

II Peter 1:3 - The Power of God in the Knowledge of God

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

9:44 AM

Introduction

A. Counterfeit detection: knowing the real thing

1. The story is told, probably far too often but I'll tell it anyway, about how the FBI and the Secret Service train their agents to spot counterfeit currency
 - a. They don't primarily train the agents to learn all the aspects of counterfeit bills, there would be too many different ways of counterfeiting bills for that to be of significant value
 - b. For this to be effective as the primary means of spotting counterfeits, the agents would have to study thousands or millions of potential mistakes counterfeiters could make
 - c. So, instead, they train their agents to study the real bills, to know how everything on the real bill ought to look and the characteristics of the paper and ink
 - d. When their agents know the real bills well enough, then when a counterfeit comes up they'll be able to spot it because they see that it is different than the actual bill
2. I've heard this story several times, and it sounds good, but I never really checked to see if it was actually true
 - a. So, I did some checking, and it turns out that it is, more-or-less, true
 - b. The secret service even posts this on their website, providing guidelines to the general public on how to spot counterfeit bills:

"The public has a role in maintaining the integrity of U.S. currency. You can help guard against the threat from counterfeiters by becoming more familiar with United States currency. Look at the money you receive. Compare a suspect note with a genuine note of the same denomination and series, paying attention to the quality of printing and paper characteristics. Look for differences, not similarities."
 - c. The Secret Service encourages all of us to become more familiar with our money so that we can tell if we're handed a counterfeit bill
3. Although it's a somewhat overused illustration, it is a good illustration for what Peter is doing here in II Peter 1
 - a. The point of II Peter is to guard us against dangers that arise from inside the church - dangers that arise from false and twisted gospels
 - b. So, just like FBI or Secret Service agents who study the real bills in order to spot counterfeits, Peter starts by describing characteristics of the true gospel so that we'll be able to spot counterfeit gospels

B. From big to little: how does our passage today fit into the whole of II Peter

1. The Big Picture: Premise of II Peter
 - a. Dangers will not only come from outside the church but also inside the church. Therefore we should guard against these by knowing the true gospel. The true gospel is marked by godliness and is found in Scripture. A gospel that denies godliness or disregards the promises of God or twists Scripture must be rejected. God will judge such things and will protect His church. Since the judgment of God is imminent, we must be diligent now to make our calling and election sure by pursuing righteousness and godliness.
 - b. In order to guard against false gospels, we must recognize the true gospel as that which is marked by godliness and is found in Scripture, any other gospel must be rejected.
2. Breaking it up: Outline of II Peter
 - a. Introduction (1:1-2)
 - b. The Gospel is Marked by Godliness (1:3-21)
 - c. Danger 1: False Teachers Who Deny Godliness (2)
 - d. Danger 2: Scoffers Who Disbelieve the Promises of God (3:1-13)
 - e. Danger 3: The Unstable Who Twist the Scriptures (3:14-18)
 - f. Conclusion: Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Christ (3:14-18)
3. II Peter 1: The Gospel is Marked by Godliness
 - a. Making your calling and election sure - godliness and the gospel go together (1:3-11)
 - b. Be reminded of these things - godliness is defined in Scripture (3:12-21)

4. Making your calling and election sure - godliness and the gospel go together (1:3-11)
 - a. We have, by God's power, everything we need to live godly lives (1:3-4)
 - b. Godly lives are marked by growth in godly qualities (1:5-7)
 - c. Godly lives are absolutely necessary to the professing Christian (1:8-11)

C. Read II Peter 1:3-11

D. Godliness and the gospel go together

1. The first identifying mark of the true gospel that Peter gives us is that the gospel is marked by godliness, so when we hear teaching, we must compare it to this mark, is this gospel marked by godliness? Is it the real thing or is it a counterfeit gospel?
2. To build his argument here, he makes three points.
 - a. First, he shows that godliness and the gospel always go together because God has provided everything that is necessary for godliness in the gospel. If God has provided everything that is necessary for godliness in the gospel, then there is no excuse for a gospel that is not marked by godliness or does not call us to godliness.
 - b. Second, he gives us a list of eight qualities that godliness is known by. These are the qualities that we must know in order to determine if a gospel is counterfeit or not. The corollary to this is that these are the qualities that we must be marked by if we claim to know the true gospel.
 - c. Third, he exhorts us that the eight qualities he has listed are absolutely necessary to those who profess Christ. If someone comes with teaching but does not embody these attributes then he is not a true professor of Christ. If you claim Christ but do not embody these attributes, then you are not a true professor of Christ. But, if in professing Christ you see growth in these areas, you can be sure that your faith is genuine.
3. This week, we're starting with the first point - God has provided everything that is necessary for godliness in the gospel.

