

Finding Joy in Suffering
1 Peter 1:8-9
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INTRODUCTION

Today we are returning to our study of 1 Peter, looking at chapter 1, verses 8-9.

Peter tells us not only are we rejoicing in a protected salvation and a proven faith but also in the salvation of our souls.

Peter says in verses 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."

Peter's readers had never seen Christ.

They were converts of the apostles.

Their faith was like what Jesus said in John 20:29, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

This is in essence what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:5, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

Many today function by sight.

They are like Thomas, who said in John 20:25, "...Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and

put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Faith is not faith if it has sight.

Faith is a firm conviction in what or who is unseen.

It's what Paul said of Abraham's faith in Romans 4:21.

He was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform."

This is Hebrews 11:1 faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

"That is what faith is. Faith is living in a hope that is so real it gives absolute assurance." (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [Hebrews](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

Faith is also "the conviction of things not seen."

"The person of faith lives his belief. His life is committed to what his mind and his spirit are convinced is true." (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [Hebrews](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

Albert Barnes says, "The strongest attachments which have ever existed on earth have been for this unseen Saviour. There has been a love for him stronger than that for a father, or mother, or wife, or sister, or home, or country. It has been so strong, that thousands have been willing, on account of it, to bear the torture of the rack or the stake. It has been so strong, that thousands of youth of the finest minds, and the most flattering prospects of distinction, have been willing to leave the comforts of a civilized land, and to go among the

benighted heathen, to tell them the story of a Saviour's life and death. It has been so strong, that unnumbered multitudes have longed, more than they have for all other things, that they might see him, and be with him, and abide with him for ever and ever. (Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: James to Jude](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)

Everyone who has believed has marveled at Jesus.

Some have said, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." (John 7:46 - NASB)

Others have said, "You have words of eternal life." (John 6:68 - NASB)

His words were life.

His words were commanding and authoritative.

When He taught, "the crowds were amazed at His teaching; (29) for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 8:28-29 - NASB).

The scribes quoted others.

Jesus only said what the Father told Him to say and He needed to quote no other.

His words were truth and everyone who hears them today and believes in Him experiences the same.

The devil came to steal, kill and destroy.

Jesus came to give life, life eternal to all who believe.

When Jesus transforms your life, He changes your heart.

You are no longer one who hates but one who loves.

John said in 1 John 3:14, "(14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death."

"We love, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19 - NASB)

The verse that is quoted by so many, when fully understood, embraces the essence of God's love.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16 - NASB)

Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

And this is exactly what Jesus did.

The most comforting words to those who are suffering are what we find in 1 Peter 1:8-9 because Peter reminds them that they "love" and "believe" in Jesus.

And this causes a "joy" that is "inexpressible and full of glory."

As Peter writes to these "aliens" who have been "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1:1), he reminds them not only are they "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood" (1:2) and "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1:3), and have obtained "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1:4) but your faith is real!

It is proven and that proven faith not only results in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ but it rejoices now because you love and believe in Christ!

You're love for Jesus produces a proven faith!

So Peter reminds them and us of 3 truths in verses 8-9.

First...

We Have Never Seen Jesus But We Love Him (v.8a)

He says, "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him"

Peter's readers had never seen Jesus.

The Greek has it, "Of whom not having had a glimpse." (Wuest, Kenneth S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Vol. 11. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Print.)

They had never had "a glimpse" of Him but there are people today who claim they have:

One man by the name of Joshua wrote on his blog:

"It was in the night as I lay in my bed. Suddenly lights went off (black-out). The entire area within a circumference of about five kilometers turned black (no lights).

A strange-looking-light entered and shone entirely in my room that it is only my room that had light in the whole area. Strange to me coz I had never seen such a light before.

The light was bright, purely white and when I looked inside the light, I saw the likeness as the appearance of a man. I did not recognize at that moment who he was and without realizing I found myself kneeling down.

Immediately the man inside the light called me by my name, 'Joshua'. Awe filled me by the call of my name because I could not imagine that someone knew me by my name. Immediately, my eyes were opened, I saw and recognized who He was: Jesus Christ."

(<https://www.christiantruthcenter.com/my-testimony>)

Another claiming to have had a vision of Jesus wrote on his blog:

"A short story of a supernatural encounter that I had with the Lord Jesus Christ when He appeared to me and two friends in a vision. One night while seeking the Lord in prayer with two friends of mine, Matt and Shane, I received a life-changing vision of Jesus. We were in Matt's living room holding hands in prayer and asking God for a visitation. About two hours into our prayer, something happened. With my eyes closed I began to see a figure walking towards me in the spirit realm. As the figure got closer I knew it was Jesus. I could not make out any details of his face. All I could see was his silhouette, but his presence was so familiar. The silhouette was a being made of a white light with a bright yellow glow. As Jesus approached me, his aura began to get brighter and brighter and with each step I felt more and more of his love until suddenly I was overtaken. Then my eyes clasp shut even tighter and the beautiful radiating white light over took my vision until it was all that I saw. The euphoria was so overwhelming, unlike anything that I had ever experienced."

(<https://www.truthseekah.com/forum/showthread.php?457-I-saw-jesus!>)

People throughout history have made the same claims:

In 1820 Joseph Smith claimed to have seen Jesus, and the result was Mormonism.

In 1844 Ellen G. White claimed to have seen Jesus, and the result was Seventh-Day Adventism.

Former Muslims sometimes tell stories of seeing Jesus in a dream. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/I-saw-Jesus.html>).

I personally met a man while I was in seminary who told me and others that he saw Jesus.

Do people see Jesus today?

Peter answers that right here.

He says, "and though you have not seen Him."

He says it again in the same verse, "and though you do not see Him now."

Jesus is at the right hand of the Father (Heb.8:1; 10:12) and He dwells in your heart by faith (Jn.14:23).

He is not here in the flesh.

Notice what he says next: "you love Him."

Your love is not based on sight.

It's based on faith.

Peter says, "You've heard about Him from me and I have seen Him."

We don't know everything Peter said verbally about Jesus but we can see in both of his letters what he said about Him:

He said a lot!

There are 101 references to Jesus in 44 verses (Logos search)

Peter said he was an "apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1; 2 Pet.1:1)

Peter also said:

Jesus' Father was God (1:3)

Jesus resurrected from the dead (1:4, 21; 3:21)

Jesus is returning (1:7, 13)

Jesus redeemed you "with precious blood, as of a Lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1:19)

Jesus was "foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you" (1:20)

Jesus made us "believers in God" (1:21)

Jesus was given "glory" from God the Father (1:21)

Jesus is "Lord" (2:3; 3:15)

Jesus is "a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God" (2:4)

Jesus "suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (2:21)

Jesus was "reviled, He did not revile in return, while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (2:23)

Jesus "bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (2:23)

Jesus is the "Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (2:25)

Jesus is the "Christ" (Messiah) (3:15,16)

Jesus "made proclamation to the spirits now in prison" (3:19)

Jesus is "at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him" (3:22)

Jesus "suffered in the flesh" (4:1; 5:1)

Jesus "belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (4:11)

Jesus is "our Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 1:11)

Jesus revealed to Peter "the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent" (2 Pet.1:14)

Jesus revealed "His majesty" to the apostles (2 Pet.1:16)

Jesus is God's "beloved Son with whom [He] is well-pleased" (2 Pet.1:17)

Jesus is the "Master" (2 Pete.2:1)

Jesus is "coming" (2 Pet.3:4)

So this Jesus, who suffered in the flesh, resurrected from the dead, made us believers in God, was

foreknown before the foundation of the world is Lord, Master, Messiah, Savior, Shepherd and the Guardian of your souls is full of glory, and coming again and "you have not seen Him" but I have, says, Peter. "You do not see Him now" but "you love Him."

Albert Barnes says, "Millions, and hundreds of millions, have been led to love the Saviour, who have never seen him. They have seen—not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of faith—the inimitable beauty of his character, and have been brought to love him with an ardour of affection which they never had for any other one."

(Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: James to Jude](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)

"Real joy flows from a love for the unseen Master"

(MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Peter](#). Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

Peter also says...

We Do Not See Jesus Now But We Believe in Him (v.8b)

Our believing in Jesus is not based on sight but faith and the biblical truth about Jesus.

Faith accepts and believes the revealed, written record of Jesus. The Bible. Both Old and New Testament.

Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15, "and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Verse 16 continues, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

This is the Old Testament but the New Testament writers affirmed each others writings as Scripture.

Paul affirmed Luke's writings as Scripture in 1 Timothy 5:18 and compared it with Deuteronomy 25:4 calling them both "Scripture."

That's means Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts is equal to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Peter affirmed all of Paul's writings as Scripture in 2 Peter 3:15-16 referring to "all his letters...as...the rest of the Scriptures."

What each writer wrote was Scripture...God's written Word.

Paul said in Acts 24:14, "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets."

