

1 Peter 1:6-9 | “Rejoice in Hope”

Good morning, please turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 1, verses 6 through 9.

We are progressing through 1 Peter, chapter 1, and hasn't it been deep?

There has been a lot of doctrinal truth, but as we saw, this doctrinal truth should change the way we live. *[pause]*

Peter started out by explaining our identity in Christ - we are chosen sojourners in this world.

Then Peter went on to praise God and recount what the Lord in mercy has done in our lives.

He has caused us to be born again to a living hope.

And he not only gave us new life, but he gave us a sure and confident hope.

That's where we left off last week, and now we will pick up in verse 6.

READ PASSAGE.

In a commentary, Bruce Larson gives this story...

“At a conference at a Presbyterian church in Omaha, people were given helium filled balloons and told to release them at some point in the service when they felt like expressing the joy in their hearts.

Since they were Presbyterians, they weren't free to say "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord."

All through the service balloons ascended, but when it was over, 1/3 of the balloons were unreleased.”

So apparently, 1/3 of the people were either uncomfortable with releasing the balloon, or they didn't experience *any* joy. *[pause]*

Do you experience joy in your life?

I'm not talking about those brief moments of happiness that come when something exciting is coming up in your life, but true, deep joy.

The joy that I'm talking about is joy that can't be touched by any hardship or changing circumstance. *[pause]*

What is it that gives you joy? What makes you rejoice?

Do you have any joy at all?

So many people picture the Christian life as someone dull and lifeless, and is it any wonder, since many *live out* their Christian lives as a bump on a log?

They go through the motions of going to church and going home, and then just living their normal week without any regard for the things of God.

It's almost like they see it as an item to check off on their weekly list...

Like, "OK, I went to church, check.

I went through the motions of hearing the prayers, giving my tithe, singing some songs without any thought or emotions, and I heard a sermon, now I've done my duty for the week - check."

And then their week looks exactly like someone who doesn't believe in Jesus. *[pause]*

Essentially, these things become mere duty to them, rather than a delight.

It becomes something to get through, instead of something that I do because my joy is in the Lord.

That is not how the Christian life ought to be lived!

That kind of thing is absolutely foreign to the Bible!

Rather, the Christian life is actually a whole identity change, where every single aspect of your life is transformed by your faith. *[pause]*

I am a new creation in Christ, whose beliefs, thoughts, values, and priorities are all different because my old life is gone.

So how I seek to parent, treat my spouse, or act at my workplace is based on God's Word.

How I view the situations that I find myself in is based on what God says. *[pause]*

Being a child of God is supposed to transform my priorities and values.

Really, what God has done in my life, giving me a new life, changes everything.

And that's why you see Peter talk the way that he does.

He bases our thinking about trials on our living hope.

He bases our thinking about life in general on our Savior.

He bases our joy *in* the Lord. *[pause]*

Peter shows us that our faith in Jesus Christ impacts our thoughts and feelings *on everything*.

Peter demonstrates that the Christian isn't supposed to be dull and lifeless.

What the Lord has done is not supposed to be something that we simply know and aren't moved by, but it affects our emotions! *[pause]*

Just skim over verses 6 through 9 and look at all the emotions that come out...

Verse 6, and I'm paraphrasing these things, 'In this you *rejoice*, though we are *grieved* for a little while.'

Verse 8, 'We *love* him and *rejoice* with joy inexpressible and filled with glory.'

All of those things are normal, Christian emotions that flow from a relationship with Christ.
[pause]

So let's dive into our passage for this morning, and really see what God has to say.

First, found in verses 6 and 7....

I. Though we face trials, we rejoice in hope. (6-7)

Where is your hope found?

What keeps you going even in the darkest of times? [pause]

"One night a thief broke into the single-room apartment of a French novelist.

Trying to avoid waking him, the intruder quietly picked the lock on the writer's desk.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a sarcastic laugh from the bed, where the novelist lay watching the thief.

'Why do you laugh?' asked the thief.

'I am laughing to think what risks you take to try to find money in a desk by night where the legal owner can never find any by day.'" [pauseeee]

I think this story characterizes most people's lives.

