**Living With Hope Through Trials Part 2**

**1 Peter 1:3-9 (Today we cover verses 6-9)**

**Introduction**

 Good morning! Please get your papers from last week if you brought it today. Today we continue looking at verses 3-9 of the first chapter of the First Epistle of Peter. Last week we discussed what Peter was instructing his readers regarding the hope they have in God who helps those who are enduring trials. The first point that Peter made in his introduction is that there is a hope that does not fade away and we have great reasons to not let go of that hope. We have been saved from our sins not because of our own merit, but because God has shown us great mercy. He does not have to offer salvation to any sinner, but because He is a God of mercy, He has made that available. When someone accepts Christ as Savior they are born again and made a new creation in the spirit. Even though our earthly bodies are perishing our eternal soul will never perish because it has been made new in Christ. Because of the resurrection of Christ, we have a strongly rooted faith that we will also experience a resurrection when He returns. With His resurrection being the firstfruits of that reality we also expect and anticipate that with hope in our hearts.

The second point he made was that we have been given security through the inheritance we receive when we accept Christ as Savior. Unlike the inheritance God gave to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament which was eventually lost because of their unfaithfulness, the inheritance we receive from Christ is imperishable, undefiled and unfading. The hope that sustains followers of Christ is the promise that heaven awaits those who keep the faith despite the trials and hardships that are faced on this earth. Not only do we have the hope of eternal life to give us courage, but Scripture tells us that God will protect those who place faith in Him until the time of Christ’s return. Our eternal souls are held in the hands of almighty God.

 With the time that we have together today we are going to look at the remainder of this passage (verses 6-9), paying close attention to two more reasons why we can have hope even during times of trial and suffering. 3. The goldsmith must put the gold into the fire to burn away the impurities, but after experiencing the fire the gold is pure and of high value. We face trials for a purpose, which is to mold us into the image of Christ. 4. We experience the joy of our salvation not through what we see or feel in this world, but in the relationship and union we have with God through Christ.

**The Purpose of Our Trials (vv. 6-7)**

**6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

 Peter continues in his letter by explaining to his readers that in the present reality- we will face various **trials**. This is not something that might happen, but Peter is making it clear that this is something that is guaranteed to happen. I know that this is not a popular teaching or something that many pastors want to address, but I must be very clear with you that Scripture teaches plainly that followers of Christ are to expect to face persecution for their faith. The words of Christ make this very clear **“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also’” (John 15:20).**

 Not only is persecution to be expected, but we must also remember that these trials will distress those who profess Christ s king. What Peter is saying is that these trials that followers of Christ experience take place for a specific purpose and sometimes that purpose is to cause that person to become more reliant on God and less reliant on their own wisdom. This leads us to the next point regarding the purpose of trials. These trials allow the believer to **focus on their future joy- Even in sorrow, we can rejoice because trials refine faith.** Not only does Peter teach about trials, but Paul does as well. He wrote that trials lead to the believer in Christ developing perseverance as well as the ability to withstand opposition for the faith. (Romans 5:3-5)

 The third purpose of trials according to Peter is that they **test our faith- Like gold tested by fire, faith is proven genuine.** It is very easy to profess faith in God when times are easy and when there is no persecution. It is not as easy when opposition has come up from all sides and when it is not socially acceptable to be a follower of Christ. We have been seeing lately in the culture that following Christ is being mocked by those who say things like prayer doesn’t work and discouraging followers of Christ from saying that they are praying for others. This took place after the horrible shooting at a Catholic school over a week ago. In this country we may face mockery or insults, but there may come a time when we may have to face personal harm for our faith. When we are tested in those ways it shows our true faith and whether or not it is legitimate. Not only does this impact the way we handle it, but others will see our faith in action and it will inspire them as well. When followers of Christ are tested in the fire it shows that their faith is genuine.

 The result of facing trials in our lives is that **praise, glory, and honor when Christ is revealed.** This is so interesting that the Apostle Peter is the one who is making this point. Later in his life he will be crucified for the faith he had in Christ. At the conclusion of the gospel of John there is a discussion regarding the future of the apostles. Starting in John 21 verse 18 we read **“Truly, truly I tell you, when you were younger, you used to put on your belt and walk wherever you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will put your belt on you, and bring you where you do not want to go.” Now He said this, indicating by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, “Follow Me!” (John 21:18-19).** The persecution that Peter would face would bring glory to God and show that his faith in Christ was genuine. We see that Peter would eventually practice what he taught in this letter.

 Application #3: The goldsmith must put the gold into the fire to burn away the impurities, but after experiencing the fire the gold is pure and of high value. We face trials for a purpose, which is to mold us into the image of Christ.

**The Joy of Our Salvation (vv. 8-9)**

**8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

After concluding his comments regarding the purpose of trials Peter then begins sharing that it is not those experiences that bring us joy in the Lord, it is the fact that we belong to Him that brings us that joy. He begins by saying that even though his readers had not seen Jesus, they still loved Him. This is **faith without sight- We love and trust Christ though we have not seen Him.** This applies to all those today who still place their faith in Christ even though they have never seen Him. Scripture is clear that those who place faith in Christ are blessed because they still have this faith without having seen Him. We see this when the Apostle Thomas doubted the resurrection of Christ and said that he would not believe unless he saw the body of Jesus and touched His wounds. After Jesus appears and he is able to see the resurrected Lord, he responds with these words “My Lord and my God.” Jesus then says in response **“Because you have seen Me, have you now believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29).** Having faith in Christ without seeing Him physically is a blessing and gives us the ability to withstand persecution.

 The second aspect of our salvation is that it gives us **Inexpressible Joy- Rooted not in circumstances but in relationship with Christ.** The joy that followers of Christ experience is not because following Him will always make this life easy or free from pain. We have the joy of the Lord because we know that no matter what we are going through He walks beside us all the way. We know this because the Holy Spirit indwells in us and provides us with the words of Scripture and prayer to keep us connected with our Savior. The joy that Christ gives is far beyond any other joy we can experience in this world. Jesus explained it this way when He was talking about His resurrection **“Truly, truly I say to you that you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy! 21 Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one is going to take your joy away from you” (John 16:20-22).** What Jesus said is exactly what came to pass after His resurrection. They mourned His death, but when they saw Him alive it gave them a joy that was so powerful it caused them to share the good news with all and not to worry about the persecution they would face. Peter is instructing his readers that their salvation will fill them with that same joy.

 The third way that salvation brings joy is in the fact that the **outcome of faith is the salvation of our souls.** As we have already said, salvation is a work of the spirit that makes the believer in Christ a new creation in the spirit. Knowing that our souls have been saved from eternal separation from God in hell gives us a hope and joy that this world cannot take away.

 Application #4: We experience the joy of our salvation not through what we see or feel in this world, but in the relationship and union we have with God through Christ. It is because of what the Lord has done for us that we can have such joy. Whatever happens to us in this world should not deter us from keeping our joy in the Lord.

**Conclusion**

 As we conclude our time together this morning let us take a few moments to review what we have learned in this passage. There are four takeaways for us to remember as we live out our daily lives: 1. We have a living hope (past- Christ’s resurrection). It is the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead that allows us to have the hope that we will also experience a resurrection as well. 2. We have a secure inheritance (future- eternal glory). Just like a child inherits the estate the parents leave behind; Christ has promised us that we will inherit the eternal kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world for those who trust Him as Savior. 3. We have a present joy (even in trials- proven faith). Being a follower of Christ is not easy and may cost us something. No matter what the cost we still have joy because we know that those trials cannot steal that joy. Our soul is eternal and is being protected until that day we stand in the presence of holy God. May we never lose our joy and remember that no matter what happens here we have a God who loves us and has purchased our salvation with His own blood. Thank you, Lord, for showing us mercy and grace that we do not deserve. Amen.

***In case you misplaced it I am providing another copy of the fill-in sheet from last week. Once you have it completed you can review and encourage yourself with the good news. We have reasons to be joyful, despite our circumstances.***

