

THE FAMILY OF  
*Like Precious Faith*

CLARENCE SEXTON



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THE FAMILY OF  
*Like Precious Faith*

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## THE FAMILY OF LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH

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Credit: A Dutch Interior - Grace Before the Meal (oil on canvas) by Pieters, Evert (1856-1932)

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# *Dedication*

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*T*his book is dedicated to my extended Christian family of “*like precious faith.*”

# Introduction

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The faith of Christians is called “*precious faith*,” because it is connected to the Precious One. The Lord Jesus is called precious by Peter three times (I Peter 2:4, 6, 7). He calls His blood precious. He called the “*trial of your faith*” precious (I Peter 1:7), and speaks of “*precious promises*” (II Peter 1:4). To Peter, the Lord and all things related to Him were precious. May what you find in the pages of this study of the book of II Peter make our precious Savior even more precious to you.

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# SCRIPTURE

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*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:*

*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

II PETER 1:1-4

## CHAPTER ONE

# THIS IS A FAMILY OF LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH



he faith of Christians is called “*precious faith*,” because it is connected to the Precious One. The Lord Jesus is called precious by Peter three times (I Peter 2:4, 6, 7). He calls His blood precious too. He calls the “*trial of your faith*” precious (I Peter 1:7), and speaks of “*precious promises*” (II Peter 1:4). To Peter, the Lord and all things related to Him were precious. Is this true in your life?

The Bible says in II Peter 1:1-4,

*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to*



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*glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Charles H. Gabriel was one of our most prolific gospel hymn writers. He was born in 1856, and lived to be seventy-six years old. Among the many hymns he wrote, at age forty-six, he penned the words to “He Is So Precious to Me.” Read through the beautiful words of his hymn.

So precious is Jesus, my Savior, my King;  
His praise all the day long with rapture I sing.  
To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling,  
For He is so precious to me.

He stood at my heart’s door ’mid sunshine and rain,  
And patiently waited an entrance to gain.  
What shame that so long He entreated in vain,  
For He is so precious to me.

I stand on the mountain of blessing at last,  
No cloud in the heavens a shadow to cast,  
His smile is upon me; the valley is past,  
For He is so precious to me.

I praise Him because He appointed a place  
Where some day, through faith in His wonderful grace,  
I know I shall see Him, shall look on His face,  
For He is so precious to me.

For He is so precious, so precious to me;  
For He is so precious, so precious to me.  
'Tis heaven below, my Redeemer to know,  
For He is so precious to me.

## *This Is a Family of Like Precious Faith*

When Peter, once known as a rough fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, speaks of his faith, he uses the expression “*precious faith.*” As we consider the matter of faith, let us take it just as God gives it—as “*precious faith.*” He says, “*To them that have obtained like precious faith.*” Peter writes to others concerning the same faith that he has.

As you think of your faith in God, do you think of it as precious? Sometimes we use the expression “saving faith,” but it is not faith that saves us; it is Christ who saves us. We come to Christ repenting of our sin, and by faith receiving the Lord Jesus into our lives as our personal Savior. We exercise faith to believe Him, faith to trust Him.

We speak also of the faith that we hold, meaning the body of truth that we have. We say, “This is our faith.” We use this expression to summarize what we believe about God’s Word and the body of truth we hold as believers. This is our faith. It is “*like precious faith*” with all other true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter writes here to those who have “*like precious faith.*” Peter was a much older man, perhaps even near the time of his death, when he penned this second epistle. He writes of so many wonderful things. Let us seriously consider them.

Notice he refers to himself in verse one as *Simon Peter*, not just Peter. Simon was his given name. When Peter was living along the north of the Sea of Galilee, he was referred to as Simon. When Andrew called for his brother, he called for Simon. When people spoke of this fisherman and his fishing business, they spoke of Simon. The Lord Jesus named him Peter. The name Peter means “a stone.” He spoke of Simon becoming a stone—stable, steadfast. When Peter penned these words, God led him to refer to himself as “Simon Peter.” He speaks of his old nature and his new nature by referring to himself as “Simon Peter.”

The Bible says, “*Simon Peter, a servant...*” He is a bond slave of Jesus Christ. He serves the Lord—not because he is made to serve the Lord, but because of his love and devotion to the Lord Jesus. By

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referring to himself as a servant, he says, “I have given my whole life to the Son of God with joy and delight.”



*What matters most is not what you are doing here, but what you are doing here for eternity.*

Peter is not only a servant, but also “*an apostle of Jesus Christ.*” The word *apostle* means “sent one.” He was sent by the Lord. He qualified as an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ, and received his doctrine directly from the Lord Jesus.

He writes “*to them that have obtained like precious faith.*” We learn also as we read this particular epistle that Peter is writing to the same people he wrote to in his first epistle. They were strangers scattered abroad. He refers to them here as those of “*like precious faith.*”

He states, “*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.*” Consider Peter’s entire life as he thinks of what things used to mean to him, and what Christ means to him now.