E. Read II Peter 1:3-4

F. Proposition and Outline

1. Proposition: God has provided us everything that is necessary for godliness so we have no excuse for not living godly lives.
2. Outline:
 - a. Who has granted us the power to live godly lives? (3a)
 - b. How has He granted us power to live godly lives? (3b)
 - c. What has he granted to us in order to live godly lives? (4a)
 - d. Why has he granted us power to live godly lives? (4b)
3. Two part sermon
 - a. As I was meditating on II Peter 1, I realized that there was a wealth of excellent truth woven into these words
 - b. So, I decided to play it on the safe side and split it into pretty small passages, 2-3 verses, so I could give appropriate time to each word without going too long
 - c. It turns out that even 2-3 verses was too long, so this first sermon is going to have to be split into two parts. We'll look at verse 3 this week - the Who and the How of godly lives
 - d. Next week we'll look at verse 4 - the What and the Why of godly lives

I. Who has granted us the power to live godly lives? (3a)

A. This first phrase in II Peter 1:3 stands at the head of this sentence as a thesis for Peter's argument

1. It is the power of God that has given us what is necessary and sufficient to live godly lives
2. So, on the one hand, we don't need to spend much time on this phrase because this phrase is going to be unpacked through the rest of this sentence
 - a. What does it mean that His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness? It means that He has given us knowledge of His calling and His glory and excellence and that through these He has provided for us rich promises that allow us to be joined to Him and separated from the world.
 - b. As soon as we understand what all of those things mean we will know what it means that His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.
3. But, on the other hand, there are a couple of things that stand out in this phrase that I want to examine before we dig into the rest of the sentence, so we will spend just a few minutes here looking at this phrase

B. Christ's sovereign power is fundamental to these verses: Christ sovereign power is necessary for us to live godly lives

1. When Peter starts this verse with 'His', I think many of our immediate inclinations are to think God the Father
 - a. I don't disagree with that at all, but as we look at the verse, it primarily refers to Christ - Christ was the last noun used by Peter, so His naturally refers to at least Christ
 - b. His divine power is Christ's divine power
2. So, Peter says that Christ's power is fundamental to sanctification
 - a. I think this is important to note because we often put Christ at the head of our justification
 - b. But Christ's power is no less sovereign over our sanctification as well
 - c. I Corinthians 1:30-31 - *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*
3. Therefore, the glory for our sanctification goes to Christ
 - a. This guards us from various understandings of salvation that make Christ necessary to forgive us our sins, but put the burden of being worthy of salvation on us, then
 - b. It is Christ's power that will sanctify us and therefore all glory from our sanctification goes back to Christ
 - c. This does not make it any less necessary for us to live lives of godliness, but we do not live lives of godliness on our own, we live lives of godliness through the power of Christ
 - d. Any life of godliness that we attempt on our own power will end in utter failure
 - e. Our righteousness apart from Christ will still be nothing but filthy rags

C. Christ's sovereign power is sufficient for us to live godly lives

1. Peter says that His divine power has granted to us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness
2. So, not only is His divine power necessary for sanctification, it is also sufficient for sanctification
3. In Christ, we have everything in abundance that we need to be changed into His likeness
4. This should guard us against seeking out other things, we have all we need in Christ through His word

D. Application: If Christ's power is sufficient for us to live godly lives, then we must live godly lives by Christ's power

1. This application anticipates the force of Peter's argument in verses 8-11
2. But, even in this first phrase we can feel the necessity of living godly lives
3. If Christ's power has granted to us everything that is necessary for godliness, then we have no excuse for not being godly
4. This phrase, standing by itself, condemns every sin that you would be enslaved to because those sins deny this verse
5. When we choose sin, we are stating that Christ is not sufficient for godliness, He has not given us everything that we need to imitate Him
6. So, let us hear and meditate on this verse - we must use the power of Christ to enact godliness in our lives

