and work of Christ. And we accept them by faith. Our precious faith is part of our divine allotment.

Now these promises, which are described as *"very great and precious,"* are the promises that are found in the gospel. We have received them by a precious faith that God gave us. And with that precious faith that God gave us come these precious promises that are a function of His character. And they are all contained in the understanding of the Biblical gospel.

Now I want to give you some illustrations of the promises that you receive through God's great and merciful gift of grace to us. Now they are in no particular order.

Now I want to quote some of my Puritan friends. Primarily, today you're going to hear some reading from Octavius Winslow—a name I'm sure you're familiar with, (*laughter*), and Richard Sibbs, another common name.

I want you to hear some of the things they talk about regarding these precious and great promises. Now men, as I go through these precious and great promises, they are a function of your divine life. Do you understand that? They are a function of the fact that you have been allotted a divine life. You've got an equal life. You are participating in the righteousness of Christ. With that comes certain privileges that you alone have because you are in Christ.

Listen to these great and precious promises. As I go through each one of them, ask yourself, "Do I really consider that as precious?"

Now what is it that makes a promise precious? Three things are needed to make a promise precious. First of all, this. The thing promised must be valuable.

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Now men, as I go through these benefits of the divine life, I want you to ask yourself as I go through each one of these very briefly, "do I really see the value in what he just described? Is that promise, that precious gift to me, is it really valuable to me?"

You see, the degree to which you hold to this in high value will be the degree to which you will express it in the high value of your conduct. You've got to understand that these are valuable. Are they valuable to you?

The second thing that makes a promise precious is this—that He who promises can be trusted. Can you really trust God to give you everything that you need for life and godliness? As I go through these benefits of the gospel, these promises that are so precious, ask yourself the question. Do I really trust God for that gift? Is it something that I know that is valuable? Can I really trust Him?

And the third thing that makes a promise precious is this. He who promises must be able to perform what He promised.

Let's listen to some of these things; no particular order. The first one I'm going to start with is *pardon*. Listen to this description of pardon from Octavius Winslow. Men, it's one of the blessings, it's one of the benefits of your divine life—an allotted life, an equal life, a participatory life.

"Hark thee, my soul! All my sins are forgiven me! He who has faith in Christ has no sin to curse him. His sins are washed away. They have ceased to be. They have been carried on the Scapegoat's head into the wilderness. They are drowned in the Red Sea. They are blotted out. They are thrown behind God's back. They are cast into the depths of the sea. Here is a promise that is so precious because it is the promise of perfect pardon.

"Is this not a great and precious promise? As great as your sins are, and if your sins demanded a costly ransom, this precious promise is as great as the demand."

Now is that valuable to you? Do you value your pardon? Do you understand what that means, that God has removed the alienation of your sin against Him, that there has been reconciliation, which we're going to talk about in a moment? That He holds back His wrath for His name's sake, so as not to cut you off?

Look at Isaiah chapter 48 verse 9. "*I, even I, for My own name's sake, hold back My wrath. I defer it for My name's sake, so as not to cut you off.*"

Now that little phrase "so as not to cut you off" is a Hebrew idiom that literally means this—"to have a relationship with you." Men, if God did not hold back His wrath against our personal transgression and sin, we would have no chance of life eternal.

Do you understand what pardon is? Is that valuable to you? It's a precious promise. It comes because of your divine life.

How about the precious promise of *righteousness in Christ*? Cross references would be Isaiah chapter 61 verse 10 and 1 Corinthians 1 verse 30.

Transcriber's Note: Isaiah 61:10. "*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*"

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1 Corinthians 1:30. *"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."*

Bruce: Again from Octavius Winslow. "You are not only pardoned, that is washed and made clean, but you are dressed, robed in garments such as no man could ever weave. The vesture is divine. Jehovah Himself has wrought out your righteousness for you. The holy life of Jesus, the Son of God, has become your beautiful dress. You are covered with it. You are wrapped in the robes of righteousness."

