

## Lifeline

But first a correction from last week's sermon...well more like an omission. I stated that I want to believe that Jesus has a name for each of us that He knows...that He will tell us...that speaks to our full potential. I don't think I will be known in heaven as Frank. I said I can't support that Scripturally but it must have been the vertigo speaking

Revelation 2:17 (ESV) 17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Have you ever watched one of those hiker lost in the woods, hurt down in a canyon shows?

They can't reach them by foot so they have to send a rescue helicopter. **PHOTO 1** For some of these people as they look up after hours of waiting...wondering if help would ever come...they are helpless..dying if not rescued....no one can help them unless someone comes down from above. .When help finally comes, that Helicopter seems like it is coming straight from heaven. They have no other way to be rescued. Without that help...they are dead.

I think a lot about that rope....the life line that comes down...I have this thing about heights...probably because I don't do flat earth very well. **PHOTO 2** If I was ever in that situation, I would hold on to that rope with everything I had. That life line is all that I have. Without it there is no connection to the power that can rescue me.

The life line is well....that....a line of life. It is the thing that connects me to life.

Peter is offering a life line to those who were facing false teaching and to us today. Last week we started Second Peter...

We learned that there can be quite a lot in a name....Simeon Peter. And many came up to me and said that they usually skip over the introduction of these letters and go to the more important stuff.

I really want to encourage you to not do that. Some of the deepest theological truths are revealed in the Greeting and Introduction of the New Testament Letters. The words were chosen very careful and with specific purpose. We will discover this today as we go all the way down to verse 4 today.

In just 4 simple...seemingly inconsequential verses Peter begin to upack some deep theological truths. If we skip thse or breeze by them we will miss a great deal.

## 2 Peter 1:1 (ESV) 1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

We see Peter use 4 Words to introduce himself in a very specific pattern. Simeon Peter Servant Apostle.

More literally...I am Simon Peter a Slave of Jesus Christ and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Slavery was prevalent and widely accepted in the ancient world. The economy of Egypt, Greece, and Rome was based on slave labor. In the first Christian century, one out of three persons in Italy and one out of five elsewhere was a slave. Huge gangs toiled in the fields and mines and on building projects. Many were domestic and civil servants. Some were temple slaves and others were craftsmen.

Some were highly intelligent and held responsible positions. Legally, a slave had no rights; but, except for the gangs, most were treated humanely and were better off than many free persons. Domestic slaves were considered part of the family, and some were greatly loved by their masters.

A person could become a slave as a result of capture in war, default on a debt, inability to support and "voluntarily" selling oneself, being sold as a child by destitute parents, birth to slave parents, conviction of a crime, or kidnapping and piracy. Slavery cut across races and nationalities.

In the time of the New Testament a bondservant referred to a person in a permanent role of service. A bondservant was considered the property of a Roman citizen, holding no right to leave his place of service.

Masters in their wills often freed their slaves, and sometimes they did so during their lifetimes. Industrious slaves could make and save money and purchase their own freedom by paying their bond. By the first Christian century, a large class of freedmen had developed. There was even a synagogue of the Freedmen in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9).

Acts 6:9 (ESV) 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.

Paul and Peter insisted that Christian slaves be obedient to their masters and not seek freedom just because of conversion. Masters were urged to be kind. Slave trading was condemned. Paul claimed that in Christ human status was unimportant.

But neither Jesus nor the apostles condemned slavery. Slavery was so much a part of their society that to call for abolition would have resulted in violence and bloodshed. Rather, Jesus and the apostles set forth principles of human dignity and equality that eventually led to abolition.

In our nation's history, Southern Pastors defended slavery as an institution, but the slavery that was occurring in the South was not the same slavery that was referenced in the Bible. Slave trading violated Scripture. The treatment of slaves in the South violated Scripture. Masters were not kind. The institution was based on racism. I have no doubt that Jesus would oppose the Slavery that occurred in the US because it violated Scripture and God's moral code of human decency. But it is incredible to see how Pastors in the 1850's and 1860's used these very Scriptures to support their own sins.

