

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (Part 5)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:6

THEME: The Sovereign mercy of God fuels the sovereign joy of our salvation

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Read Passage

Joel Osteen . . .

Many of you no doubt are familiar with a young man by the name of Joel Osteen who has what's being hailed as a blockbuster book Your Best Life Now (been #1 on NYT best-seller list and has sold over 1 million copies). Endorsed by such men as Max Lucado; Pat Robertson; John Maxwell; Joyce Meyer.

For those of you not familiar w/Mr. Osteen, the bio on his website==> Joel Osteen has quickly become a leading voice for a new generation of ministers. After becoming Senior Pastor in October of 1999, Lakewood Church has more than quadrupled its weekly attendance and is one of America's most diverse churches. According to Forbes.com and Outreach magazine Lakewood is the largest and fastest growing congregation in America with over 28,000 in attendance each weekend. Joel Osteen can be seen via his weekly television broadcast on numerous national cable networks, including Discovery, USA Network, ABC Family, Black Entertainment Television (BET), Trinity Broadcasting and the Daystar Television Network. The Program can also be seen internationally in over 100 nations including CNBC Europe, Vision Canada, CNBC Australia and Middle East Television. Joel's program is also carried on prominent local network affiliates in the Top 30 markets in America. Recent Nielsen Media Research rated Joel Osteen's broadcast as the #1 inspirational program nationally, based on average television viewers per market. Joel's recent book, "Your Best Life Now" has quickly become a national best seller. It is available on-line or everywhere books are sold. Joel and Victoria Osteen are also taking God's message of unconditional love and unending hope to capacity crowds in arenas all across America. In 2005 Joel and Victoria will visit 15 cities including Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and Philadelphia.

As far as the book is concerned . . .

Really a tattle-tale for what's wrong w/the contemporary American CH.

Big on comfort and convenience, little on substance and sacrifice.

Gist of the book is don't be content!

Don't be content if you don't have, visualize what you want. "Get rid of that small-minded thinking and think big!" It's a book that's replete w/ appalling misinterpretations of Scripture verses that are mostly used to support t/contention that God wants you healthy, wealthy and happy. If you visualize and claim that you can expect to have it.

Library of Congress Publication data listed in the front of the book==>
["Self-Actualization \(Psychology\) - Religious Aspects - Christianity"](#)
Appropriate that if Christianity is listed at all it be listed last!

Problematic that t/CH doesn't have t/discernment to see through such smoke and mirrors. Tragic. Where are the Bereans of this age?

Over 30 million so-called Xn "self-help" books have sold the past two years. "Self-Help?" What is that? I know what it means to the world (bookstores are filled w/self-help books, from Oprah to Dr. Phil).

CH of JC knows nothing of self-help. I hate to tell you this, but "God helps those who help themselves" isn't in the Bible. God helps those who despair of their sin and in humble repentance turn to him for help knowing that within themselves lies no good thing!

There is no doubt about what Peter would have thought -

- about a Xnty that promised health, money, freedom from affliction, & happiness above all else. He would have called it a false gospel. Peter knew what it was like to forsake everything t/world has to offer in order to know & serve X // to be afflicted // suffer // lit. give his life as a martyr for t/cause of X. Yet he glorified God w/his death, as Jesus said he would (Jn. 21:19).

Peter's audience in 1 Peter couldn't relate. They weren't wealthy, they

certainly didn't have it easy. We see that in our passage (vv. 6). In addition to that, they were "slandered" (2:12, 3:16), they were to "follow in t/sufferings of X" (2:21), indeed they did "suffer for righteousness sake" (3:14), not only were they to follow in Christ's sufferings, according to 4:13, they also were sharing, lit. "fellowshipping" in those very sufferings. Self-help doesn't go very far in those kinds of circumstances.

Yet there's hope // joy

They knew that they had a future inheritance (v. 4). Same for us. It's not all about having a life on easy street. Xnty has never been about that. That's a great deception from the pit of hell!

I think t/title of Mr. Osteen's book is telling in that regard: "Your Best Life NOW." As in right now. (forget about patience // future reward // future inheritance that's promised to me). I want mine now! For t/Xn t/best life is future, not now. If you want "now" you may just be forfeiting t/future in order to get it!

Jesus never promised your best life "NOW"==>

Mark 8:34-37 **And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? "For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"**

It's not like the pop. T-shirt slogan that says, "He who dies with the most toys wins." No, it's "he who dies w/his focus solely on gaining worldly goods loses - his soul."