Now is that valuable to you? Is your pardon valuable, realizing that now you've been wrapped in the robes of righteousness? Is that valuable to you? You see, men, the degree to which you and I hold that in high value is going to be the degree to which you express that as an act of worship in the constancy of our own lives.

How about the precious promise of *reconciliation*? Cross references would be 2 Corinthians 5:18 and Colossians 1:20, also Romans 5, verses 6-10.

Transcriber's Note: 2 Corinthians 5:18. *"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."*

Colossians 1:19-20. *"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."*

Romans 5:6-10. *"For when we were still without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."*

Bruce: Reconciliation. You were strangers. *"But you are now brought nigh by the blood of Christ."* Once aliens, once foreigners, but now *"fellow citizens with the saints in the household of God."*

Is this not a great and precious promise? Is that valuable to you, that you are no longer an alien, that there has been reconciliation between you and God? God has reconciled you to Himself by removing the alienation of your sins through the blood and the sacrifice of Christ. You are now members, fellow heirs with equal status with everybody else in the body of Christ. Is that valuable to you?

Participant: Amen!

Bruce: You see, when it is, you're going to act like it. But if it's not valuable to you, you're not going to think about it. Remember, you've been given everything you need to live life at its highest quality. And the highest quality is understood in terms of these precious and great promises that He is giving us, because when you think of how precious and great they are, that's going to impact the way that you live. Faith and conduct are never separated.

How about another precious promise. Is this valuable to you? It's the whole gift of *adoption*. Romans chapter 8, verses 15 and 17 and 2 Corinthians 6:18.

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Transcriber's Note: Romans 8:15-17. *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs with God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."*

2 Corinthians 6:18. *"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."*

Bruce: We are called children of the heavenly Father. How precious! How great a promise!

I told you the story of when I was working with the orphans in Viet Nam when we built the orphanage. I was using the Scripture to teach the Vietnamese children the English language. The greatest thing I could ever teach them was the first four words in the Bible, which is the most important verse. And that is this. *"In the beginning, God."* If you don't understand those first four words, men, nothing else in Scripture makes any sense, especially John 3:16. John 3:16 has no implications at all unless you understand those first four words. The first four words they ever learned in the English language were these—*"in the beginning, God."* I used the Old Testament and the New Testament as a textbook to teach them to read English.

There was one little boy whose parents had been executed when he was about nine years old. We found no living relative anywhere in the country of South Viet Nam, and he was an orphan.

I was reading from John chapter 14, where the Scripture says, *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you and make My abode with you."* And I was describing in my well-educated English way what I meant by the word *abode*—that God would literally come and dwell within you, and that's what it meant to be in Christ. And I was trying to explain that.

This little boy was probably the rottenest human being I had ever met. We found him in a garbage can. He'd been surviving since he was about six years old. He would just as soon slit your throat because that was the only way he knew how to survive. "If I take care of you and kill you, I'll survive and you won't." That was his mindset of life because that's how he'd been raised. That's all he knew.

But we were going through this. He looked up at me and said, "Does that mean I can have a father?"

And I said, "Yes. That's exactly what it means—that you are no longer an orphan. You can have a Father, a heavenly Father."

At that moment the Lord was pleased, and over the next several days I began to see something radically change in that little boy's life. God granted him saving faith. And it was because he understood this. *"I'm now adopted. I'm a member of the family of God, and I've got a Father!"*

Now men, is that a precious promise to you, that you've got a heavenly Father, that you are part of the family of God, that that's eternal? How precious is that in your thought process? Do you think about being adopted, that you've got a Father in heaven,

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that you are part of a family? You see, the degree to which you think about that is the degree to which you'll act that out in your life. It's an act of worship.

How about *God's providence* as another great and precious promise? Is this precious to you? God's providence—is it valuable? A cross reference would be Romans chapter 8, verses 28 and 29.

