



LIVING LIFE & BEING GODLY

A STUDY OF 2 PETER 1

We often believe that being godly means that a person can not live a productive or practical life. The view we have is that life demands compromises that either make life a drudgery or godliness useless. Peter who struggled with the realities of these issues, tells us that a meaningful life and a godly life are not mutually exclusive.

Second Peter was written shortly before Peter's death. He references in this book his impending death. Christian tradition places the death of Peter and Paul in the winter of AD 67-68. This corresponds to Paul's request in 2 Timothy for his winter coat when Timothy visits him in Rome. This would place their deaths sometime from December through February. The persecution of Christians ended with the suicide of Nero in June of AD 68.

Sunday School Illustration: Peter and John heal the lame man in the temple.

“THIS BLESSING” *2 PETER 1:1-4*

As we follow Peter through the New Testament, we watch his struggles not only through his own eyes but we see him through the eyes of his fellow Apostles. Paul in Galatians [chapter 2] gives us a window into this struggle when he challenges Peter who wants to secure the good will of powerful leaders in the Jerusalem church at the expense of fellow gentile believers' feelings at Antioch. Peter accepts correction from Paul and changes his direction. Being godly doesn't mean always being right but it means being aware of how our actions impact others and if these actions please God. In the 1st 4 verses of 2 Peter 1:3 we are introduced to 4 terms that Peter will unpack in the rest of this chapter.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul by Carlo Crivelli, 1430-1495

2 PETER 1:1-4

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like **precious faith** with us **by the righteousness** of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord,

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to **life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by **glory and virtue**,

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly **great and precious promises**, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having **escaped the corruption** *that is* in the world through lust.

“THIS BLESSING” *2 PETER 1:1-4*

These terms are:

- **Life** – [Gr.: Zoe'] It means life force. Peter uses it for to challenge us to an exemplary living.
- **Godliness** – [Gr.: Eusebeia] It means to do good worship. Peter uses it to reflect our need to please God with our lifestyle.
- **Glory** – [Gr.: Doxa] It means glory or splendor. Peter reminds us that the character of our life both reflects and reflects on the glory of Jesus Christ.
- **Virtue** – [Gr.: Arete'] It means virtue or moral excellence. Peter wants to challenge us to character building in our Christian living.



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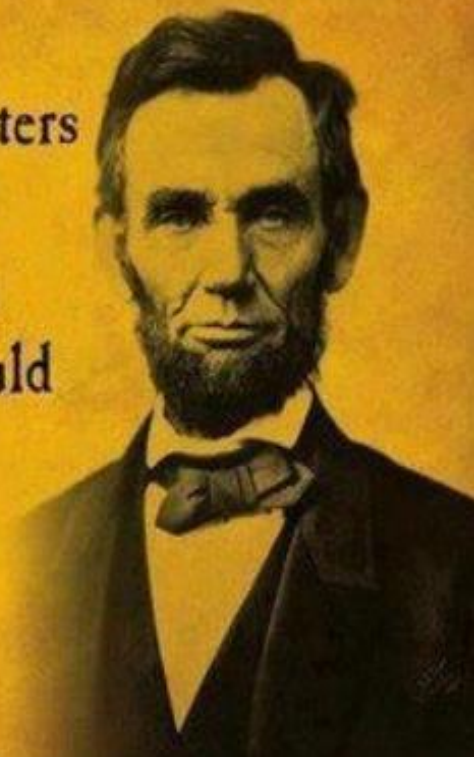
In the late 1850s, Abraham Lincoln was, as many Americans were, trying to understand the breadth and depth of the evil that our Supreme Court, President Buchanan and the Congress of the United States had enacted in the 1850s. The Dred Scott Decision [1857] declared Black people to be sub-human. The Fugitive Slave Law [1850] unleashed the power of the Federal bureaucracy in favor of slaveholders. The attempt by President Buchanan [1857-60] to eliminate abolitionist dissent.

“THIS BLESSING”

2 PETER 1:1-4

We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the Courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who would pervert the Constitution.

~ Abraham Lincoln



This quote though never spoken by Lincoln publicly was found in his 1859 notes for a series of speeches concerning the Dred Scott case of 1857

