

FBC POWELL, 3-17-19 AM NOTES
"Rejoicing Even in Trials"
1 Peter 1:6-8
2 in Series, "Standing Firm in the True Grace of God"

Philippians 3:20a (NASB) "For our citizenship is in heaven..."

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NASB) "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Mark 16:15 (NKJV) "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'"

John 16:33b (NASB) Jesus said, "...In the world you have tribulation..., **2 Timothy 3:12 (NASB)** "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

"Many a martyr went singing to the stake."

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB) ²² "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

John 15:11a (NASB) "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you..."

Romans 8:28 (NASB) "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose."

Psalms 16:11b (NASB) "...In Your presence is fullness of joy..."

Romans 15:13 (NASB) "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy..."

1 Thessalonians 2:19a (NASB) "For who is our **hope** or **joy** or crown of exultation?"

"[Joy is] a delight in God for the sheer beauty and worth of who He is. Its opposite is hopelessness or despair, and its counterfeit is an elation that is based on experiencing blessings, not the Blessor, causing mood swings based on circumstance."

—Tim Keller

- Happiness is from without; joy is from within.
- Happiness is like a thermometer that registers conditions; joy is like a thermostat that regulates us in whatever conditions we find ourselves.
- Happiness evaporates and disappears in times of pain and suffering; joy can co-exist, and even deepen in tough times.
- Happiness originates in our circumstances; joy originates with God.
- Joy is produced in us by the Holy Spirit. **Romans 14:17 (NASB)** "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and **joy in the Holy Spirit.**"
- Joy is associated with knowing and obeying the Word of God. **Jeremiah 15:16b (NASB)** "...Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart..."
- Joy gives us God's strength when we are weak. **Nehemiah 8:10b (NASB)** "...do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."
- Joy finds its fullest expression in the Lord's presence. **Psalms 16:11b (NASB)** "...In Your presence is fullness of joy."

- Joy is chosen. **James 1:2 (NASB)** “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials...” The Greek word translated “consider” means to reckon, to make a settled choice, to count something as true in spite of feelings and circumstances. In times of trial, we choose to reckon, to count, to consider it all joy because we know that God is greater than our trial or our circumstances.

I. Rejoice! In Christ, We Have a Secure Inheritance (v. 6a)

1 Peter 1:4-5 (NASB) ⁴ “To *obtain* an inheritance *which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you*, ⁵ who are **protected by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

1 Peter 1:5 (NASB) “Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

1 Peter 1:4 (NASB) “To *obtain* an inheritance *which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you*.”

II. Rejoice! In Christ We Have a Faith That is Proved (vv. 6b-7a)

A. “...now for a little while” (v. 6b)

1 John 3:2 (NASB) “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

Revelation 21:4 (NASB) “...and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

B. “if necessary, you have been distressed with various trials” (v. 6c)

1 Peter 5:10 (NASB) “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.”

C. “the proof of your faith being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire” (v. 7a)

“The gold-smith...puts his crude gold ore in a crucible, subjects it to intense heat, and then liquefies the mass. The impurities rise to the surface and are skimmed off. When the [gold smith] is able to see the reflection of his face clearly mirrored in the surface of the liquid, he takes it off the fire, for he knows that the content is pure gold. So it is with God and His child. He puts us in the crucible of Christian suffering in which process sin is gradually put out of our lives, our faith is purified from the slag of unbelief that somehow mingles with it so often, and the result is the reflection of the face of Jesus Christ in the character of the Christian. This, above all, God the Father desires to see. Christ-likeness is God’s ideal for His child. Christian suffering is one of the most potent means to that end.”
—Kenneth Wuest

III. Rejoice! In Christ We Have a Promised Honor (v. 7b)

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NASB) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

IV. Rejoice! In Christ We Have an Ever-Deepening Love Relationship (v. 8)

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NASB) ¹⁷ “Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, *though* the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.”

Chapter 2: Rejoicing Even in Trials

1 Peter 1:6-8

Beginning with the first verse in 1 Peter, we are reminded that Christians are “aliens” here on earth. 1 Peter 1:1a: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens...”