In most ancient societies few things were more despicable than to be a slave. To the pagan nations one would never become a slave unless they were forced to be. It is the same in the world today being in any form of submission is seen as a weakness. Yet for thousands of years, the Jewish people used the term servant or bondservant to describe their relationship with God.

In Israel, however, the idea emerged that it was a great privilege to be a servant or slave of God. The slavery to God that the Jews depicted was a voluntary act of surrender to God. You gave up all that you had...by choice...without coercion....you surrendered to God because you wanted to. Every time in the Bible when you see the word "servant" it is the same word "Slave" In the Old Testament....

Abraham, Moses, David and the Prophets were all referred to as Servants/Slaves of God.

The Prophet Isaiah when foretelling of the Messiah said He would be the ultimate servant/slave.

Isaiah 42:1 (ESV) 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

Isaiah 52:13–53:6 (ESV) 13 Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. 14 As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind— 15 so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

When Jesus came He placed the highest emphasis on being the lowest servant.

Mark 10:44–45 (ESV) 44 And whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus clearly expected those who followed Him to be His slaves His servants.

John 13:12–18 (ESV) 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Luke 17:10 (ESV) 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.' "

In Scripture, Paul, James, Peter and Jude all referred to themselves as slaves of Jesus. So when Peter says I am a slave of Jesus he was simply stating what others who followed Jesus and prophesized about Him had said.

Peter said...Don't forget that I am Simeon and don't forget that I am a servant of Jesus....in other words...I am just like each of you. We are all obedient slaves of Christ.

Now remember why Peter is identifying Himself. He is going to challenge the gnostics. This is a letter of authority. But Peter doesn't start out with a list of his credentials. You would think before He challenges false teaching that he would first validate his position as a leader in the church. Establish why he has the authority to speak and challenge false teachers.

You would expect him to say...I am Peter...I walked on water...I healed lame people...I am to Leader of the Biggest Christian Church in the World in Jerusalem, I studied at the school of Jesus every day for three years. He named me Rock because I hold on to the truth. I was in His inner circle. I have seen it all...the transfiguration, the crucifixion, and I was the first disciple to see Jesus resurrected, I am an authority on the topic and life of Jesus...you should listen to me....and this is what I say.

In our western culture that is how it is done. If you are going to claim to be an expert or authority...you better bring it.

Well that is what Peter does....actually. The highest authority that Peter could claim? "Hi, I am Simeon...I became Peter...and I am a slave...a slave of Jesus Christ." There are no greater words that anyone can say about themselves in Christ. Others can give you titles but just know that you are on your very best day...a Slave of Jesus.

So now that you know that about me...Peter says....I am a slave but I am also an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Not a title that I gave myself...one that was given to me.

Luke 6:13 (ESV) 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:

Jesus Himself gave the 12 Disciples the Title or Office or Position of Apostle. In addition, two others would be given that office Mathias and Paul. The Title would be taken from Judas.

Apostle comes from the Greek word, apostolos, it referred to a person who was an envoy or representative of Jesus and chosen specially by the Lord to be his authoritative representatives.

Last week we talked about the Living Stones....believers who made up the House of God. They aligned with the Cornerstone of Jesus Himself...

But also aligning with that Cornerstone...and put in place long before each of us...is the foundation of the House of God. The Foundation is made of the apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 2:19–22 (ESV) 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

The 12 Apostles were commissioned not only to proclaim the good news but also to develop and guarantee the truth of the gospel message. In guarding the truth of the message they form the foundational structure of the church.

The 12 Apostles knew Jesus, encountered Him face to face and received this Title from Jesus Himself. Just like He named Peter. They were Apostles because Jesus said so. The qualifications of Apostle were identified in the choosing of Mathais...

