

"The Lord's Encouragement to ALL Believers"

Part 4

1 Peter 1:1-2:10

Introduction: Last week in our study of 1 Peter we looked at the NEED FOR TESTING.

Notice 1 Peter 1:6-7

The persecution these believers were facing was a testing of their faith and it was something that was needful. We can say we have faith but until it is tested, we do not know how strong our faith is or what kind of faith we have. Let us notice the words of Spurgeon again on this thought:

"Indeed, it is the honor of faith to be tried. Shall any man say, 'I have faith, but I have never had to believe under difficulties'? Who knows whether thou hast any faith? Shall a man say, 'I have great faith in God, but I have never had to use it in anything more than the ordinary affairs of life, where I could probably have done without it as well as with it'? Is this to the honor and praise of thy faith? Dost thou think that such a faith as this will bring any great glory to God, or bring to thee any great reward? If so, thou art mightily mistaken."

The tests of our faith are designed by God and they are regulated by Him. He takes His children through the furnaces of affliction and while doing so He keeps His hand on the thermostat. He knows how much heat we can take and how long we can take it. We also considered last week the need of surrender. The tests are designed to refine our faith and when we resist, we God can allow the test to go on until the purpose is accomplished.

As we continue in our study tonight, we shall see that Peter is going to remind these believers of the joy that is theirs in the midst of what they are facing. This will also be a good reminder for each of us because we too have a joy but as we go through life and we face the tests and the trials we allow certain things to steal our joy away. As believers we look in the wrong places for our joy. We look to people, relationships, material possessions, health, friends, circumstances, and many other things. But these things all change and so when they are not what we think they should be we find ourselves joyless. My prayer tonight is that what we shall look at will help you if your joy has been stolen away.

➤ **The Believer's Joy**

Notice 1 Peter 1:8a

Peter is speaking here of our Lord Jesus Christ and he carries this thought from the previous verse. He states that his readers love Jesus Christ, and we need to stop and

consider this thought for a moment. The Bible refers to those who "love the Lord" as True believers.

Exodus 20:6

⁶ *And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

Psalm 97:10

¹⁰ *Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Romans 8:28

²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

1 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

John 8:42a

⁴² *Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me:*

1 Corinthians 16:22

²² *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.*

How can we as believers love the Lord whom we have never seen? Where does this kind of love come from? The word for "love" here is "agape". Wuest says that this is "a love that is called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the person loved." We can go further with this thought and we can say that this love is produced by the salvation within the believer. God has produced in every believer divine love.

Romans 5:5

⁵ *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Galatians 5:22a

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love...*

In order for a sinner to love the Lord he or she must have the nature of God for God is love. Before salvation we did not love the Lord, but we were His enemies. Now that His nature is within us there is a love and appreciation for our Lord that did not exist before.

Notice 1 Peter 1:8 again.

Peter could write with confidence that these believers loved the Lord because loving Him comes natural to the person who is saved.

People talk much about loving God, but the true test of our love for Him is the tests and trials of life. Our love for the Lord should not be diminished by the difficulties in life. It is so important that we spend time in the Word of God and learn more and more about our Lord because the better we know Him the deeper we love Him.

Notice 1 Peter 1:8 again.

Peter tells us these people rejoiced with joy unspeakable and were full of glory. How could they have joy unspeakable when they were facing the fiery trials under the persecution of Nero? Because their joy was not found in circumstances.

This is where many believers fail. They look for joy in all the wrong places. The majority of secular dictionaries are completely wrong with their definition of joy.

"Joy is the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or the emotion evoked by the prospect of possessing what one desires. The world's definition of joy is therefore dependent on what "happens"."

Let me show you a list where joy is NOT found.

1) **Not in Unbelief** — Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born... (and at his death cried out desperately) I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six month's life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"

2) **Not in Pleasure** — Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone."

3) **Not in Money** — Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

4) **Not in Position and Fame** — Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

5) **Not in Military Glory** — Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, before he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."

So, where is joy found? It is found in Jesus Christ.

Notice the words of an unnamed man:

"It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians—and I am one of them."

Joy then is the deep-down sense of contentment that dwells in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord. It is not an experience that comes from desired circumstances but even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful and severe.

John 16:19-22

¹⁹ Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

²⁰ Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

²¹ A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

*²² And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, **and your joy no man taketh from you.***

This joy is what every person desires, and only we who are believers can experience it. But even believers miss this joy because they search in all the wrong places. If we are going to have joy, then our focus must be upon the Lord and not on what is happening in my life.

John 15:4 - 5, 8-11

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

⁹ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

¹⁰ *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

¹¹ *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Notice 1 Peter 1:8 again.

The joy which Peter speaks of is "unspeakable". This means that it is indescribable. Because it is the Lord's joy there are no words that we could articulate to describe this joy. It is a supernatural joy. Let this be a reminder to us that the closer we get to our Lord the greater the joy we experience. Therefore, let us draw near to Him. Let us get our eyes away from the world and turn them to the Source of all True joy. Don't allow the daily circumstances to rob you of the greatest joy known to man.

Notice 1 Peter 1:9

This word "receiving" is in the present tense and it means that we are receiving the salvation of our souls. As we walk with the Lord we are receiving the benefits of our salvation and one of the benefits is the joy spoken of in the previous verse.

So, let me pull this together to help you to see what Peter is saying. These believers were under the heaviness of persecution. But they had within them unspeakable joy which was evidence of the salvation they possessed as believers. No matter what the Roman authorities brought upon them nothing could take away their love for Jesus Christ and the joy of their salvation. There would be a day when they would experience the completion of their salvation which would be their glorification and until then they had assurance within them that they belonged to God.

We as believers can get our eyes off the Lord and when we do the joy begins to fade. Sometimes we get focused upon circumstances and while we are distracted the enemy comes and he steals away our joy. We can actually fall under demonic oppression and when this happens the demonic world will bombard you with thoughts concerning the situation you are facing. We must recognize this and resist the attacks and get our mind back upon the Lord and His promises.

Maybe in your life the joy has went away because of something that is happening. I want you to know that you can get the joy back. Sin will rob you of your joy.

Let me show you something that David prayed for.

Psalm 51:10-12

¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

¹¹ *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

¹² *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

Conclusion:

I will end with a passage that deals with David and his men being robbed and I want you to see what happened.

1 Samuel 30:1-8

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

² *And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.*

³ *So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.*

⁴ *Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.*

⁵ *And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.*

⁶ **And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.**

⁷ *And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.*

⁸ *And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and **without fail recover all.***

David was able to get his blessings back. The Lord permitted him to recover everything that was taken.

Maybe your joy has been stolen away and like David you are distressed. Let me say that you need to encourage yourself in the Lord and you need seek the Lord and He will restore your joy.

If we look to circumstances and people for our joy, we will certainly be disappointed. People will let us down and circumstances are ever changing.

Psalm 16:7-11

⁷ I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

⁸ I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

¹⁰ For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

¹¹ Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.