

1 Peter
Joy Thru Trials – 1 Peter 1:6-9

Fairlawn Lutheran Church Library Bible Study
February 8, 2026

Prayer & Introductions

A. Readings:

Clowney p. 34ff

1 Peter 1:1-9 2 Peter 3:8 ...one day is as 1000 years... Heb 12:1-2 “for the joy that was set...”

B. Review:

Week 1: *1 Peter Introduction – From Peter to Christians in Asia Minor in 63AD to encourage them in their suffering that is about to get worse.*

Week 2: *Union With Christ – “New Birth”. There are 2 signs of new birth: 1. Living Hope & 2. New inheritance*

Week 3: *Atonement: “At One Menth” - Restoration of a fractured relationship. Election – Assumed by all NT writers and confirmed in the old testament. But we are still accountable and our actions matter.*

C. Joy Thru Trials – (Clowney pp 34-37)

1. 4 Reasons we can have joy thru trials (See Attachment)

2.

D. Contemporary Significance: Keller Audio –“Suffering – If God is Good, Why” (...so much evil in world?)

The problem of Evil & Suffering – “If God allows evil and suffering to exist because he can’t stop it, then he can’t be all powerful. If he can stop it but won’t, then he’s not good. Therefore, there is no such thing as a good and all-powerful God.”

1. One Way NOT to face Evil and Suffering... Abandon our belief in God. This doesn’t help. Having no belief in God makes pain and suffering worse.

- a. Peter is saying that abandoning your faith in the face of suffering is no help.
- b. There is nothing more natural than violence and suffering..
- c. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) – existentialism. “If God does not exist, there is no possibility of ... good existing.”
- d.

2. 3 Ways to Face Evil & Suffering

a. Look Back to Something [9:15]. Because Jesus went into the ULTIMATE furnace for you, you can have assurance that he will walk with you into your personal furnaces.

- i. Peter likens suffering to a fiery furnace like in Daniel 3.
- ii. To deal with evil and suffering we have to look back to what Jesus did on the cross.
- iii. Only in Christianity do we have a God who suffered. A God who sacrificed his only Son.
- iv. The cross can’t tell us the answer to “Why does God allow suffering?”. But we know that it can’t be that God doesn’t care. We have a God who suffered.

b. Look Ahead To Something [20:00].

- i. We have a “Living Hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” [v 3]
- ii. If Jesus resurrection happened (and it did) we can have assurance that we will have a resurrection as he promised.

c. Look Into Something [26:05].

- i. “The good news (gospel)... things into which angels long to look.” (v12). We need to look into the gospel.
- ii. Why did Jesus get thru his furnace? “For the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross...” Heb 12:2?
- iii. He did it to spend eternity with us in heaven. We are His living hope.

[Audio Keller ""]

Next Week: Continuing on 1 Peter.

'your faith and hope are in God' (21). Peter writes to those who have not seen the Lord, but who rejoice with him in what the Lord has done. They already begin to receive what will be theirs when Christ comes, the goal of their faith, the salvation of their souls (9).

3. Joy through trials in Christ our hope (1:6–9)

Reflection on what God has done for us fills us with exultant joy. *In all this you greatly rejoice*. The text could also be translated, '... in whom you greatly rejoice'. Since Peter uses the same verb in verse 8 to describe our joy in Christ, it is possible that he is thinking, not just of all the blessings we have in Christ, but of Christ in whom we have the blessings.²¹

Dramatically, Peter moves from ecstasy to agony. We who *rejoice* in Christ *suffer grief in all kinds of trials*. No doubt Peter thinks not only of suffering Christians, but of Christ himself. Peter well knew how Jesus had been put to grief (2:21–22). Yet *because of his grief we have joy*, even in suffering.

Peter is now dealing with the heart of his concern in writing this letter. He wants to assure Christians of their hope as they face trials. He now gives four reasons why we can not only endure trials, but *rejoice in hope* in the midst of trials. The *first reason* is that our hope in Christ points us beyond the trials. Our troubles last only for a little while; our hope in Christ is for ever. Peter returns to this theme when he writes the conclusion of the letter (5:10). Jesus himself endured the cross and despised the shame because of the joy that was set before him (Heb. 12:2).