Only two men were identified as the potential replacement for Judas. No women were chosen, even though Jesus' mother Mary was present in the meeting (Acts 1:14). Now notice that the criteria for selecting an apostle is that 1) the man must have been a witness of Christ from His baptism to His ascension and 2) it was God's will that the men be an apostle.

It should also be noted that Scripture refers to these men in the past tense. We will see this in 2nd Peter and in Jude. Because these 12 are referred to in the past tense there will be no more who carry the office of Apostle.

If apostles existed today, they could write Scripture and their works could potentially be added to the Bible. The Bible would grow year after year. Ephesians 2:20 teaches that the church was established on the apostles and the prophets. But notice that the three words "having been built" are in the aorist tense. The aorist tense refers to completed action. That is, after the twelve apostles, there is no need for apostles because the church's foundation had already been built.

So we have to stop here and address the obvious question. Don't some people call themselves Apostles today?

One of the Spiritual gifts listed in the bible is the gift of apostleship. It means messenger. Someone gifted by God to be a messenger of God's truth.

Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

There are lots of people who have been given the gift of apostleship. Taking the already established and complete message of Jesus to others. We would call them missionaries or church planters today

Barnabas, Silas and others has this gift

I believe that at times I have had the gift of apostleship but I would never in my greatest moment of self delusion ever refer to myself or allow anyone else to refer to me as an Apostle.

I could take on that title no more than I could take on the title of Messiah or Christ. To suggest or imply or even hint to someone that I have the same office...the same position as one of the 12 disciples is dangerously absurd.

But they say...we are not claiming to be one of the Apostles we are just acknowledging that we are gifted as apostles.

To know that such confusion about the Office and the Spiritual gift exists in the minds of believers and then to still use that term in any way to define yourself is in my opinion a massive pride ride. And it discounts in my mind their teaching on other scriptural topics.

Why is this so important at the beginning of Second Peter and in our world today?

False teachers...Gnostics...are going to come into the church and self proclaim to have the same Title and Authority of Peter, John and the other Apostles. They will call themselves Apostles.

The Internet is full of people defending why they would get to use the same Title that Peter used. And ironically they use it in a way that Peter never would. They skip over the humble servant part and go right to the call me an apostle part.

In the church today this has become a lot like Seinfeld and The Maestro.

The first test of a True teacher...is not to do anything that brings confusion or misunderstanding to those you are entrusted to teach. If you know there is confusion about the term apostle in the Bible...and there is.... then don't use it. It would be better to be known as a missionary than to falsely imply that you carry the office of Apostle.

The highest title we can ascribe to is to be Slaves of Jesus Christ...Nothing else matters. And that is how Peter...a True Apostle of Jesus Christ.... wants to be known as well.

**2 Peter 1:1 (ESV) 1 Simeon 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:**

Do you remember when we talked about how important it is to remember who is writing? Peter the leader of the Jewish Church of Jesus is writing this letter to warn the Gentile Churches about Gnosticism. Peter tells these Gentiles that they have the same faith as He or anyone else does.

They do not have some watered down faith...some faith that is less because they are not Jewish...They have the same faith that he has...the same faith that everyone has. Hearing that from Peter carries a lot of weight.

Remember it was Peter who validated that the Gentiles should receive the gift originally. Remember that God sent Peter a vision to help him understand that Gentiles could not be excluded; and God used Peter to bring to faith the first Gentile convert

And it was Peter, with his impeccable Jewish credentials, who spoke out decisively in favor of allowing Gentiles to enter the new covenant on the basis of faith alone (15:7–11). We can better appreciate the phrase "to those who ... have received a faith as precious as ours" when we hear the echoes of this struggle in the background.

**Acts 15:7 (ESV) 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe."**

Peter tells them you have the identical faith that I have. Then note that there are interesting doctrinal truths here The faith that we have received is a gift...not earned but rather given...it is given to all of us equally. And we all get the same gift. It is a faith of equal standing.

After Peter defines who he is, he then needs to make sure that his audience knows who they are. He is going to establish their foundation. They have all be given the same gift of faith or salvation and they have all been given one truth.