For example, when he was living on the Galilee, he thought about a fishing business. He perhaps thought that he would have the best and biggest fishing business one day. He had a fishing business with his brother. They had partners—another set of brothers, James and John. No doubt it meant a great deal to him to become a successful fisherman.

There is nothing wrong with working hard at a job. I hope all of us are diligent at what we do to earn a living. But now it is not fishing that is precious and meaningful to Peter. All of that has diminished. All of that has paled. Now it is not fishing; it is his faith. He says, “I’m writing to you about our *precious faith.*”

With every passing day, the Lord Jesus meant more and more to Peter. This is the way it ought to be in our lives. Perhaps you dreamed as a younger person of a career and what you could achieve or what you

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could accomplish. But somewhere along the way you met the Savior and He changed your life. Now, you sing, “How precious is Jesus, my Savior, my King!” You are not just a man or a woman; you are a Christian man or a Christian woman. Things are different now. You have more to live for than this world and the things of this world. What matters most is not what you are doing here, but what you are doing here for eternity. Your life is changed.

What if Peter had the biggest fishing business? What if Peter out-fished everyone? What if Peter made enough money to build the biggest house in Capernaum? What if everyone knew about Peter and talked about what a great businessman and fisherman he was? All of that would be burned some day. No wonder Peter writes under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, not about his fishing, but about his faith.

There is so much confusion today about Christianity and the person of Jesus Christ, but I can tell you how we can clear it up. Those of us who truly know the Lord Jesus can clear up the matter by living like Christians ought to live. That, my friends, would mark the distinct difference between all this talk about Christianity and what real Christianity happens to be. May God help us to seek to live up to that worthy name that we have been given—the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When you meet a man or woman who really loves the Lord Jesus, a person in whom there has been a real change that God has wrought, one who yields to the transforming power of God at work in his life, it is thrilling. Peter says, “He is my Savior and I am writing to others of *like precious faith*.”

## THE POWER OF THIS FAITH

There is “*divine power*” in this faith. The Bible says in II Peter 1:3,

*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,*

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*through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.*

Peter was a man's man. He was the kind of man you would admire for manliness. No doubt he was a strong man. We are given insight into this by reading about Peter's life as he followed Christ. In John chapter twenty-one, when others were trying to pull the fish to shore—if you read carefully, there were one hundred fifty-three fish in the net—Peter single-handedly pulled the net to shore. He was quite a man. But here he is talking about another kind of power. Peter realized that there was a power that only God has. He knew that he could have this power in his life because Jesus Christ came to indwell him forever when he came to Christ.

Peter had been around the sea and he had seen storms sweep down upon the sea—terrible storms, frightening storms. No doubt people had lost their lives in some of those storms. There was a certain power in nature that a man living near the Sea of Galilee would have experienced. One night the disciples were frightened and fearful for their own lives on board a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Suddenly the Lord Jesus spoke to the winds and waves and said, "*Peace, be still.*" Peter realized Christ had power over nature.

The Lord Jesus also has power over illness and disease. Peter's own mother-in-law was healed by the Lord. No doubt, Peter was so close to the situation that he would have known how gravely ill the woman was. Christ healed her. Personally, in his own family, Peter witnessed the power the Lord Jesus has over disease.

He knew that the Lord Jesus has power over demons. He was with the Lord when He cast out the demons who exercised power in people's lives. The control Satan had over those people was broken by Christ. Peter knew that Christ had faced the Devil in the wilderness. He knew the Lord Jesus has power over Satan, over death, over hell, and over the grave.

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He had seen the Lord raise the dead—people who were actually dead were brought back to life. He was standing there looking in the face of a corpse when Christ restored life to that corpse. He was standing at the tomb when the Lord Jesus called Lazarus' name and Lazarus came forth. He was in the house of Jairus when the Lord Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Peter was walking with Christ in the city of Nain when the widow's dead son was being carried out to be buried, and Christ restored life to that widow's son.

Then of course, Peter saw the Lord Jesus bleed and die. He watched His suffering. At noonday, he saw when all the light of heaven was blacked out and darkness covered the earth for three hours. He knew that Christ suffered and bled and died and that His body was taken down from the cross and, with tender hands, laid in a borrowed tomb. He knew that on the third day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, because he saw the living Savior.

The Lord Jesus said, *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* We are not left here weak, defenseless, and helpless like orphaned children. We have a great God, the only true and living God who is greater than all our need. He has all power. Our precious faith is a dynamic, powerful faith in the Almighty God. This precious faith is powerful!

In the same verse the Bible says that He has given us *"all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."* He has called us. It is a high calling. As Christians, we are to live completely different lives. We have a high calling to walk the high road—choosing not just the good, but the best. In Philippians 3:14, the Bible says, *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* We have a high calling.

I do not flinch at all to write to you and say that if you are a Christian and you are a member of a Bible-believing church, you have an identity with Christ that should be lifted up! We have a high

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calling. People ought to know that our lives have been changed by the power of Almighty God.

In II Timothy 1:9 the Bible says, *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”* This is a holy calling. We have been declared to be holy. Positionally, we are regarded as holy. God has sanctified us and set us apart to be a holy people—*His* holy people.

