

1 Peter 1:6-9
Salvation's Joy and Trials

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Main Idea:

Our joy in Christ is unbounded even as Present Trials refine our faith for Christ's glory.
-two experiences happening simultaneously: trials and joy in Christ.

Prayer:

Our heavenly Father, you are great and gracious and compassionate. In your love for your people from before the foundation of universe you ordained not only our salvation but our sanctification - the way our faith would grow and be strengthened.

We thank you for the Apostle Peter, the deep spirituality and understanding he had of the Christian faith and how you taught him and guided him by the Spirit to write the things of God.

Help us, Lord, understand your truth today, bring it into our lives, and continue to grow in our faith as your children and servants. In Jesus' precious name we pray.

Today I want us to think about the most important thing we have. It's not our family, it's not our health, it's not our money, but it's our faith, our Christian faith.

It's the most important thing we have because nobody can take it away from us. The enemies of Christ could take away our possessions, they could take away our freedom by putting us in prison, they could even take away our life, but they can't take away our faith.

Our faith is like gold. Gold is one of the sturdiest substances in all creation. Fire cannot destroy it or discolor it. If a house burns down and there is gold jewelry or gold coins in the house, they will be untouched by the fire. They will look the same as they always have.

The Christian faith is like that. Once a person has it, by the gifting and grace of God, he or she cannot lose it. No matter what happens, no matter what trials of life may come our way, our faith remains. It remains fixed on Christ; Christ

the unchangeable one. He is not disturbed or distressed or surprised by the trials of his people on earth. He is with us every step of the way.

So we read in our text today...

⁶In this you rejoice,

What is the “this” that Peter is talking about? Whatever “this” is, it is a cause for rejoicing. So let’s consider...

I. Reason for Rejoicing

We have to look at the context – what went before verse 6. We have seen in previous study of verse 3 that we, Christian believers, have been given a “living hope.” It is not a dead hope. We have a living hope because God raised his Son from the dead and he is alive forevermore. He’s the living Savior; he’s alive and well to shepherd and govern our lives and bring us at last to his everlasting kingdom.

We also saw last week from verses 4 and 5 that we have an invincible inheritance from Christ – nothing can conquer nor take away nor diminish our faith because it is guarded by God’s power. Verse 5 says we’re “shielded by God’s power” – it’s like we God reaches down his invisible shield and all the evil schemes and plans that Satan would throw at us or knocked down by the shield of God’s power.

We have a living, vital hope and assurance in our salvation because it is grounded in and based on Christ’s resurrection from the dead, and then linked to this great reality we are kept and guarded by God’s power until Christ’s return.

In a world of trouble and trials and sin and evil, this is great cause for rejoicing. This is cause for rejoicing when we consider our own sins and failures, and when we see the evil in our culture and world all around us. In spite of all these problems, the resurrected Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is ruling and reigning over all creation and he will at last bring us safely to his heavenly kingdom.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says joy should be the mark of a Christian and if we don’t have joy we’re not very good witnesses. I think our passage today will show us why we can be joyous Christians in the ups and downs of life. The apostle Paul certainly had his trials, but the unwavering mark of his Christian life was his unquenchable joy in the Lord. he had the right perspective on life: our trials are temporary but our home with Christ is eternal.

Verse 6 continues:

...though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

Peter now brings up the matter of ‘trials.’ So what we see here is

II. The Necessity of Trials – v. 6

What Peter means by trials is “testings, difficulties, hardships, distresses.” He calls them “various trials,” so he evidently means that can be from different causes – many would be just the common problems of life that most of us experience – such as problems with health, with school, with job, with finances, with relationships,– and so forth. It would also include trials that come from the fact that because we are Christians we may be persecuted for stance with Christ and our Christian lifestyle.

Peter also uses this phrase “if necessary.” So evidently the trials we go through are considered necessary by God. Our trials accomplish certain goals in God’s plan for his people.

Peter says three things about these trials:

A. They are grievous

They are not just inconvenient or a bother, but they cause us grief – emotional pain and distress. They may cause us to weep and moan and cry out to God for help. There is nothing pleasant about trials and God knows exactly which trials will be suited for each individual.