II. How has He granted us power to live godly lives? (3b)

A. Knowing God is the means by which He has given us the power to live godly lives

1. We are promised that we will know God in the New Covenant
 - a. Jeremiah 31:31-34 - *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*
 - b. John 17:3 - *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
 - c. I John 5:20 - *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.*
2. The word 'know' here, is *epignosis* - overknowledge
 - a. *Epignosis* and *gnosis* don't always need to be contrasted in Scripture, but when they are paired with each other, it is highly likely that there is an important distinction
 - i. None of the quotes mentioned above use the word *epignosis* or the verb equivalent, but John never uses this word in his corpus, and I think he means the same thing as Peter does here
 - ii. But, Peter uses in this paragraph both the word *epignosis* (vs. 2, 3, 8) and the word *gnosis* (vs. 5) so there is likely a contrast
 - iii. So, what does Peter signify here, by using the word *epignosis* - overknowledge
 - b. *Epignosis* is much stronger knowledge than simply *gnosis*
 - i. I Corinthians 13:12 - *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*
 - ii. Contrast 'know in part' (*gnosis*) with 'know fully' (*epignosis*)
 - c. *Epignosis* is the knowledge of God that Christ reveals to us
 - i. Matthew 11:27 - *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*
 - d. *Epignosis* is the recognition of God in Christ
 - i. Luke 24:16, 31 - *But their eyes were kept from recognizing him... And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.*
 - e. So, to borrow a slightly overused phrase, *epignosis* is knowing God as opposed to knowing about God - it is perceiving Him as He is
 - i. This is not merely head knowledge about God, but it is knowledge of God
 - ii. It is a knowledge that cannot come from study, but can only come from personal knowledge of God
 - iii. Therefore, it is knowledge that only a believer can have, unbelievers are categorically excluded from having this type of knowledge
 - a) Romans 1:28 - *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.*

B. Knowing God entails knowing Him as the one who has called us

1. God is the one who has called us to Christ
 - a. I Corinthians 1:9 - *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
 - b. I Peter 2:9 - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*
 - c. II Corinthians 4:6 - *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
 - d. It is the call of God that brings us to Christ, who has brought us from darkness into His light
2. To know God as the one who has called us entails recognizing Him as sovereign
 - a. Romans 8:29-30 - *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined **he also called**, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
 - b. Romans 9:9-26 - *For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad---in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works **but because of him who calls**--- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
*What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.
You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory--- **even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?** As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people **I will call** 'my people,' and her who was not beloved **I will call** 'beloved.'" "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there **they will be called** 'sons of the living God.'"**
 - c. God's calling is an execution of His sovereignty
 - d. To know God correctly, we must know Him as the sovereign God, the One who has purposed all things and the One who perfectly executes all of His purposes
 - e. God's call to follow Christ is one of His sovereign acts
 - f. So, we know God as the one who has called us, He brought us to Christ in order to fulfill His own purposes and bring about His own glory
3. To know God as the one who has called us entails recognizing Him as gracious
 - a. I Peter 2:9-10 - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*
 - b. I Peter 5:10 - *And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*
 - c. I John 3:1 - *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*
 - d. God's calling is an execution of His grace
 - e. To know God correctly, we must know Him as a gracious God, the One who has given us blessings that we have not deserved
 - f. God's call to follow Christ is one of His great graces to us, not because of any merit of our own were we called but because God is rich in mercy

C. Knowing God entails knowing Him as the one who has called us to, by and for His glory and excellence

1. The phrase here in the Greek is not very clear
 - a. It appears that Peter left out a proposition when he was writing, and so we have to guess at what proposition should be put in here
 - b. Because of the construction of the sentence, this phrase starts with the dative case, we can limit the necessary proposition to one of three propositions
 - i. Through the knowledge of Him who called us for His own glory and excellence
 - a) Dative of purpose - why did He call us?
 - b) He called us in order to magnify His own glory and excellence
 - ii. Through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence
 - a) Dative of instrument - how did He call us?
 - b) He called us using His own glory and excellence
 - c) This would put glory and excellence parallel to His divine power at the beginning of verse 3
 - d) He has used His divine power, His glory and His excellence on our behalf
 - e) This is the usage in the NASB and is footnoted in the ESV
 - iii. Through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence
 - a) Simple dative - to what did He call us?
 - b) He called us in order to bring us to His own glory and excellence
 - c) This would put glory and excellence parallel to the divine nature in verse 4
 - d) He has called us to His own glory and excellence and therefore we partake in the divine nature
 - e) This is the usage in the ESV and is footnoted in the NASB
2. Peter could have easily made the phrase here clear
 - a. By inserting a preposition that described how the dative should be taken, Peter would have clarified this sentence greatly for us
 - b. But, upon much meditation, I don't think it was a mistake that Peter left out the preposition
 - c. All three of these are correct, I think Peter is calling us to meditate on all three of these cases here
3. So we must know God as the one who has called us
 - a. He has called us in order to magnify His own glory and excellence
 - b. He has called us by the means of His own glory and excellence
 - c. He has called us so that we might share in His own glory and excellence

