

Reasons To Say “SO”

1 Peter 1:6-9 January 21, 2024

Well, Good morning all. Thank you Mike, for the message you gave this morning. Yes, it's so nice to have made it through “Snowmageddon” 2024 . We triumphed over the snow and ice and here we are able to meet on this fine day. Now we are looking forward to the return of Norm and Nancy as they will be returning this week from their excursion to foreign lands and look forward also to brother Norms return to the pulpit. But for this week, I am here once again to continue our look at 1 Peter Chapter 1. Today our text will be coming from verses 6-9.

But first, as you might remember I was not able to get to all the blessings of God's abundant grace and peace that we attempted to get through last time as we looked at verses 1-5 of the first chapter of 1 Peter. So this morning I will be picking up with the final blessing of those we were attempting to get through before the clock ran out on me. Before we do that, a quick review of what we did cover last week I think would be in order.

We began by looking at who it was that Peter was writing this letter to. We determined that it was to the mostly Jewish Christians located throughout the region now known as Turkey. I say mostly Jewish believers because it is generally held that by this time there was by now a smattering of Gentile Christians in the area suffering the same conditions as the others. He speaks to the trials via persecution they are suffering, and the letter is meant to encourage them in their struggles. He writes to them offering praises to God for their inclusion in the elect of God, for the sanctifying work of the Spirit at work in them resulting in obedience to Jesus Christ and their being **sprinkled by the blood**. Peter makes special note in vs 6, which we will look at in just a bit, about the hardships and diverse trials they were living through at that time. Life wasn't the best of times, so to speak, yet Peter records this about them: ***In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.***

Even if times were not ideal, Peter's message of abundant grace and peace multiplied brought comfort and rejoicing to those he was ministering to.

With that established we began to look at the many different blessings that spring forth from God's grace and peace. Beginning with a look at how God's abundant grace and blessings are to all the church, Jew or Greek, male or Female, slave or freed. We looked at the many spiritual blessings that God the Father has blessed us with in Christ, those who have been "accepted in the Beloved". We looked at the sanctifying work of the Spirit and how he dwells in us, God giving us "life in our immortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

We looked at how that Spirit also gives us the blessing of "being Obedient to Christ". We, being led by the Spirit, have peace with God, we are no longer at enmity against Him and by His grace we are predestined to do good works prepared beforehand.

We also noted it is by the sanctifying work of the spirit that they were of those who have received the sprinkling of the blood. We contrasted **that** sprinkling of the blood with **those blood sacrifices of bulls, goats and lambs** that were offered in the old covenant times, sacrifices which God voiced his utter contempt for. But in Christ, **His** blood sacrifice was found more than just acceptable, but pleasing in Gods eyes. Now, instead of the required yearly sacrifices by the high priests of the time, Christ our High Priest has made one sacrifice for all making our redemption complete and for all time. The key vs is what we **read** in Hebrews 12:24 "***you have come to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel***", and as pointed out in Isaiah 1, all those former sacrifices of blood that were declared by God as contemptible in His eyes.

We examined how Paul, the self- proclaimed greatest sinner of all, saw abundant MERCY in how God delivered **Him**,.... he the blasphemer, the persecutor, a violent man. The mercy that God showed him was an example

to all who count themselves among the worst of sinners, that Christ Jesus has immense patience for all who believe in Him and are ordained to eternal life.

We then looked at how by that same abundant mercy, “God hath given us a new birth”. The old has gone, the new has come. We are made a new creation in Christ, having received a new body, incorruptible, indestructible and forever free from the consequences of death and as a result of the new birth, we now possess a “Living Hope” which gives us the assurance that when the fulfillment of time comes we will reside with him forever and ever. That ultimate salvation of our souls exists in our “Living Hope”.

And where does that Living Hope come from? It was found in the next blessing we observed, **we serve a risen Savior**. Yes, Christ’s resurrection gives us that hope. Despite the false teachers of the day proclaiming there was no resurrection, Paul defends the gospel by proclaiming that God did raise His Son from the Dead and we spiritually arose in Him. Christ was alive, so we too are alive. Our living hope for our place in paradise is fully guaranteed.