But the thing that comforts us is that none of our trials happen by accident. God leads us into trials and he accompanies us into trials. So we’re never separated from God in our trials.

A friend of ours had a lot of serious health problems and operations that last few years of his life and on one occasion after surgery he was alone in his hospital room and suffering such excruciating pain that he cried out, “Enough,” then the Spirit of God answered him and said, “That’s for me to decide.” When our friend heard this he rejoiced because he knew his trial was no accident but under the sovereignty of God, and this gave him great comfort.

Peter goes on to say that these trials come to us (end of v. 6) ⁷ **so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

B. So trials are a necessity because they test the genuineness of our faith.

How does this work? How do trials test the genuineness of our faith. In other words, how do they verify or test the reality of our faith. Peter gives us a very clear illustration of this. He says that our faith is tested in the way that gold is tested.

In the ancient world gold would be panned out of riverbeds and the specks of gold embedded in other little rocks separated from the rest of the little rocks by melting

the mixture. Then the impurities would rise to the top and be skimmed off the top, leaving the gold in the bottom.

Melting the gold would turn it into a more concentrated and pure form.

This is what trials do to our faith. They bring up the impurities in our lives, the spiritual defects – they bring them up to the surface to make them more noticeable so they can be dealt with. If the fire were not put under the mixture of gold and other elements, the gold could not be separated into its pure form. It is the heating, the fire that does it.

So it is with us – it is the heat, the fire of trials that tests our faith. Job was tested by trials and through it all he learned that he needed to accept the sovereignty and purposes of God although he could not understand everything about God ways.

It is actually a mercy of God that he tests our faith in the fires of trials. Otherwise we would be ignorant of our own spiritual weaknesses and complacent in our remaining sinful habits and erroneous thinking. The “renewal of the mind” is a process that takes a lifetime. But a Christian who is converted at age 20 should be a much more mature believer at age 60 – after 40 years of trials and testing of various kinds that may come his way. It seems true that some people have greater and more excruciating trials than others. We don’t know why this is and we have to leave those things to God’s purposes. Maybe he gets more glory from the life of the brother or sister in suffering from extremely difficult trials.

This is difficult to accept when it seems we are in the brunt of a hard trial. But we have to look at the whole context of this passage – there is an abiding joy with the Christian no matter how hard the trial. It’s a realization that we belong to the Lord and these trials will pass. In fact, Peter says at the beginning of verse 6, “though now for a little while.” In comparison with the eternity of glory and peace that awaits us, these trials will only seem like a drop in the bucket.

Summary: our trials are grievous, they test the genuineness of our faith, and here’s the other point about our trials:

C. They will bring glory to Christ at his return – see verse 7:

So that your faith...”may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

When Christ returns he will be glorified for the great work of sanctification and purification and maturity that he accomplished in his people. These people will not be spiritual infants, untrained in the ways of God, but people who’ve been through the fires of trials and grown to trust Christ and repent of their sins and cling to Christ and grow in the knowledge of his Word. They will be battle-hardened warriors – true heroes who gave up the comfort of their own selfish lives to lay down their lives for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the earth

Peter, we should remember, was not one unexperienced in the trials of life. He had been Jesus' faithful right-hand man, but he had also failed the Lord when he denied knowing him, and he had yielded to the pressure of the Judaizers by withdrawing from table fellowship with the Gentiles when they came to Galatia.

And besides that, Peter had been one of the 12 apostles in Jerusalem when the church first formed on the Day of Pentecost. He likely began pastor some of those people then and continued as not only a pastor, but a leader of the pastors. So he was thoroughly familiar with the trials of life – his own personal trials, plus the many trials of God's people whom he had labored long. Peter knew all about trials – his own, and those of the people of God.

He was a man of observation, he was sensitive to the Spirit, he counseled with other leaders in the early church, and by the Holy Spirit he was given to understand something of how the trials in the Christian life function. He was a man of experience and was taught by the Spirit of God, besides having been at Jesus' side for three years, so God had equipped him to write about the trials in the Christian life. He was a veteran pastor who had no doubt walked with the people of God through many of their trials. The inspiration of the Spirit was the crowning ingredient that makes Peter's advice here "worth its weight in gold."

