

The Joy of Salvation

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[0 : 00] Amen. I want you to open up your Bibles to 1 Peter.! The book of 1 Peter. It's right before 2 Peter, but it's kind of hard for you to find, right after Hebrews and James.

So 1 Peter, we're still in chapter 1, and this morning we're going to read verses 6 through 9. So as you turn there, I want to ask you guys to stand with me as we read God's Word together.

1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 6. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 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.

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, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Take this Word now. We continue to pray. Speak to us through it. In Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. Amen. You know, throughout this letter of Peter, we have, this is now only, I think, our fourth week in 1 Peter.

[1 : 23] And throughout this letter, we're going to see the Apostle Peter address the issue of Christian suffering over and over again. In fact, we saw that hinted at, even in verse 1, where he refers to the original recipients of this letter as the elect exiles of the dispersion.

In other words, he addresses these people as those who are, even in the places in which they live, treated as foreigners. They feel like pilgrims in their own country and in their own society.

And so we can see, even in verse 1, a bit of a hint that suffering is going to loom large in this letter and suffering looms large in the lives of the people to whom Peter originally wrote this letter.

But we come head on into suffering for the first time where Peter directly addresses the issue of suffering in these four verses that we're looking at this morning. But that's not the last time that we're going to come upon this theme.

It dominates 1 Peter. You can see it even in chapter 2, where we are told in verse 13 that we're to be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution.

[2 : 33] He says that whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors sent by him to punish those who do evil, to praise those who do good, for this is the will of God, that you should, by doing good, silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Foolish people, he will later go on to describe, who persecute God's people. He says there in verse 20, what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure, but if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

So he says you're going to suffer. It's no good if you suffer because you deserve to suffer for doing something evil, but if you endure when you suffer for the good that you do, that is counted before God.

That counts. That's worth something. It means something. He goes on at the beginning of chapter 3 to address the suffering of wives who are oftentimes married to husbands who are not believers and they struggle in those relationships and he addresses that suffering directly.

He begins in the middle of chapter 3 to talk about those who suffer for the sake of righteousness.

Verse 13, he comes back to that theme. Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good, but if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed.

[3 : 47] In chapter 4, he says, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you as though something strange were happening to you. Over and over in this short little letter, Peter returns to the theme of suffering and in particular, he returns to the theme of suffering for the sake of righteousness, suffering for the sake of your faith in Christ.

And this is something about which Peter speaks with authority. I mean, he speaks with authority first of all because obviously he is an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He identifies himself as that in verse 1.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ so that he bears the very authority of Christ in his writings. So in anything that Peter or Paul or the other apostles write down, they speak as authorities.

But Peter speaks uniquely as authority as well because he experiences suffering in his own life. If you track through the book of Acts, you will see a bit of Peter's suffering. Not as severe, say, as the apostle Paul's suffering, but real nonetheless.

He is harassed and arrested by the leaders in Jerusalem twice and released until finally after the leaders have killed, Herod has killed James, one of Peter's closest friends and a fellow apostle.

[5 : 02] Herod then arrests Peter and puts him in prison where for all Peter knows he is awaiting the same fate as James, waiting to be killed until he is released by a heavenly messenger, by an angel miraculously from prison.

Peter lived a life of suffering. He wrote this letter from the city of Rome. And if you ask yourself why in the world would Peter, the Galilean fisherman, be in Rome?

Why is he not still in Jerusalem where in the early days of the church God had given him an incredible ministry? He preached once and 3,000 people were converted. Why is he no longer in Jerusalem where he could continue that ministry?

Why way across the empire in Rome? Because he had been scattered along with the rest of the apostles and most of the believers in Jerusalem. Early persecution scattered them and now here's Peter in Rome later in his ministry.

And in not many years from the writing of this letter Peter himself will be martyred for his faith. So he speaks to the issue of suffering with authority not simply as an apostle but he speaks as one who knows suffering intimately who has encountered it in his life and who knows that more suffering awaits him in the future.

[6 : 20] He speaks with authority to the issue of suffering but before we can even look at what Peter says about suffering we have to pay very close attention to the context in which he begins to address it.

So I want you to take a look here at the very beginning of verse 6 where he says in this you rejoice. The context in which Peter begins to deal with suffering in earnest is in the midst of rejoicing in the midst of joy.

And then if you move down to the end he says in verse 8 though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

So we begin this passage this morning with Peter saying that you're rejoicing in something. In this you rejoice. There's a rejoicing in something and then at the end of the passage if I might give you my translation of verse 8 is though you do not see him believing in him you rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory for you are obtaining the outcome of your faith.