They are trying to find something where there is nothing.

More specifically to our passage, they are trying to find hope where there is no hope. [pause]

Without Christ, what hope is there in this life?

Without Christ, this life is all that there is.

How can you have any hope, confidence, or joy in this life when you are uncertain of the future?

You see, your hope or lack of hope makes a huge difference on how you live *now*.

If I have no hope, then I lose motivation to do anything now.

If I have no hope, then I lose joy because what is there to look forward to?

But if I have hope, then I have motivation to keep going and I can have joy even now.

And that's what Peter is talking about here in this passage. *[pause]*

He starts out by saying, "In this you rejoice."

In what? What's he talking about?

Well, what he just said about our living hope, our inheritance, and our future salvation. *[pause]*

Since our glorious gifts in the future are amazing and certain, then we can greatly rejoice now.

We can confidently anticipate these realities because Christ has secured them for us.

They are guarded in Heaven, and we are guarded for Heaven. *[pause]*

We rejoice in the unseen future because the future has been promised to be great for us by the God of the universe.

Now that is a living and sure hope! *[pause]*

And so Peter's argument as he moves on is this...

Since we have this living hope, then even though we face trials in this life, we can *still* greatly rejoice.

How is that possible? How can you have joy in the midst of the hardest, most distressing moments of your life?!

Because you have hope and can see the big picture. *[pause]*

Of course, if you are only focusing on your hardships, then you won't rejoice.

But if you are looking beyond your trials to your blessed hope, then you *can* rejoice.

And Peter pushes us to change our perspective by talking about the momentary nature of our trials.

He says, "In this you rejoice, *though now for a little while*, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials." *[pause]*

What Peter is saying is that in comparison to eternity, your trials are just for a little while.

Paul also makes this point when he says, "This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." *[pause]*

What Peter wants us to do is to zoom out and look at our trials in accordance with the big picture of our living hope.

And when you zoom out, you see that your trials are truly brief. *[pause]*

Eternity is forever, and so I want you to imagine your eternal life 80 billion years from now.

All of those 80 billion years were of perpetual bliss, perfection, and total enjoyment of God.

There's no sin, no sorrow, no pain, nothing like that. *[pause]*

OK, now that you have kind of had that in your mind, I want you to think about something in light of that.

I want you to compare the 80 billion years of Heaven with 80 years of various trials that arise up now and then in your life.

So 80 years divided by 80 billion is point zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, one percent of 80 billion.

That's 6 zero's by the way.

And guess what? 80 billion years still isn't the end of Heaven's time because it's forever.

Now how do your trials look? Momentary and brief.

I'd say that's "for a little while", right? *[pause]*

Let's say that you were offered your dream job that paid very well.

And just for illustration's sake, let's say that in this job you wouldn't experience any hardships, but it would be satisfying and fulfilling.

So you were offered this job, and you would have it until you retire, but there's one caveat to taking this job offer...

You had to spend only 1 day doing another position, and it would be a very hard day.

Now how would you view that one day in comparison to all the years of being in that stress-free, fulfilling job?

You would view it as momentary, for it's only *one* day compared to years upon years in the other job.

And even when you are going through that hard day, what is it that makes you rejoice in the midst of it?

Your confident hope of the job to come after that one day. *[pause]*

So likewise, we must change our perspective to see the big picture when it comes to our trials.

Even Jesus could do this with the Cross.

What does the Bible say? “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross.”

He had the big picture in mind, he had the end result, and the future in mind. *[pauseeeeeee]*

Now this hope-filled thinking doesn't take away the pain of trials, for even Jesus felt the pain of the Cross and in the Garden he knew that it wouldn't be pleasant, as he prayed out to the Father.

So also, the Bible doesn't act like trials don't hurt, but it's realistic and explains that, “Yes, trials are hard.”

Here in our passage, Peter says, “you have been *grieved* by various trials.” *[pause]*

Trials produce grief in us; they are distressing.

It's OK to be saddened by the hardships that you go through.