As we saw last week, the Greek word translated “aliens” in verse 1 is translated in other translations “exiles”, “temporary residents”, and “pilgrims”. An alien, an exile, a pilgrim all referring to a person whose primary, permanent address is in another place. One of the greatest truths a Christian can learn is that this world is not our home. As a Christian, you are a pilgrim, an exile here who is headed home, but you are not home yet. For Christians we know where home is – Philippians 3:20a: “For our citizenship is in heaven...” For a true Christian, death should hold no fear because at death, we simply go home. As aliens here who are headed home, we have a job to do. The Lord didn’t leave us here in this foreign land to hide in seclusion in the desert or a monastery until it is time to go home. We have a mission. 2 Corinthians 5:20: “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” We are pilgrims here, but we must never forget that we are pilgrims who are also ambassadors, representing our King. The job description for ambassadors is summarized in Mark 16:15 (NKJV): “And He [our King, Jesus] said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”

As pilgrims on a journey in a foreign land, we find that many of the people of this world, who do not know our King, don’t really want us here. Added to the mix is the fact that there is a real enemy (Satan) who stirs up those who do not know our Lord. Therefore, on our journey, there are often tough times, rejection, ridicule, and in many cases persecution. In this world, we often find ourselves swimming against the current, moving opposite of the direction of this world. Often our love and our desire for God’s best for them are met with disdain and our values are rejected and even ridiculed.

The New Testament is filled with warnings about how the world will treat us if we truly love and represent our king. We read in John 16:33b that Jesus said, “...In the world you have tribulation..., and 2 Timothy 3:12: “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Here is the question that this message will focus on answering: How are we to respond to all the things that go along with living in a fallen world – rejection, ridicule, and sometimes even persecution? The commanded response may surprise you. We are not told to “fight for our rights”, “pour our lives into politics”, or form isolated communes in the desert with other believers. Our response to an often-rejecting world is found in the first phrase of 1 Peter 1:6: “In this you greatly rejoice...” At first glance, that may sound quite ridiculous. Why would our Lord tell us to rejoice (express joy)? This world we live in has no joy. Those who do not know our Lord desperately need to see joy, to observe joy, unexplainable joy; joy even in tough times; joy that is manifested even in rejection, ridicule, and persecution. The only place they will see true joy is in the lives of those who know Jesus Christ.

Have you ever heard of *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*? It is an account of people in church history who were martyred (often by being burned at the stake) for their faith in Christ. Recently I read this statement about many of these martyrs. “Many a martyr went singing to the stake” [the stake is what they were tied to while they were burned to death for following Christ and refusing to

renounce Him]. That joy manifested in singing is not natural; it is supernatural. This is what gets the attention of those who do not know our Lord.

This world in which we are aliens and strangers is (on the surface) seeking success, wealth, and notoriety. Many in the world are successful in becoming wealthy and widely known. However, all the “stuff”, they achieve, all the notoriety leaves them empty. What they really crave is joy. But sadly, they abandon that which brings joy for things that they believe will bring happiness.

Let’s talk about “happiness”. I believe that there is a profound difference between biblical joy and what the world calls “happiness”. Sometimes this distinction between happiness and joy gets confusing. Many of the Puritan writers [which I wholeheartedly recommend] and other Christians at different times used joy and happiness interchangeably. In today’s English language, there is a great difference between these words “happiness and joy”. The world (non-believers) understands and can even experience happiness, but the world (non-believers) cannot experience true biblical joy.

That statement leads to an obvious question, “What is joy?” Actually, joy, biblical joy, is difficult to define. Joy is not something that we can “work up”; it is given by God. Biblical joy is one characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

All genuine joy comes from the Lord Jesus Himself. John 15:11a: “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you...” In our text in 1 Peter 1:8, Peter describes this joy as being “inexpressible”. Let me give you the best description I can. Joy flows out of the assurance that no matter our circumstances, God is sovereign, and He is working everything together for our good. Romans 8:28: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” It is possible to have joy in a bad marriage, a boring or dead-end job, and when your finances are depleted. Joy is found only when we draw close to God – Psalms 16:11b: “...In Your presence is fullness of joy...”

