

**THOSE NECESSARY TRIALS**

1 Peter 1:6-9

**Intro:** Up to this point in the epistle the Apostle Peter's words have been marked by great joy which he felt in his heart, a joy which he was expressing in praise and adoration toward God. And you can see by reading the first five verses of 1 Peter 1 that his joy was in the blessing of salvation which he had experienced in his own life, but also in the prospect that this gave him for the future – "a living hope." He was thankful that it was guaranteed for him in heaven because God was keeping it for him, but also because he himself was being kept for that grand day. He knew that his inheritance was "incorruptible, and undefiled, and" that it never would fade away! He was more certain of the blessings of salvation that he ever could have been about an earthly possession that he might have. The people of this world are so prone to get as much as they can in the way of earthly possessions, but they do fade away and need to be replaced, or they can be stolen from us, or destroyed as many people in several of the southern states have experienced this past week when their towns have been damaged by storms, and many people have lost all of their possessions.

Just yesterday morning I read in Proverbs 23, verses 4 and 5,

4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

In our study of the Sermon on the Mount you will remember that our Lord said this about treasures on earth and treasures in heaven:

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

In every generation there are many, many people who know nothing about laying up treasures in heaven. But this is what the people of God are exhorted to do. At the same time, we have many treasures, such as Peter was mentioning in our text which God is holding in reserve for us, treasures which we did not acquire by our own works, but treasures which we have by the grace of God.

In a world where so much emphasis is laid upon acquiring money in order to purchase things, things which never bring the joy that we thought they

would bring, it is both refreshing and enlightening to read in the Bible of an inheritance, a living hope, which the people of God can never lose.

However, we all know that even for a Christian not everything is easy in this life. We have our joys, but we also have our sorrows. We rejoice in our blessings, but we sometimes, as the Apostle Peter said here in verse 6, “are in heaviness through manifold temptations,” or trials. And if you read verse 6 carefully you will see that the Apostle was saying that we can be rejoicing greatly, and yet at the same time be “in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Such talk seems to a person who doesn’t know the Lord like an impossibility because gladness and sadness seem to be mutually exclusive. If you are glad, then you are not sad, and if you are sad, then you are not glad. But a careful reading of the text indicates that it is possible for us to be glad and sad at the same time.

Be sure to notice this in verse 6 where I want to begin my message today. In this verse the Apostle Peter spoke of:

### **I. A CHRISTIAN’S BLESSINGS AND TRIALS (1 Pet. 1:6).**

If you are reading through this epistle each week in preparation for the Sunday morning messages, you will notice as I pointed out in, I think it was my first message in this series, that Peter referred to the trials and sufferings of his readers in every chapter.

We have it here in chapter 1. See it in verses 11 and 12 of chapter 2. In chapter 3 notice suffering in verses 14 through 17. More than once in the epistle Peter spoke of the sufferings that our Lord experienced here on earth, and related our sufferings to His. In chapter 4 we have a very strong section on suffering, beginning with verse 12 and continuing on to the end of the chapter. In chapter 5 I will read just two verses: 10 and 11.

So we have trials referred to throughout the epistle.

In verse 6 of chapter 1 we are given some real encouragements regarding sufferings. One is, as I have been mentioning, trials do not have to mean that our joy must come to an end – even temporarily. In fact, if we are rejoicing in the right things, trials can actually increase our joy. When Paul was writing to the church in Philippi, he exhorted them not to worry, but to make their requests known to God, and he promised them that if they did, they could experience “the peace of God which passeth understanding.” By this he meant that they would have peace when, as far as their circumstances were concerned, there was no earthly reason why they could be at peace. Peace and joy usually go together. So we can be

having a tough time personally, and yet at the same time can rejoice in the Lord and the many blessings that we have in Him. And Peter said that they would not only rejoice, but “greatly rejoice.” That ought to be encouraging to us.

But notice also that Peter spoke of our trials as “for a season.” That is, life is not one long trial, or one trial after another. It may seem like that at times, but God is the One Who is in control of our trials, and these words “for a season” means that He sets time limits on our trials.

Another thing that Peter mentioned is that we have “manifold temptations,” or trials. The word that Peter used here which is translated “temptations” means anything that is a testing time for us. And he called them “manifold temptations” because there are different kinds. The main idea in the epistle regarding trials has to do with ways in which the believers were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. Sometimes it was just words of accusation that were thrown their way, at other times the trials became more physical, and sometimes resulted in death. But we have other trials such as physical problems, or financial problems, or the sorrow of losing in death someone we love. There are “manifold temptations,” and it seems that we all, at one time or another, get a taste of each one. As far as persecution is concerned, we do not experience persecution and the threat of physical harm or death like those early Christians did, and perhaps the reason we don’t is because we may not be as devoted to the Lord as those early Christians were. We all need to give some thought to that.

Trials always produce “heaviness.” This is a good translation of the word that Paul used. When we are sad or unhappy, we speak of having a heavy heart. And sorrow can make us feel like we have a heavy weight pressing down on our hearts, or on our chests. I am sure that most of us know what that is.

But before I leave this verse I want to point out to you that little phrase, “if need be.” These words are the translation of three words in the Greek text.

Some of you will remember that some time in the past I brought a series of messages on the word “must” which is often used in the NT. We have it in statements like, “Ye must be born again.” Or, John the Baptist’s statement concerning the Lord, “He must increase, but I ... decrease.” Or, “Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” That word always speaks of something which was absolutely necessary in the plan and purpose of God.