It's not ungodly to grieve, for grief is a natural emotion that arises out of trials and loss.

And so as Christians, we aren't called to go through trials as a stoic, who never shows any emotion, and acts like we are all strong and tough...

...But we are also not to go through trials without hope, for we are to rejoice in hope through them. *[pause]*

So although we grieve, deep down there is still a joy that can't be moved by anything. *[pause]*

Peter indicates to us that joy and sorrow can simultaneously be present in the Christian's life.

Joy is mingled with grief.

And to the world, it doesn't make sense, but to us it makes perfect sense. *[pauseeeee]*

Does your hope in Christ give you joy now?

Even though you face trials, do you still rejoice in hope? *[pause]*

Don't we often *not* do what Peter is talking about?

He's saying that we are to rejoice, though for a little time you grieve.

But instead, we despair, though for a little time we are joyous.

That is not the way you were meant to live your life in Christ!

You want more joy? You want a joy that even remains through hard times?

Then put your hope in God, and then this hope sustains you and helps you see trials in light of the big picture. *[pauseeeee]*

So Peter tells us that trials are momentary, but also that trials are purposeful.

Look at what he says in verse 6, “*if necessary, you have been grieved by trials.*” [pause]

This is actually very comforting.

Peter is showing us that trials only come into our lives if they are deemed necessary by God in His good wisdom. [pause]

And in order to fully feel the comforting nature of this truth, just envision the opposite of what this truth would be.

If this wasn't true about trials, then that would mean that God would sometimes give us trials in our lives that were *unnecessary*.

So God was just like, “Yeaaaaah, that wasn't really necessary.”

That wouldn't be a good feeling when you were going through a hardship, would it?! [pause]

But here's another thing to think about...

If God didn't give us trials that he deemed necessary, then that would mean that God was withholding something necessary from us.

So do you see why this truth is actually very encouraging?

It means our trials are purposeful, they are doing something in us that is necessary, and when we go through them, we should trust our all-good and all-wise God. [pause]

If I have to go through a trial, I want to know that it was purposeful, not pointless.

And Peter shows us that we face various trials, “*if necessary.*” [pause]

Yet that's not the end of his talk about trials, for he explains more about the purpose of these trials.

He says that trials come into our lives, “*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.” [pause]

He's showing us the purpose of our trials - they have a Divine design.

And in so doing, he's showing us the beautiful results of our trials, too. [pause]

What he does is uses an illustration of how gold is refined in a fire to describe our faith being refined in our trials.

So what fire is to gold, so trials are to our faith. [pause]

Raw gold is filled with impurities, so you place it in a crucible and heat it to almost 2,000 degrees.

This allows the non-gold contaminations to rise to the top and you can scrape them off.

And so what you have now is pure gold. *[pause]*

So likewise, trials are like that fire that burns away the impurities of our faith.

This refining process brings out something beautiful, more pure, and more strengthened.

They burn away our self-confidence, so that we are running to His loving arms even more.

[pause]

And if gold is fit to be fire-tested, then how much more our faith, which is more precious than gold? *[pause]*

It's when you face hardships that your faith is truly tested.

And Peter is telling us that this testing actually shows forth the genuineness of our faith. *[pause]*

Trials test your faith, and reveal whether your faith is genuine or not.

In the midst of the hardest times, trials burn away the counterfeit impurities of your faith and disclose where your trust truly lies.

Is your trust really in Christ or is in it something else?

Trials test our faith, and make us ask the question: are we going to give up or endure? *[pause]*

Jesus talks about this in his parable of the sower.

The sower sows seed on rocky ground, and these people receive it with joy, yet they have no root, and when tribulation or persecution arises, they fall away.

The trials revealed the genuineness of their faith. *[pause]*

So trials refine and reveal our faith.

We are all thrown into the fires of trials, and these very trials are refining and revealing our faith.

And the result is a faith more precious and valuable than gold!

Genuine, refined faith is more precious than all the gold in the world to the Lord - this is what the Lord cares about!

Not your money, not your financial successes, not your standing with the world, but he cares about your faith - it is precious to Him.