The trials of life are very tough but Peter gives us invaluable help in navigating our way through them. What he says next is so valuable. Look at v. 8:

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What we see next after looking at the necessity of these trials, we now look at

III. The Believer's Present Experience

Thankfully trials are not the whole of the Christian life but only part of it. Our present experience is also enhanced by three wonderful aspects of our relationship with Jesus:

A. Love for the unseen Christ

"Though you have not seen him, you love him.

Now Peter had seen Jesus, he had walked with Jesus for 3 years. He had an advantage over these Gentile believers to whom he's writing in Asia Minor, what we now call Turkey. They lived hundreds of miles away from Israel and Peter was ministering to them maybe 10 or 20 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Peter understood well that they had never seen Jesus, the way he had seen him. Because Peter had been with him he saw the great compassion the Lord had as he healed and delivered people of every age from every kind of affliction, infirmity of

body and mind. He had listened to Jesus instruct about God and about himself and about the Holy Spirit and how humans should relate to God and one another.

He had seen Jesus combatting evil – Satan himself – and casting out demons that oppressed people. Peter had seen the truth first hand that Jesus came not to be served by humans, but to serve them. Peter saw his struggle in the garden of Gethsemane as Jesus wrestled with the horror of having to go to the cross and bearing in his own innocent body the horrible sins of his people of all ages. Peter saw Jesus take abuse from the Roman soldiers and from his own people. He saw him dying on the cross. But then he got to be there on several occasions when the resurrected Son of God appeared to his disciples, and even to him alone on one special visit on resurrection day.

Peter had got to experience all these interactions with the Lord Jesus and he was drawn to the strong yet tender Lord Jesus Christ – the Jesus who confronted evil head on – who confronted religious hypocrisy – the Jesus who wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus – and Peter, overwhelmed by the kindness and love of his Savior could not but love him with all his heart. Peter loved and served Jesus Christ all the days of his life until he was killed, according to tradition, under the Roman emperor Nero's persecution of Christians. It is said that Peter was crucified, but he insisted on being crucified upside down, because he said he wasn't worthy of being crucified the way his Lord had been, right side up.

So how could Peter say to these Gentile Christians, **Though you have not seen him, you love him?** It was because although they had never seen Jesus with their eyes, they had heard of him and seen him in the eyes of their thoughts and imagination as they listened to Peter tell them what he had known and seen and experienced of Jesus Christ.

They had heard the gospel, they had seen Jesus with the eyes of their heart – what they had heard and learned about Jesus caused them to love him also, as Peter did. Peter confirmed and declared what he had seen and heard from them – their love for Jesus was like his own love for Jesus.

We are in the same situation as these Galatian Christians, are we not? We have not seen him or listened to him, or seen him heal the woman who had had a bleeding problem for 12 years. But what we have read and heard has engendered in our own hearts and minds the same kind of love that Peter had and that these Christians living far north of Palestine had.

The Word of the Gospel is powerful, the preaching of the Gospel is God's ordained way of communicating divine truth to his people. To hear the Word of the Gospel speak of Jesus Christ is just as real and authoritative as if we had been there ourselves hearing him and watching him. Never underestimate the truth and authority of the Scriptures. They speak of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, divinity clothed with humanity, who walked among men and women, and which call upon us

to believe, to repent of our sins, and call upon Jesus as the Lord of our lives. ¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18

These people had beheld Jesus Christ in the preaching of the apostles, they beheld and they believed, and they followed Jesus. They became his disciples.

Peter goes on in v. 8 and adds this, **Though you do not now see him, you believe in him...** So they not only loved Jesus but they believed in him. These are really two sides of the same coin. Love leads to belief and belief leads to love – all this without ever seeing Jesus face to face, but seeing him with the eyes of faith.

Do you have the eyes of faith today? Have you seen him in the Scriptures? Have you beheld his miracles, his teachings, his sufferings, and his victory over death? Have you seen and believed? Have you seen him and come to love him? The Word of the Gospel calls us to this. The Word of the Gospel accomplished this in our lives.

