

1 Peter 1:6-9

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Before getting into the new material for this session, I want to encourage you to reflect on the previous sessions. It is important to keep continuity between sessions because when this letter was written, it was written as a single letter, without chapters, without verses and without section headings. So think about it. What have you read? What stood out to you? What parts were confusing? Were you reminded of something you hadn't thought about in a long time? I encourage you to keep asking yourself questions like these to see how Peter is building upon the things previously said in the letter.

Let's get into the verses for this session. This session begins with a call to GREATLY rejoice even if we should experience distress by various trials. This one verse may sound similar to the writings of James and Paul.

James 1:2 *Consider it joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials*

Romans 5:3 *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations*

1 Corinthians 12:10 *Therefore, I am well content with weakness, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties,*

Colossians 1:24 *Now I rejoice in my sufferings*

It is quite clear that during times of trial, struggle, and distress that the Christian response should be one of rejoicing. In other words, we should continue to find joy in any situation that may arise. As a side note, it is important to remember that joy and happiness are two very different things. How is this possible though? How can anyone find joy in times of trial and suffering? Peter gives us the answer in this letter. Verse six begins with "**In this** you greatly rejoice". Well what is "this" that Peter is speaking of? It is the eternal inheritance that we spoke of last session. The suffering we may experience now greatly pales in comparison to the glory and peace that is to come. We are bound for a destination that is free of hurt, illness and

suffering that is in the presence of the Lord. What could possibly be greater than that? So rejoice dear Christian! Heaven is coming!

The next verse goes on to tell us about something that is more precious than gold. What do you think this is? Well if we look at the context of the verse, we find that it is the proof of our faith that is more precious than gold. But this questions remains, what is the “proof of our faith”? To begin to understand this concept, let’s think about this scientifically for a moment. In math or science, how do you prove something to be true? Teachers, how do you prove that your students know the material they are supposed to have learned? How do you prove that the safety features in a car will help protect from injury in an accident? The answer: you must test it. It is the same concerning our faith. Peter likens the testing of our faith to the refining of gold by fire. Let’s look at a few scriptures to help paint an accurate picture of what the testing of our faith is and does.

***James 1:3** knowing that the testing of you faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

***Romans 5:3-5** And not only this, we exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

***Hebrews 6:11-12** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, nut imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

We can learn a few things from these verses:

First, we know that trials are going to come. As Chuck says “Storms ARE coming to your house”

Second, those storms or trials are going to put our faith to the test, and that testing is a good thing. As it says in James and Romans, the trials or testing produce endurance, character and hope. Look at the life of Job as an example. Often times, trials are like a spiritual workout for our faith.

Third, the ultimate proof/outcome of your faith is your salvation (Rom. 6:22), or the inherited promises as Hebrews 6:11-12 puts it. One day, Christ will come to make things right. He will reveal Himself and bring a new heaven and new earth, and this is what we have to look forward to. This is where our joy comes from. Having faith and trusting that one day God will remove us from this broken world and bring us into heaven is the source of joy that can and will carry us through any struggle, trial or test here on earth. The struggles, while very real, are temporary, but the glory of the Lord is eternal.

Application Questions

- What are trials or struggles are you going through right now? Have they clouded your vision of the hope we have in things to come?
- What is the difference between joy and happiness?
- The last time you struggled with something, did you remain joyful through it?
- What are some ways that you can apply this lesson to your lives right now?
- Think about the last test or trial you experienced. How was God working in your life at that time?
- How can you better prepare yourself for the next trial?

One Last Remark

I encourage you to keep your focus solely on the Lord. In Matthew 14 Jesus calls Peter out onto the water. It wasn't until Peter took his focus off of Jesus that he began to sink, and his "troubles" began to consume him. Keep focused on the Lord and the things to come so that your troubles will not consume you. Trust that the Lord has you in His hand and that all things happen according to His divine plan.