God sees our faith as gold that he wants to refine and make beautiful and pure.

So this is why we can rejoice in trials because they are producing something glorious! *[pause]*

We tend to think of pain and hardship as bad, and of course, it's not pleasant to go through difficulties...

...But we must also remember that they are producing something good in us!

Trials are pushing you to trust the Lord, and prove whether you truly trust Him or not. *[pause]*

And look what Peter says happens when Christ comes again - our genuine faith may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor. *[pause]*

Now the question is who receives the praise, glory, and honor?

And I'd say both us and God.

When we go through trials still trusting the Lord, it reveals the proven character of our faith, and when Christ comes again, we will fully receive God's approval.

He will say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

There's nothing better than to receive recognition from God Himself.

And this is great, but ultimately our faith will bring praise, glory, and honor to the Lord. *[pause]*

This is exactly what we should want because it was He who was the one whose power helped us to endure the hardest moments of life...

...And it was He who was the very object of our faith! *[pauseeee]*

They say that the way a person knows that gold has been refined enough through the fire is when they can look at it and see their own reflection.

So when Christ looks at our genuine, refined faith it will show that we look like him, and reflect back and display his glory.

He's the One who produced the beautiful, refined, precious and genuine faith of his people. *[pauseeee]*

So what's your view of trials???

Often, we view trials as long and pointless, but Peter shows us, "No, no, no - when you look at the big picture, trials are brief and purposeful."

Yes, they produce grief in us, and they are hard.

But let's start looking forward in faith, see that our trials have a wondrous Divine design, and even in the midst of the grief, we can rejoice in hope.

Because they are not pointless, but purposeful. *[pauseeee]*

God sees your faith as precious, and he wants to take your raw faith, filled with impurities, and refine it into a faith that will ultimately bring him praise, glory, and honor.

So God is doing something marvelous that is for our good, and for his glory, so will we trust him even in our trials? *[pauseeee]*

J.R. Miller gives this illustration...

“A saintly woman suffering for weary months in painful illness said to her pastor: ‘I have such a lovely robin that sings outside my window. In the early morning, as I lie here, he serenades me.’

Then, as a smile brightened her thin features, she added, ‘I love him, because he sings in the rain.’

That is the most beautiful thing about the robin, when the storm has silenced almost every other songbird, the robin sings on in the rain.

That is the way the Christian who is with Christ may do.

Anybody can sing in the sunshine; you and I should sing on when clouds pour out their rains.

We should sing in the rain.” *[pauseeee]*

Though we face trials, we can rejoice in hope, and secondly....

II. Though we haven't seen Christ, we rejoice in hope. (8-9)

In verses 8 and 9, Peter builds off of what he just talked about concerning the revelation of Jesus Christ. *[pause]*

We will see Christ when he is revealed in the last time, but in the meantime, we haven't seen him and don't see him now, yet we love and believe in him. *[pause]*

To the unbelieving world, this doesn't make sense.

How could we have such deep love for someone that we have never seen?

How could we have such confident trust in someone that we don't see even now?

To people who walk by sight, it boggles their mind, and they think that it's ridiculous.

That's why they will make fun of Christians as believing some fairy tale or made up story.

But to us, it makes perfect sense because God has opened up our eyes to know Christ and trust His work on the Cross in our place.

It would be unthinkable to us to *not* love and believe in Him. *[pauseeee]*

To not see Christ, and yet to love and trust him is the essence of faith in Jesus.

Remember what Jesus said to Thomas in John 20?...

“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” *[pause]*

Not seeing him, yet loving and believing in him is the core of our relationship to Christ in this earthly life.

This is what it looks like to be a Christian! *[pauseeeee]*

Isn't it crazy how Peter, who *did* see Christ, talks this way about those, who haven't?

He doesn't view our situation as any lesser than his, but he commends our love and trust. *[pauseeee]*

Although we haven't seen our Savior, we love him and believe in him.

Not seeing our Lord doesn't take away our love for him.

It doesn't take away our trust in Him, and it doesn't take away our joy.

