

The Christian – His Rights and Privileges (2)

Introduction

A. While sin has robbed the human race of spiritual rights and privileges – the believer, through the new birth, has been given a new relationship with God.

B. The Bible teaches us that we have been given "all things" in Christ. The theme Peter is talking about is related to the needs of salvation and the daily life.

According to 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. II Peter 1:3

C. According to Scripture, therefore, (1) there are no "second-rate Christians (according to God's provision), (2) and every believer has the same provision for his daily life.

I. The Right and Privilege of Knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. I John 3:5

Comment: The knowledge John is writing about is more than historical information. He is referring to the grasp on truth which is the result of a personal relationship. While the historical is necessary it is not sufficient because of the terrible effects of sin (I Cor. 1:18; 2:14; II Cor. 4:4). In His mercy and grace God has brought every believer to the place where he can say, "I know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." The privileges and rights involved in such a relationship are beyond human comprehension in potential and value.

II. The Right and Privilege of Knowing We Have a Place in Heaven.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. II Cor. 5:1

Comment: Who knows what the future holds? Every day thousands attempt to learn what may lie ahead of them in time by use of the horoscope. In His grace the Lord God has told the Christian some things about his future. We know we have a home in heaven. The Lord Jesus said He was leaving earth to prepare such a place for those who believed on Him (John 14:1-3).

III. The Right and Privilege of Knowing the Grace of God.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. II Cor. 8:9.

Comment: The grace of God is one of the most important subjects in the Bible. It reminds us that in our relationship with God in salvation, our walk with God, and our service for Him – works play no part except as evidence (of grace, love, etc.). No one can "earn" the grace of God. In fact, the very word "grace" means "unmerited favor."

IV. The Right and Privilege of Knowing the Meaning of Redemption.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (empty life) received by tradition for your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. I Peter 1:18,19

Comment: The word "redeemed" means "to buy with a goal of setting free." The Lord Jesus is here described as a sinless lamb Who, through death, redeemed all who will believe upon Him. One important word in these verses is "from." The believer has been set free from his former "empty life." We do not have to live according to the patterns of sin found in our ancestry – nor in our former life.

V. The Right and Privilege of Knowing Our Divine Calling.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling Eph. 1:18

Comment: Most Christians believe only certain individuals in the church are called – the clergy, the missionary, the teacher, and perhaps the elders or deacons. The Bible is very emphatic in stating that all believers are called to live so Jesus Christ would be praised (Rom. 8:28,29; I Peter 2:5,9). This means that the Christian has the same call as the pastor, etc. How we carry out our call is quite different. We have different gifts, and fulfill our call in different ways, but we all have the same call.

VI. The Right and Privilege of Knowing the Assurance of Salvation.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him. I John 2:3-5

Comment: While the basis of our assurance is the Word of God, the evidence is found in our daily life. When one is born again he becomes a "new creature" II Cor. 5:17. The manifestation of this work is the consistent obedience of the believer. The emphasis here is on the basic characteristics of the Christian's life (I John 3:8,9). We may sin, as a believer, but a known sin will not characterize our life.

Conclusion: We make ourselves "second rate Christians" when we do not live in harmony with our rights and privileges.

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