Also notice that this is past tense. You and I have already obtained it...We don't grow into it...we don't earn it...it was...past tense given to us. And we received the same faith that was given to Peter, James, John, Matthew and any other believer that you can name. It is of equal standing...the same...in Greek a balance scale...equal on both sides.

To those who have obtained a faith in other words could state.... "To you who have received the teachings about Jesus Christ," or "To you whom God has caused to trust in Jesus Christ," How did we get this incredible gift? By the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ "Righteousness" normally refers to the act by which God puts sinners in a right relationship to him. What is unusual about this phrase, however, is that this is the only place in the New Testament where we read of "the righteousness of ... Jesus Christ." Everywhere else the righteousness is attributed to God. Peter is not three verses in and he is already hitting on one to the key points of this letter. He will repeat over and over that Jesus is God. We got this righteousness from our God and Our Savior Jesus Christ. The whole tenor of the letter consistently puts Christ at the same level as God.

**2 Peter 1:2–4 (ESV) 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**

Letters were a rare commodity. It took a lot to write them, to send them and to distribute them. The style was to identify yourself, designate the recipients, write the message and close with another form of encouragement.

The Greeting set the tone for the letter. Romans and Greeks often greeted each other by saying, "Chairein". It means literally Howdy...well ok Hello or simply Greetings

The Jewish people of the day...greeted one another by saying Peace or Shaloam.

Often the greeting would identify the audience, GreckoRoman or Jewish.

But Christians in the First Century had their own way of greeting one another. They combined these greetings with a twist. Instead of Greetings and Peace...they began using the term Grace and Peace. Or literally Charis Shaloam.

Paul in First Corinthians...

1 Corinthians 3 (ESV) 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:1–2 (ESV) 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:2 (ESV) 2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2 (ESV) 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peter in our book today...

2 Peter 1:2 (ESV) 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

It was one of the ways Christians would let each other know that they believed. If someone said Shaloam...they were probably Jewish...If they said Chaire they were Greek and if they said Charis Shaloam they were likely Christians. Not too different from our expression of Merry Christmas instead of Happy Holidays.

Instead of "Greetings" the Believers changed the greeting to some kind of reminder of what binds them all together. Usually like this.

But Peter does something unusual in this greeting. Something that is usually not included and something that brings out the very purpose of the letter.

His greeting is normal....Charis Shaloam...but then he adds. "In the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Peter not only gives them the blessing but now He tells them where this blessing comes from....the Knowledge...what will be a recurrent theme...Everything points to and comes from Jesus who is God and knowledge of Him both relationally and intellectually is the key to receiving it.

Remember this entire letter is going to be a fight against Gnosticism. The key to identifying gnostic lies is to know the real truth. True Knowledge is going to be a key and repetitive theme of this letter. The problem with gnostics is not that they had knowledge. Their problem is that they think they have special knowledge and the knowledge that they do have is based on lies.

Significantly, Peter both opens and closes the letter with a reference to the knowledge of God and or Christ

He refers to this knowledge again in 1:3 and 8 as the foundation for his readers' Christian experience.

So as we read 2nd Peter we have to have a clear understanding of Knowledge.

Peter will constantly tell us that there is a knowledge of truth that every believer must have and know for themselves. They must have knowledge of Jesus through a relationship with Him and they must have knowledge of His truth.

This knowledge is complete and fully revealed in Christ. You will grow it in but you will not receive any new special knowledge.

Therefore, when Peter begins his letter by referring to "the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord," he is saying that the readers of the letter will only enjoy "grace and peace in abundance" as they grow in their relationship to God and to Jesus.

This is one of my key messages that I try to bring to believers in Jesus. It is great that you know Jesus personally and intimately. Based on that you will be saved. It is by your faith that you are saved.