Not only does our joy point beyond grief. In the *second place*, it is actually strengthened through the very sufferings that we endure. Peter has declared that God keeps us for glory by faith. Our faith, then, must continue to the end of our lifelong pilgrimage. If our faith is to endure, it must be purified and *stress-tested*. Like *gold* it must pass through the furnace (7). Trials should not surprise us, or cause us to doubt God's faithfulness. Rather, we should actually be glad for them. *God sends trials to strengthen our trust in him* so that our faith will not fail. Our trials keep

²¹ Some commentators link the phrase *in all this* (6) to 'the last time' (5) and understand the rejoicing that Peter describes to be the joy of the last day. Most understand the rejoicing to be in the blessings described in verses 3–5. The verb *rejoice* could be translated as an imperative, but the indicative fits the form of the passage and the theme of Peter – our future joy is already present. See Bénétreau, pp. 88–89. For the thought of inexpressible joy, see Rom. 8:26; Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9.

us trusting; they burn away our self-confidence and drive us to our Saviour. The fires of affliction or persecution will not reduce our faith to ashes. *Fire* does not destroy gold: it only removes combustible impurities. Yet even gold will at last vanish with the whole of this created order. Faith is infinitely more precious and more enduring. Like jewellers putting their most precious metal in the crucible, so God proves us in the furnace of trial and affliction. The genuineness of our faith shines from the fire to his praise.²²

A third reason joins joy to suffering. We know that when Jesus comes, he will bring far more than an end to suffering; he will bring his reward of blessing. Our trials are never forgotten by the Lord; he keeps our tears in his bottle (Ps. 56:8, NIV mg.). Paul says that *our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all* (2 Cor. 4:17). Our present sufferings cannot be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18). Peter, too, speaks of the crown of glory that does not fade away, which we will receive when Christ comes (5:4). Our faith will then be found to be precious, for by it we (and he) will receive *praise, glory and honour* (7).²³ Peter saw the glory of the Lord when he was transfigured on the mountain; he heard the promise of his return as he ascended in the clouds.²⁴ He knows that the end of all things is near; judgment is already beginning for the people of God. The day of God when the universe will be remade is the day of the Lord Jesus, the day when he will be *revealed*.²⁵ That day brings terror to those who do not know the Lord, but joy beyond expression to those who love him.

In the *fourth place*, the supreme reason for joining joy to suffering comes into view. That reason goes beyond even the glory that we will receive from the hand of the Lord. For, of course, *our tested faith does not earn the glory that will be given to us*. We receive glory as we share in Christ's glory. Indeed, it is not even certain that Peter is speaking of the

²² The NIV gives the sense of verse 7 well: *that the proven genuineness of your faith ... may result in praise. Dokimion* means 'genuineness' rather than 'proof'. It is the genuineness of our faith that will be found to praise and glory. See BAGD, p. 203; Selwyn, p. 129.

²³ Praise, glory and honour are normally ascribed to God in Scripture (1 Tim. 1:17). Peter affirms the glory of God as the final goal of all our service (4:11). He says that we have been made a nation of priests to show forth his excellencies (2:9). Jesus will be revealed in glory (4:13; Heb. 2:9). But we will share in the revealed glory of Christ (5:1), and will receive an unfading crown of glory (5:4). It would seem, therefore, that we are to understand the *praise, glory and honour* as the grace that we receive at Christ's revelation (1:13; Rom. 2:7). Since this is a sharing in Christ's glory, however, the thought of all praise being directed to God is essential to the passage. See Selwyn, p. 130; Bénétreau, p. 90 and Excursus, 'Joie et souffrances pour Dieu', pp. 259–263.

²⁴ Mark 9:2–8; Acts 1:11.

²⁵ 1 Pet. 4:7, 17; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12.

praise, glory and honour that we receive. He may be referring to the praise God receives from our proven faith (2 Thess. 1:10). We seek in all things that God may be glorified (4:11). If we receive crowns of glory, it will be our joy to cast them at the feet of the Saviour (Rev. 4:10).

When Jesus Christ is revealed, the gold of our faith will shine to his praise. The whole nature of suffering is changed for Christians when they realize that their anguish brings honour to Christ. The Museum of the Desert in the Cévennes mountains of southern France commemorates the sufferings of the Huguenot martyrs. When Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Protestant public worship was made a crime. Believers caught at secret services in the fields were sent to the galleys. Chained to a rowing bench, they slaved at the oars until they died. A replica of one of the great galley oars hangs in the museum today. Underneath is a model of a galley. Beside it are inscribed the words of a Reformed Christian galley slave: 'My chains are the chains of Christ's love.'

