

# What will my entry be like?

## 2 Peter 1:1-15

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As we travel through life, we increasingly encounter challenges and distractions that can knock us off course in our Christian walk. The apostle Peter, who has trod this path ahead of us, is keen to exhort us time and again to make progress in our Christian growth, reminding us that we have resources at our disposal to live godly, effective and fruitful lives in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You will have noticed from the reading a few minutes ago (2 Peter 1:12-15) that the apostle Peter insists in reminding us of some basic lessons to bring our lives back into line: did you notice the words “remind”, “reminder”, and “recall”? *“I know you know these things”*, says Peter, *“but I also know you need to be reminded”*. Oh how true is in our case too! So Peter appeals to our memory again in chapter 3, verses 1 and 2.

It is clear, therefore, that what Peter is transmitting to us is of such importance that he is willing to remind us as many times as necessary. We, on the other hand, have the task of making every effort to retain in our memory Peter’s instructions so that they may have a forceful impact on the way we live our lives. Peter exhorts us to make progress in our spiritual growth and he reminds us that we have everything necessary to do so (2 Peter 1:3 & 4) and he urges us to be diligent in developing the qualities that will keep us from living *“ineffective or unfruitful”* lives in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5 & 8).

My objective this morning, therefore, is to remind ourselves of 3 basic lessons that Peter has recorded for us to help us keep our Christian walk on the right course: **1.** This world is temporary. **2.** There is an eternal world out there. **3.** We will one day enter that world in its full dimension. These seem rather obvious statements for us Christians, but they are of the utmost importance if we are to understand the fundamental relevance to our lives of the question that concerns us this morning, that is, *“what will my entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be like?”*

So, as already mentioned, we should not take lightly Peter’s constant reminders of the great importance of diligently learning the lessons he transmits to us in this epistle. He urges us to be diligent in making every effort to develop those characteristics that make us *“partakers of the divine nature”*. Why is he so keen in reminding us? Well, **because he knows what is at stake**, which is this:

the **quality of our entrance** into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ **depends** on us making spiritual progress (2 Peter 1:11).

Please note the phrase **“in this way”**, as it implies there are a series of conditions that determine the type of entrance we will enjoy into the eternal kingdom of our Lord. Our entrance can be a “rich” entrance, i.e. an abundant and generous entrance (to use one of the Spanish versions) or, if the conditions to which the words “in this way” allude to are not met, our entrance into the kingdom of our Lord will not be as abundant, generous, full (“rich”) as it might have been! That is a quite a sobering thought, isn’t it?

But let us be absolutely reassured about one thing: in either case there will be an entrance, whether “abundant and generous” or the contrary (not up to the standard the Lord expected from us). Let us remember that Peter is addressing believers (1:1), so entry into the kingdom of God is by faith and not by works. Paul reminds us of this in his epistle to the Ephesians 2:8-9, but Paul also quite clearly tells us that we can live a Christian life that will cause us loss: 1 Corinthians 3:15.

So we must ask ourselves: what is this “abundant and generous” entrance into the kingdom? Well, I propose to you that what Peter is telling us is that God's future goal for you and me is to fully and actively (“richly”) participate in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1:11). You see, Peter is centering his thoughts not on the **fact of me entering** the kingdom, but on the **extent of my participation** in it, on the richness of my entrance! The Lord told a parable once about the kingdom of God in relation to 10 Servants (please read it in Luke 19:11-27), who had been entrusted a certain amount of money and were expected to put it to work until their master returned. Please note the master’s answer to each as they came to give account of themselves: “well done, my good servant!’ Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, **take charge of** ten, five, etc. cities”. But one servant came along and had nothing to show his master. One of the lessons of this parable is that in our Lord’s kingdom the extent of my participation depends on what I have done in this life with that which the Lord has entrusted to me.

With this in mind, therefore, the Apostle Peter reminds us that this life is a short period of training for the life that awaits us with Christ in his kingdom and, therefore, that we must diligently **develop our Christian life** (1:5-8).

So, to encourage and stimulate us to be diligent in developing our Christian growth the Apostle Peter reminds us of some truths that we must remember in our daily walk.

### **1. The world we live in and everything in it is temporary**

Peter, in 2 Peter 3:10-18, warns us that the heavenly bodies and the earth will be burnt up and dissolved.

Few things capture our attention and awaken our diligence more than temporality of things, right? When we have responsibilities and deadlines to take care of we are acutely well aware that we must take advantage of the time available to us: being diligent, leaving aside what gets in the way, discarding what is secondary, things and activities which don’t contribute to achieving our objective.

So, Peter warns us that since we know everything will be dissolved and nothing in this world is salvageable we should not fall into the error of the wicked (2 Peter 3:17). In other words, let’s not

make the things of this world the main investment of our lives. The Lord, during his ministry in this world, admonishes us: *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matthew 6:19-21).