That sort of emasculated theology devoid of biblical substance might appeal to some in contemporary America, but it's foreign to t/history of t/CH - would also be foreign to many if not most Xns t/o t/world who live in abject poverty.

Here's One test of truth as it relates to a given concept or belief system Obv. "is it scriptural?"

Also, is it transcultural? Is there application to believers of all generations and situations? This sort of health-wealth false-gospel sells wonderfully in t/economically prosperous USA. Try selling it to Xns in China. Or the Sudan?

Truth that is biblical and transcultural is this==>

JAM 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world {to be} rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

Paul to the Philippians (1:29)

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 6==>

In verse 5 Paul speaks of those ==> men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.6 But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment.7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.8 And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. 11 But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.18 *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation FOR THE FUTURE, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Again, don't misunderstand what I'm saying

Are possessions and money and things inherently evil? Can you be a

millionaire and be a Xn? (Point you back to t/issue - I just read it v. 17).

Besides, Xnty has never really been a draw for t/rich, famous, prominent. It's always been about the poor, the needy, the humble. There's almost a glimmer of truth (almost) in Ted Turner's statement that "[Christianity is a religion for losers.](#)"

We may look like "losers" to the world, but in the end we're winners. That not because of anything intrinsic to ourselves, but solely due to the great grace and mercy of our God. Amen?

I. The Elements of the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (3-9)

Main idea in our passage==>

The Sovereign mercy of God fuels the Sovereign joy of our salvation.

By God's design our salvation is to be enjoyed by us to God's greatest glory and praise! That's the difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is dependent on my circumstances (when things are going well for me, I'm happy. When their not, I'm unhappy). Etymology of the word is indicative ("hap" means "chance" ==> "happenance" "happenings" "haphazard").

Joy transcends circumstances. Joy is there whether your circumstances seem to be favorable or not. It's there because I know that God has your greatest good in mind. It's there because it's a fruit of the Holy Spirit who works in your life (Gal. 5:22).

Look at Acts chapter 5 - Apostles are brought before Jewish authorities. They are threatened for preaching about Jesus Christ. And then they are flogged (from what we know going back at least to t/2d c. - 13 hard strikes the bare chest followed by 26 to the back). Doesn't sound like fun to me. Brought B4 t/courts, commanded to stop preaching, it may cost you imprisonment—even your life. You then suffer a very painful whipping. What do you think? You limp home and cry? Give up? Luke records in 5:41 that they "[went their way from the council rejoicing that they](#)

had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name." Not exactly your best life now. Not exactly happiness. But there can be joy ever rejoicing because, as someone once defined it, "Joy is the flag that flies on the castle of the heart when the King is in residence there."

That's why it's sovereign joy. It stands in juxtaposition to false joy.

The first element of t/sovereign joy of our salvation ==>

A. SJ was Prompted by God's Great Mercy (3a)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ACCORDING TO HIS GREAT MERCY has caused us to be born again . . .

B. SJ is Accomplished Through Our New Birth (3b)

1. A New Birth that Gives us Hope for the Present

". . . to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

2. A New Birth that Gives us a Future Inheritance (v. 4)

to an inheritance [that is] incorruptible and undefiled and unfading which is kept in heaven for you

Thirdly ==>

C. SJ of our Salvation is Preserved by God's Power (5a)

1. Through Present Faith (5b)

2. For Future and Final Salvation (5c)

[you] . . . are being guarded by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Fourthly (lastly) ==>

D. The Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation will be Evidenced by Persevering Faith (6-9)

1. This ties into where we spent most of our time last week on the doctrine of perseverance

[you] . . . are being guarded by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Rem. t/word φρουρεω (to be guarded, kept, protected) was used of guarding something or someone from getting in & also of guarding something/someone from getting out. In that sense we are guarded by power of God from any deadly attacks against our souls that might come from outside of us, as well as being guarded from ourselves - from our leaving t/fortress of t/faith.

What I mean when I said that we persevere by virtue of God's work of preservation.

In fact==>

a. God guards us by means of our faith

[you] . . . are being guarded by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We remain believers (believing) by virtue of God's keeping us.

"Those whom God has accepted in His beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit can neither totally or finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved." [1646 Westminster Confession of Faith, Article 17]

But even our faith isn't something that comes entirely from within us - God by nature of our new birth has given us eyes to see. If you are genuinely a believer you have that faith because it comes as a gift - it's part of what it means to be a new creation in Christ // regenerated // have eyes opened // ears that hear. (Cf. Matt. 13:16).