Peter reflects on the love that his readers have for Christ, love that makes them ready to suffer so that their proven faith can be his tribute: *Though you have not seen him, you love him.* Peter, of course, had seen the Lord. His love for Jesus could bring pictures to mind: Jesus in Capernaum, being served supper by Peter's mother-in-law, cured of her fever; Jesus on the sea, lifting Peter from the water – 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?'; Jesus in the hall of the high priest, looking at Peter after his denials; Jesus on the cross; Jesus, alive again, sitting by the coals of a fire on the shore of the Lake of Galilee – 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?'

Peter had seen Jesus, and loved him. Does it amaze him that distant and scattered Gentiles who have never seen Jesus also know and love him? Peter well knows that it is not his physical association with Jesus that joins him to his Saviour. He knows Jesus as the Son of God by the gift of the Father in heaven. He realizes that Gentiles, too, have received the Spirit (Acts 15:8). By faith we Gentiles who have never seen Jesus may share with Peter in loving him. It is not necessary for us to have been in Galilee with Jesus. Through the witness of Peter and the other apostles we learn about what Jesus said and did. They bear witness through the Holy Spirit, and by the witness of the Spirit we are brought to know and love the living Lord.

We did not see Jesus; we do not now see Jesus; but we shall see Jesus. Peter contrasts the past and the present with the future (7-8). The day is

coming when Jesus will be revealed. In that day the goal of our faith will be realized. Our eyes will behold the One we have trusted and loved.

Peter's expressions march forward: *You have not seen Jesus, but you love him; you do not see Jesus, but you believe in him; you will see Jesus and rejoice in him.* But notice the change that Peter makes. He says that *you... are [present tense] filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*²⁶ Not only do we have faith in Jesus and love for Jesus now; we also know already the joy that we will experience when we see him. Such is the faith and hope of those who know Jesus. The salvation of our souls in the last day is the goal of our faith. We wait for the salvation that Christ will bring with him at his appearing. Yet we are already experiencing that salvation. This apparent paradox forms the warp and woof of New Testament hope. Because Jesus has already come, in the flesh and in the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God has already come. Our hope is realized: we know Jesus. But because Jesus is coming again, the kingdom of God is yet to come, and the goal of our faith is still future. Christians live in a future that is already present, not just in imagination or expectation, but in realization: the reality of Christ's presence in the Spirit.

4. God's promises of hope are fulfilled in Christ (1:10-12)

Sufferings now, glories to follow. Peter wants to encourage Christians who face the first to look for the second. He has pointed our hope to the glory of Christ, and to his return. Now he would have us remember that the Christ of glory is the Christ of the cross. The sequence of our lives follows the sequence of Christ's life. He suffered first, then entered into his glory. So must we. Jesus understood that order well. It was the pattern predicted for the Messiah in the Old Testament.²⁷ After Peter's confession, Jesus had plainly predicted his betrayal, sufferings and death. Peter had

²⁶ Literally, 'You rejoice with joy inexpressible and glorified.'

²⁷ This exposition assumes that the sufferings and glory of Christ are spoken of in verse 11 as the subject of prophecy. Selwyn argues that the prophets are NT prophets, and that they predicted sufferings for Christ, the woes to precede the glory at the end (pp. 262ff.). The phrase *eis Christon* can readily be translated 'for Christ', but may mean 'of Christ' (BAGD, pp. 229-230). The same prepositional construction is used earlier in verse 10: the prophets told of 'the grace *unto you*'. This seems to explain the repeated phrase. Grace is prophesied for us (meant for us); sufferings are prophesied for Christ (meant for him). In the whole passage the vision of the prophets is identified with the gospel preached by the apostles (12). The prediction of sufferings and glory for Christians cannot support this identification. The mystery that angels desire to look into is not the fate of Christians, but the mystery of Christ, foreknown from the foundation of the world (20).

protested violently, 'Never, Lord! . . . This shall never happen to you!' (Matt. 16:22). Jesus told Peter that his response was from Satan, but Peter had continued to resist the thought that Jesus must suffer. Peter could rejoice in the glory of Christ on the mount of transfiguration, but he had failed to understand why Moses and Elijah had there talked with Jesus about his death – the death he must accomplish before he entered the glory that was his. In the night arrest in Gethsemane, Peter had drawn his sword to rescue Jesus from suffering.