Joy is often tied to hope in the New Testament. Romans 15:13: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy...” 1 Thessalonians 2:19a: “For who is our *hope* or *joy* or crown of exultation?” Here is why we often see hope and joy together. Biblical hope always looks to the future and has absolute confidence that what God has promised, He is going to fulfill. Joy sees current circumstances in light of that solid hope we have in God and the assurance we have that God will keep His promises.

Additional insight into what true joy looks like comes from Tim Keller. “[Joy is] a delight in God for the sheer beauty and worth of who He is. Its opposite is hopelessness or despair, and its counterfeit is an elation that is based on experiencing blessings, not the Blessor, causing mood swings based on circumstance.” [Tim Keller, *Galatians for You*, page 154]

Joy is tied to God who never changes, and joy is not tied to circumstances which always do change. Sometimes joy is most evident when our circumstances are most painful. This is because our focus turns to God and we find that He is not only sufficient, He is beautiful and precious.

Let’s go deeper in the difference between biblical joy and happiness. While joy affects the emotions, it is technically not an emotion. Happiness (as it is used in our day) is pure emotion. Happiness depends on what happens, and therefore happiness is a function of our circumstances. Here is a good definition: “Happiness is a pleasant emotion that is a response to

pleasant circumstances.” There is certainly nothing wrong or ungodly about being happy. I like “happy” and I don’t really like being “sad”. However, I don’t find in Scripture (that is correctly translated) promises of continual happiness here on this fallen planet.

At the risk of over-emphasizing this, let’s contrast happiness and joy:

- Happiness is from without; Joy is from within.
- Happiness is like a thermometer that registers conditions; joy is like a thermostat that regulates us in whatever condition we find ourselves.
- Happiness evaporates and disappears in times of pain and suffering; joy can co-exist and even deepen in tough times.
- Happiness originates in our circumstances; joy originates with God.

Let’s look more broadly at what the Scriptures say about joy:

- Joy is produced in us by the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and *joy in the Holy Spirit.*”
- Joy is associated with knowing and obeying the Word of God. Jeremiah 15:16b: “...Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart...”
- Joy gives us God’s strength when we are weak. Nehemiah 8:10b: “...do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”
- Joy finds its fullest expression in the Lord’s presence. Psalms 16:11b: “...In Your presence is fullness of joy ...”
- Joy is chosen. James 1:2: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials...” The Greek word translated “consider” means to reckon, to make a settled choice, to count something as true in spite of feelings and circumstances. In times of trial, we choose to reckon, to count it, to consider it all joy because we know that God is greater than our trial or our circumstances.

In our text, Peter gives us four reasons to rejoice whatever our circumstances.

I. Rejoice! In Christ, We Have a Secure Inheritance (v. 6a)

The word translated “greatly rejoice” in verse 6 literally means “to leap with ecstatic joy”. Peter is referring back to verses 4-5. Look at these glorious verses! 1 Peter 1:4-5: “to *obtain* an inheritance *which is imperishable and undefiled* and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are *protected by the power of God* through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” That is secure! We have an inheritance that that cannot be stolen, pilfered, or damaged.

Not only can no one take our inheritance, no one can take us. 1 Peter 1:5: “who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” That is as secure as anything or anyone can be. We are protected, kept, secured by the power of the One who spoke the world into existence. I love that song *In Christ Alone* and I almost burst from joy when I hear these words:

*No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.*

— Keith Getty

Peter is telling us that not only can our salvation not be taken away; our inheritance cannot be taken away. 1 Peter 1:4: “to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” Whatever trial, whatever pain, whatever disappointment we go through on the journey home, we can still leap with joy because we have an inheritance laid up in Heaven that no one can touch because it is protected by the power of God – the same power that spoke all creation into existence.

II. Rejoice! In Christ We Have a Faith That Is Proved (vv. 6b-7a)

Our joy not only looks to the future; it looks to our “now”. Every person listening to this message knows what it means to be “distressed by various trials”. The point Peter stresses, over and over, is that we can rejoice even in these distressing trials because they are fulfilling God’s purpose.