D. How does knowing God give us power to live godly lives?

- i. Knowing God leads to knowing His will and knowing His will in a deeper way
 - 1) This is straight forward and relatively obvious - if we know God in Christ in a deep, real way, we will understand His will and His purpose for our lives
 - a) Something akin to Ephesians 5:17 - *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*
 - b) Overknowledge is actually linked with knowing the will of God in Colossians 1:9 - *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,*
 - 2) When we know God we will both know and understand what His will is
 - 3) This is one level of power that leads to godliness - it is the power of understanding that leads to action
 - 4) When we know what God desires and why He desires it then we can enact it in our lives

- ii. Knowing God and God's call gives us motivation in our lives
 - 1) Although I don't disagree at all with the first point above, I think that cannot be the whole story though
 - a) We are not simply called to know the will of God, but to know God, to know God as the one who has called us
 - b) To some degree, that factors in above, because we don't simply know the will of God, but knowing God leads to a deeper understanding of that will that enables us to enact it in our lives
 - c) But, I think there is still something deeper
 - 2) I think this deeper motivation is illustrated well by a quote from Piper:
 - a) "If you are a prisoner of war in a concentration camp, and you have lost hope, and hopeless, have thrown your morality away, and you learn that a prisoner exchange is being planned, and you see the guard coming down the row pointing to individual prisoners and calling them to follow him to freedom and family; it is not a mere piece of knowledge when he points to you and calls you. *It is power!* The power of hope surges through your body because *you know you have been called.* So when Peter says that divine power for hope and godliness flows through the knowledge of our call to glory, we can feel what he means. If we could but see the glory and excellence of God and know that our Creator has approached us and said, "You there, come; I'm going to show you my glory and give you an eternal life to enjoy it," it would mean power! The power of hope and the power of godliness. You know this from experience: when you see the glory and excellence of God most clearly and know he has set his affections on you, then is when you have power to live as you ought."
 - b) When we know God, especially in knowing Him as the one who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, we have great reason to live godly lives
- iii. Still, I think there is one more level of how knowledge of God leads to godliness
 - 1) Not only is there a deeper understanding of the will of God and a motivation from knowing the call of God
 - 2) There is the personal knowledge of God that makes displeasing God a horrible thing
 - a) Even on a human level, we would recoil from doing something that would displease a close friend because we know how that would affect our friend
 - b) As we grow in our knowledge of God in Christ, the same thing happens, but on a much deeper level
 - c) I think this finally captures the essence of overknowledge - knowing God fully
 - d) When we know God fully, our relationship with Him makes sin much less appealing in the light of His great grace and love to us
 - e) I think this is what is captured in I John 2:3-6 - *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*
 - f) Galatians 4:8-9 - *Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?*
 - g) If we truly know God, it is impossible to dwell at ease with sin. If we do dwell at ease with sin it is impossible to know God.
 - 3) There is the personal knowledge of God that makes godliness a glorious thing
 - a) II Corinthians 3:16-18 - *But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
 - b) When we know God personally, displeasing Him with sin not only becomes repellent, but the light of His glory draws us - we behold the glory of the Lord and are thereby transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another

E. Application: If knowing God is the means by which He has given us power, then we must strive to grow in our knowledge of God

1. We find inducements to grow in this 'overknowledge' of God throughout the New Testament
 - a. Ephesians 1:17 - *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,*
 - b. Philippians 1:9 - *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,*
 - c. Colossians 1:9-10 - *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*
2. Considering what we have just discussed, how do we grow in the knowledge of God?
 - a. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, overknowledge is not simply knowing more about God
 - i. It is not simply study the Scriptures more
 - ii. It is not simply memorizing more verses
 - iii. It is not simply understanding systematic theology
 - iv. So, none of these things will automatically cause you to grow in the overknowledge of God
 - b. But, in a catch 22, all of our knowledge about God comes from Scripture
 - i. Studying the Scriptures is the way to knowing God more
 - ii. Memorizing Scripture is the way to knowing God more
 - iii. Understanding God's plan revealed in Scripture is the way to knowing God more
 - c. So, how do we resolve this? How do we grow in the overknowledge of God and not merely the knowledge of God?
 - i. First, to grow in the overknowledge of God through Scripture, we must be called by God to serve Christ
 - a) This requirement is given to us by Peter directly in this verse - to know God we must know Him as the one who has called us
 - b) Unless you are a believer here this morning, there is no way for you to grow in the overknowledge of God
 - c) Our overknowledge of God must be rooted in our calling by God
 - d) So, to know God seek the calling of God in Christ
 - One. If you are a believer here this morning, then, to borrow a phrase we'll run across in a few verses, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure
 - Two. If you are not a believer here this morning, seek God's mercy in Christ, do not rest until you have plead with God to show you grace in Christ