John Calvin said, "Faith is not a cold notion, but that it kindles in our hearts love to Christ. For faith does not (as the sophists prattle) lay hold on God in a confused and implicit manner, (for this would be to wander through devious paths;) but it has Christ as its object. Moreover, it does not lay hold on the bare name of Christ, or his naked essence, but regards what he is to us, and what blessings he brings; for it cannot be but that the affections of man should be led there, where his happiness is, according to that saying, "*Where your treasure is, there is also your heart.*" (Matthew 6:21.) (Calvin, John. [1 Peter: Commentaries on the Catholic](#)

[Epistles](#). electronic ed. Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998. Print. Calvin's Commentaries.)

Faith sustains us while were suffering.

D. Edmond Hiebert says, "Two present tense participles (*mē horōntes*, "do not see," and *pisteuontes*, "you believe in"), as well as the temporal adverb "now," stress the reality of their ongoing commitment to the unseen Christ. The participles again point out the negative and positive aspects of this relationship. "Though you do not see him now" points out that their continuing committal is not nurtured by any gazing upon His visible presence. Unlike Thomas (John 20:24), they did not demand to see before they would believe. But Peter's "now" implies that one day they will see Him (Rev. 22:3–4). Their present relationship with Him is a matter of faith, "you believe in him." "In him" (*eis hon*, literally, "into him") indicates that their faith has brought them into a vital union with the unseen Christ. This inner relationship, not sight, sustains their faith relationship. Thus their relationship with Christ now is marked by love and faith." (Hiebert, D. Edmond. [1 Peter](#). Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1997. Print.)

Peter says because of this...

We Greatly Rejoice (vv.8c-9)

Their relationship of faith and love in the unseen Christ had a profound impact on their lives.

They "greatly rejoiced with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

Because Jesus was the object of their faith and love, this caused them to "greatly rejoice."

This "joy" that is "inexpressible" (aneklaeto) literally means "higher than speech."

Those who live in personal communion with Christ experience a joy so divine that they cannot communicate it; humanly speaking, such joy is beyond the reach of speech and expression. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Peter](#). Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

John Calvin says it is "unutterable, because the peace of God exceeds all comprehension." (Calvin, John. [1 Peter: Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles](#). electronic ed. Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998. Print. Calvin's Commentaries.)

Since those who have this joy "cannot communicate it," Matthew Henry says, "the best discovery is by an experimental taste of it; it is *full of glory*, full of heaven. There is much of heaven and the future glory in the present joys of improved Christians; their faith removes the causes of sorrow, and affords the best reasons for joy. Though good people sometimes walk in darkness, it is often owing to their own mistakes and ignorance, or to a fearful or melancholy disposition, or to some late sinful conduct, or perhaps to some sad occurrence of providence, that sinks their comfort for the present, yet they have reason to rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation, Heb. 3:18. Well might these primitive Christians rejoice with the joy unspeakable, since they were every day *receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls*, v. 4." (Henry, Matthew. [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#). Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.)

Again, Peter reminds his readers in the midst of their suffering for Christ, they love and believe in Him even

though they have never seen Him and this produces joy.

The joy is not in the trial but in Christ!

He is the object of our faith and love.

Paul said in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

In verse 28, he said, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

In this we rejoice!

We know there is nothing that can separate us from God's love for us or our love for Him.

Paul said in verses 35-39, "(35) Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." (37) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Salvation produces joy.

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Luke 10:20 says, "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Rejoice that Christ has appeared in the flesh.

John 8:56 says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

Rejoice that you have hope in Christ.

Romans 12:12 says, "rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer."

Rejoice that your trust is in God.

Psalms 33:21 says, "For our heart rejoices in Him, Because we trust in His holy name."

Rejoice that you share in the sufferings of Christ.

1 Peter 4:12-13 says, "(12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; (13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation."

CONCLUSION

Our faith and love has an outcome that causes our rejoicing.

Verse 9 says it is "the salvation of our souls."

God has saved us through Christ.

He initiated that love relationship with us.

He chose us according to His foreknowledge causing us to be born again.

And we have an inheritance that will never fade away reserved in heaven.

Our sufferings are there to prove our faith in Him.

Suffering reveals the genuineness of our faith and the strength or weakness of it.

We love Him and believe in Him.

He is our hope.

He sustains us.

There's no other reason to rejoice!

Do you believe in Him?

Do you love Him?

If you do, it is "through Him [you] are believers in God who raised Him [Jesus] from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (v.21).

If you have not believed in Him, believe in Him now!

Turn from your sin and confess Him as Lord as we pray.

[Lord's Supper]