A true Xn by nature of who he or she is can't lose that. It is inherent to what you are. God has made it so that those who genuinely are called

by him will continue to believe by the very nature of that calling.

Xns by very definition are believers. If one ceases to believe or departs from the faith that indicates that this person never carried the inherent definition for if they had they would have remained (1 John 2:19).

D. The Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation will be Evidenced by Persevering Faith (6-9)

Five characteristics of this persevering faith . . .

1. A Persevering Faith That:

a. Results in Joy (6a)

b. Stands the Test of Trials (6b-7)

c. Loves The Lord (whom we have not seen) (8a)

d. Believes in The Lord (whom we don't see) (8b)

e. Is the Means to Final Salvation (9)

1st characteristic of this persevering faith is found in 1st 4 words of v. 6=>

1. A Persevering Faith That:

a. Results in Joy (6a)

In this you rejoice . . .

(1) Million Dollar Question: "In what?"

Options would be to the "last time" end of v. 6, (grammar agrees - both datives), so KJV. IOW - you will rejoice when your salvation is complete. Also possible (ATR, 83) to see a connection to Χριστου (v. 3) or Θεου (v. 5). Best to see it in light of t/entire context of vv. 3-5.

In [all of] this you rejoice . . . (Pres. tense = "You are rejoicing")

(a) Not the common word for Joy (χαρα) - ἀγαλλιαω

A word that's always used in NT to describe great or lively joy. Could

call it "salvation joy."

Used of Mary in her "magnificat" of Luke 1 (**my soul exalts the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior**)

Joy t/Philippian Jailer experienced when he found salvation (Acts 16:34).

Used in LXX to translate Psalm 51:12 (**restore to me the joy of my salvation**).

This is the word that exemplifies ==>

I. The Elements of the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (3-9)

Main idea in our passage==>

The Sovereign mercy of God fuels the Sovereign joy of our salvation.

That's t/kind of joy we're talking about. "Salvation Joy". Since that salv. is found in a sovereign God who not only grants it by means of his great grace, he also guards it by means of his power (v. 5). If that's true, if you are indeed ==>

being guarded by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Then you can't forfeit it (either your faith or your salvation). Follow also that you can't totally lose t/sovereign joy that accompanies that salvation. You may lose touch w/it, but you can't lose it.

In [all of] this [there is joy] . . .

D. The Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation will be Evidenced by Persevering Faith (6-9)

1. A Persevering Faith That:

a. Results in Joy (6a)

secondly==>

b. Stands the Test of Trials (6b-7)

(1) But note the contrast (v. 6)

though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

"Trials" not "temptations" (KJV - bad translation). Word *πειρασμος* can mean either so t/context est. t/meaning.

(a) Sort of looks backward and forward

In this you rejoice (*looking back to the blessings of vv. 3,4,5*) **though now** (*in the present*) . . . **you [suffer grief with] various trials,**

One thing to talk about the sweet by and by but we live in the dirty now and now!

Someone said this to me a few weeks ago: - "It's one thing to have a bad day, but when a bad day turns into two bad days, which turns into a week of bad days and a month or more of bad days - that's a pretty good indication that you are smack-dab in t/middle of a real time of suffering.

(2) What do you do as a believer in Jesus Christ when your bad day turns into a bad week which turns into a bad year?

Grin and bear it? Deny that it exists? Or do you recognize t/pain that's there & in spite of it all grasp onto t/hand that holds yours secure knowing that this hand of mercy is your only hope? And that One who holds you loves you & will never leave you or forsake you.

When we're going through tough times there's a tendency to deceive ourselves into thinking that we're t/only ones who experience it. No one hurts like I do. Other Xns don't have t/bad days that I have. Not true.

Someone once said that there are two certainties in this life: Death and taxes. May I add a third? Suffering.

We're all a by-product of t/fall. All of us are sinful; all of us live in a fallen world; all of us will experience times of great sorrow and pain.

(a) That Pain is very real

When Peter writes that they had been "grieved" he uses the word λυπέω. Same word that's used of t/grief Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). Used of t/grief t/H.S. feels when we walk in disobedience (Eph. 4:30). Used of the grief that accompanies the death of a loved one (1 Thess. 4:13).

(a) This is Common to us all

Tears know no racial limits. Suffering is t/same if you're black, white, brown, red or yellow. Knows no distinction between male & female, young or old, rich or poor. Doesn't matter if you're a Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal.

Philip Yancey - "The kingdom of suffering is a democracy, and we all stand in it or alongside it with nothing but our naked humanity."

