

Precious, Proven Faith
1 Peter 1:6-12
February 26th, 2023

1. Rejoice while _____ (1:6-9)
 - a. Trials are _____ (1:6)
 - b. Trials _____ (1:6)
 - c. Trials are _____ (1:6-9)
2. Rejoice because we now experience what prophets _____ (1:10-12)
3. Applying the Word
 - a. See your suffering through this _____.
 - b. Remember the _____ time in which you live by faith.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection from 1 Peter 1:6-12

1. We often view suffering as an impediment to joy, but Peter insists that trials can result in “inexpressible” joy. How is that possible? Peter compares suffering to the smelting of metallic ore. How does this metaphor help us understand how to rejoice in hard times?
2. What are some examples of trials that might be temporary for a person? What trials might last their entire life? How does the reality that all suffering is only “for a little while” when compared to eternity give hope and perspective in suffering?
3. How have past (or present) trials shown you the genuineness of your faith? How might that change the way you think about those times of hardship?
4. Why is it important that v. 6 describes the emotional distress we feel during suffering even while it points to the purpose and joy we can also have during suffering? Can you think of any other portions of scripture that give us permission to still feel our emotions in suffering? What are the boundaries that we still need for our emotions? What other approaches do people often take in regards to their emotions when suffering?
5. Why do you think angels marvel as they observe redemptive history? (see also Heb. 2:16; Luke 15:10)
6. How might you read the Old Testament differently in light of verses 10-12?

Note: Some questions adapted from *Knowing the Bible: 1 Peter* and *1 Peter for You*

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Big idea: Our precious faith is proven by suffering and anticipated by prophets.

To rejoice in suffering is not to downplay our suffering and it doesn't mean we ignore our feelings when suffering.

Verse 6 describes the audience as "distressed by various trials."

"distressed" is an emotional word. It's not a word about the suffering but how we feel when we suffer. It refers to the emotion of grief not the suffering itself.

And yet verses 6-9 are bookended by a description of rejoicing.

In between two statements about rejoicing are honest statements about suffering that is temporary and necessary.

It's those statements about the temporary and necessary nature of suffering that enable joy and grief to coexist when we naturally assume they cannot coexist.

1. Rejoice while suffering (1:6-9)

a. Trials are temporary (1:6)

i. We can endure suffering better when we know it is temporary

1. Silly example – the dentist. I've often thought that cleanings would be more bearable if you knew exactly how long they were going to last and where you were at in the process.

ii. How long is "a little while"?

1. **2 Corinthians 4:17** For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,
2. **Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
3. Sometimes we know how long suffering will last.
 - a. A bullied child might know that each school day will end and they will be home safe and eventually the school year will end.
 - b. Someone recovering from surgery might be told to expect 3 weeks of pain.
4. Sometimes don't know how long suffering will last.
 - a. A strained relationship they may stretch into years.
 - b. Loss of someone you love that the pain lingers the rest of your life, even as it ebbs and flows and changes over time.
 - c. Chronic illness that will likely last the rest of your life unless a new treatment option is developed.
5. But we know there is an end point. If nothing else, the end point comes when either Jesus returns or we go to Him.
 - a. How can that be "momentary" or "a little while"? Perspective and comparison.
 - b. Even a long life is a blip compared to eternity with Jesus.

- c. We are comparing it to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away.

b. Trials **vary** (1:6)

i. Not merely one type of trial but many types of trials.

1. What are the various types of trials they might have been experiencing? How are they similar, different to various trials we experience?
2. Slandered by non-Christians (2:12; 3:16)
 - a. **1 Pet. 2:12** ¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.
 - b. 1 Pet. 3:16 ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.
3. Unreasonable masters (2:18-20)
 - a. 1 Pet. 2:18 ¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.
 - b. 1 Pet. 2:20 ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.
4. Unbelieving spouse (3:1)
 - a. 1 Pet. 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,
5. Receiving insults (3:9)
 - a. 1 Pet. 3:9 ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.
6. Reviled for the name of Christ (4:14, 16)
 - a. 1 Pet. 4:14 ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
 - b. 1 Pet. 4:16 ¹⁶ but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

ii. Clear, common thread of suffering that is related to their faith in Jesus, even if it isn't violent.

iii. These principles though apply to suffering that is just part of life in a broken world.

1. Sickness, sorrow, poverty, conflict, parenting pressures, relational loss, abuse.
2. Life can hurt in lots of different ways.
 - a. Which is why it can be hard if you go through something and someone says, "I totally understand." Because often they don't totally understand.
 - b. **Proverbs 14:10** The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy.
3. And yet God knows – completely, intimately, deeply, personally, tenderly.

c. Trials are **necessary** (1:6-9)