But the blessings of being a Christ follower come from not only having a relationship with Him but also understanding all that He is, will be and represents. The full knowledge of everything about Him and His truth. Jesus left us His Truth, the written word passed down through the ages that tell us all about Him. You will never experience the life Jesus planned for you if you fail to study His Word.

We know this right? The most peace filled and grace filled believers that we know have Bible that are....worn out...they have worn out binders...marked up pages....leather faded from hands that at times almost strangled the book holding on to Jesus.

You are reborn a baby in the faith. Saved with full potential in Christ but that is just the beginning of the Christian experience not the end.

Lots of saved people who have a relationship with Jesus are walking around faking it because they don't have His peace or feel His undeserved favor in their lives. Churches are full of them because they think getting people saved is the only responsibility. We are actually told to make disciples, not converts.

In our day we are rightly warned about the danger of a sterile faith, of a "head" knowledge that never touches the heart. But we need equally to be careful of a "heart" knowledge that never touches the head! Too many Christians know too little about their faith; we are therefore often unprepared to explain how our "God" differs from the "God" of Mormonism or of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Disciples of Jesus know all that they can know about Him. They are constantly studying, learning, and surrendering.

Know Him doesn't refer to a casual acquaintance. It means an exact, complete, and thorough knowledge.

Peter tells them and us....The more you know of Jesus personally and intellectually the more you will experience His grace and peace. In fact, Peter says it gets multiplied.

"Knowing God" does mean having a warm, intimate relationship with our Creator; but it also means understanding who he is, with all its implications. Peter, we remember, is warning his readers about some heretical teachers. To avoid their errors, these Christians must not only have a "warm and fuzzy" feeling toward God; they also need to know some specific things about him, what he has done, and what he demands of us. One of the things they need to know, Peter hints, is that Jesus is God

We come to knowledge of Him as we learn of Him through His Word, through prayer, and through the community of God's people. It is true that we need God alone, but God does not meet us only in our solitude but also in the community of His people.

We are willing to try almost anything except the knowledge of Him. We will trust in the schemes and plans of men instead of the knowledge of Him. We will try knowing ourselves instead of the knowledge of Him. We need to come to the same place the Apostle Paul did, when he said that I may know Him

Philippians 3:8 (ESV) 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

2 Peter 1:2-4 (ESV) 3 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,

Peter continues and tells us that everything we will ever need....anything related to our life or our godliness....comes from one source. His Divine Power...the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, spoke the world into existence, arranged the stars.. holds it together in this and every moment...That power...had given to us everything that we need.

Note these two elements of Christian experience: the possession of life and its expression in godliness. The order of these two is once again significant. You can't express a life of godliness if you don't first have it.



How do we obtain everything that we need? There it is again...Knowledge..specifically the knowledge of Jesus.

This divine power has provided us with the spiritual ability to live a godly life.  
Him who called us to His own glory and excellence.

Peter says, not only do we have everything we need in this life....all things that pertain to life and godliness...but we also have been called to a higher place.

Now get this...to HIS own glory and excellence.

This knowledge of God comes to those who are called. It is knowledge, but it is not mere intellectual understanding or intuition. It is the knowledge that comes by experience—the experience God's people have of God Himself.

Note again the reference to knowledge, and let it be remembered that this word always implies much more than intellectual perception, for it includes spiritual experience.

This verse essentially says this, "Jesus, through his own power, has given us everything we need to live as Christians really should. This is possible because we have come to know God. He is the one who has called us to have a part in his greatness and moral goodness.

2 Peter 1:2–4 (ESV) 4 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.

Note several key points here. God has granted to us His precious and very great promises. These promises are the truth of Scripture.

Remember Peter is telling the Gentiles that these promises are for you too...

The Promises are two fold. 1) We will share in His Divine Nature...future tense...and 2) we will escape the corruption of sin in the world.

We don't talk about this enough. God could have saved us from Hell and kept us on earth.

Yet His love is so strong that He wants us to share in His Divine Nature....to become like Him.

That is the promises that are precious and great.

When do we experience this? When we have escaped the corruption of this sinful world.