We went on to speak of the inheritance we have that can never perish, spoil or fade, it cannot be given away or stolen. We talked about the spirit of adoption to Sonship and how we, by that Spirit, cry out ABBA, Father as we are children of God. Because of that relationship we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. We looked at how our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, a book that is kept in heaven. Jesus said “Rejoice because your names are written down in Heaven.” When the Roll is called up yonder, we will all be there.

And then the last blessing that time allowed us to look at was “this inheritance is kept in Heaven for you **“Who through faith are shielded by God’s power.”** This speaks to our absolute, complete security....we are kept by God’s power. As Paul declares in ***Romans 8: “Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the Love***

of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

That brings us to where we left off last week; the end of verse 5 where Peter says :”who through faith are shielded by God’s power ***“until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”***”

The final verse I read last week when speaking of being shielded by God's power was Philippians 1:6 ***“being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*** This is the day we are looking at, ***“until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”.....***This is the day that brings us to the culmination of God’s divine plan for our salvation,..... **this is** the day of our ultimate salvation.

Whether we are in our grave or among the final survivors of this totally defiled, corrupt, sinful and unfit earth....things are going to change and I believe in an instant. In one moment we are yet of this earth and in our sin corrupted bodies, then in the blink of an eye we are being lifted up in to the clouds to greet Jesus and all the angels and all our brothers and sisters in Christ who have previously passed.... Turn to ***1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*** where Paul explains it this way.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “¹³Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve LIKE THE REST OF MANKIND, who have no hope.¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Paul starts out reaffirming what he spoke of in 1 Corinthians 15 considering Christ's death, burial and resurrection, defying those who claimed there was no resurrection. Then he goes on to speak of the hope that we have and we share with those those who have gone on before us in death. Christ did indeed raise to life guaranteeing our hope of inclusion in all the blessings of that resurrection and Life in Him. He encouraged his listeners to not grieve the passing on of those who had gone on before like the **rest of mankind** who have no such hope. We do grieve, but the hurt is not so much because of their passing on, ...because we know those who have passed on in Him have gone on to a place we all desire to go. They are now where there is no more death, no more pain, no more tears, no more mourning no more sickness. But we grieve for the hole that they leave in our lives, we miss their smiles, their voices, their hugs, we miss them. But we can rejoice for them and with them that their spirits did not remain in the ground but in an instant passed from the body to being with the Lord.

They have joined in the rejoicing and praising of the Lord and perhaps, as some old country gospel songs proclaim, they are playing in the angel's band and singing in their choir. The hope and anticipation we possess is that we too will realize those same blessings...in the Lord's timing. Yes, Christ did arise and so we will be blessed participants of the 2nd resurrection. We will have our new bodies given, having been conformed to the image of the Son. And on **this day** we certainly will be fully persuaded that ***we have been kept by the power of God to the salvation being revealed on that very day.***

1 Peter 1: 6-9

That brings us to the text of our study for today, verses 6-9. I have titled this morning's message "**Reasons To Say "So"**". The reason for that title will be made known a little farther along in the message. As we have seen, the previous 5 verses of 1st Peter 1 has given us much hope by reminding us of our election and our standing before God and our risen Savior. Peter is continuing on the same theme as we look at verses 6-9. Let's do a quick read of 6-9 then we will get into it and see how Peter is not yet finished with giving reasons to praise God for all His many blessings to us. He, in fact, is just getting started.

1 Peter 1:6-9 *“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”* Sounds like we are on the same track as the previous 5 verses, WE.... SERVE..A.... RISENSAVIOR.

I'd like to look at five ways I see that Peter lays out for us in this section of scripture as to why we have such an inexpressible and glorious joy. According to the text they look like this: 1. We have a salvation that is secure 2. A faith that is proven 3. A commendation that is inevitable 4. A love that is unseen and 5. The deliverance of our souls.

