

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (Part 7)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:7

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

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(Open Bibles to 1 Peter 1) . . . This comes from the "and you think you're having a bad day" files.

On a Monday the following ad appeared in t/classified ad section of a small-town newspaper:

FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap.

On Tuesday--NOTICE: We regret having erred in R.D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read: "one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him after 7:00 p.m.

On Wednesday--R.D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in his classified ad yesterday. His ad stands corrected as follows: FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958-2020 after 7:00 p.m. ask for Mrs. Kelly who loves with him.

Finally on Tuesday--NOTICE: I R.D. Jones have no sewing machine for sale. I smashed it. Don't call 958-2020 as the telephone has been taken out. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she quit.

Well, so much for persevering in trials!

Read Passage

Been thinking a lot about t/concept of trials & joy. Specifically, how we can experience joy in t/midst of trials & reasons why we may not have as much joy in our lives as we would like to have.

Six Reasons Why We Don't Experience Joy

Arbitrary; No particular order. Here's my list:

1) We Tolerate Sin

BTIM - We tolerate sin in our lives. I'm not sure if there's a more miserable sight in t/world than a Xn who is not walking as he/she should B4 God. Tolerating pockets of sin in his life.

In that sense, sin is to Joy what water is to a flame. Fires of joy cannot burn in a heart that is tainted by sin. I'm sure you know what it's like to feel "dirty" - to feel like you are not walking in t/Spirit but according to the flesh. Can't be joyful during those times.

{turn in my Bible to Galatians 5:16-17, 22}

Great deception. That we can somehow find joy or happiness or fulfillment in sin. Could be lust (sexual or otherwise), greed, worry, pride, selfishness, gossip, anger, etc. Any time we choose sin over God we are saying, "Sorry God, this is what I need for fulfillment right now." That's an ultimate act of unbelief. It's putting self in t/place of t/Sov.

REMEDY: REPENTANCE (we all need to be about repenting)

2) We Are Ignorant

Sometimes we just don't know all that we need to know for our joy to be made full.

I think of James 1 -

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Word in v. 2, "consider" = ἡγέομαι ("to think" as in thinking something through, to thoughtfully consider something as true).

Did you know it's not "natural" to rejoice during difficult times? Did you know that? It's not. It's not "natural." Know what it is? It's SUPERNATURAL! Right?! It takes the eyes of faith grounded in spiritual knowledge of what this life is all about.

We can rejoice in trials because we know certain things (what things) THAT God is in loving sov. control over all that happens to us // He has our good in mind // that ultimately our joy is in X & that can't be taken away from us // we have t/hope of eternal life/inheritance - we are kept by power of God for a salvation ready to be revealed (v. 4-5).

Comes by knowing t/truth of God's Word as it's imprinted on our hearts by God's Spirit. If you don't know these things you can't rejoice in them.

REMEDY: KNOWLEDGE.

3) We Have False Expectations (1 Cor. 10:13)

We expect too much or we expect the wrong things. Very common.

Run t/gamut from expecting no difficulties in life as a Xn ("what's happening to me? I thought following Jesus was easy"). Or, positively speaking, expecting that because you're a Xn you should have all t/modern comforts of Americana (stuff, luxurious house, lots of extra money, cable TV, expensive car, yearly cruise to Jamaica - you know all those necessities of life!). That's t/problem. We measure ourselves against t/American standard rather than against God's standard.

I know I'm digressing, but this is a pet peeve of mine (have any pet peeves? I've always thought that would be a good name for a pet: "peeve"). We don't know what it means to live in frugality - to really live w/i our means. How many times do we worry about our bills, complain that we have no money, or whin about what we don't have when comparatively speaking we're rich. Compared to those who live in India or China we're wealthy beyond comprehension. (Could live in a refrigerator box

under a bridge somewhere and live better than 25% of those in t/world.)

We don't know what necessities really are. We think we have to possess a cell phone can cable TV. That's sick! Don't tell me you're living in poverty & have no money because you can't afford to pay t/cable bill or because you bought a house you can't afford or a brand-new car. Turn off t/cable (you'll live w/o it). Get rid of t/cell phone (put some quarters in your shoe). Somehow, at one time we've all lived w/o those things.

It would be a good experience for all of us to go visit t/CH in Sudan. Nobody there is complaining about t/reception on their cell phone ("can you hear me now?").

