

STUDIES IN 1 PETER (5)
The Genuineness of Your Faith
1 Peter 1:6-9

Tonight, we continue our study of 1 Peter. We have noticed Peter's introductory remarks and his initial acknowledgement of their hope. We have talked about their living hope, manifest in the resurrection of Jesus, and in anticipation of an incorruptible inheritance reserved for them in heaven. In our lesson tonight, Peter challenges them to rejoice in their genuine faith even in the face of trials.

I. Rejoicing in various trials

- a. ***In this*** – Peter could be referring either to inheritance he has previously addressed or the strengthening of their faith as they face various trials. Both certainly apply and are cause for joy.
- b. ***You greatly rejoice*** – we have addressed in times past what the Christian joy is about. It is not the happiness the world associates with joy (though true joy will be expressed when we are happy). This is an inner joy that is ever present, even while we are hurting, because of where our mind is fixed. In fact, this true joy can INCREASE in troubled times because of our future spiritual anticipation. Jesus “for the joy set before Him endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:2), Paul rejoiced in suffering and would continue to do so (2 Corinthians 7:4 - *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.*) Philippians 4:4 Paul would say to the suffering saints there, “*Rejoice in the Lord always...*”
- c. ***Though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials*** –
 - i. NOTE: This is the first of 4 sections in this short letter that Peter deals with Christians facing persecutions and other troubles. The word “suffer” is found 12 times in this letter, and at least 5 more times other words associated with this grief are found. It is a major theme, and Peter first addresses it early in this letter.
 - ii. Peter notes that for the time being (a little while – unspecified length, but not forever -cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17)
 - iii. If need be – The NASB says, “if necessary” – is suffering a prerequisite to salvation? It is not a command as in, “You must go out and find a way to suffer”, but it IS something that given enough time, will happen. So certain is this that Paul said, “All who desire to live godly will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - iv. You are grieved by various trials – notice Peter does not describe these trials as pleasant. This is not somebody who enjoys pain in any way. These unpleasant circumstances are not something he looks forward to experiencing (think of Jesus in the garden). In fact, he sorrows that they are taking place – consider, if you are being persecuted as a Christian, it means someone, and likely the society that you are part of, is bound for hell
 - v. What are the “various trials” Peter is speaking of?
 1. They could *outright persecutions* – as in beatings, imprisonment and even death.
 2. They could be the *mocking and hateful rhetoric against Christians* which is on the increase as larger numbers turn their back on God, Jesus and the Bible.
 3. They could be *economic hardships* in a society that so despises Christians they make them suffer. Friends with the rampant intolerance we are seeing right now against those with opposing views, conditions are ripening for Christians to begin receiving economic and other sanctions simply because you profess to be a Christian.
Question: Will you continue to contribute to the church as you do, if you lose your tax-deductible contribution?

4. They could be the *disappointments and discouragement from friends and family* who express no interest in the truth, or even more heart breaking – they walk away from it.
5. They could be the *sufferings associated with life that all face* – illnesses, this pandemic, struggling to make ends meet, worries, and other burdens of life.
6. They could be *struggles with temptations and sin* that we are trying to overcome.

II. Genuine faith

- a. ***That the genuineness of your faith*** – proof (NASB), testing (KJV)
 - i. As we deal with trials and tribulations, we need faith. IOW, we need to believe God – His instructions and promises, and we need to trust Him. IT is always worth reminding us that it is easy to say this, but much more challenging to do it. Hebrews 11 is filled with examples of what this enduring faith is like.
 - ii. It is also a genuine faith. The word “*genuine*” (δοκίμιον, dokimion) (NKJV) is a word that mean something that is proven to be true even after it is tested. Hence the various words in translations. This is the noun form of the word.
 - iii. It is also found in James 1:3, “the testing of your faith”
- b. ***It is much more precious than gold that perishes*** – here Peter references its value.
 - i. Be reminded that we are not to trust in uncertain riches (1 Timothy 6:17, Matthew 6:19).
 - ii. The spiritual man understands the true value of faith over stuff, no matter how much stuff we might have.
- c. ***It is tested with fire*** –
 - i. The word for “tested” (δοκιμάζω, dokimazō) is the verb form of the above word. This is the act of verifying that something is genuine. Putting something to the test.
 - ii. One way metals, including gold, are purified is to heat them up so that they melt. In the process, the heat is so great that impurities are burned out of it and rendering the metal purer.
 - iii. Found in passages such as 1 John 4:1, 2 Corinthians 13:5 - “test yourselves” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 – “test all things”, Galatians 6:4, “But let each one examine his own work...”
 - iv. Make no mistake, our faith will be tested and how we respond will determine who we really are spiritually.
 - v. It is in this sense that testing can be a good thing – learning limits, ensuring we can finish something, and making us stronger as we deal with our limitations.
Romans 5:3-5 – good can come out of our trials and troubles.
- d. ***May be found to praise, honor and glory***
 - i. This is the result of our testing – what we hope our trials will prove to be true.
 - ii. Likely, these three descriptions are what we will receive when we stand before God in judgment
 1. Praise – when we stand before God we hope to hear, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21, 23).
1 Corinthians 4:5, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.*
 2. Honor – being given a place of high respect. John 12:26, *If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*
 3. Glory - Romans 2:7-10 – Paul noted that eternal life awaits the one who continues to do good. “glory, honor and immortality”
 - iii. NOTE: If in being tested we find weakness or failure, we know what we need to work on.

e. At the revelation of Jesus Christ (7-8)

- i. He is coming back – the word revelation is ἀποκάλυψις, (apokalypsis). It is the same word used for the book of Revelation. The point here is the Lord is returning (1 Corinthians 1:7 also mentions that we are eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; 2 Thessalonians 1:7 notes that He will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels; Revelation 1:7, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.”
- ii. **Whom having not seen you love, though now you see Him**– most to whom Peter is writing never physically saw Jesus (just like us). He first observes they had not (in time past) seen Him, and even as he is writing, and they are facing trials, they STILL do not physically see Him. But consider:
 1. They were blessed to speak and communicate with some who had (cf. 2 Peter 1:16-18). Here Peter uses a past tense verb.
 2. But even then they loved Him – what does this involve – 1 John 5:3 – in this is love, that we keep His commandments. And it involves endurance.
 3. Why do we love Him? 1 John 4:19 – we love Him because He first loved us. There is evidence for why we should believe in Jesus and WHY He died for us (with love). Peter was preaching a message that involved the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:7, “We walk by faith, not by sight”.
 4. **Though now you do not see Him, yet believing** - Consider John 20:29 where Jesus spoke to Thomas who refused to believe until he physically saw and touched Jesus. *Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*
 5. Friends, it is a firm faith that sustains us.
- iii. **You rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory** – this again returns to the Christian’s joy, which we have noted is not the world’s definition of joy.

f. Receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your soul (9)

- i. This is the goal. Understand that whatever we endure in this life, and when times are bad, we need to keep reminding ourselves of this. Hebrews 11:13-16 – one of my favorite faith passages.
- ii. **The salvation of your soul** – truly this is what it is about. Jesus Himself taught, “But he who endures to the end will be saved” – Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10 – “Be faithful unto death and you will receive the crown of life.”

And thus we have Peter’s first encouragement in the face of their trials and tribulations. As we have noted in introducing this book, it is a great source to turn to when we face the troubles of this life. We are reminded to endure, have faith, and anticipate the good that can come from such. And ultimately, if we remain faithful, we have an eternal rest to anticipate. What about you? Is your faith genuine?