Transcriber's Note: Romans 8:28-29. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

Bruce: *"Fear not; I am with you. Be not dismayed; I am your God."* How often do you think of God's protection and God's provision? Do you think about that daily? Monthly? Do you ever think about it hourly? Is it not something that is an exceedingly great and precious promise? Don't you see how God in His providence takes care of you and provides for you? Is that valuable to you?

Men, we need to submit our selves to understand the magnificent grace of God's providence in our lives. We think we're the captains of our own ship. We're not. He is the captain of our ship. Do you understand His providence? Is that precious to you? Think about it! Think about the way God has protected you over the years.

I have a friend who came to saving faith when he was fifty-five years old. For years he always said to me, "You're so fortunate that God saved you when you were a teenager. How come He didn't save me when I was a teenager?"

I said, "The issue is the same. It's for God's glory. You see, He provided for me and He protected you. Either way, it's God's glory. He protected you those first fifty-five years that you did not end up in hell. You ought to be grateful for that. You've been protected through God's providence for fifty-five years. Rejoice in that! Celebrate that! I celebrate the fact that He saved me as a teenager in the provisions that He gave me. Either way, it's for His glory, and both of our responses should be the same, which is what? Gratitude! Gratitude that He provided for me and He protected you. And He preserves you. It's the same issue."

Men, think about God's providence in your life. It is a very great and precious promise.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: Would you unpack that a little bit more, especially with your comments about Cindy, and as we encounter more and more of our friends and family who encounter dread diseases, with regard to what we need to gather from God's providence in these situations?

Bruce: Well, maybe the next answer might help us, Bill. The next precious promise would be this—*eternal life*. John 3:16. We shall never taste death. *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."*

Now with my friend, she has asked me, "Would you come and help me think correctly about what I'm going through?" I can't cure her cancer. I can't do that. Yes, I pray for a miracle. And I pray that the Lord will use this for His glory, that He'll draw other people

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to Christ because of His activity in this and His providential care. But I can't deal with it. All I can do is try to help her think correctly.

And so what I'm starting with is that she has saving faith. God has granted her a divine life. So the way I'm going to start talking with her is this. We know this. Life is eternal; cancer isn't.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Life is terminal. I'm in the same situation she's in. The Lord could take me tomorrow because life is what is terminal.

The issue is this. Have you dealt with the eternity of your terminal life? Now she has done that. So what we're starting with is that I'm helping her just to understand the security of her salvation. We're going to start there, because I said, "Cindy, you and I understand. We know the end result. Let's start with the end result and work backwards. We're going to start there. And your eternity is secure because of the saving grace of Christ, because you have been participating in the divine life. Now let's take that as a conclusion, because we're both going to end up there. And we'll work backwards to see how we manage it today."

That's God's providence. That's the best we can do. I don't have answers for how people can do that. All I can start with is to realize this—that life is terminal.

I think I told you the story of my Vietnamese pastor friend who helped me build the orphanage. He was an escaped North Vietnamese who came south and was converted by a French missionary to saving faith. He started the little church that I was helping him with at the orphanage.

The North Vietnamese were after him because he was an escaped North Vietnamese who had been converted to Christianity. They wanted him dead. The South Vietnamese also wanted him dead because he had a ministry to the Mottenyards. The Mottenyards were the mixed biracial people in the mountains who were essentially mercenaries. Whoever gave the biggest rice bowl would be the side that they would be on. One day they'd be with the V. C. Next day they'd be with the Americans. Whoever gave the most supplies is who they would fight for. That's how they were. And there were laws in South Viet Nam which said that you could not associate with Mottenyards. You could not associate with them under penalty of death.

I used to fly him up into the mountains when I wasn't flying combat missions in the helicopter. And we would develop and drop off supplies to the Mottenyards.

The South Vietnamese wanted him dead also. And one day I asked him. I said, "Brother, how do you manage that? You step out of your house and you know this. Both sides want you dead. How do you manage that?"

And he said this. "In God's providence, he will not take me one second too soon or let me live one second too long."