Let’s look carefully at some really important phrases in verses 6b-7a.

A. “...now for a little while” (v. 6b)

Our trials don’t last forever. They are confined to our short time here on earth (short when compared to eternity). There are no trials in Heaven. Trials have the purpose of teaching us, preparing us, cleansing us, and enabling us to glorify God. I repeat: There will be no trials in Heaven. How do we know that? We read in Revelation 21:4: “and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” Remember, we are still here in this fallen world where there are tears, death, mourning, crying, and pain. But compared to eternity, these trials are “now for a little while” (v. 6b).

B. “if necessary, you have been distressed with various trials” (v. 6c)

The trials that God allows in our life are necessary! God does what He does and allows what He allows because they are necessary to prepare us for what He has for us to do here and also to prepare us for eternity with Him. *Every trial we experience is God making an investment in us.* – Read that last sentence again and let it sink in! When you send your child to college or trade school, you are investing in them. God sends all of His children to U. T. – The University of Trials! When you send your children to school, you want them to learn and not waste their time and your investment. God desires for us to learn the lessons He has for us in the trials he allows.

Perhaps the best summary of what God desires to do through our trials is found toward the end of 1 Peter in 1 Peter 5:10: (as we jump ahead a little in 1 Peter) “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.” Our trials are custom made for us by our Heavenly Father who knows us and knows all about us. In response to what He knows, He allows trials to teach us humility, to focus our eyes on what He is doing and to join with Him.

C. “the proof of your faith being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire” (v. 7a)

The “various trials” (v. 6c) that distress us are given by God as a gift to us. Why? Does He have a reason for them? Yes, yes, yes, God has a reason for all that He does and all that He allows. What is His reason? It is “so the proof of our 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” (v. 7a). This perspective on trials should not diminish joy, it should increase our joy. The word translated “proof” in verse 7a was used to describe the assaying of metal to determine how pure it was. Our Lord is calling us to constantly examine ourselves to see if we are growing or have become stagnant or are going backwards. An unhealthy and a false faith will be revealed to us by the way we deal with trials.

Kenneth Wuest is/was a great Greek and New Testament scholar. He really has a good word about this passage. “The gold-smith ... puts his crude gold ore in a crucible, subjects it to intense heat, and then liquefies the mass. The impurities rise to the surface and are skimmed off. When the [gold smith] is able to see the reflection of his face clearly mirrored in the surface of the liquid, he takes it off the fire, for he knows that the content is pure gold. So it is with God and His child... Christ-likeness is God’s ideal for His child. Christian suffering is one of the most potent means to that end.” [Kenneth Wuest, *1 Peter*, page 27]

That is why we count it all joy when we go through trials. God is using our troubles and trials to conform us to the likeness of Christ.

III. Rejoice! In Christ We Have a Promised Honor (v. 7b)

A faith that is approved results in praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I think this refers to two things (both which are taught elsewhere in the New Testament).

A. God Is Honored

A proved, purified faith pleases God and gives him glory and honor and praise. Our whole purpose in living is to give glory, honor, and praise to God and one of the main ways that we do that is to rejoice in times of trial and let the trials do the purifying work of our being conformed to the likeness of Christ which is what God allowed them for.

B. God Honors Us (v. 7b)

I think this could also be applied to the rewards for believers received at the judgment seat of Christ after a life of faithfulness in trials. 2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

IV. Rejoice! In Christ We Have an Ever-Deepening Love Relationship (v. 8)

Does that phrase express the desire of your heart? I especially love that phrase, “joy inexpressible and full of glory” What does that mean? It is a joy so full, so overflowing that it is inexpressible. It cannot be put into words. There is no earthly reason I should have joy; it is beyond explanation.

Conclusion

If your joy depends on your circumstances, then what you are calling joy is not joy at all. My favorite Old Testament passage related to joy is Habakkuk 3:17-18: “Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, *though* the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.” You can rejoice even in trials. Do you have real joy?

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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