So there's a rejoicing in something in verse 6 and then in verses 8 and 9 there's a rejoicing for or because of something. Rejoicing in something rejoicing because of something and these are not two different items that he's addressing.

[7 : 43] So let's take a close look and ask what is it in which we are rejoicing that Peter's talking about. What is this in this? What is this? Well you can see it in the verses above where he says that according in verse 3 according to the great mercy of God he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled and unfading and then move down to verse 6 in the verse 5 that we are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I told you last week that those three items or those three phrases living hope that comes through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and inheritance that is reserved for us in heaven and then a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time those are three ways of describing the same thing. And what Peter is saying in those verses is that there awaits for those who are the followers of Christ a great inheritance eternal life resurrection life final full ultimate salvation awaits those who have trusted in Christ.

And so now in verse 6 he says it is in that it is in that future hope of final ultimate salvation that we rejoice in that you rejoice which connects us back down to verses 8 and 9 that we are rejoicing with joy inexpressible and filled with glory for we are obtaining the outcome of our faith the salvation of

our souls.

It's the same thing. We rejoice in future final ultimate salvation and we rejoice because we are through faith obtaining our ultimate final salvation.

[9 : 30] So if I were to summarize the theme of this entire passage I would say it this is succinctly I think as I can put it is that that faith in future joy the inheritance the salvation the blessing faith in future everlasting joy is the foundation and cause of joy in the present.

How can you have joy in the midst of the many and varied trials that Peter mentions? How can we rejoice when everything around us begins to fall apart and crumble?

How can there be any real sense of excitement? Of rejoicing? Of happiness? Now when things at times look so badly how can that be?

And the answer that Peter gives to us is that your eyes are not simply riveted upon right now your eyes are riveted upon the future and in the future an inheritance an everlasting inheritance a joy a life that never ends awaits you and if you fix your eyes upon that joy it will produce in you joy in the present.

Faith in future joy is the foundation and cause of joy in the present in the midst of whatever trials we might endure. That's the point of this passage.

[11 : 02] Now let me show you how we get there. Verse 6 In this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials.

Pause right there because I want to dig deeply into this verse and help you to understand a little bit more about what exactly the apostle Peter is saying. In this you rejoice though now for a little while you are grieved by various trials.

Grieved by various trials. What exactly does that mean? Well it means first of all that he's addressing all sorts of things. He's not being really specific. He's not saying well you are beset with the same kinds of suffering that I have dealt with.

You're going to be arrested and imprisoned and eventually killed. That's not actually the fate of the majority of Christians throughout history. It wasn't even the fate of the majority of Christians in the first century.

We talked about that overblown view of persecution of the church in the first century that in reality their suffering and their persecution at the hands of non-believers. It was not all that different from the suffering that we experience today.

[12 : 06] Yes there were the occasional localized persecutions in which Christians were beaten and sometimes killed but on the whole the kind of suffering that first century Christians endured was the same kind that we endure.

The loss of friends separation from family because you take such a strong stance upon your faith in Christ. Belittlement by others social ostracism at times being looked at strangely because you hold so firmly to certain beliefs.

This is the kind of suffering that these people were primarily enduring. It's the same kinds of sufferings that you and I primarily have to endure when suffering comes into our lives. They faced sickness and disease. They faced painful circumstances in the midst of their families.

The same sorts of things that you and I deal with. So when he says that they are grieved by various trials that's what he means. Things that are common to all of us.

Not these extreme examples of persecution. We often think that passages like this don't really apply to us because we've not been thrown to the lions.

[13 : 08] We're not in a prison in Iran waiting to find out whether or not we're going to die. So these sorts of passages well these are words of encouragement we can offer to those who really suffer but they don't affect me. But understood in context.

If you understand exactly what Peter is saying and the people to whom he's writing you begin to understand that he's touching upon the very things that touch us. He's dealing with the very trials that come into our lives and would attempt to draw us away from faithfulness to Christ.

That's exactly what he's talking about when he says that you're grieved by various trials. And that word grieved is used over and over in the New Testament. Sometimes it means something like grieve.

Sometimes it means that sorrow has fallen upon you. You are sorrowful. So Paul says in 1 Thessalonians I do not want you to grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

He's addressing the Thessalonians and talking about Christians and friends of theirs who have died and he says now when you think about your believing friends who have died I don't want you to be sorrowful same word I don't want you to grieve as do people who don't have that future hope.

