

Title: Confirming Your Calling (Part 1)

Passage: 2 Peter 1:3

Theme Growing in the knowledge of grace demonstrates the reality of grace

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This may be the most difficult passage I have yet to study. True on different levels. The Greek is rather challenging. The connection between verses 2 and 3, along with 3 and 4, is tricky. And there are some theology issues that have to be addressed.

I have about 50 hours of study in these 9 vv. & will have at least 50 more when it's all said and done.

My prayer is that I can pull it together in a way that will be easily understandable and applicable w/o ignoring some of the more weighty details.

**{{ Read Passage }}**

### **[i] Confirming Your Reservations**

It is a common practice when making reservations (such as reserving a hotel room) to receive a confirmation of that reservation.

May even be times that you may be uncertain about whether you actually have a reservation – Esp. true when making them on t/internet. You wonder if pushing a button on your computer in your office will actually result in having a room reserved for you 2k miles away.

But your reservations are relieved (pun) when a window pops open that reads: *Here is your confirmation number.*

There's security and assurance in confirming what you think you have so that you can be sure you in fact have it.

[ii] This is the first issue that Peter addresses in this letter

"Confirming Your Calling"

Entire passage resonates with t/admonition of verses 10 and 11 {read}

That admonition builds upon that virtues of vv. 5,6,7 which are grounded upon the reality of God's calling one to salvation in v. 3.

[iii] So this passage turns full circle

From God's Sov. Call to Salvation (in v. 3) ==> Our Perseverance in Faith ==> To Confirming God's Call ==> Finality of Salvation (entrance into the eternal KD - v. 11).

[iv] This text teaches us an essential yet often misunderstood truth: That no one will enter the kingdom of heaven apart from good works

I realize that we have to be careful here. I didn't say that we gain eternal life by our good works. No, it's by grace. What I said is that no one will gain eternal life apart from good works.

It's often been phrased this way: *"While no one is saved by works, no one will be saved w/o them."*

That may sound like double-talk, but it really isn't. And it's essential that we understand the distinctions and definitions involved here.

When we think of "works" we too often fall prey into thinking in terms of "religious duty". That's not really accurate. The idea goes far beyond that.

**\* We need to think in terms of Christlikeness**

Do you demonstrate the graces of salvation in your life? Do you have an appetite for the things of Christ? Dead men don't eat. If you have no hunger for Christ, you're probably dead.

**\* We also need to think in terms of repentance**

That we will sin is a given because we are sinful. John tells us that if we deny this we are liars. He also tells us that when we sin we have an advocate w/the Father in X.

Question is, "Do we repent?" Do we endeavor to forsake our sin as we pursue X?

**\* We further need to think in terms of growth**

As we will see in this passage, growth demonstrates life. Are we growing in the G&K of JC?

**\* And we need to think in terms of our doctrine**

What do we believe? An orthodox confession in itself doesn't save. But an orthodox confession is necessary. Do I believe in the central truths of the faith: That God is Triune and that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone?

And we also need to understand that these "works" (prefer to call them "graces") don't result in salvation; they confirm it.

**Growing in the knowledge of grace demonstrates the reality of grace.**  
I can't make myself alive; but I can prove that I have life.

There are three main points in this passage that will carry us from v. 3 to v. 11.

*I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)*

*II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Fruitfulness (5-9)*

*II. Salvation's Surety: The Believer's Security (10-11)*

This morning we will focus on our first point ==>

**I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)**

I'm using the word "inheritance" to refer to all that is our salvation. That encompasses our life lived in the here and now as well as the finality of our salvation – that which is still future. So it's everything pertaining to life and godliness (3), and it's the entrance into the eternal KD (11).

In his 1<sup>st</sup> letter, Peter refers to believing wives as fellow-heirs of the grace of life (3:7). He also speaks of our inheritance in future terms, as that which is reserved in heaven (1:4).

Already - not - yet. Key to navigating our way through this passage.

**A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)**

**Just as His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

Peter's words ==>

**Just as . . .**

bring us back to verse 2 ==>

**Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**

We have grace and we have knowledge.

In verse 3 we have grace (granted) and we have knowledge.

Grace is unmerited // undeserved blessing. It is unmerited in that you can't earn it. It's not like in RC'sm where you can merit grace by grace. Undeserved in that none of us is worthy of it.

Remember – even though we will be talking about diligence / perseverance / works / confirming your calling ==> all of that is still grounded in grace. It's all of God's grace in His choice & call.

It has been "granted" to us. The word δωρεομαι carries with it a sense of generosity. It's to be granted a gift (in this case, all that is our inheritance).

In Galatians 3:18 ==>

[Paul makes the statement that] . . . **if the inheritance [Abraham] is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.**

What do we have here?

**. . . His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. Through these He has given to us precious and very great promises . . .**

#### ***A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)***

Similar to what Paul writes in Philippians 1:29 ==> **It has been granted for you to believe in Christ.**

#### ***B. An Inheritance Grounded in God's Call (3)***

**. . . through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

#### ***1. What does it mean that God called us?***

Simple answer is that it means God called us to something – namely to salvation. ==>

### ***B. An Inheritance Grounded in God's Call (3)***

In theology we talk about two "calls" ==>

#### **a. External and Internal Call to Salvation**

The external call of the Gospel is that which goes out to t/ears. It's hearing (or reading) t/Gospel.