Well that is the word that Peter used here. He was saying that our trials are what God sees that we *need*, experiences or testings which are *necessary* for our spiritual growth. When I was going through a time of considerable opposition in my ministry a number of years ago, my doctor brother who was living at the time, said to me as we were talking about it all in his office one day – he said, “Well, Cuss, if you didn’t need it, you wouldn’t get it.” He didn’t mean that God was punishing me, but he was encouraging me to believe that it was all a part of God’s plan for me, and that God’s purpose was to bring me blessing through the testing!

That is always God’s purpose in our trials. We need to be careful as Peter also tells us in this epistle, that we do not suffer for our wrongdoing. But trials will come even though you and I sincerely try to live the ways the Lord wants us to live. As we often hear it said, “Untried faith is always weak faith.”

And this is what Paul called these trials in verse 7:

## II. “THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH” (1 Pet. 1:7).

These testings which God brings into our lives are in reality *trials of our faith*. They are testings which God brings along to make us stronger in the life that we are called to live, a life of trusting God.

You know, it is relatively easy to say that we are trusting God, walking by faith, when things are going smoothly in our lives, but when the trials come our way, then we realize how much we need to depend upon the Lord to keep us trusting Him. We are like Peter was when he boldly stepped out of the boat to walk on the water to meet the Lord, and then he began to notice how rough the water was, and being to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me!” He really wasn’t trusting the Lord as much as he thought he was. How often you and I find ourselves in that same position. We may not be walking on the water, but we begin to sink when our trials hit us.

Now at this point in Peter’s epistle he compared our trials with gold, *i.e.*, with trials and money. And his point was, Which will make you the richer person, gold or trials. If we had a choice, I am afraid that most of us would be inclined to take the gold. But at this point we need the Word of God to help us to keep our values straight. Peter tells us (and he knew by his own experiences) that the trials of our faith, trials to prove the genuineness of our faith, trials to strengthen our faith, are not only more valuable than if the Lord were to give us a bag of gold, but they are “much more precious,” much more valuable, even if it gets to the place where it is a

*fiery trial.* The gold can perish. It can become devalued. Or we can spend it and it is gone. Or, when we die, we have to leave it behind. But the trial of our faith will “be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Through our trials of faith the Lord is purging away the dross from our lives, so that when the Lord Jesus returns, we will “be found unto praise and honor and glory,” that is, we will be to His “praise and honor and glory.” This is like the Apostle Paul said in Eph. 1 three times, “That we should be to the praise of His glory.” God is working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. Cf. Heb.3:20-21. All of our trials are designed especially by God to make us more like our precious Savior.

Our trials make us look longingly for the coming of the Lord when we will be with Him and like Him for all eternity.

### **III. PRESENT AND FUTURE RESULTS OF THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH (1 Pet. 1:8-9).**

Peter mentioned four present results in verses 8 and 9.

#### **A. We will have a greater love for the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:8a).**

Peter had seen the Lord, and loved Him, loved Him deeply. We haven't seen our Lord, but nevertheless we love Him. And there is something about going through the trials that the Lord brings into our lives, regardless of what they are, that makes us love the Lord more than ever before. He become a greater reality in our lives. Prayer becomes more extended, and even more spontaneous as we go about our daily lives. And we delight to see the Lord as He is revealed in His Word. And we look forward to that glorious day when we will finally see our precious Lord Jesus Christ *face to face*.

Face to face with Christ my Savior,  
Face to face – what will it be –  
When with rapture I behold Him,  
Jesus Christ Who died for me?

What rejoicing in His presence,  
When are banished grief and pain;  
When the crooked ways are straightened,  
And the dark things shall be plain

Face to face! O blissful moment!  
Face to face – to see and know;  
Face to face with my Redeemer,  
Jesus Christ Who loves me so.

But there is a second present result.

**B. We will trust Him more (1 Pet. 1:8m).**

We see this in the words, “yet believing.” In trials we are taken beyond our own resources, and what we can do for ourselves. And so we learn how much we need to trust the Lord, and we do trust Him more. This always follows loving Him more. What peace this brings to our hearts, and what joy this brings to His.

And the third present result is:

**C. We will rejoice in the Lord more (1 Pet. 1:8b).**

We learn more about what it is to delight ourselves in the Lord. We joy in God, as the Apostle Paul said, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We want the Lord, not just for what we want from Him, but just because we want Him.

The fourth present result, having implications for the future is in verse 9.

**D. By God’s grace we will be making progress toward God’s ultimate purpose in saving us (1 Pet. 1:9).**

It is wonderful to see how God’s purpose in saving us, is furthered along through the trials and testings, those “manifold temptations,” which He has planned for us. Even our Lord “learned obedience” as a Man “by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8). We learn the importance of obeying God in our trials, and through our obedience to the Lord, the Holy Spirit continues to work in us, making us more and more like the Savior.

**Concl:** This is truly a very important and a very precious passage, isn’t it?

I trust that we all have received encouragement from it. We all have our trials, and are in them in one way or another right now. Let us look to the Lord to keep us in our trials, and to work His perfect work in us. Then by His grace we can be the recipient of these blessings which He directed Peter to tell us about in the early part of this epistle.

I close by reading the words of one of William Cowper’s hymns which he

wrote back in 1774, and it gives the message of our text today with real insight into the ways of the Lord. (#21 in the Trinity Hymnal.)

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs, and works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the cloud ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding ev'ry hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.