Peter's misunderstanding was shared by the other disciples. On the very day of Christ's resurrection, two disciples were returning to Emmaus confused and dismayed because Jesus had been crucified. On the road Jesus joined them; before he made himself known to them, he taught them from the whole Old Testament that the Messiah must first suffer and then enter his glory (Luke 24:25–27). It was from the risen Lord himself that the apostles learned how Christ's suffering and glory fulfilled the Scriptures. They proclaimed that message in the apostolic gospel (Acts 17:3).

Glory is the goal of the Old Testament promises. From the first oracle in the garden of Eden, God promised victory over the serpent through the Son of the woman (Gen. 3:15). Peter, preaching after Pentecost, declared that Christ would remain in heaven until his coming again when 'the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets' (Acts 3:21).

Even a casual reading of the Old Testament prophets reminds us of their vision of glory. That vision stands out against the history of Israel. God promised Abraham that his descendants would be blessed, and would be a blessing to the nations. God did redeem and bless Israel. Solomon could say, when the temple was dedicated, that all God's promises of blessing had been kept. He looked for the nations to be drawn to pray at God's temple, and asked God to hear those prayers.²⁸ But the glory that filled Solomon's temple did not remain. Solomon himself turned his back on the house of God to dedicate a shrine to Chemosh on the Mount of Olives. Idolatry brought God's judgment: the glory departed from the house of the Lord. Where the glory cloud had rested, the smoke of destruction pillared upwards. Israel in the north, then Judah in the south, went into captivity.

The message of the prophets pronounces God's judgment on the sin of his people, but it does not stop with judgment. The final vision of the Old

²⁸ 1 Kgs 8:56, 41–43.

Testament is not of dry bones in death valley (Ezek. 37). Rather, it is renewal beyond conceiving. The prophets picture the restoration of all that had been lost: the land, the temple, the sacrifices, the priesthood.²⁹ But the restoration does not look back to recover the past; it looks forward to God's final renewal. God's fulfilment will transform everything. Not only will the remnant of Judah and Israel be gathered, but the remnant of the Gentiles will be gathered with them.³⁰ Not just Israel, but Egypt and Assyria will be called the people of God.³¹ Eden will be restored, and more: God will make a new creation where peace will be universal and darkness will be gone.³²

This incredible glory can come only because the God of glory will come. The Lord God will appear in order to save his people and renew creation.³³ The coming of the Lord is joined to the coming of the Angel of the Lord, and to the coming of the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord.³⁴ On the mount of transfiguration Peter saw the glory of the Lord shine from the face of Jesus, the Son and Servant of God. Now Peter looks for the return of Christ in glory to finish his fulfilment of the promise of the prophets.

The Old Testament also describes the sufferings of the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord. In the Psalms we hear the cry of the righteous servant as the reproaches directed against God fall on him.³⁵ David's wanderings to escape Saul's jealous fury become a symbol of the innocent suffering of the Lord's Anointed. The prophets themselves suffer for their faithful proclamation of the word of the Lord.³⁶ The prophets show, too, that the animal sacrifices of the ceremonial law cannot make final atonement for sin. There must be a better sacrifice, a sacrifice God will provide; not the ram caught by its horns on Mount Moriah, but the willing offering of the Servant of the Lord, whose soul will be an offering for sin.³⁷ Suffering precedes glory because the precious blood of the Lamb of God opens glory for believers.³⁸

²⁹ Isa. 2:2–4; 56:7; Ezek. 40:2; 44:9–31; Jer. 33:18.

³⁰ Isa. 2:2–4; 56:6–8; Mic. 4:1–3.

³¹ Isa. 19:19–25; 66:21; Zech. 14:16–20.

³² Isa. 11:6–9; 30:26; 35:9; 60:20; 65:17; 66:22.

³³ Isa. 35:1–10; 40:3, 10, 30; 60:1, 20; Zech. 14:16.

³⁴ Isa. 9:6; Zech. 13:8; Mal. 3:1–2; Isa. 40–42; Ezek. 34:11, 23. Cf. Pss 2; 45; 72; 110.

³⁵ Pss 69:9; 22:1–21; 57:4, 6; 59:3–4.

³⁶ Elijah, himself a resident alien, suffers for the word (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:17; 19:2); so do Jeremiah (15:10) and most of the prophets (Matt. 21:35–36; 23:31, 37; Acts 7:52).

³⁷ Hos. 6:6; Isa. 1:11–17; Gen. 22:13–14; Isa. 52:13–53:12.

