*Joy in Suffering*

1 Peter 1:6-9

10/16/22

**Introduction:**

* Another complex sentence like last week.
* Vs. 3-5 are a general call to worship God for the salvation He has accomplished.
* Vs. 6-9 apply that call to the context of suffering that Peter’s original audience was experiencing.
* We have noted already that this letter is to believers who were suffering because of their faith. Yet Peter’s message to them is that they are to rejoice in Christ despite their suffering. He begins to unfold that message here.

**Body:**

1. The believer’s joy is rooted in their salvation, not in their circumstances – vs. 6
   1. *In this* refers to the new birth and benefits (living hope, eternal inheritance reserved for those protected by God for a salvation to be revealed at Christ’s return) that flow from it.
   2. Peter is saying that his readers are rejoicing in the very things he is calling them to bless God for doing.
   3. This rejoicing comes *despite their suffering!*
   4. Peter is contrasting their spiritual joy with their physical distress.
   5. Their right standing with God has made it necessary for them to suffer/be distressed by various trials.
   6. The term *trial* is a broader term that persecution, reminding us that not ever hardship we face as believers is the result of opposition for our faith.
   7. The experience of joy in Christ does not eliminate the feelings of pain that comes from suffering… that pain remains. Yet our salvation provides a peace, joy, and confidence that suffering cannot touch.
2. God has a purpose for our suffering – vs. 7 a
   1. Suffering tests the quality of our faith
   2. Peter compares suffering to gold being tried by fire
      1. Fire removes the impurities (dross) from gold
      2. Fire proves the quality of the gold
   3. So suffering tests our faith
      1. It removes the impurities from us, refines our faith, reveals idols and areas of needed growth
      2. It demonstrates the quality/strength of our faith as we learn to lean on God through the trials.
   4. How Firm a foundation: *when through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*
3. Suffering gives us an eternal perspective – vs. 7b-8
   1. Suffering is not a random act of God thrown out there to trip us up. God has an intended result for trails.
   2. Suffering lifts our eyes from the present challenge of our suffering to the future reward of our faith (vs. 7b).
      1. We do not seek out suffering (Paul avoided it more than once)
      2. We do not find perverse joy in the painful experience of suffering
      3. Rather, it causes us to look forward to the future revelation of Jesus Christ
      4. Suffering well results in the praise, glory, and honor of our faith when we patiently endure suffering without loosing our *living hope* and *joyful response* to salvation.
   3. This eternal focus in suffering is fed by love and belief in Jesus.
      1. Peter praises these suffering saints for loving Jesus enough that they are willing to suffer for Him, even though they have not seen Jesus
      2. Peter praises them for believing in Jesus despite not seeing Him.
      3. This love and belief produces joyful worship in God’s people that cannot be take from us by any physical circumstance.
   4. Notice all the joyful and hopeful terms Peter uses: *the proof of our faith results in praise, glory, and honor* and the outworking of our faith causes us to *rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory.*
   5. Because we understand the vital role God plays in planning, accomplishing, and applying salvation, it always results in God’s people glorying in the goodness God has accomplished in them.
4. Suffering may affect us physically, but it can do no harm to our souls – vs. 9
   1. *Two important warning Jesus gives*
      1. The parable of the soils, two of the soils express a form of faith that does not bear fruit.
      2. In teaching of signs that will precede Christ’s return, Jesus talks about false Christ’s who will lead people astray. In that discussion, Jesus says that it is those who persevere to the end who will be saved.
      3. Both these serve as a warning/encouragement to remain faithful in the face of suffering.
   2. Although suffering is not fun, those who endure it and so prove the authenticity of their faith *obtain as the outcome of their faithfulness the salvation of their souls.*
      1. The worst the world can do is kill the body. They cannot touch our standing with God.
      2. Remaining faithful to Christ gives the growing confidence that we will receive the eternal reward Christ has promised.
      3. Faithfulness does not produce salvation; faithfulness is the mark of salvation (the perseverance of the saints).

Conclusion:

1. Is your joy/hope visible enough that someone would ask you the reason for your hope?
2. Are you looking for God to give you your best life now, or have you forsaken the world for the joy of knowing Christ? It is only when our love for Christ and trust/belief in Him are stronger than the pull of the world on us that we can endure in the face of suffering.