(b) Little phrase in middle of v. 6 - εἰ δέοι (it is necessary)

1st class condition in t/Gk. Assumed to be true. IOW "It is necessary!" It's part of life. Picture of Xnty as being a relationship w/God whereby you are exempted from all the pain of sin is wrong. It's a lie.

Listen - if it were true that Xns were somehow excused from pain & suffering why does John give us t/hope of eternal reward when he writes of t/Kingdom in Rev. 21:4 being a place where==>

. . . [God] shall wipe away every tear . . . and there shall no longer be *any* death; there shall no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain . . . ???

John writes as if it were a given - Will be pain & suffering in this life.

(3) Here's the issue:

As a Xn you never go through t/trials of life, t/pain, t/sadness, t/affliction, alone. You never go through these things w/o purpose.

Suffering can never finally and ultimately be meaningless, because God himself has shared in our suffering. [Philip Yancey]

That's the cross! Shaped like a dagger and planted into t/heart of t/earth dripping w/the life-blood of t/Son of God!

That's t/hope – the living hope of t/resurrection of JC from t/dead (v. 3).

It's not the capricious whims of chance that move the happenings of t/universe, it's the loving hand of your father who holds you close even when life hurts. You can have joy in that. Peace.

In his spiritual autobiography, William Barclay, the venerable Scottish scholar, tells the tragedy of losing his 21-year-old daughter and her fiancée who were drowned in a boating accident. He writes, "God did not stop that accident at sea, but he did still the storm in my own heart so that somehow my wife and I came through that terrible time still on our own two feet."

Barclay also tells of receiving an anonymous letter about his daughter's death. It said, "I know why God killed your daughter. It was to save her from corruption by your heresies." Barclay says, "If I had known the writer's address, I would have written back in pity, not anger, saying, as John Wesley once said, 'Your God is my devil.'" [Marlin Vis, "The Blame Game," Preaching Today, Tape No. 114.]

(a) Remember what 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.

That's what Peter means here==>

. . . though now FOR A LITTLE WHILE, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

Truth is that we don't have to go through difficult times forever. We may find that a bad day turns into a week of bad days or weeks of bad days or months of bad days. Even years! But in light of eternity it is just "a little while." The time is short (may not feel like it when you're going through it!) t/time is short & t/best days are ahead. It will pass.

Interesting how Peter begins and ends his letter on this same note. Same

phrase that's used here is used in the same way in 5:10==>

And after you have suffered **FOR A LITTLE WHILE**, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

(4) We don't know for sure what sorts of trials Peter's readers were experiencing

Some have suggested that it was a specific persecution, such as t/persecution under Roman Emperor Nero that began in 64 AD. However, if t/letter was written after t/Great Fire of Rome it was written to soon after it for the persecution to have spread to Peter's audience.

Really no reason to speculate on a specific reason. Wording would seem to indicate that there were many different kinds of trials.

We know they were "diverse" or "various" (ποικίλος). One source claims that t/phrase "polka dot" finds its origin in this Gk. word.

Was used of t/spots on a leopard, diff. colored veins in marble, changing months/seasons, changes in music. [Vincent].

Like each of our lives, trials come in all shapes and forms and at different seasons.

Peter's wording strongly parallels that of James==>

JAM 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various (ποικίλος) trials,

Peter's use of this word shows that it wasn't just one sort of trial they were experiencing (such as persecution for their faith). Likely many different sorts of afflictions/sufferings, maybe too many to list. Summed up in "All that life throws our way."

Certainly safe to say that these various trials weren't directly a result of personal sin, but the kind you experience no matter how vibrant your

walk w/JC may be.

BTW - Interesting that only other place Peter uses this word (ποικίλος) is in 4:10 where he uses it of the grace of God. If I may stretch it a bit - that would be a good parallel. The afflictions we experience in this short time frame we call "life" may be multifaceted. But so is t/grace of our God.

That's why, as t/writer to t/Hebrews says in 4:16==>

[We can] draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Whatever our need, there is sufficient grace.

PSA 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the \Lord\ delivers him out of them all.

Someone once wrote==>

I asked for Strength..... And God gave me Difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for Wisdom.....And God gave me Problems to solve.

I asked for Prosperity.....And God gave me Brain and Brawn to work.

I asked for Courage.....And God gave me Danger to overcome.

I asked for Love.....And God gave me Troubled people to help.

I asked for Favors.....And God gave me Opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted.....I received everything I needed