How can we not treasure the bible, the word of God, the Old and New Testaments, for there we find the buried treasure that is so precious and valuable that we should sell all we have and purchase it. We must do anything and everything to get it. To get Jesus, that is. To come to him in faith and love and repentance.

Have you seen him in the gospel? Do you love him, do you believe in him? Have you begun to follow him by confessing him as Lord and Savior in the waters of Christian baptism.

Are you growing in him? Are you becoming more acquainted with him in the scriptures, read at you own kitchen table, or through the preaching of the Word at church and on the internet. Won't you come to the waters of Jesus Christ and drink of him. To know him is to love him. To see him is to believe him. To behold him is to follow him all the days of your life.

The trials may come and go, but our compass is set on true north – following our Lord Jesus Christ all the days that he gives us on earth. And afterward he will receive us into glory.

Verse 1

He who would valiant be
 'Gainst all disaster
 Let him in constancy
 Follow the Master
 There's no discouragement
 Shall make him once relent

His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Verse 2

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound —
His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight:
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.

Verse 3

Since, Lord, Thou doest defend
Us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labor night and day
To be a pilgrim.

But Peter has one more thing to say about the believer's present experience of the unseen Christ, you **rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,**

Yes, life has its trials and they can be very grievous, but Peter has observed something in these believers. They have obtained a joy that is so deep and so all pervasive that it encompasses their lives. This realization of who Jesus is and how he has come to save them from their sins and give them eternal life had overwhelmed them with gratitude. They had been worshippers of idols, of false gods that were only leading them to hell. They had been immersed in all kinds of sins.

But the light had come to them in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – his life, death and resurrection. Light and truth and salvation had come to the human race and the apostles of Jesus had obeyed Jesus' command and spread out from Jerusalem to preach about Jesus in the Roman, Gentile world. Light and deliverance and salvation had come to them.

They realized the spiritual peril they had been in and the great deliverance that had come to them. The God of the universe had clothed himself in our humanity and come down to planet earth to rescue a people for his name. And they had been

included in that elect number – oh, the mercy of God! Oh, the kindness of God! Oh, the love of God – it had come to them, even to them, even to these Gentile sinners.

It was like rain after months of drought, like a rich meal of food after starving for weeks, it was like instantaneous healing from a dreaded and fatal disease. It was light to chase away their darkness. Love to replace their hate. Glory to replace their shame.

But it had come. It had come to them. The morning star had arisen in their hearts and minds in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Truth had replaced error. Light had chased away the darkness. Sadness had turned to joy.

They were overwhelmed when they realized what the living God had done to save them from their sins. Words were not enough to express their joy. They used every word they could think of to praise and thank God and rejoice together. But human language was not totally capable of expressing what they knew and felt.

They were filled with joy and the glory of the Lord. There's one last point. Verse 9 says, **obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

IV. The Salvation of Your Souls

Notice that the text says “obtaining the outcome of you faith.” This is present tense verb. They were even at that time experiencing the salvation of their souls. They had been born again by the ministry of the Holy Spirit because Christ had been raised from the dead. They had already begun to experience the resurrection power of Jesus Christ in their lives. This is true conversion, this is scritureal conversion. This is the way savaltion works. When the Spirist of God enters a human life that person is changed forever. There is a new presence and power in their lives – the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is why salation is permanent for the believer. Peter says in verse 4 that their **inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.**

Salvation of our souls is an experience, given by God, that begins now and goes on forever. But it does have a goal. Peter calls it an “outcome.” It is the end, the summing up, the consummation. Like the goal of a basketball team is to win the game, the goal of a treasure hunter is to raise up that sunken Spanish galleon and find that treasure chest of gold.

The end of our salvation, the goal is to transform faith into sight. To be in the presence of the one whom we now see by faith. To see him face to face. To worship him, to embrace him, to express our adoration and devotion as we fall at his feet.

Until that time we have to go through the necessity of trials for the perfection, the refining of our faith. But it works for our spiritual maturity and will bring glory to Christ now and when he returns.

Until then, keep loving him, keep believing in him, and keep rejoicing in him. Your living hope because of Christ's resurrection from the dead will be consummated into face to face fellowship at his return. We await that glorious Day. Amen.

-by Jeff Gregory, pastor
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