

Armagh Baptist Church Bible Studies
'Grow in Grace' – Studies in 2 Peter
Wednesday 1st February 2012 – 8:00pm
2 Peter 1:3-4 – Realise what you've got!

Introduction

Tonight I want to try to help you to realise what you've got in Christ!

About 40 years ago a Cavan man began to realise what he'd got. A young man called Sean Quinn started off milking 5 or 6 cows, on a few acres on a bleak hillside near Ballyconnell on the Cavan-Fermanagh border.

He didn't have much as far as this world was concerned.

But then he began to realise what he did have. He realised what he was sitting on! He was sitting on a few acres of grass – but just under the grass was a very valuable commodity – limestone and sandstone! He began to dig deep. He just got himself a lorry and a digger, and he started to dig, transport it, and sell it. He simply began to realise the potential of what he already had!

His Quarry business began to grow, and I'm told at one point he actually placed an order for a fleet of 200 new lorries all at one go! He started 3 or 4 factories on the site, making blocks, slates and even glass bottles.

He built a hotel or two – and bought a few more.

He started his own insurance company: Quinn Direct and built new offices.

He started a wind farm and was very soon able to supply more than 5% of the total energy needed by the National Grid in Ireland!

And how did he do all that? He simply realised the potential of what he was sitting on! He realised the potential of what he already had!

But you know, there's a problem with all of this: Sean Quinn got greedy. He got into property development, and he got into speculating on the stock exchange, he got into gambling on whether commodities would go up or down in value – and just recently, Sean Quinn, the man who used to be the richest man in Ireland, was declared bankrupt, first of all in Belfast, and then in Dublin, and he's been put out of business for the next 12 years – long past his normal retirement date. How the mighty Quinn has fallen!

But you know, it doesn't matter how much Sean Quinn had, or how much money he made, or how many factories or hotels he built – there's was *always* going to come a day, when he would have to leave it all behind! – Absolutely ALL of it! Sean Quinn might have realised the value and the potential of what he was sitting on, but he was always going to have to leave it behind one day: sooner or later! Because you can't take it with you!

But, Christian, do you realise what you are sitting on, in Christ!?

Do you realise what you've got in Christ?

You have something far more valuable, you have something that is priceless, you have something that will last forever –

The problem is – you don't half realise it! – You hardly know the value of it!

Listen to 2 Peter 1:3 –

*'His Divine Power has given us **everything we need** for life and godliness'*

Christian: you have all that you will ever need – in Christ!

What's more, listen to 1 Peter 1:4 –

*You have **'an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you!'***

And listen to this in 1 Peter 1:7 –

'Your faith is of greater worth than gold, which perishes, even though refined by fire.'

Christian: do you realise what you've got?

- You have something far more valuable than the purest gold!
- You have something that can never perish, spoil or fade!
- You have an inheritance you can never lose!
- You have everything you need for life, and more!

And yet we live our lives like the poor cousins of the world, don't we!?

Christian:

You have something that the rest of this world is still searching for,

You have something that many are crying out for,

You have something that people don't even know where to look for,

And yet we live sometimes, as if we had nothing worth talking about it!

Tonight, we're going to realise what we've got!

We've all met people who are searching blindly for something you and I have already got! Let me give you some examples:

I spoke to someone, not so long ago, who had lived in 17 countries in 5 yrs! He was travelling the world, looking for kicks and thrills and experiences, but at the back of it all he was searching for some kind of reality. Sadly, he didn't find much of it in the religion he was brought up in, here in Ireland!

I also remember a young guy who lived in Ballyconnell – one of the first people I ever did the *Christianity Explained* course with. He had taken all the hard drugs you could think of – cannabis, heroine, ecstasy – and it had nearly killed him! Just a few months before I met him, he had taken a contaminated ecstasy tablet, and his head thumped so much he thought it

was going to explode! He thought he was going to die! Since that he hadn't touched drugs at all. Instead he had been searching for God!

At first he got in with the Hare Krishnas who lived on an island on Lough Erne, and they indoctrinated him to chant, '*Hare Krishna*' – and if he did it often enough he was told he would get in touch with God!

He soon realised that was all wrong. So as I took him through *Christianity Explained*, he began to search for Christ. And the only thing that held him back from true faith in Christ was his girlfriend – who had no time for God after being brought up in the Catholic Church! He was called Mark (Frankie) Whelan, and he came from Wicklow.

And there were other people in Cavan – intelligent, well-educated, well-to-do people, and they were trying to search for true spirituality, to get in touch with God. How were they doing it? Believe it or not, they were trying to do it by staring at, and meditating on, a New Age Crystal!