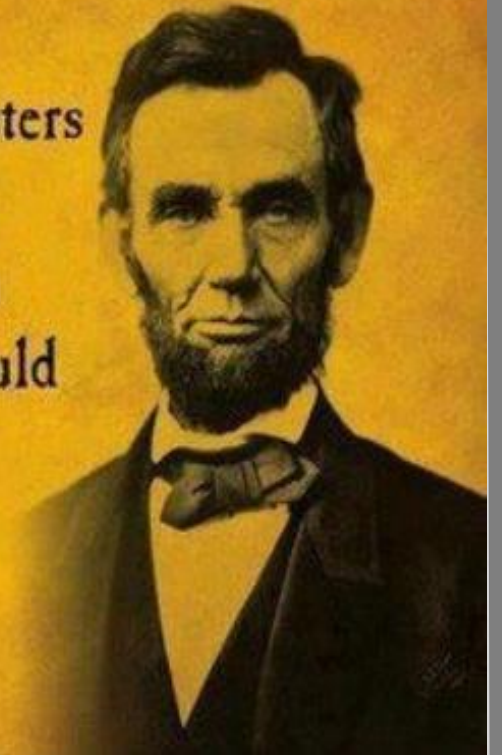
In a series of notes for speeches given to Republican committees in Ohio and New York from September 1859 – February 1860 leading up to the Republican Convention, Lincoln struggled with the actions of Congress, the Supreme Court and President Buchanan. Though he never used the phrase in a speech it reflected his feelings leading up to the election of 1860. Our Constitution held out hope for Lincoln and Fredrick Douglas that the evil of slavery would eventually be abolished.

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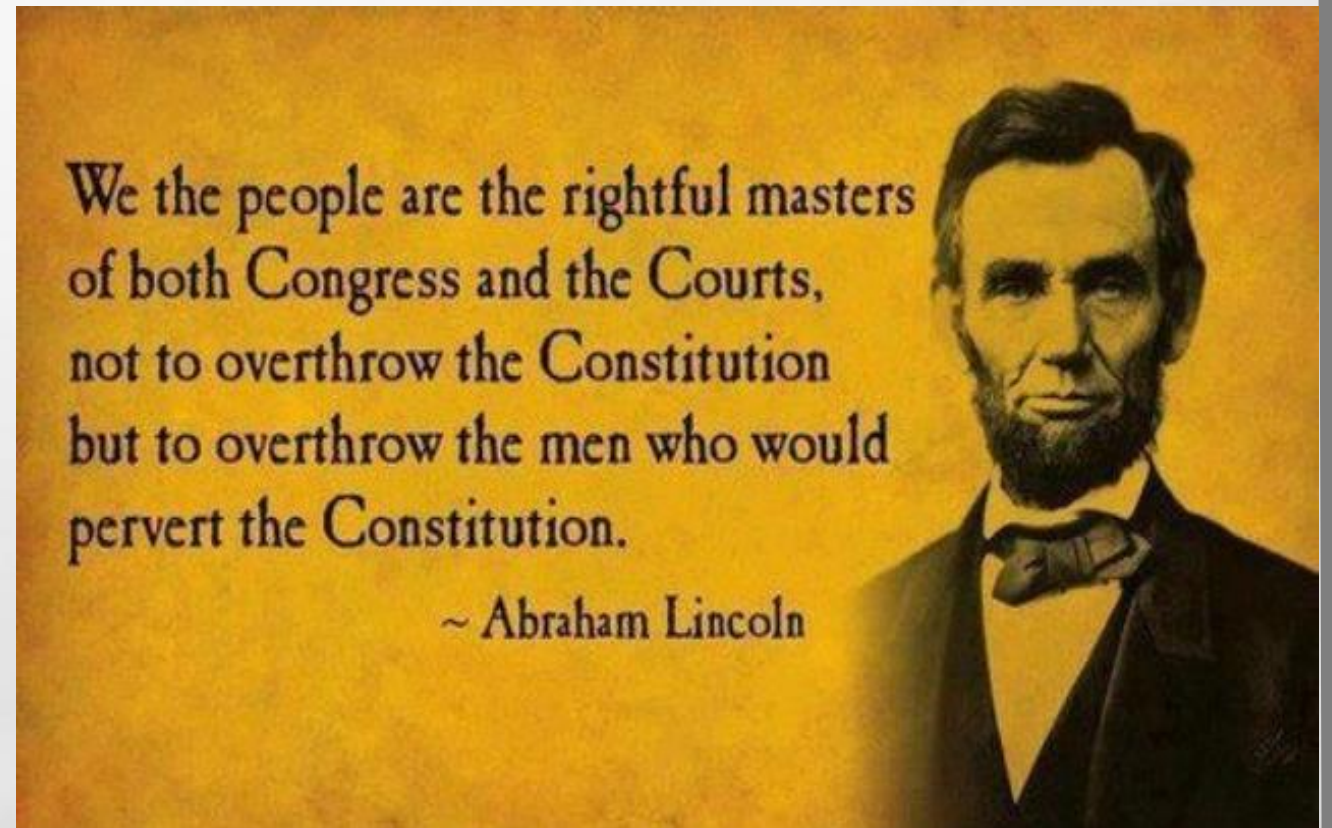


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In Lincoln's view the character of the American people would not continue to permit evil actions by government officials who intentionally twisted the Constitution to their own ends. Fredrick Douglass in a 4th of July speech in 1857 would give a blistering condemnation of the American people for tolerating the evils that had been unleashed in the 1850s. Unlike Lincoln he was pessimistic concerning the American public's character.

Ephesians 2:1-10

"THIS BLESSING" *2 PETER 1:1-4*



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EPHESIANS 2:1-10

1 And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the **lusts** of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

In Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul lays down 3 principles for us as we live our Christian lives:

1. Paul identifies that our old way of living and thinking as not pleasing to God. In fact, it is evil. These evils flow out of our “self driven passions” both Peter and Paul use the same word extensively “epithumia” which is often translated “lusts” but means “base passions”.
2. Paul tells us that the “grace” of God in Christ has changed our character and given us new direction.
3. Paul then tells us that God has a purpose and intent for our lives – to live godly.

“THIS BLESSING”
2 PETER 1:1-4



Happy 4th of July

We are blessed to live in this nation. I am fascinated by the creation of the United States. It is a unique phenomenon in world history. No one looking at the 13 colonies with all their political, social and economic differences believed they could ever come together to form a government that would last a decade let alone 2 and ½ centuries. Many expected the United States to collapse into anarchy or tyranny. Most rebellions in history had. The French Revolution that began in the decade after our own revolution ended would follow that well worn path.

Why was America different? The reasons are many but the blessing is universal. Our Constitution surprisingly is the the main reason. Enshrined in its pages is the belief in the importance, responsibility, sovereignty and weakness of the individual. This allows us to correct our course and limit our leaders' bad behavior.

“THIS BLESSING”

2 PETER 1:1-4



Happy 4th of July

Because of this unique character, America as a nation has done great good in the world. It has had and still has many failures, but it is the most generous and honorable nation our world has yet seen. This is a blessing. I am concerned about our country's future, but I am grateful for the blessing we have been and pray we will remain a blessing.

Peter focus on godly behavior. But he knows his own weaknesses and struggles. In Acts 3, Peter and John heal the lame man sitting at the Temple gate. Peters response to the crowd's amazement and accolades reflects a real perception of his own limitations and a desire to worship God with his actions. This is what it means to be "godly".

Acts 3:11-12

"THIS BLESSING"

2 PETER 1:1-4



Happy 4th of July

ACTS 3:11-12

11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

12 So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or **godliness** we had made this man walk?



“THIS BLESSING” *2 PETER 1:1-4*

We struggle with godliness because we as Peter know ourselves. We know that we struggle and fall. We also know that our self-centered passions can drive our decisions in evil directions. We need to remember the blessing of God’s grace that saved us and calles us to personal freedom and responsibility.

Peter through out his life would have blunders and failures where his selfish passion got out in front of God’s grace in his life.

He would rebuke Jesus, wish ill on a friend, violent attack a man, deny Jesus. Finally [Galatians 2] he hurt fellow believers because he was afraid to offend powerful people. Yet Peter in all these situations accepted correction in his life. If we are to to live full and godly lives and be a blessing, we must be willing to allow God’s correction in our lives. **Galatians 2:11-14**

San Pedro y San Pablo [*Saint Peter against St. Paul*]
by Jusepe de Ribera [1591-1652].

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GALATIANS 2:11-14

11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

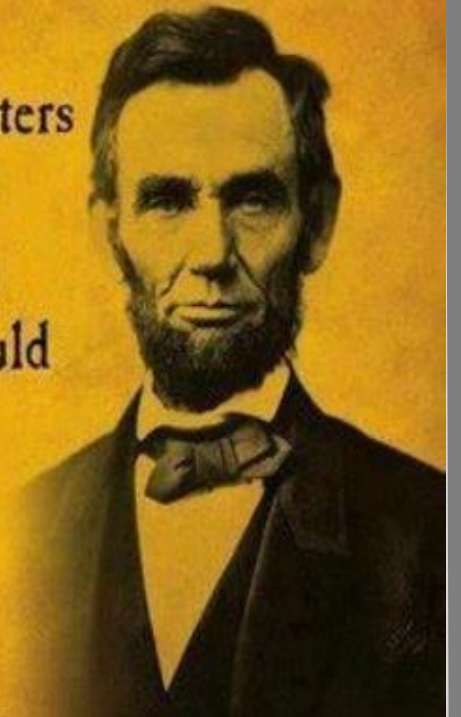
13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

In Lincoln's Inaugural speech of 1865 shortly before his assassination, he spoke of the desire for not only for healing of America but the desire that America embrace its Constitutional ideals for all Americans. He identified that the Civil War had been a correction of our evils. Present that day at the White House was Fredrick Douglas. Lincoln wanted to know his opinion of the speech above that of anyone else. Seemingly Douglas' faith in America had been restored. He would go on to become a staunch supporter of the Constitution and an American patriot.

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1 PETER 2:9-12

9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises *[virtues]* of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

“THIS BLESSING” *2 PETER 1:1-4*

God blesses our lives with His power and presence that we might become a blessing in this world in spite of our weaknesses and struggles. Peter was such a person. And we can be such people as well.



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