With eyes of faith, we see our precious Savior and we are filled with love, trust, and joy even now.

And we know that one day we *will* see him when he comes again, and we long for that day because we will be with our Lord. *[pause]*

And all of these things lead us to rejoice with joy inexpressible and filled with glory. *[pause]*

Have you ever experienced something that was so amazing that you couldn't put it into words?

Maybe it was someone that you loved so much, or something that you experienced that was such an amazing sight to see.

That's what Peter is talking about when it comes to our joy in Christ.

It's a joy so deep and profound that it's *indescribable*.

No amount of descriptive words could truly convey the joy that we feel for our Lord and Savior. *[pause]*

Do you feel this type of joy in Jesus?

One way that we grow in our love, trust, and joy in Christ is getting to know Him more through Scripture.

Think back through your life, what was it that made Jesus more precious to you?

Wasn't it learning more about Him? Hearing more and more about his grace, mercy, and love for you?

Wasn't it hearing about the greatness of Christ through preaching? *[pause]*

What else? Wasn't it trusting him and seeing him provide for you, take care of you, and comfort you through hardship?

And also, we can't neglect the importance of prayer...

Pray that God would change your heart to love him more, trust him more, and rejoice with joy in him more. *[pause]*

So often we glance over the Word and prayer as though they were just the elementary means of growth in our faith...

...But that's not true at all, for we never mature past the Word and prayer, for they are to be our life-long companions. *[pauseeee]*

This love, trust, and joy in Christ is all only possible because Christ has died for us, God has caused us to be born again, and the Spirit is within us.

So now we are able to have a deep relationship with the unseen Christ, who will someday be seen by all. *[pauseeee]*

Since we love, believe in, and rejoice in Christ, then we can always take joy in the fact that final salvation is coming, knowing he secured it for us.

Our loving and trust-worthy Savior has saved us, and will deliver us finally when he comes again to deal with evil once and for all.

We are those who love Him, believe in Him, rejoice in Him, and as a result we receive the end result of our faith, salvation. *[pause]*

Did you notice anything that is sorta the common denominator between: love, believe in, and rejoice with joy?

What do they demonstrate about someone who responds in these ways to Jesus Christ?

That Christ is your greatest treasure!

Though you haven't seen him, he is the most precious thing to you in the whole world.

So is Christ your greatest treasure? *[pauseeee]*

What Peter is showing us is that...

You can rejoice in the hope of your salvation, no matter what you face!

There's a story of a western captain as he lay on the battlefield of Shiloh...

“He suffered greatly from a fatal gunshot through both thighs, and from thirst.

He said, ‘The stars shone out clear and beautiful above the dark field; and I began to think of that great God who had given His Son to die a death of agony for me...

...and that He was up there — up above the scene of suffering above those glorious stars; and I felt that I was going home to meet Him and praise Him there...

...and I felt that I ought to praise God, even wounded and on the battlefield.

I could not help singing that beautiful hymn: ‘When I can read my title clear, to mansions in the skies.’

And there was a Christian brother in the brush near me.

I could not see him, but I could hear him.

He took up the strain; and beyond him another and another caught it up, all over the battlefield of Shiloh.

That night the echo was resounding; and we made the field of battle ring with the hymns of praise to God.’” *[pauseeee]*

Do you make your field of *trials* ring with praises to God? *[pauseeee]*

This is the glorious truth of being a Christian - nothing can take away your joy!

Why? Because our joy isn't based on changing circumstances, but on our unchanging Lord.

Ultimately, it is Christ, who is the hope of our salvation.

It is only because of him that we can be saved, for he came to this earth and died on the Cross so that we could be forgiven.

He rose again so that we could have everlasting life. *[pause]*

Do you want this joy? Turn in faith to Jesus Christ and it can be yours in Him.

Are you already a Christian and you are lacking joy?

Maybe many of us should pray like David, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”

Go to Christ, fix your eyes on Him, who has fullness of joy and who can turn your sorrow into joy. *[pause]*

As you go through this life, always remember your living hope, so that even now when you can't see Jesus, and even when you go through trials, you can rejoice in hope.