All these people were searching, in different ways, in different places, and they were searching for something that you and I have already got! But sometimes I wonder do we really appreciate what we've got? Before we leave tonight, we're going to realise what we've got! We're only looking at 2 verses, but look what it says in verses 3 & 4...

1. You have been called to know God personally! (v.3b)

This was something that these people in Cavan were searching for – They wanted to know God! – Well, you know Him already! You've got that! **How?** – God has '*called*' you – God has invited you into a relationship! **Why?** Why has God called you? '*Out of his own glory and goodness!*' It's purely out of the goodness of God's heart that you are permitted to know Him. You and I don't deserve this any more than anybody else. But you have been given the privilege of a personal relationship with God, your Maker, through Jesus Christ! And as a result of this relationship...

2. His Divine Power has given you everything you need for life and godliness! (v.3a)

Christian: You've got everything you need for life!

Many a godless pagan, as we were thinking about last Sunday night, would give anything to have what you have! To have everything they need for life!

Whenever you became a Christian by trusting in Christ as your Saviour and Lord, what happened?

- Jesus Christ became the foundation upon which you have built your life ever since. He has given you stability and certainty in living. (See Luke 6:46-49 and 1 Corinthians 3:10-11).
- Your heart became a home for God to live in by his Spirit. Giving you true spirituality and completeness. (See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
- God placed his Holy Spirit into your life to indwell you and empower you to live life in the way that He had always intended it to be lived. Giving you strength and control. (See Romans 8:9-17).

Do you see these people that I have talked about tonight, who are searching for spirituality, who are trying to get in touch with God, looking into the cults or into the New Age, into Celtic or Eastern mysticism, that's what they are looking for – all along – and you've got it already! You're in touch with God – He lives in you by His Spirit – because you have a relationship with his Son, Jesus Christ, as your Lord and as your Saviour!

- All this is God's doing – **'His Divine Power'** (v.3a)
- God has given you **'everything you need for life'** (v.3b)
– so realise your potential – you don't need anything else!
- And you've everything you need for **'godliness'** (v.3c)
– don't miss that bit! God comes to live in you by his Spirit, first and foremost, to make you godly – to enable you to live a godly life – not just to give you a buzz!
- You don't need a second blessing, or a baptism of the Spirit, or the latest spiritual craze – you've got it all already – it's inside you! (Just like Sean Quinn was sitting on top of all that potential without knowing it – so are you!)
You've got all you need of God already – inside you – but you need to tap into that potential – You need to start digging deeper with God! (We'll see what that means next time in vs.5-11).

So, put it this way: You have the valuable deposit of God's Holy Spirit, within you, just under the surface. What you need to do is to start digging. Start bringing the fruit of the Spirit's work to the surface of your life.

So: you have a Personal Relationship with God.
And, you have the Divine Power of God within you. And...

3. You have the Precious Promises of God for you (v.4)

God has made us many promises in His Word, but two are specifically mentioned in v.4...

(i) The Privilege of participating in the Divine Nature (v.4b)

That is the GOAL of many world religions – to become like God, to become part of God, to be absorbed into God. (All sorts of weird ideas going round). But for us, as Christians, that's not our goal, it is in fact our starting point! We have already been given the privilege of sharing in the Divine Nature. We are already part of the worldwide Family of God. We are sons and daughters of the Living God – not at some point in the future – but now! And it's something we are certain of – because God has promised it: John 1:11-12 – we have been given the right to become sons of God! Romans 8:14-17 – we are sons of God by adoption! We have the privilege, as Christians, of being one with God right now!

(ii) The Power to escape the corruption in this world caused by evil desires (v.4c)

- Why do secular people today, who have turned their back on God and religion, now start searching for God in the weirdest of places?
- Because, ultimately, they have searched the world and they're disappointed with what they have found – sin, suffering, immorality, corruption, evil desires, emptiness.
- They search for God, or for 'spirituality' as they might call it, as an escape from this world.

Well, here, God has promised us as Christians, true escape from the corruption of sin:

Partly now: in that he gives us the Power of His Spirit living within us to combat the power of sin in our old nature and around us. (Romans 8:5-14).

But ultimately then: the corruption of this world is going to be punished and destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-13).

But you and I, as Christians, are promised by God that we will escape that, and be ultimately saved – living in a New Heaven and a New Earth!

Conclusion

This is what we've got as Christians!

All this world is still searching for – you and I have it already!

Have you realised what you have in Christ? Do you really appreciate it?

Well, next time you come across someone, honest enough to admit that they are searching for God (in whatever obscure kind of way), you try to honestly tell them what you have – simply through faith in Jesus Christ; simply through knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour.