

# Joy Inexpressible

1 Peter 1:6-9

6 In this (that we have been born again to an eternal inheritance that is guarded and protected by God Himself) you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9 (ESV))

Faith in God comes to us in differing forms and in differing levels. First comes faith that brings us to salvation. But then later on, God begins to call us on forward to greater and greater measures of faith. And as we read these words, we find the Lord here speaking of a very “special dynamic” that takes place within a person’s soul when they are required to take those next steps forward and to exercise an extraordinary measure of faith. Here in verse 6, that “special dynamic” is spoken about as the strange ability to “rejoice” even as we are experiencing suffering and severe distress from various trials. And our rejoicing will be to no small measure. In verse 8 our joy is described as “rejoicing with joy inexpressible”.

May we pause for a moment and acknowledge again that it is too often that we read right on past words such as these and not give them their proper due. I say that because I have done that exact thing with these very words. And I must not permit that to take place, because there are special “secrets” and “mysteries” hidden all through these blessed scriptures, and God truly does want to reveal them to us. We need only to be willing to listen and to receive them.

That truth is so well expressed in words that I have shared with you often from 1 Corinthians chapter 2. Listen!

7 . . . we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:7-13 (ESV))

Folks, I love to see and hear and learn about God's special "secrets", His "wisdom" and His "mysteries", because, as I do, I know all the more that I am a "true son" of His.

Here, in these words God reveals to us that His great truths come into our hearts and into our minds and souls only through one source and means, and that is through His Holy Spirit. And that same truth, and that same source and means are being revealed to us here in our worship text. The Holy Spirit is faithful to do His part. Our part in this great equation is "Faith". And here, God's Holy Spirit is taking us one more step deeper into the very special mystery of "faith". Listen again!

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(1 Peter 1:6-9 (ESV))

Again, here in our worship text, God is taking us one more step deeper into this special mystery of "faith". And if we will be willing to walk with Him through it, He will take us into realms of faith where we have never been before. But may we be warned, as these words quickly reveal to us, this "step of faith" requires suffering, sometimes very painful suffering. But with that suffering also comes "joy inexpressible".

As we study these words, may I use an expression that helps me to better understand these special steps of faith, and the "joy inexpressible" that takes place during our times of difficult suffering and distress, and that is "exhilaration"?

My thoughts go to the Apostle Peter and the special "exhilaration" that he must have experienced as he stepped out onto the water to walk to Jesus. And yes, I know that Peter's walk did not last long, perhaps only a few steps. But oh, would you not have loved to have walked those few steps with him?

The word “exhilaration” isn’t used here in these scriptures, but I do believe that it describes that special experience when excitement and joy and fear are all mixed together as we step out onto uncertain waters.

I recall some years ago when I was taking flying lessons, there were certain special moments that could literally almost stop my heart, moments like those just as my wheels were about to touch down on the runway. As you know, there is no real danger while your plane is soaring freely through the air. It is only in those moments when your plane is about to come into contact with the earth that any real threat to your safety takes place. And it is at those special moments when a mixture of fear and excitement and fun all come together at one time. That was when I really learned the true meaning of “exhilaration”.

I get that same sense as I read these words here in our worship text. May I read them again?

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(1 Peter 1:6-9 (ESV))

Here, it is not an airplane ride that brings “exhilaration”. It is the simple, but so very difficult exercise of our “faith” during some of those most difficult circumstances of life.

Thinking again of Peter’s first real experience with faith there on the water as Jesus was walking towards him. That was a very big “step of faith” for Peter to take, one that I have wished so many, many times that I could experience. I confess to you that I have often considered going up to the lake at French Camp and stepping off the end of the pier. But I have never followed through. I really wish that I would do it.

And yes, I do know that what I have just said sounds a little insane, but don’t you wonder what might happen if you had the “strength of faith” to do something like that? Folks, I do believe that under the right circumstance and for the right purpose of God, I really could step out onto that water and I would not sink. I would walk! I just don’t know what that right circumstance and that right purpose might be, and so, sadly I have never done it.

For clarity, may I say that I have come to accept that such out-of-the-ordinary steps of faith seem always to be prompted by an actual command from God? Such was so with Peter and the Lord Jesus. Peter said to Jesus,

28 . . . “Lord . . . command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. (Matthew 14:28-29 (ESV))

I confess that I have never sensed the Lord Jesus commanding me to step out onto the water, and perhaps that is the reason why I have never taken that step.

But may I say to us, with these words, God is doing a very similar thing as that which He did with Peter on the water. Here, God is clearly telling us that there will be times when He will command us to join with Him in a “next level” of faith, one that will require great suffering, distress and trials, a step of faith that will only be attainable and bearable as it is accompanied by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And no, the name of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this passage. But folks, the presence of the Holy Spirit is clearly within the every context of these words. Listen again!

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.  
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In verse 7 we especially see the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit . . .

7 . . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:7 (ESV))

The Holy Spirit does many things within our souls, but none more important than to “reveal the Lord Jesus” to us. In John 15, Jesus said,

26 . . . when the Helper (the Holy Spirit) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. (John 15:26 (ESV))

And in John 16 Jesus said,

12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not

13 He will speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:12-15 (ESV))

This is what the Holy Spirit is doing within each of our souls. He is “revealing the Lord Jesus” to us.

This is the “step of faith” that God is “calling”, yea “commanding” us to take with Him. And yes, while this faith will often be taken in short, choppy steps, God intends this measure of faith to become a natural way of life for us, an everyday occurrence. But as the saying goes and as the experience works out, such a measure of faith can only come as our faith is truly being “tested” in the fiery crucible of daily life experiences.

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Do you want to move on ahead with the Lord Jesus and take this step of faith? Most of us would quickly say yes. And we really would mean it. But just as with the disciples out there on the water that day, only one of them, Peter, actually took the step. And even then, after he had walked all the way out to Jesus, he still faltered in his faith and began to sink.

Why do you and I often choose to “stay in the boat”? It is the same reason that the children of Israel chose to stay in the wilderness and not go on into the Promise Land, a “lack of faith”, and added to the “lack of faith”, great “fear”. The children of Israel saw “giants” in the new land. And Jesus’ disciples saw the winds and the waves. And they also knew that every other time they had put their foot into the water they had sank.

Folks, “faith” truly is a strange and mysterious thing, a belief in something that we cannot see. Hebrews 11:1,

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1 (ESV))

And in today’s worship text,

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(1 Peter 1:8-9 (ESV))

As Jesus walked on the water near the boat, the first words He said to His disciples was 27 . . . “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” (Matthew 14:27 (ESV))

As we said a moment ago, most often, it is “fear” that guides and determines our decisions and the amount of faith we exercise. But here as we read these precious words regarding our faith, and as we remember the assurances that God’s Holy Spirit will lead us into “all truth”, the “secret wisdom from God” is that if we will only surrender ourselves over into His hands, the Holy Spirit will walk with us into realms and conditions and “spiritual experiences” where we have never been before.

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, (1 Peter 1:8 (ESV))

A dear saint that I have mentioned to you on other occasions, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones preaches that this “joy inexpressible” describes a “condition of soul” that takes place when the Lord Jesus “pours out” His Holy Spirit upon the soul of a believer.

And yes, from the very first moment of our salvation we do have had the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. But there are other extraordinary times in our lives when we need an extraordinary presence of God’s Spirit. And it is in those times and circumstances that the Lord Jesus “pours out” His Spirit upon us.

Here in today’s worship text, God seems to be describing extraordinary suffering that will come to saints who really step on forward with Christ. And because we would choose to do that, He would join with us by “pouring out” an extra measure of His Holy Spirit upon us.

And the evidence of His extra presence will be this overwhelming sense of joy and rejoicing spoken about here, this “joy inexpressible”; and with the crowning reward of our salvation being made sure and precious to us. Those words . . .

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This special kind of faith in the Lord Jesus is only possible by the extraordinary presence of God's Holy Spirit.

Folks, with these words, God is plainly calling, yea commanding you and me to take this next step of faith? Just as assuredly as He commanded Peter to step out of the boat and come to Him, He is calling you and me to take the next step of faith. And yes, with these words He does warn us that along the way we will experience very difficult sufferings and trials and distress. But folks, the Lord Jesus is worth our suffering and our distress. And faith and our salvation are worth any suffering we will experience.

I really do want to take this next step of faith! Do you? Jesus is holding out His hand to us and commanding us to come to Him. He is trustworthy with our faith and our trust!

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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