

Home Group Notes  
Week of March 29, 2020

My parents were in their teens during World War II. They had heard about the war in Europe, but when Hawaii was attacked, everything changed. Suddenly, everyone was in fear, headlights were covered, they couldn't get supplies, and everyone had roles to play. Children helped gather up materials to recycle, teens engaged in adult work, my mom worked to keep groceries available and my dad (age 17) volunteered to serve in the military.

Those same challenges came upon the early church. Everything changed - they were at war. Followers-of-the-way were a small minority, misunderstood, and oppressed by 'the enemy.' And yet, they were known for their faith, love, and unity. Though they lived under Roman oppression and rejected by many, they believed God's promises and lived with "inexpressible and glorious joy."

Years ago, I was in a small meeting with Pastor Chuck Swindoll. As we talked about what it means to serve as a shepherd, he made this statement: "The calling card of the Christian should be their joy." In this week's journey through 1 Peter, we will learn HOW we can live with "inexpressible and glorious joy" even in the trials of life.

Last week, we focused on the call to be obedient to Jesus in light of His gift of living hope (1 Peter 1:1-5). This week, we will examine God's master plan of using trials in our lives, the role of faith, and the reasons we can have His joy even in times of grief. Let's look in God's Word. Begins by reading 1:1-12.

#### A STUDY GUIDE TO LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD, THE BIBLE

Always, when we study a passage, we should know the big picture. This is a letter written by the Apostle Peter to believers in Asia Minor during times when they were suffering grief from trials. Reread 1:1-5 to get the backdrop for this week's passage. Write down three words from this passage that represent these five verses. (We're using the NIV version of the Bible, but there are many other good translations.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read again through this week's passage: 1:6-12. Begin by making some broad observations:

Q. What are some of the big topics addressed?

Q. List below what "this" refers to in 1:6?

Q. Make a list of “key” words found in this passage. (Key words are essential to the big picture / main purposes or meaning of this passage.) Perhaps include how many times the topic/word is included.

Getting more specific, let’s look into Peter’s encouragement.

Q. What were the recipients experiencing? Use Peter’s words.

Q. What do we learn about God’s character and His master plans? What was the Father’s part? (3) Jesus Christ part? (7-11) The Holy Spirit’s part? (5, 8, 11-12) Was grace always a part of God’s plan, even in the Old Testament? How? (10-12)

Q. LEAD QUESTION: According to this passage, what role does suffering / trials play in the life of a follower of Christ?

Q. How is faith essential to experiencing God good plans? What is the role of our faith? (An excellent article that I highly recommend is found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/3-secrets-joy-midst-trials-1-peter-16-9>.)

Reread 1:6-12. List reasons why we can have “inexpressible and glorious joy” in the midst of suffering trials? (Note: After you have done your study, notice the summary at the end.

Note: In 1 Peter 3:15, we are told to “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” I believe that “hope” is what we share about with people (our hope is based in the gospel, the promise of eternal life with Jesus) and “joy” is something that encourages people to ask.

#### DISCUSSION IDEAS FOR YOUR GROUP

In what ways do trials prove the genuineness of faith? How are trials beneficial to our faith? How does verse eight connect with these questions?

We see in verses 10-12 that the prophets were searching to find out the circumstances of the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. Then later we see that these questions have been answered in the gospel. In both of

these statements, the Spirit (God) is working. What does this reveal about our need to walk by faith in the Spirit? How does this happen?

How can we simultaneously have grief and joy? What does Peter reveal about the source and presence of joy?

#### PRAYER TOGETHER

These are times of special need for prayer. Around the world, people are huddled in safety.

- Please pray for one another - for faith, for joy in trial, and for love expressed
- Please pray for God's family in the world - for safety, for witness, for perseverance
- Please pray for our officials to have insight, wisdom, and compassion so that we might live in "we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

I pray that you will be filled with His joy as you live out faith in Jesus,

Steve Springsted

Addendum: 'How can we have joy in the midst of trials?'

- 1) We can live through the trials with confidence in our eternal future, a living hope (1:3), anchored in the historical accomplishment of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our hope is not wishful thinking - it is confidence in the promises of the only one who broke the death barrier. We are going to live with Jesus forever!
- 2) We can treasure in our hearts that our inheritance (1:4) is waiting for us in heaven, kept secure by God Himself. (The security is not up to us and anyone else.)
- 3) We can rest in Jesus that our salvation of our souls is complete and coming with Jesus. (1:5, 9) There is nothing to accomplish, our faith in Jesus and His works is God's master plan for salvation.
- 4) We can have joy because we know that these trials have purpose. They prove the genuineness of our faith (1:7) which results in greater joy. (I remember the first time I read 1 Peter 1 and how it moved me to joy as I realized that my faith was genuine.)
- 5) What joy fills out heart as we consider the many many promises that God is going to reward faithfulness in trials. I am shocked the faithful in trials will receive "praise, glory, and honor." (1:7) Doesn't He deserve all the praise, glory, and honor?? (See also Matthew 5:11-12; 16:27; Luke 6:23; 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10; 22:12.)
- 6) We can rejoice in trials give opportunity to draw near to and love Jesus (1:8) as we are faithful and obedient. . God uses trials and suffering to produce growth in our love for and faith in God.

7) We can dwell on the privilege to follow Jesus' example who suffered for us.  
(1:11; see also 2:21)

In summary, we live through trials with joy because we grow in a love relationship with Jesus Christ and dwell on His amazing grace and promises. (cf. Psalms 77:12)