We start in Verse 6, *“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”* Peter refers back to what we have discussed in verses 1-5. He says **“In all this you greatly rejoice”**. We gave this a pretty good look in the first five verses culminating with verse 5 where it says **“we have a salvation that is protected by the Power of God”**. This is where the first reason to rejoice has its foundation in the words, **A salvation that is secure**. This is why they are rejoicing. Rejoicing is more than a momentary happiness, a chuckle and a grin. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. Rejoicing is a deep, profound happiness rooted in something that you have great confidence in. We are overwhelmed with joy....God loves us with an everlasting love. We rejoice because we know our Savior died for us and will present us to the Father as His spotless, sinless bride. We rejoice, as they rejoiced....because our salvation is secure.

Contrast that to those who sit under the false gospel which teaches there is no such thing as a secure salvation because their salvation isn't a result of being chosen by God, rather it's of their own making because they are doing the choosin'. There is no such thing as the perseverance of God, it's

perseverance by their own works . Christ doesn't do it all, He needs their help, their choosing to allow Him into their stony hearts and they will decide whether salvation is for them, which, when looked at long enough and hard enough it soon becomes apparent that if you have saved yourself, you have a salvation that is fragile and not sustainable..... not real. You have to keep up with all those good works or you will actually lose your self obtained salvation. Fear and doubt rule, any rejoicing is short lived and pretty much made up.

Just ask yourself this, if it is true that it is up to you to maintain your salvation, could you do it? I know my answer is a resounding no. But as Paul tells us in *II Timothy 1* ***“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that Day.”*** Rejoice brothers and sisters in Christ, we have one who keeps that salvation for us.

2, A Faith That is proven. Verses 6 and 7 bring this to mind. They say, ***“(In this you greatly rejoice,) even though now for a little while, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable,even though --tested-- by fire.”***

We will pick up on the rest of verse 7 in just a bit.

Peter is now speaking about how trials, tribulations, temptations at times can have a not so positive effect on us. We all can relate to that. Peter does not address exactly what those various trials are, but we know that Christians under the rule of Rome were facing many different kinds of persecution. We live in a country where that is not usually the case, even though at times there are indications that “The Times, They Are Achanging”. Right now we are relatively persecution free here. But that does not mean we don't have our own trials to deal with. Family issues rise up, health issues, loss of jobs, finances and yes, even times of persecution, minor as they may be. There are many things that can give us a sense of being tested. It's how we deal with them though that becomes the real test for us.

Our text says that “ **though now for a little while you may have had to suffer in all kinds of trials**” meaning these test or trials are temporary things. So, do we dwell on them, or do we think about what Paul says in *II Corinthians 4*: “ **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal**” What we have here on this earth, good or bad, are all temporary things, and spiritually our time is much better spent fixing our eyes on that which is permanent, our relationship with the Savior and all His blessings, they are eternal.

Another thing that is important about these various trials is they are purposed by God for our own spiritual growth. In James we are told that we should ***Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,***

James, another apostle encouraging us to consider our facing of various, diverse trials with joy. He says ***consider it pure joy,*** Peter says, “***In all this you greatly rejoice,***” when you ***suffer grief through various trials***”

Paul tells us in Romans 5: “***We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame,***”

Now, some might ask, What's wrong with these people? But we know what's right about what they are saying. Peter, Paul and James explain themselves very well. Again in James 1, “***because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*** Peter says in our text verse “***that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire.***” meaning the proof of our faith is shown by our endurance even in trials. Paul goes on to say “***because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us***”

Trials tests our faith at times. But as God, the finisher of our faith and the Spirit that lives in us walk with us through the fires of these tests, our faith is refined, we grow in His grace. Our perseverance, trust, strength, all continue to grow In Christ. The faith of Christ that we possess is complete,

but the weaknesses of our flesh at many times can test that faith,
not diminish it, but test it.

We had a pastor at one of our summer camps preach a message out of the final passage in the last chapter of Job. He titled it simply, "SO?". We know the story how Job was tested severely, in the end losing everything he had except the faith in his redeemer. He had professed earlier that he knew his redeemer lived and he was confident that even though his body had been destroyed by worms,.... he would see God with his own eyes. **Such was the faith of Job.**

Well the book concludes with the report that Job, after passing through the fires of his many trials, was blessed by the Lord in the latter part of his life more than before in his former life.. He had more of land, more livestock of all kinds, he was richly blessed with 7 sons and 3 daughters, his daughters considered the most beautiful in all the land. At his passing he left them all a grand inheritance. A Beautiful picture of Christ and His church.