[14:25] You see? So it does have to do with sorrow and loss but it's more than that. It is a deep emotional anguish at the painful circumstances that you face.

It is in fact one of the words used in the Gospel of Matthew to describe Jesus' anguish as he knelt down in the Garden of Gethsemane and literally sweat drops of blood.

We see this great distress this great turmoil that our Lord experiences there and it's described with this very word that he was distressed is what most translations say.

He was grieved as he knelt down in the Garden. It is intense emotional affliction that comes upon you when outside circumstances intrude upon your life.

Painful circumstances come into your life. And so Peter is telling us that yes he knows that because of all of these various small and large sufferings that come into our lives we are going to be distressed.

[15:28] We are going to be sorrowful and grieved. We are going to feel the weight of emotional stress in our lives. That's going to happen. That is a reality for all the followers of Christ.

It's going to happen he says. But he says it's only going to happen for a little while. Notice what he says for a little while in verse 6.

Just a little while. And we think it doesn't feel like a little while. I mean if you are in a painful marriage that lasts for 30, 40, 50 years and never improves and never gets better it just doesn't get better.

The very thing that Peter addresses in chapter 3 when he talks to wives for suffering in marriage and you are in the midst of something like that that lasts decades. You think this is not a little while. This is not a small thing. Don't trivialize my suffering by saying that it only lasts for a bit or if you endure cancer for 10 or 12 years and it keeps recurring and keeps coming back and you go through treatment and you are in remission and then 5 years later it is back and you go through treatment again which is awful and terrible often times and then a few years later it comes back and you have been dealing with it for 10, 12, 15, 20 years and you say it is not a little while.

[16:47] It is just not. It is long and it is painful. Parents who have had children who have rebelled against them and left the home or there have been tension there sometimes for years and even decades would say that is not a pain that is short lived.

That is a long lasting pain and it almost feels you read this and he says oh you are going to be grieved by all these kinds of trials but only for a little while it almost feels like he is trivializing our trials and yet he is not.

He is helping us to see our trials in the midst of a larger picture because if your eyes are focused on future joy on the inheritance on the living hope on the salvation to be revealed at the last time and you see that that is a life that literally lasts forever with no end with ever increasing joy each moment forever.

Viewed in the light of eternity 50 or 60 years of suffering is but for a little while. And God means for us to see our suffering in that way.

He means for us to understand that whatever may befall you whether it be painful for a day or painful for a decade whatever befalls you it is but for a little while only for a little while it will not endure forever but joy and life those will last forever.

[18:37] It's just for it's just for a little while all the turmoil all the pain it is just for a little while all the pain that Jesus endured in the garden and all the pain that Jesus endured on the cross we read that passage earlier from Hebrews chapter 12 where we are told that it was for the joy set before him for the joy set before him he endured the cross scorning the shame this is not an embracing of pain this is not this is not some sort of sadistic form of creation that welcomes pain and says make me hurt God I want to feel the pain it's not that sort of thing Christ endured the cross scorning the shame for the joy set before him that's what Peter would have us do Peter would have us imitate Jesus and understand all of our trials all of our pains are but for a little while if our eyes are fixed on a future joy in this you rejoice future salvation in this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary does that mean that we may not endure trials well if it's necessary he might put you through the wringer if it's necessary he might cause suffering to come into your life that's not at all what the phrase means in fact I probably wouldn't even translate it as if necessary

I would probably translate it as something like because it's necessary the word necessary means that it must happen it's used it's used most frequently in the New Testament to describe things that have been sovereignly ordained by God to occur in other words these trials these are not things that might come into your life if it becomes a necessity these are things that are going to come into your life because God has sovereignly ordained and decreed that they should they are going to come and they are not going to come upon you by accident they are not going to come upon you because God has slipped up they are not going to come upon you because for the moment God is unable to prevent them they are going to come upon you they are going to enter into your life because they are divinely ordained they are necessary according to the divine plan in this you rejoice even though now for a little while because it's the Lord's will you are going to be distressed because of all of these various trials that are coming upon you there's your reality rejoice in the midst of all of that it's only a little while rejoice in the midst of it and now we come to the explanation of why why does it work like this why why has

God designed the Christian faith why has he designed our lives and put things together in such a way that joy comes to us in and through trials why why is this a part of the divine plan why why insert that necessary dee why insert that in there Peter why tell us why is why is this the way that it has to be I don't know any genuine followers of Christ who do not walk through fiery trials from time to time I do not know any because they do not exist this comes upon all of us and so we have to ask the question Lord why have you designed it so that it works in this particular way why have you not designed it so that once we confess faith in Christ once we begin to follow him you begin to clear out all the roadblocks you begin to remove all the sicknesses and all the death and all the rejection and give us all the best parking spots and we go to the mall why don't you do all that for us why have you ordained that it should occur in this kind of a way and that's what the middle section of this passage is all about he's going to explain why and how suffering functions in this way in our lives so focus in there verse 7 begins with an important word so that in other words he's given us the purpose you want to know why you're rejoicing in these trials and why he's bringing these trials upon you here you go so that the tested genuineness of your faith now skip that middle clause we'll come back to it so that the tested genuineness of your faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of

Jesus Christ here's the point of trials God sovereignly decrees that trials should come into our lives because they are the proving ground for genuine faith the word that's translated in my translation as tested genuineness means provenness it means that these trials are coming upon you so that your faith is proven by them and because it's proven by them it's going to result in something praise and honor and glory when Christ returns so this is how it works we put our faith in Christ it is yet to be seen whether or not that faith is real and lasting and genuine we've all known people who have for a time been excited about going to church have been excited about spiritual things and read their Bible frequently and then faded from it all together there's known people like that so we profess our faith in Christ we say that we believe in him we begin to do all the things that

Christians are supposed to do and yet it is yet to be seen whether or not that is a genuine real profession of faith so how do we know how is that faith tested and proven to be real through trials through trials and then when your faith proves itself to be real and genuine authentic faith in Jesus Christ it results in something praise glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ one of the most frightening passages in all of the Bible is when Jesus tells us that in the last day when he returns many will say to him Lord Lord and he'll say to them depart from me I never knew you oh and they'll protest but we did these things for you we did all of these great ministries for you and at the end of the day though Christ says I never I never knew you he does not say well that was good that you were faithful for a time but you kind of fell off towards the end and if you know

[25 : 28] I knew you earlier but now I don't no he says I never knew you your faith was never genuine was never authentic it was never real because it did not pass through the fiery trials that came upon you and so Peter is telling us we rejoice because our faith is proven real by the test that God brings into our lives and therefore it results in praise glory and honor to Christ when he returns when our faith shows itself genuine Christ is greatly honored he is greatly greatly honored so the tested genuineness of your faith may be found to result in glory and honor and praise at the revelation of Jesus Christ it is tested and he uses the illustration it's tested like gold just like gold is tested now it doesn't doesn't relate to us very well today because we don't deal with gold regularly alright our currency is made out of paper and cheaper metals and most of us don't even use that

I don't carry cash with me hardly ever I use my debit card my credit card my kids have a much better understanding of how the debit card works than how the actual monetary system in the world works okay they don't understand this issue of gold and silver and all these sorts of things very well in fact for most kids gold coins are for pirate movies not for actually purchasing things alright so we're a little bit removed from this issue of gold but we kind of get a vague idea we understand that in the ancient world it was the purity of your metal that determined its worth and so because gold was more dense than almost every other metal as you heated gold up all the impurities would rise to the top you just slough them off the top very easily and then you've got pure gold and when that gold cools off and you place it on the scale it's going to be very heavy it's going to demonstrate its worth it's easy to see but that doesn't happen unless it goes through fire unless you put what you've mined into a very very hot furnace it will never be worth as much because if you put your gold on the scales and it's filled with all sorts of other things and it's got all sorts of impurities it's going to lessen the density of what you've got it's going to lighten it it's not going to be as heavy as it would appear to be and so you might think that you have a certain amount of gold and yet you put it on the scales and you just don't have it or you may have something that turns out not to be gold at all it's burned up it's just not it was not authentic gold it was some other mineral that looks like gold that happened frequently in each world and people would try to pass things off as gold or silver and when they were put on the scales the truth came out or when they were put through the fire the truth came out

Peter says well gold eventually perishes even gold everything around us perishes but faith is different when faith is put through the fire and proven to be genuine it lasts and endures forever it's even it's even more precious it's even more valuable than the gold that sustains you day to day and allows you to buy the bread that you need from the market it is more precious it is more valuable than this more precious he says in verse 7 than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire if you have real authentic genuine faith it is worth more than everything else in the world around you but the only way for you to know whether or not you possess something of such great worth is if you pass through the fires of affliction there's no other way for you to know there's no other way for you to confirm it it is necessary you must pass through these trials and then your faith proven to be real results in ultimate final salvation and then he goes on to describe that faith in more detail it's not a faith that's based upon what you can see though you have not seen him you love him and though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice it's not it's not a faith that's rooted in things that we can see around us because the trials are going to come and they're going to make everything around us look and feel dark and hopeless they don't feel that way you don't see the blessing of