So, we must constantly remind ourselves that if we focus our lives mainly on reaching all the potential that this life offers us, we will face a double problem, because, **a)** everything will be burnt up (2 Peter 3:10), and **b)** we will not have an abundant and generous entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, simply because we will not be prepared or qualified to actively and fully participate in the vast administration of His kingdom (as we shall see in a moment).

*May the Lord help us keep this lesson in our minds and hearts and help us grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This will bear fruit that lasts forever.*

## **2. There is another world which, in contrast to this one, is eternal**

We have already read it in verse 11 of the first chapter of Peter’s second epistle: *“For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

This other world is supernatural, it belongs to another dimension, to another order of things. There have, of course, been glimpses of it throughout human history, but the supreme revelation of that other world was made by the One who for three years brought it close to all those who encountered Him. We are talking, of course, about Jesus of Nazareth, who said of himself: *“No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man”* (John 3:13).

Peter was one of those who had a glimpse of Heaven. He was a direct witness of the extraordinary life of the Lord, and of his actions (which were in absolute harmony with his teachings). He was a direct witness of the absolute uniqueness of Jesus’ death, of His resurrection, and of the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit. Peter was also a direct witness of his miracles, proof that Jesus came from that other world, but Peter in this epistle focuses on an **intimate and singular experience** which he refers to in chapter 1, verses 16 -18: He had witnessed the Lord’s majesty!

Peter is referring to the occasion when the Lord takes him, James and John to a high mountain and fulfills what he had told them on another occasion: *“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:27). And Matthew describes Peter’s experience on the mountain: *“And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him”* (Matthew 17: 2-3).

Peter's experience teaches us that this other eternal world is close to us too! It can be experienced here and now, because heaven – if I may use this expression – is primarily an intimate relationship with the Lord himself, developing our experiential knowledge of him and participating in the divine nature. In his second epistle, Peter (1:3-4 and 3:8) makes clear that life in its fullest sense is attained through an intimate *“knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”*, so that we become *“partakers of the divine nature”*.

So we have, then, two options: **a)** we can live only for this visible and attractive world, which due to its temporality leads to future loss, or **b)** we live for the *“eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”, “growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”*.

*May the Lord help us choose this second option, for if we diligently deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow our Lord, we will be granted a rich “wide and generous” entrance into His kingdom.*

### **3. God's plan for us is to participate in the government of his kingdom**

The supernatural world that we have been talking about and to which we are heading is not only **eternal**: it is a **Kingdom**, which belongs to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1:11). The psalmist reminds us of this fact: *“The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all”* (Psalm 103:19).

The kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a kingdom that **encompasses the entire universe**, from the visible to the invisible, from the physical to the spiritual, the known and the unknown, everything created by God, and like any kingdom, it must be **governed, administered**, and its immense resources **developed**. Heaven, therefore, is not a passive place, it is rather a kingdom where those who govern it have the **adequate capacity and preparation to administer it**. That was God's original purpose when creating human beings (Genesis 1:26, 28 and 2:19). Having created them in His own image and likeness, they were to have dominion, to rule the earth and manage it as they exercised their God given capabilities.

God created us with an eternal dimension – in his image and likeness – so this world is a mere stepping stone, designed by God to be a training center which prepares us for an infinitely greater dimension of government, to occupy positions of authority in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (remember the Parable of the 10 Servants in Luke 19).

Consider too what Daniel writes – we remind ourselves he held positions of great authority in the Babylonian and the Medo-Persian empires: *“And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him”* (Daniel 7:27). The following verses also tell us that our participation in the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is nothing less than **to reign**: *“if we endure, we will also reign with him”* (2 Timothy 2:12); *“and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth”* (Revelation 5:10). The saints will judge the world and angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

As we ponder these things, there are, of course, questions that crop into our minds: What do we **know** about that kingdom? How **does it work**? What are the **rules of behavior**? What **goals and purposes** does that kingdom have? **Will I be fit to reign**?

The answer is found in verses 3 to 8 of this chapter 1: the key is in **the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. You see, the kingdom is His, His character and wisdom permeates everything. The kingdom revolves around Him. That is why Peter in these verses urges us to put all diligence in working on our sanctification, so that we become partakers of the divine nature in all its dimension, **through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior**.

That is the requirement for our entrance into the kingdom to be **“broad and generous”**: that **we know the King**, and have served and obeyed Him during our earthly life, becoming **“partakers of the divine nature”**. **To the extent that we have developed the mind of Christ we will be qualified to reign with Him.**

*May the Lord help us to advance daily in our knowledge of Him. Let’s diligently live our lives in the light of God’s word, choosing His divine perspective over our human perspective, for we are expected to reign with Him.*

Peter ends his epistle by asking us to reflect on how we are living our lives: **“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness** (2 Peter 3:11).

We are invited this morning to reflect on how we live our lives in the light of God’s Word and to praise our God and Father, who has not only brought us into the kingdom of his Son, but also desires that we reign with Him in his eternal kingdom.

We pray that we may see the Lord more clearly, love Him more dearly, and follow Him more closely. Amen.