³⁸ 1 Pet. 1:2, 19; 2:24.

The pattern of sufferings and glory has profound meaning for the church. Job's anguished accusations from the ashes have an astonishing answer. Our suffering is not a sign that Christ has betrayed us, or that he is no longer Lord; rather it is a sign of our fellowship with the risen Lord who first suffered for us. Suffering, indeed, becomes a sign of the glory that is to follow. But Peter is not announcing a general principle that those who look for reward must be prepared to pay in suffering. The prophets did not enunciate a principle: they predicted the sufferings and glory of the one who is himself the Lord. Christ is the end of prophecy, the goal of history. He is not one example of sufferings and glory among many; his is the suffering that brought salvation, his is the glory that brings the new creation. Jesus is therefore not simply the one of whom the prophets speak; he is the one who speaks through the prophets. The prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). The Spirit of God who inspired them is the Spirit of Christ. 'It is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus' (Rev. 19:10). Not only does prophecy bear witness to Jesus, but Jesus bears witness through prophecy. The incarnate Lord is the true witness; the eternal Logos is the source of the prophetic testimony.

Peter knows that his Lord is the Son of the living God; he understands that the Spirit that filled him at Pentecost was sent from the throne of glory. That Spirit of Christ illumined him, fisherman that he was, to preach what the rabbis had missed: the Old Testament witness to Christ's resurrection. Now his understanding sweeps back to the prophecies that the Spirit interpreted for him. They were prophecies given by the same Spirit, the Spirit of the Son of God. Peter opens our eyes to see Christ in the Old Testament not only as the promised Messiah, but as the Lord. The Spirit that was fire in the bones of the prophets was the Spirit of Christ, driving forward to the salvation he must bring. 'The lion has roared – who will not fear? The Sovereign Lord has spoken – who can but prophesy?' The Lion of the tribe of Judah who opens the seals of the book of God's decrees is the Lion who thunders in the voice of the prophets.³⁹

The same Spirit of Christ, sent from his ascended glory, now fills the apostles who preach the prophecies come true.⁴⁰ One Lord through the ages, one great plan of salvation, one revealed message, heralded by the prophets of old and now announced by the apostles of Christ – all is focused on the

lordship of Jesus Christ. Peter's thrilling witness to one Lord and one scriptural gospel was attacked by Marcion in the second century. For Marcion the God of the Old Testament was a tyrant to be replaced by the God of love. Many since Marcion have missed what Peter teaches: both Testaments bear witness to Christ; both are the witness of Christ.

Peter presents one community of the people of God as well as one gospel. The Spirit of Christ did not inspire the prophets apart from their own involvement in the message. Their prophecies excited their own hopes; they yearned for fuller and clearer revelation. They sought to interpret the oracles they received, enquiring into the time when God's great salvation would come.⁴¹ But the full meaning of their prophecies could not appear until Christ appeared. Peter could well remember the marvelling conversation of Moses and Elijah with Jesus when they stood with him on the mountain (Luke 9:30–31). God's plan was amazing beyond comprehension. The prophets ministered mysteries still hidden from them and their own generation; they ministered those marvels to us, as they spoke of the things of Christ.

Peter is not saying that the prophets had no ministry to their own time, or that they spoke in inspired riddles that made no sense to them or to their hearers. The very diligence of their search for better understanding shows how the prophecies challenged and intrigued them. What Peter is eager to point out is that his hearers are the heirs of the full message of the prophets. The least disciple of Christ is in a better position to understand Old Testament revelation than the greatest prophet before Christ came (Matt. 11:11).

Indeed, suffering Christians have the advantage not only over the prophets; the very angels of heaven peer into the mysteries of salvation that are revealed by the Spirit to those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ. The verb Peter uses well describes the action of straining to see: angels peering, as it were, over the battlements of heaven to behold what God has done in Jesus Christ. Paul reminds us that the apostles were set forth as a spectacle to angels as well as to humans (1 Cor. 4:9). The cosmic sweep of God's redemption is all centred in Christ, whom we know and love. The petty dreams of earth's little tyrants shrivel before the majesty of the kingdom of God, ministered by prophets and apostles, but now realized for those who know Jesus Christ.

³⁹ Amos 3:8; Rev. 5:5.

⁴⁰ 1 Pet. 1:12; John 15:26; 16:14; Acts 2:33.

⁴¹ Dan. 9:2; 12:4.