On the practical side, we are to live a holy life on a daily basis. We can only do this by the grace of God, by God’s power, by the indwelling Christ who lives in us. It is a holy life the Lord has called us to live.

In Hebrews chapter three, we read that it is not only a high calling and a holy calling, but it is also a heavenly calling. In verse one the Bible says, *“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”* This is a heavenly calling.

## THE PROMISES OF THIS FAITH

Our precious faith comes with precious promises. The Bible says in verse four, *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises...”* We have God’s promises.

People talk to me often about the crisis hour of human history in which we live. “Pastor, what are we going to face in the future? What’s ahead for all of us? What are we going to find around the corner?” I am going to tell you. We are to live on the promises of God. Find a promise and claim it.

*“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* Do you like that one? *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”* Do you like that one? *“And we know that all things work together for good*

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*to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Do you like that one?*

Find a precious promise. Let it get hold of you. Consider this verse about the promises of God. In Numbers 23:19 the Bible says, *“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it?”*

In other words, does God talk about things He does not plan to do? We as human beings do that. We say, “I’ll tell you what I’m going to do,” but so often we never follow through with it. The Bible says God does not speak that way. Everything God says, God will do. Every promise God makes, He will keep. He is not like a man. Notice again He says in the same verse *“...or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”* God will keep His promises.



*Everything  
God says, God  
will do. Every  
promise God  
makes, He  
will keep.*

Let us consider another verse about the promises of God. The Bible says in II Corinthians 1:20, *“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”* If God said it, you can say, “Amen!” It is going to come to pass.

What is a promise? A promise from God is a divine assurance on which we can depend. Many times, one of God’s promises has carried me through a most difficult hour in my life.

Peter must have thought many times about what we find in Luke chapter twenty-two when Christ said, *“Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee.”* This prayer promise meant something very special to Peter.

In the same verse Christ said, *“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”* It meant something to Peter when the Lord said, “I’ll pray for you. When you’re converted, strengthen the brethren.” He was



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saying to Peter, “You are going to have a hard time. You are going to fall. You are going to deny me, but you are going to come through it.”

No wonder Peter said, “*These are precious promises.*” Faith in God does not see its way through life; it faiths its way through life on God’s promises by believing the Lord. Believe God in the dark, and believe God in the daylight. Believe God in the quiet, and believe God in the storm. Believe God when all is going well, and believe God when all is not going well. Believe God and His promises.

## THE PARTAKERS OF THIS FAITH

We have the joy of being partakers of this faith. The Bible says in verse four, “*...that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*”



*Atheism is  
not the most  
dangerous  
thing we face.  
Religion without  
Christ is most  
dangerous.*

We have to be very careful not to misinterpret this verse, because there is so much false teaching concerning people becoming gods. The correct way to say this is that we receive this “*divine nature*” rather than saying we have God’s nature. We are not becoming gods. We have our old nature, but He gives the “*divine nature.*” We are partakers of the divine nature. This means that God

gives us an enabling to live the life that pleases Him. If you are a Christian, God has given you a nature that enables you to live the life that pleases Him.

Atheism is not the most dangerous thing we face. Religion without Christ is most dangerous. The world has developed its own brand of Christianity. The Lord Jesus warned us in the mystery kingdom parables of Matthew chapter thirteen that there would be a growth

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of what would be called Christianity that is not really Christianity. If you are truly a Christian, God has made you a partaker of the “*divine nature*.”

Peter goes on to write, “...*having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*.” In life, we naturally lust for more and more. It should not be that way for the Christian, not for the person who has this “*precious faith*.” The place Christ has in our lives determines the place all else has in our lives.

We can escape because Christ did not escape. He could have escaped, but He did not. An angry mob came down the hillside, across the Kedron, and into the Garden of Gethsemane. Christ saw them coming with torches and lanterns. He could have run. He could have escaped, but He did not. He could have escaped, because we know that when they tried to push Him over a cliff in Nazareth, He escaped out of their presence. It was not His time to die. When they took up stones to stone Him, He disappeared. He did not have to go to Calvary. He did not have to bleed and die. But He did have to go to Calvary, and He did have to bleed and die in order for us to have salvation so we could escape. The sinless Son of God became sin for us.

The Lord Jesus has given us the reason to live—not just a reason, *the* reason, the eternal reason to bring honor and glory to Him. It is not that God has simply assigned this to us and says, “All right all you Christians, go about doing My work.” That is the way some people see the Christian life. That is not what He did. He has placed in us, as “*partakers of the divine nature*,” the desire to do what He wants us to do. How wonderful!



*We are partakers  
of the divine  
nature. This  
means that  
God gives us  
an enabling to  
live the life that  
pleases Him.*

## *This Is a Family of Like Precious Faith*

Some of you are so very different from the way you once were. God gave Simon Peter a new nature. God gave him a desire to serve Him, to live for Him. Why? Because of this “*precious faith*” in Jesus Christ. The object of our faith is not faith; it is the person of Jesus Christ. Welcome to *The Family of Like Precious Faith!*