

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Seventeenth Sunday After Trinity, October 12, 2025

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)
Hymns: 18, 196:3, 296, 472, 50.
Lessons: Isaiah 66:18-24, Hebrews 13:15-21, Mark 3:13-19.
Sermon Text: 2 Peter 1:1-4.
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltritt

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Peter begins his second letter with an opening blessing upon Christians: ***“Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”***

This includes words with which we often begin our spoken sermons.

If we were to talk about “needs” versus “wants” we would realize that we have everything we need, particularly when it comes to a foundation for our spiritual life.

And how do we receive these needs?

GOD HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED

- 1. Peter, an apostle and servant of God, writes especially for believers.**
- 2. Believers have received great gifts from God.**

In this, his second letter, Peter identifies first of all who he is. He calls himself ***“a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.”*** By this time Peter would be an old man. But the first word he uses is ***“servant”***. He does not claim to be a leader or master. This is a contrast to the Roman Catholic idea that Peter was the first pope, the first bishop of Rome, the first leader of the Roman Catholic church. The papacy has claimed special authority which is lacking in Peter’s humble description of himself as a servant.

Throughout both of his letters, Peter presents a picture of humility, not the bold apostle who told Jesus he shouldn’t die and even tried to fight those who captured Jesus in Gethsemane, when he cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest.

Peter and others among the Twelve had often argued who was greatest, hoping for greater power and authority and honors. But Peter never forgot how Jesus taught them true leadership. Hours before his crucifixion, Jesus got down on his knees, washed their feet, and said, ***“You also should wash one another’s feet.”*** (John 13:14, NIV84) In the business world, being a head or leader is often measured in terms of power over people. In Christ’s world, being a true leader means taking the attitude of the servant and following through on that attitude.

As he asks and wishes that ***“Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,”*** he goes on to point out that Jesus’ ***“divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”*** Peter had nothing that had not first been given to him by God.

Peter, who had once been a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, had been given everything by God. His relationship with his heavenly Father through Christ was a gift. His apostleship was not earned but given to him for God’s glory and for the benefit of believers. This is what Jesus’ divine power has done for him, and really, for every believer, giving them everything regarding life, especially eternal life.

Peter also identifies himself as an apostle. An apostle is one who has been sent on a mission. The Apostles were given their messages directly by Christ, instead of learning them from the Old Testament Scriptures. Apostles were given authority to represent Christ directly, instead of indirectly through, for example, a divine call

from a congregation. Apostles were sent out directly by Christ. This is actually what the word apostle means in Greek, “one who is sent out”.

Peter was an apostle of Jesus. Jesus is the personal name that was announced by an angel of the Lord to his stepfather Joseph. He is also called Christ, a Greek word meaning the same as the Hebrew term Messiah. Both names mean “the Anointed One.” In Old Testament times God instituted the practice of anointing to do two things: first to set apart God’s chosen man for a special and crucial job. Prophets, high priests, and kings were anointed to publicly show God’s choice and God’s authority. Second, anointing was done to give special gifts of the Holy Spirit to equip God’s anointed ones for their tasks. Jesus was anointed at his baptism in the Jordan River for his work as Savior. At that time the Father’s voice showed the Father’s loving choice, and the appearance of the dove upon him showed that Jesus in his human nature had been strengthened by the Holy Spirit’s power.

Jesus is also Savior, the one who personally brings the forgiveness of sins, the pardon that spares us from hell. Jesus is God, totally one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, worthy of our worship and adoration. He is Lord – the one who commands our allegiance and obedience.

This letter is addressed to believers, ***“to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.”***

There are several ideas in that description of followers of the Savior Jesus Christ.

First is the idea that their faith has come from God, as a gift, not as a choice or as something earned.

The faith that connects us to our God, the lifeline that hauls us out of hell and binds us to our Father, is not something we must generate ourselves, nor can we do so. It is a gift from God that we receive, that comes to us through Word and sacrament. While Christian living does indeed involve our own works and efforts, the Christian life begins with God’s opening our minds and hearts to believe the great things he has done.

The prophet Jeremiah teaches us that we were passive in our conversion when we read ***“Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; For thou art the Lord my God.”*** (Jeremiah 31:18, KJV) In Luther’s words, we confess “that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.”

No one can say ‘it was my decision, my idea to become a Christian.’ God called you by his own power and goodness to be his child. No one can make a “Decision For Christ”, a decision to become a Christian.

We also see here that every believer’s faith is equally precious.

It is true that believers have been given different gifts by God. It is true that some believers have been given greater responsibilities by God in the service of Jesus Christ. But the faith of each believer is precious, because Peter writes to believers ***“who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.”*** Peter had learned through bitter experience not to trust himself, but to trust in God for everything. Scripture tells us ***“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*** (Hebrews 11:1, NIV84)

Peter intends his letter not just for one particular congregation or person but for all Christians, to all who have received a faith ***“as precious as ours.”***

As believers come to know the Triune God and their Savior Jesus more fully through God’s Word, their lives change. Grace and peace abound. Grace is the attitude within the Father to look kindly upon us for Jesus’ sake, not holding our sins against us. The more we know the Father through Christ, the more we enjoy living in his favor instead of fearing his wrath, the more we will enjoy peace in our hearts instead of guilt. Since all true security, comfort, and meaning of life originate in the heart of God, the more we know him, the better our lives will go. The more we know our Savior through the Word, the more grace and peace will abound.

Peter doesn’t only say that grace and peace are only given to us once. He says ***“Grace and peace be yours in abundance”*** or as another good translation says it: ***“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”*** (2 Peter 1:2, EHV)

Peter goes on: ***“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”***

There you see the word ***“given”*** again. It is not earned.

And it is valuable. This is what Jesus’ divine power has done: Everything regarding life has been given, granted by God.

And not only has God given grace and peace, but he has also given promises, very great promises. And God keeps his promises so that you share his divine nature. Even on earth you wear his robe of righteousness, perfection, because he forgives your sins. He declares you not guilty, he justifies you because of what Jesus did.

It is through the Word of God that we ***“escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”*** This faith is our way out of this sinful world.

We see here the goals, the intent that a loving, sovereign God has for fallen men, women, and children.

God’s power gives this to man, just as he gives faith. His power ***“has given us”*** everything we need for godliness.

Knowledge of God comes from the Word of God. As Moses told the Israelites, ***“What I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. . . . The Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it”*** (Deuteronomy 30:11,14).

Listen to a few passages that tell us of some of the glorious things God has done for us who believe:

“[God] chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).

“This is what the LORD says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine’ (Isaiah 43:1).

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Revelation 21:3-4).

Christians can head in only one of two directions. Either they are growing in their faith and life, believing and living God’s precious promises, participating in the divine nature, or they are dying in their faith and life, heading for the ***“corruption in the world caused by evil desires”***. Anyone who chooses not to believe and not to live God’s promises will be a sucker for Satan’s lies. Those lies often deliver a short-term burst of excitement, but when they become a lifestyle, they rot out a person’s character, poison what faith is left, and lead to hell.

It is through and because of God’s promises that ***“you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”***

Believe God’s precious promises. Repent daily and change your life with the power God has given you.

May we grow as Peter ends this letter: ***“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”*** (2 Peter 3:18, NIV84)