The internal call is that work of t/HS on the heart that causes the sinner to respond in faith. It's a hearing that goes beyond t/ears to the heart.

#### **(1) We see both the external and internal call in Acts 16**

Apostle Paul (Silas, Timothy, Luke) is in Philippi. They find no synagogue there (took what was called a "minyan," a min. of 10 men), so in keeping with the practice of the Jews during the exile, Paul goes to t/river & finds a group of women who were there gathered for prayer. He preaches the gospel to this group of women. That's the external call; each & every one of them heard. Then in v. 14 we read that God opened t/heart of a woman by name of Lydia so that she could respond to the message & be saved. That's the internal call.

What Jesus referred to in Matt. 22:14 when he said that==>

. . . many are called but few are chosen.

**(2) As we saw in 1 Peter 1 – You can't separate the call of God to salvation from the call of God to holiness (They are inextricably connected)**

1 Peter 1:15 **but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;**

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification (ἁγιοσμος)

Ephesians 1:3-4 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be (ἅγιος) holy and blameless before Him.

This focus by Peter on God's sov. calling is one reason why we are to be holy. He is a holy God & He calls us as his people to share in his nature (v. 4).

**b. Turn to 1 Peter 2:9**

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

If you are a Xn you are a member of that chosen race. God chose you to be an heir of salvation.

He chose you. He sent his Son to pay for your sin. Secures your salvation. Listen, your salvation was secured before you ever knew it.

You may have lived years in rebellion, but God had His eye on you. You were His.

In fact, your salvation was already secured and payed for B4 you were born. You were purchased by God when Jesus hung dying on that cross almost 2k years ago.

Obv. that doesn't mean you were saved (justified) before you were born or that you were saved before you came to faith in Him who died for you. Your salvation was secured, but didn't become a living reality until God called you. "Effectual Calling" (it works, every time).

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

ἐλκύω - Strong word, "To draw, haul-in, to drag." Used in Acts 21:30 of t/masses "dragging" Paul out of t/Temple.

When God called you, he called you out of darkness (symbolic of death). You were D.E.A.D. dead. No such thing as a little bit dead. (like being a little big pregnant).

**c. This has always been a dividing issue in Christian Theology**

T/R.C. CH, following T. Aquinas & t/schoolmen, taught that we are not totally dead, spiritually, but just a little bit dead. Later became a point of contention between Luther and Erasmus.

Luther called it t/Pelagian heresy (after t/3rd c. heretic Pelagius who taught that t/fall of man into sin was of no real consequence - man still had a free will.). Condemned by Augustine & t/rest of t/CH.

Luther actually published 99 theses against this free-will theism of t/Pelagian schoolmen. The CH at that time (much of t/CH today) held that unsaved, unregenerate men have the liberty to love God and do good. Luther & rest of t/reformers said, "No!"

For them, the issue centered not as much on whether man may have liberty, but if he could have liberty apart from God. In Luther's words, "True liberty is what thou needest, and God offers it thee in his gospel."

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Luther wrote 99 statements against this idea that man can do and will good apart from X.

An example ==>

- \* It is false that the will, left to itself, can do good as well as evil; for it is not free, but in bondage.
- \* It is not in the power of Man's will to choose or reject whatever is offered to it.
- \* Man cannot of his own nature will God to be God. He would prefer to be God himself, and that God were not God.
- \* The excellent, infallible, and sole preparation for grace, is the eternal election and predestination of God.
- \* We do not become righteous by doing what is righteous; but having become righteous, we do what is righteous.
- \* He who is without God's grace sins continually, even should he neither rob, murder, nor commit adultery.
- \* He sins, in that he does not fulfill the law spiritually.

Theologically, that was true of every one of us. Our will was not free, but fettered in chains of bondage; We were powerless; We were selfish; All of the seemingly good things we did were as filthy rags in God's sight because they were not done out of gratitude and worship of Him.

We were in darkness like blind cave-dwellers groping around in t/dark, trying to make sense out of life.

Then God called us . . .

**d. He didn't call us out of the twilight // grey // dim light**

**. . . who called you out of darkness . . .**

DARKNESS. We're talking about the absence of light as far as our souls were concerned.

Back when I was about 12 years old my family took a trip to Tucson, AZ where we visited what are called "Colossal Cave" - a series of underground caves that has been turned into a national park. Quite a unique place.

Do you know how much of the cave is underground? All of it! Goes about 600 feet back into a mountain and down about 40 feet. We took a tour which I quite vividly remember. Two things stand out: 1) On one occasion t/tour guide turned off the lights. As soon as she did I jumped and grabbed for something. I had never experienced zero light B4. Was almost suffocating. 2) She also told stories about bandits hiding from t/law in t/cave and getting lost. How at least one of them went insane groping around in t/suffocating & silent blackness. Also how an extended time in zero light would result in blindness. Your eyes lit. shut off as your body tells them they are no longer needed. Believe me, I was quite thankful when t/lights were turned on and t/guide led us out of that dark place into t/light of day.