But when comparing all Job was put through to all he gained, it's easy to conclude "SO?". It's not about the material things he gained, those are really pictures of all the spiritual blessings the church has in Christ. But, as we think of all our blessings and then think of our trialsWe have trials? Tribulations? SO!!! Those are for our perseverance, our growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ, giving us greater confidence in all that God does for us. Tests? SO!! We have Christ and all He possesses! He is our salvation, our wisdom, our righteousness, our hope our peace our inheritance. He is our strength so we **can** face **all** things. To all those negative things, we just say--- "SO". **In Him, we have a faith that is proven.**

3. A commendation that is inevitable. In verse 7 Peter says *"(that the proof of your faith)...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

We sing praises, we give glory and honor to the Triune God, we do it faithfully as we should. But do we expect the Lord God our Savior to give us praise, honor and glory in return? Well, that is what our text says. At the

revelation of Jesus Christ while we are standing before Him dressed in our robes of righteousness, in absolute awe, humbled and overwhelmed at the sight of His glorious presence, we will hear Him say **“Well done good and faithful Servant.”** Words of praise for all His elect.

Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 4:5**: ***“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.”*** God knows the hearts and motives of man. And Those found perfect in Christ will each receive their praise.

In **II Timothy 4** Paul says: ***“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”*** Yes, As we stand there face to face with Him, He will say **“Well done good and faithful Servant.”**

While preparing for this study I was using the internet and I came across this poem. It is untitled and no author is credited, but I would like to share it with you because of it's relevance and value to this part of our study.

**Oh the bliss of heaven's light,
The scene of His dear face!
Our soul cannot conceive the sight
Nor song our joy relay!**

**Yet stand we will, by grace alone,
Blameless with great joy.
Though undeserved, His mercy shone
All praise our tongue employ.**

**But nay, that day when we will shout,
The glories of His name,
Our Savior will turn about
And Praise Us Just the same!**

That is exactly what Peter is telling us here, We have a **Commendation that is inevitable.**

#4 A Love Unseen Verse 8 says: “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: “

We have a love that is unseen, but it is not unknown. We spoke earlier about a faith that is proven. We have not seen Him, but we love Him. That is the faith of Christ, that gift from God, that gives us our assurance. **Hebrews 11:1 says “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”.**

The King James Version uses the words **evidence of**, other versions use words like “conviction of”, “proof of”, “certainty of” or “assurance of.” I actually prefer the latter words because they to me express more of a meaning that proclaim what we have is something that is solid like a rock, the assurance of things not seen, the certainty of things not seen, the proof of things not seen, the conviction of things not seen. But no matter how it’s translated, by faith we have seen. Paul says in II Cor. 5: **“We walk by faith, not by sight.”** Paul is not saying that faith is blind, quite to the contrary. As John Newton wrote “I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.” Faith sees things that our physical eyes could never see. Without faith, we would still be blind, that love unseen would not apply to us. The faith we walk by once again is a God given conviction, assurance, belief in things not seen.

And then to realize how and why we came to love him. We love Him because He first loved us. That knowledge alone should rock you back on your heels! We talked some last time about how understanding the good news can only happen after you know all that's bad about the bad news. That always takes me to Ezekiel 36 where God lays out in great detail all that He will do for Israel as He restores them to their land, He cleanses them of their sin and their impurities, takes out that heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh. All of the things that we know are just pictures of what

He does when He, through His spirit, restores us. Ezekiel then tells us what **God** says happens next.....

"Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.....Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!"