How do you argue with that? You don't! You just believe it. You just trust Him. As Ecclesiastes says, "*There is a time to live and a time to die.*" The question is how do I manage the time between this and knowing my eternal life?

How precious is your eternal life to you, men? Is it something that is really valuable? Do you think about it very much, realizing that when your life ends that you'll be in

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heaven, a new heaven and a new earth, free from sin, free from the presence of sin? Do you ever think about that?

You see, when you understand God's providential provision for your eternity, it helps you to understand God's providential management of your present. But you've got to start with eternity and work backwards. Bill, that's the best I can do to help people understand that. Yes, Don?

Don: I think that Ted said something very good last week—that it's really all about knowing God.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Don: And he said, "If that means cancer, it means cancer. If it means unemployment, it means unemployment." If it means other things that come into my life that aren't pleasant, so be it, so long as I can know God and know that I have eternal life. I thought that was very good.

Bruce: Amen. Thank you, Don. Thank you, Ted.

Here's another one. I'm just going through a list of some of the great and precious promises. Ask yourselves the question. Are these valuable to me? Are they valuable?

Here's another one. How about *resurrection*, your resurrection? Cross references: John 5:29 and Acts chapter 24 verse 15.

Transcriber's Note: John 5:28-29. "*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*"

Acts 24:15. "*I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.*"

Bruce: We know that if Christ rose from the dead, so also shall we rise from the dead when we die in Christ. Because Christ lives and will never die, we live eternally with Him. This is eternal life, that you know God. Eternal life does not mean more time. It means more of a relationship with the eternal God. And when you and I are in Christ, we take on those characteristics that can be ours. And one of those is the characteristic of eternity because we are in Christ. Because Christ rose from the dead, so shall we. Is that precious and valuable to you?

And lastly, I want to give you something from Richard Sibbs. The last great and precious promise I would like to go through with you today would be this *that we will reign with King Jesus*. Do you ever think about that? We will reign with King Jesus.

Listen to this. "For we shall reign with Jesus at His coming. We shall be glorified with Him. We shall sit upon His throne, even as He has overcome and sits with His Father upon His throne. The harps of heaven, the streets of glory, the trees of Paradise, the river of the water of life, the eternity of immaculate bliss—all of these God has promised to them who love Him. "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But He has revealed them to us by His Spirit.*" And by our faith we have grasped them. And we have today "*the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.*" Now beloved, remember this. See how rich your faith makes you.

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"What a treasure! What a great and glorious precious promise! What a costly regalia! What gold mines! What oceans of wealth! What mountains of sparkling treasures has God confirmed upon you by the allotment of your divine life!"

Is that valuable to you? When it becomes valuable, it will be reflected in your conduct. That's what Peter is saying. You can't separate your faith in the knowledge of the Person and the work of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ from your conduct. One feeds the other. The other expresses what you believe.

The designs of these promises are essentially twofold—a life of participation in the purity of God and a life of deliverance from the corruption of this world.

I'll tell you what, men. This is so important that we're going to pick up those last two things. So you can discard the notes you have today. That will be two weeks from now. (*Laughter.*) Because I'm not finished with where we are today.

We'll come back next week and look at two other things. We just talked about the first precious promises that He gave us, and that is a life of provision. Next we're going to see a life of participation and then a life of deliverance. What does that mean to us as it relates to the great power and precious promises that God gives us through His own life?

May God be pleased to help us understand, men, the valuable promises that God gives us and how precious they are. And the more that you and I think about those things, the more we will understand how we have been provided everything we need for life and godliness to honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, forgive us for our meager understanding of these beautiful truths that You give us. In our humanness we can't even grasp the glory and the magnificence of what You've just taught us through Your Holy Spirit. Father, help our unbelief. Remove those thoughts that are not worthy of You and replace them with thoughts of Your glory and Your majesty. Help us to take value and to think that these promises are valuable to us, so that when we reflect upon them and worship You, we realize this: that you have given us everything that we will ever need to live life at its highest quality, and have a life that is constantly worshiping You correctly. And may it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen!"