- i. "If necessary" – why would trials be necessary? Necessary for what?
 1. The word is there so it means something.
- ii. So that your faith will be proven and refined.
 1. Proof of your faith – it will show it to be the real thing.
 - a. Show who? You, primarily. God already knows.
 - b. How do you know if you are following Jesus because its convenient or even though it is costly? Suffering.
 - c. **Matthew 13:20-21** "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.
 2. Tested by fire like gold
 - a. The heat causes impurities to rise to the surface so they can be scooped away from the pure gold.
 - b. Suffering can do the same thing for us. It exposes what we are trusting in.
 - c. Also like gold, our faith is precious – even more precious than gold. Why? Gold is perishable. Our inheritance is imperishable.
 3. Randy Alcorn – The faith that can't be shaken is the faith that has been shaken.
 4. If you have a spindly little tree sapling that you lash to a solid stake, it keeps it upright and protects it from the wind. But if you leave it like that too long, it never grows the strength it needs to stand. It needs to be blown around so that when it is big it doesn't get blown down.
- iii. Who gets the praise then?
 1. Jesus – he gets the praise, honor, and glory at His revelation – when we're safely home or He returns.
 2. Wayne Grudem sees this fulfilled at the judgment seat of Christ.
 - a. Grudem – he thus reminds Christians that God's purposes in present grief may not be fully known in a week, in a year, or even in this lifetime. Indeed, some of God's purposes will not even be known when believers die and go to be with the Lord. Some will only be discovered at the day of final judgment when the Lord reveals the secrets of all hearts and commends with special honor those who trusted him in hardship even though they could not see the reason for it: they trusted him simply because he was their God and they knew him to be worthy of trust.
 3. The author Malcolm Gladwell admits that he is kind of a snob when it comes to ends. He hates it when a movie or book is excellent until the very end and then it falls flat. Sometimes he will get to the last five pages of a thriller novel and not want to finish it. He isn't confident the author will finish it well.
 - a. Are we confident the author of our story will finish it well?
 - b. You might be in a chapter that's hard and you can't see how this story arc is going to come out ok. It could be that in 10 years, you'll see. But it could also be that you won't see until the story is all done. And you're with the author of your life.

- iv. We fix the eyes of our faith on the unseen Jesus (1:8-9)
 - 1. Now we see him and love Him by faith.
 - 2. We can't see Him but we see Him at work in our lives and others, we experience the new life He gives, we see Him revealed in His Word, we have His Spirit in us, confirming His truth. And we love Him now.
- 2. Rejoice because we now experience what prophets ***anticipated*** (1:10-12)
 - a. The salvation you experience, the salvation you rejoice in, was anticipated and prophesied about.
 - b. Jeremiah was told ...
 - i. **Jeremiah 31:33-34** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
 - c. Ezekiel was told ...
 - i. **Ezekiel 11:19** "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,
 - d. Isaiah was told ...
 - i. **Isaiah 53:5** But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.
 - ii. This was "predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." (v. 11)
 - e. Daniel clearly explains when the Messiah would come, as our Youth Group has been studying this year.
 - f. Notice it was the "Spirit of Christ within them" that was working within them as they prophesied.
 - i. It shows the Triune God at work before the coming of Jesus.
 - ii. In the OT the Spirit is known as "the Spirit of the Lord" (Is. 11:2; Ezek. 11:5), "the Spirit of God" (1 Sam 11:6; 2 Chron 15:1), "your/My Spirit" (Is. 30:1; 44:3), "the Spirit" (Is 32:15), or the "Holy Spirit" (Ps 51:11; Is 63:10). (adapted from Sanchez)
 - 1. But the language used here is "Spirit of Christ."
 - 2. Peter Davids – "Peter here ... wishes to underline that the spirit is not only from Christ but witnesses to Christ, whom he represents."
 - iii. **2 Peter 1:21** for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.
 - iv. They weren't guessing or trying to read the stars but it was revealed to them by the Spirit.
 - 1. And they made careful searches and inquiries seeking to understand the Word given to them, but they recognized it was going to be fulfilled after them and they were serving you.
 - v. The Spirit was at work in giving the prophecies. And the Spirit is at work in those who preach the gospel today (v. 12).
 - vi. Do you realize the privileged time in which we live?
 - 1. In the progress of revelation, we get to experience what OT saints and even angels longed to look into. We get God's Word in our hands and the Holy Spirit inside us. We

get a new heart. New Life. We get to read about Jesus, the perfect display of the Father – better than Prophets telling us (Heb. 1:1ff). We don't sacrifice bulls and goats as pale shadow, we trust in the complete and sufficient death of Jesus.

3. Applying the Word

- a. See your suffering through this ***lens***.
 - i. It's real and it hurts and it is distressing. You can feel those feelings.
 - ii. It may be different than the way others suffer, but we all suffer.
 - iii. It's limited in duration.
 - iv. In some way, it's necessary. Necessary for what? If nothing else, it refines and proves your faith.
 - v. But scripture lists many other reasons we suffer:
 1. It equips us to help others who suffer (2 Cor. 1:4-5)
 2. It shapes our character (Rom. 8:28-29)
 3. It causes us to look past this present life (Rom. 8:18)
 - vi. Beyond the "purpose" answers to why we suffer, there are also the "reality" answers:
 1. We live after the fall and our world is broken. (Genesis 3; Rom. 5:12)
 2. We sin, and feel the consequences.
 3. Others sin against us, and we experience that.
 - vii. But it's all limited in duration – it won't go on forever.
- b. Remember the ***privileged*** time in which you live by faith.
 - i. James Harriet wrote the famous series of books, "All Creatures, Great and Small" about his life as a veterinarian in rural England in the 1930's. Throughout the books he also moves from single to married and eventually has several young kids. His partner, Siegfried, in the practice also has young kids at the same time. In one of those later books, there's a scene in which Siegfried and James are looking out at their young kids playing together in the field and they remark that the days in which they are living are the good days and they should remember it before they are past.
 - ii. Do you look at the period in which we live, under the grace of Jesus, knowing the Father, made alive and indwelt by the Spirit as "the good days"? We should!



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Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this **present time** are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

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 And a stranger does not share its joy.

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