He has revealed to you His Son that is in you. It is then **you can see Him** in ALLLL His glory. Now you need to come to grips with what is shown about you, all your evil, wicked, loathsome ways. And then you will ask, **How Can It Be That God would ever love me???!!!!**

God speaks to us by His word. By this word He tells us repeatedly about that love for His precious saints. Precious in the eyes of the Lord are His saints. I have always liked this verse where God speaks to us through the prophet Jeremiah : ***"Yea, Ihave loved you.... with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you."*** I mean REALLY, is that stunning or what? He has loved us with an everlasting love? Even after all our wicked evil ways, He draws us with loving kindness to **Himself**? What a privileged people we are! I've heard people say that God cannot be a **just** God if He only saves some but not everyone. Again I say really? The real question is **WHY DOES HE SAVE ANYONE?** To not save anyone, that would be a just God, because justice demands we pay the wages of our sins. But we have a God full of genuine love for his elect, a God who is merciful and has purposed to redeem a people to himself, not by any merit of our own, because we have none....but for His Namesake and for His Glory.

Knowing me, the sinner I am, I don't want a just God, I want a merciful God! Lord have mercy on me a sinner. And God's reply to that? **Romans 5:8 *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*** Now, does that give us reason for rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory? If that was the only verse I knew, it would be like the proverbial cherry on top of the best piece of Rhubarb Pie I have ever had, and many of you know how much I love a good rhubarb pie. I trust

each of you would say yes, that does give me reason for a joy unspeakable and full of glory. **A Love Unseen**, the love in which He first loved us and we now are made able to love Him.

5. **The deliverance of our souls** Verse 9 of our text: ***“Obtaining the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”*** You know, there is a point in each of our lives where something changed us. We grew to know something was different. I grew up in a free will baptist church. I made a profession of faith....a couple different times. I raised my hand, I walked the aisle in front of hundreds of witnesses. I was baptized, told I was promised eternal life because I had surrendered myself to Jesus. Well, the years passed, and I completely left all that behind. Then one day I met an insurance salesman who after we spent a little time taking care of some business matters, we soon became best of friends. He began to talk to me about Christ, but it was a different Christ than the one I grew up knowing. By the Grace of God, He used this man, Stuart Knorr who was pastor of this church at the time, to introduce me to the doctrines of Grace. It took some time and many arguments about this new gospel I was hearing, but by that same Grace, I eventually came to realize I had been deceived for so many years. I was not saved at all.

During that time, I also realized that something had changed in me, I was a different person. I believe that was the moment I started down the road to the understanding of this ***“obtaining the end of my faith, the salvation of my soul”***. Paul tells us in Romans 6: ***“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the fruit you reap leads to holiness,and the outcome is eternal life.”***

We are set free from sin at the new birth and by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Some preachers teach that once saved you begin this process wherein you become less and less sinful, become more pleasing to God even to a point of no longer having any sin. That is progressive sanctification and it is a false Gospel. Our sanctification is as complete at the instant of our quickening as it ever will be. We at our new birth are set apart, in Christ. We are made

Holy right there and then, perfect in God's eyes.

We do however gain perseverance as we grow in wisdom, we grow in confidence and our faith becomes stronger and more steadfast as we are tested again and again, proving at the end that our faith does not perish like pure, refined gold will....no our faith grows stronger and never perishes. We owe the “deliverance of our souls” to the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus. ***“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”***. It is He who will bring us to that end of our faith, that goal, the salvation of our souls. **That deliverance of our souls? It is finished.**

CONCLUSION

I will conclude now with just a couple quick points to wrap it up. We certainly have never suffered the trials of the early Christians and others through out history and at this time in many places around the world. Think of Job who went through what must be considered an ultimate test. How many of us could go through what He did? But like Job, by the grace of God, we could. Also, just like Job, we are blessed by the countless, abundant mercies and grace of our Lord. As Paul says in *Ephesians 1* ***“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ”***. When Paul was suffering one of his many trials, that thorn in his flesh, and after he asked God three times to relieve him of his burden, God answered Paul with this, “My Grace Is Sufficient For Thee”. In God, our weaknesses are a source of strength because we have that sufficient grace in Him and that Grace will always get us through what ever life throws at us. As Jesus did say: ***“lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”***

When we are in the midst of trials, may we remember those words as we compare our trials to our countless blessings, knowing the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls. What are trials and temptations compared to that? Sure, They can make you weary, tired, anxious. But Jesus also said, ***“Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”***. May we, when facing diverse trials be made mindful of all the abundant blessings and peace of God that we each have in Christ, may we all just say ***“SO?”.... Soon, I will be with my Savior in Glory.***