ISW - People are born in t/darkness of their sin. They are cave dwellers who live in a spiritual blackness. They don't have eyes that can see and understand truth. One difference. I didn't like t/darkness of that cave. People love their condition of spiritual darkness.

John 3:19-20 . . . **men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

Those of us who were old enough to remember our life apart from X loved t/darkness. As a rebellious teenager, I loved t/darkness. I loved being selfish; I loved serving myself; indulging myself in whatever way I saw fit.

My passions were for anything but knowing and serving JC. God changed my appetites. He called me out of that life of darkness.

As John Calvin once said, God drew us "out of the labyrinth of ignorance and the abyss of darkness." [Calvin, 76]

**e. Note the prepositions:**

"Out (ἐκ) of darkness into (εἰς) the light." We were called while yet in the dark. How did we see? Was there any light in our souls, a dim sliver? No, it was darkness, complete blackness. That's the state in which we were called ("While we were yet sinners Christ died for us").

He died for us that He might one day call us ==>

**... out of darkness into His marvelous light.**

Paul wrote about this in 2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Conversion to X is a spiritual transfer from one place to another. It is as if God picked you up out of t/slime of death and ruin & He set you down in an island paradise. You have been spiritually transported out of darkness into t/light.

COL 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

## f. Acts 26

TAP is B4 t/Jewish King Herod Agrippa II. Paul had been arrested by Rome & was being held in Caesarea.

So Paul, under arrest & B4 t/King, makes his defense. He shares his background, his biography as a Pharisee & how he came to believe in JC as t/Messiah. Toward t/end of that he tells t/King what t/Risen X had said to him on that day on t/Damascus Rd.

16 'But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

To be turned from D to L. is to be turned from t/Dom. of S. to that of G.

### (1) This takes a sovereign act from an omnipotent God

Do you think you had t/ability w/i yourself to turn your life from darkness into light? Do you think you're deity?! Don't claim t/ability to do something only God can do!

Only God has the power to separate the light from the darkness. True of creation. (Gen. 1:4 - G. saw t/light was good & he sep. t/L. from t/D.). Only God can do that. What's true of creation is true of salvation.

"As there are chains of eternal darkness on damned spirits that will never be taken off and that are said to be reserved for the day of judgment, so there are

chains of spiritual darkness on the unconverted soul that can only be taken off by God's powerful hand. When God calls the sinner to come out, the chains fall off and enable the soul to come into the light." [Robert Leighton, 106, 17<sup>th</sup> c. Scottish Presbyterian]

"My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed thee."

Only God can take a spiritually dead sinner & make him alive.

Only God can call you == >

... **out of darkness into His marvelous light.** (No less of a creative act)

This is again what Peter is referring to in 2 Peter 1:3 (turn back).

### ***I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)***

#### ***A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)***

#### ***B. An Inheritance Grounded in God's Call (3)***

... **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

### **2. One question is the antecedent of "His" in verse 3 {restate}**

#### **a. Usually it's God/Father that calls**

Romans 11:29 **The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.**

Sometimes we refer to the Spirit's call in that it is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin and regenerates the heart. Titus 3:5.

#### **b. Here Peter seems to be implying that it is Christ who calls**

(1) While JC isn't the Father, He is God (saw that in verse 1)

... the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Clearly affirmation of X's deity – that JC is God.

c. Maintain the context it is very likely that the "Him who called us" in verse 3 is Jesus

{Flow of thought from vv. 1-3}

Further it is according to "Divine Power" (His power as God).

Cf. 1:16

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*II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Fruitfulness (5-9)*

Growing in the knowledge of grace demonstrates the reality of grace.

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**I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)**

A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)

B. An Inheritance Grounded in God's Call (3)

C. An Inheritance Gained Through a Knowledge of Christ (3)

D. An Inheritance Guaranteed to Sanctify (4)

1. This gift includes precious and great promises (4)

a. By these promises believers become partakers of the divine nature (4)

b. Being a partaker of the divine nature results in escaping the world's corruption (4)

## **II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)**

### **A. Faithfulness Proven by a Chain of Virtues (5-7)**

1. Moral Excellence (5)
2. Knowledge (5)
3. Self control (6)
4. Perseverance (6)
5. Godliness (6)
6. Brotherly kindness (7)
7. Love (7)

### **B. Fruitfulness Placed in Contrast with Vice (8-9)**

1. Ambition or Apathy?
  - a. Ambition comes by Knowing Christ and being Mindful of His Grace (8)
  - b. Apathy comes by Neglecting Christ and being Forgetful of His Grace (9)

## **II. Salvation's Surety: The Believer's Security (10-11)**

### **A. Be Diligent in Making Your Calling and Election Certain (10-11)**

1. Negatively: Growing in the Grace and Knowledge of Christ Guards From Defection (10)
2. Positively: Growing in the Grace and Knowledge of Christ Guarantees Final Salvation (11)