God when you're in the midst of trial you don't see the good that God's going to bring out of cancer you don't see the good that God's going to bring out of rebellious children you don't see the good that God's going to bring out of getting fired from your job you don't see the good that God's going to bring out of all you cannot see it you cannot see God at work when you're in the midst of a trial you do not see him you cannot you can't see him and yet you love him that's what genuine faith does it loves this giver of all good things even when it seems that nothing good is coming your way loves him and believing in him it rejoices it rejoices when you see no cause for rejoicing in your life in the immediate present in the moment you see a cause for it you don't know if things are going to turn around in your family you don't know if your kids are going to turn around and come back and begin to follow after the ways that you've taught them you don't know if that's going to happen you have no way of knowing that you don't know if your job is going to get better or your job is going to get worse you don't know we don't know in the world is the economy going to improve is the economy going to crash in six months is our way of life going to fall we have no way of knowing or is it just going to continue on for another hundred years we have absolutely no way of seeing and knowing those sorts of things we don't see always around us in the midst of trials we don't see a reason to rejoice and yet he says not seeing anything right now in the moment you rejoice with a joy he says that is inexpressible and filled with glory can't explain this kind of joy to anyone there are not words to adequately describe to adequately explain the existence of this kind of joy

I have seen believers endure the loss of loved ones and rejoice in the middle of it and you think to yourself how is that possible how can they do that how can a woman who's lost her husband of 60 years and who has no other means of caring for herself because he provided everything how is she rejoicing through her tears right now because I see the joy in the tears on her face how can that happen how is that possible it's inexpressible you can't explain it you can't even you can't even

really describe it when you see no reason for it no cause for it you see nothing that would lead you to understand it it's there and it's inexpressible and it is filled with glory because for verse 9 back to it again for we are obtaining the outcome of our faith that that proven faith obtains an outcome that proven faith assures a result salvation of your souls ponder that for a moment salvation eternal life heaven the inheritance it's the result of something it's the result of tested proven genuine faith faith in

[33 : 43] Christ salvation does not belong to everyone if it's the result of something particular heaven does not await everyone if it only awaits those who have tested genuine faith if it is indeed the product and the outcome of proven genuine faith in Jesus Christ that means that those who do not have proven tested genuine faith in Jesus Christ do not obtain its outcome salvation which means that we are surrounded by a lot of people for whom this outcome is not assured for whom the inheritance is not reserved and for whom the hope of life is not a reality we are surrounded because regardless of their spirituality regardless of the goodness that they possess in their own eyes or the eyes of the people around them regardless of all that they may do only one thing obtains salvation real genuine tested proven faith in Jesus

Christ and so the primary question that we have to deal with this morning is do we possess that I'm not asking if you agree with the truths of the scriptures that's step one in faith that's step one I'm not asking you that James says that even the devils believe in that sense even the demons believe in that sense and yet they shudder at the very presence and thought of God not asking whether or not you agree with truth that's just step one I'm asking whether or not you have real genuine proven trust in him to bring you all the way home are your eyes fixed on the promise of future joy so firmly that whatever comes your way cancer or broken relationships or lost jobs whatever comes your way cannot put out the fire of joy in your heart do you possess that kind of real faith in Jesus Christ or are you like gold that perishes when it's tested perishes! dies has no hope everybody everyone falls into one of those two categories there is no in between there is no I'll figure it out later there is no well I'm not quite sure about it so I'll deal with it at a later date there is no well I think so I'm a decent enough person that I think I'll be okay no it's either have that kind of genuine proven tested faith in Christ or you do not that is the only question that we need answer this morning whatever may face you all we need know is whether or not the tested genuineness of your faith will be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the coming of Christ let's pray it is a glorious thing to think that all of our trials serve a purpose in your plan not merely so that we can feel as though we have endured not merely so that we can stand as shining examples of those who are tougher than everyone else but our trials are purposed for us so that we might know that our faith is genuine our hope is sure and steadfast and that the inheritance really belongs to us and so we give you thanks for our trials we are not morbid people who long for trials to come into our lives but we thank you because we know when they come in of necessity they will test and try our faith and I pray that at the end of the day we will all stand with our eyes fully fixed on the future hope that we have in Christ and for those who are here who may not yet have that faith I pray Father that you would do such a work in their hearts that they would turn and trust in Jesus God ask this in Christ name Amen