- ii. Second, to grow in the overknowledge of God through Scripture, we must be empowered by His Spirit to understand the Scriptures
 - a) I Corinthians 2:10-15 - *These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*
 - b) John 14:26 - *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*
 - c) The Spirit's revealing power in our lives is what keeps us from simply knowing more about God through study of Scripture and causes us through study of Scripture to truly grow in an overknowledge of God
 - d) So, we ought to earnestly seek the Spirit's revealing power in our lives
 - i) This entails an earnest life of prayer paired with a study of Scripture
 - ii) On our own, we will never grow in the overknowledge of God
 - iii) So, we must humble ourselves and seek God's Spirit to empower us to know Scripture correctly
 - iv) If we fail to pair the study of Scripture with earnest prayer for the Spirit's revelation, we will fail to grow in the knowledge of God
- iii. Third, to grow in the overknowledge of God through Scripture, we must come to Scripture desiring to submit ourselves to the words of God
 - a) Proverbs 1:7 - *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;*
 - b) Proverbs 2:1-5 - *My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*
 - c) Part of knowing God through the Scriptures is coming with a proper attitude of reverence and fear for God, ready to submit to His word
 - d) When our hearts are ready to submit to what He speaks in His word, then we truly grow in the knowledge of God through the Word of God
 - e) So, we ought to be careful to approach Scripture with a proper attitude
 - i) We must seek to submit ourselves to the God who is revealed in Scripture
 - ii) We must seek to grow in our knowledge of Him
 - iii) We must seek to live according to His will
- d. When we have all three of these prerequisites - we have been called by God, we have been filled with His Spirit, and we have put ourselves in submission to the Word of God - then we will grow in the knowledge of God through the study of Scripture
 - i. So, when I say that the study of Scripture is not sufficient for these things, don't hear me say that you shouldn't study Scripture
 - ii. On the contrary, I hope to motivate you even stronger to study Scripture in order to know God, but only through these prerequisites
 - iii. If you come to Scripture in a way other than these, it will be useless knowledge

Conclusion

A. This is where I'm going to stop this morning

1. We've made it through half of the first sentence
 - a. Who has granted us the power to live godly lives? (3a)
 - b. How has He granted us the power to live godly lives? (3b)
2. Next week we'll complete the second half of the first sentence
 - a. What has He granted us in order to live godly lives? (4a)
 - b. Why has He granted us the power to live godly lives? (4b)
3. I don't think we will necessarily go through all of II Peter this slowly, but these first several verses are jam packed full of excellent truths and I didn't want to rush past them

B. So, what is our take-away for this morning - what do I want you to remember?

1. Christ sovereign power is necessary and sufficient for us to live godly lives
 - a. This means that without Christ's sovereign power exercised in our lives, we cannot grow in sanctification - we can't grow in godliness by our own power
 - b. This means that with Christ's sovereign power exercised in our lives through His Word, we don't need to chase after other things - we will grow in godliness by Christ's power through His Word
2. Knowing God is the means by which Christ's sovereign power is exercised in our lives
 - a. To know God is *epignosis* - to know Him fully or completely - not merely knowledge about God but knowing God
 - b. To know God entails knowing Him as the one who called us - to know Him as both sovereign and gracious
 - c. To know God entails knowing Him as the one who called us to, by, and for His own glory and excellence
 - d. When we know God, we are given power to fight against sin and live godly lives

C. What have I called you to do this morning?

1. Purpose to live a godly life because Christ's power has provided that for you
 - a. If Christ's sovereign power is necessary and sufficient for us to live godly lives, then we have no excuse for not living godly lives
 - b. So, make this your purpose as we go through II Peter - desire to grow in godliness because Christ is giving you power through His Word
2. Grow in the knowledge of God through the Scriptures because you have been called by God, empowered by His spirit, and you have put yourself in submission to His word
 - a. If we are granted power through our knowing God, then we ought to desire and strive to grow in our knowledge of God
 - b. And so I'll close with Paul's prayer for the Colossians in Colossians 1:9-10 - *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*