All of us are stranded in the valley that is the place our sin has dumped us. We find ourselves in the corruption that is in our world because of our sinful desires. Every path leads to a destination and all of us are destined to become stranded in our sins.

We wake up on day...or as the prodigal son...we come to our senses. And we realize that we are doomed in our sin. We can't get out. The pull of sin has been too great.

No matter how hard we try to help ourselves we just keep going deeper into the pit. We become resigned to our fate.

But then just like the Helicopter we discussed earlier....God sends Jesus on a rescue mission. PHOTO

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It will cost Him his life, but you and I are worth it.

Jesus said I am the Way the Truth and The Life...translated..I am your lifeline.

If you want to get out of this mess of sin...if you want to experience my Divine Nature....you better hold on to me with all that you have.

Jesus tells us I will get you out of here...But the way it happens...my truth...My Word...the Foundation of our faith....all of my promises written to you...The Book you call the Bible is the lifeline.

You have to know me....You have to experience me....You have to embrace my truth...You have to...well...you have to become my slave...my servant. You have to know me in your head...you have to know me in your heart..you have to experience me in all the ways I reveal myself to you.

Peter tells us that there are Gnostics coming...They will dangle all kinds of fancy things in front of you...enticing you to hold on to them. They will say you don't need Jesus...You don't need His promises and you don't need His truth. So Peter at the very beginning of this letter to believers wants to make sure they know on thing.

So what is Peter trying to make sure that his readers know? What is the most important thing that will protect them from Gnosticism? What is the most important thing that he an share with those he is soon to leave behind? Said another way, what is the most important thing all believers absolutely must know?

If we have nothing else...we must have Knowledge of God. Intellectual, Experiential, Relational, all consuming knowledge of Jesus.

Why did God create us? To Know God.

What aim should we have in life? To know God.

What is Eternal Life? .To know God.

John 17:3 (ESV) 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

What is the best thing in life bringing more joy and contentment than anything else on earth? To know God.

Jeremiah 9:23–24 (ESV) 23 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."

What did God see in man that he could do do bring God the most pleasure? To Know God

Hosea 6:6 (ESV) 6 For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

So do you? Do you know God? Is Jesus everything to you? Are His promises in the Word...His truth in the Scriptures the one thing you hold on to with every ounce of your strength?

When the storms come....the pull of sin shakes our foundation...when we realize we have fallen and can't get up....do you have a death grip on your lifeline? No matter what the world offers as a solution to your problem are you going to hold on to Jesus?

True knowledge of God is always attended by a fixed belief ... a strong unwavering trust in God's promises. So often today people want to claim relationship with God while at the same time they abandon the words of the Bible. It is as if we want a God in our own making—one who exists under the authority of our own word. To use our analogy...many claim to be rescued...they experience the invitation that the rescue helicopter offers....but they never grasp the life line.

This is the gnosticism that Peter wants to extinguish. This entire book not only warns of false teaching but shows us how to get home. We grab on to the truth of God's Word as if it is a lifeline because it is. There is nothing on earth strong enough to pull us out of the gravitational force of corruption on earth. God has come from Heaven and give us a life line- His truth, His promises, His way. He gives us the only thing we can truly put our trust in. He gives us the strength to hold on, and He promises to take us home.

According to Peter's gospel, there is simply nothing else strong enough to pull us home nothing else escapes the "tug of the corruption that is in this world." One can almost envision men, women, and children being pulled loose from the muck of this world and ascending to Heaven's skies solely by holding fast to the strong cord of God's Word. If we need rescuing from this world, as the pull of the world gets stronger we must hold on tighter.

Almost every time I hear someone tell me that they are not living the abundant life that Jesus promises to us....I have one question for them.

Are you abiding in Christ? How tight are you holding on to your life line? Are you investing your time, energy, money and other resources to know Him better? The one thing that Peter wanted to make sure of is that those who follow Jesus actually KNOW Him.

You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.

Let's Pray