I'm not saying these things are wrong to have. It is wrong to live beyond your means, or to mark as a necessity what is really a convenience. I've seen families lit. tearing apart at t/seams because they just had to have a really expensive home & expensive cars & a swimming pool & all sorts of toys. Both parents work full-time to try to pay for that which they can't afford. Children & t/marriage fall by t/wayside.

Sometimes it can be that way w/our joy. What do we expect? "Things" can't fuel your joy anymore than burning garbage can fuel a 747!

Remember hearing about a godly Puritan saint of past ages who, in poverty sat down to a loaf of bread & water & exclaimed, "What? All this and Jesus too!" Let me take this in another direction. "Considering it all joy" doesn't mean that there's no pain, no tears, no doubts. Doesn't mean we can't be honest (cf. David in t/Psalms - "complaining" but rejoicing)

You may be expecting "happiness" rather than "Joy" and there's a diff. as I pointed out to you a few weeks ago. Happiness = circumstances; Joy transcends circumstances. Joy is "the flag that flies on t/castle of the heart when the King is in residence there." You can't find happiness in affliction. But joy may be found there because joy supernaturally transcends affliction.

In that sense, Joy may genuinely be defined by t/phrase "Bitter-Sweet." (is it bitter or sweet? Yes and no, it's both polar opposites at the same time). But for t/Xn t/Sweet is always of more value than t/bitter for t/sweet is eternal in nature.

What are you expecting? We can only expect what we're promised. As those transformed by X we can expect joy & God's sustaining power & an inheritance that cannot be taken away from us. We can't expect worldly happiness. We're not promised that.

I think of 1 Corinthians 10:13 (common to most of you) ==>

No temptation (πειρασμος) has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

We can expect joy // that God will always be faithful to his own // he will allow us to escape t/trial intact w/endurance.

REMEDY FOR FALSE EXPECTATIONS: SET YOUR MIND ON GOD'S PROMISES, (Don't listen to the lies of t/world)

4) We Lack Discipline (1 Tim. 4:7)

Undisciplined people are not a happy lot. All that we are and all that we are to be, as Xns, takes personal discipline. It takes discipline to have a healthy marriage // raise godly kids // grow in t/Xn life.

"Godly people are disciplined people. It has always been so. Call to mind some heroes of church history--Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, Susanna Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, George Muller--they were all disciplined people. In my own pastoral and personal Christian experience, I can say that I've never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline. Godliness comes through discipline." [Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian life, page 15]

Discipline is at t/heart of our lives. If we're not disciplined w/our time

we fritter t/days away, days that cannot be recaptured once they're gone. Discipline is at t/heart of our devotion to Christ (prayer, ministry, being in God's Word) (we continue acting like spiritual children when we should be pressing on to maturity) // fighting against sin (we stifle t/work of God's Spirit & will one day look back at our lives w/great regret).

I think often of this quote by Jonathan Edwards who once said, "I'm resolved to live as I wish I had when I come to die."

That's spiritual dynamite! If only we could capture than thought and implant it into t/depths of our souls!

A deception that goes along with this point - It's t/"Tomorrow" mentality. We all fall prey to this. "I'll take care of it . . . when? Tomorrow!"

You're on your way to an all you can eat buffet. You know you need to lose weight. When are you going to do it? Tomorrow!

You need to forsake that sin. Maybe it's what t/Puritans referred to as a "besetting sin" (something you're always struggling with). You blow it. You resolve that you will repent. Temptation comes & you're caught in "t/middle ground" (what I call "t/Valley of Decision" - do I sin or don't I). Temptation is great. You think, "One more time won't really hurt. It'll be different, (when?) – Tomorrow!

Problem is tomorrow turns into yesterday and yesterday turns into a year ago and a year ago turns into several years. Your falling for that same sin! You're acting in that same childish manner! You're walking in t/same spiritual immaturity. You're still not spending time in God's Word. You're still telling yourself, "I'll do it - tomorrow". Let's not put off for tomorrow what we must do for today!

I have a friend of mine (he wouldn't mind me sharing this with you) - he was always in the dumps. Eternal pessimist. Sort of guy that would proudly wear a T-Shirt that says, "If Murphy's Law is True - I'm Murphy" Yet, he was a

great guy. Had a lot of biblical knowledge, loved t/Lord. One day we were fellowshiping over a cup of coffee & I asked him, "You know, my concern is that you are going to go to your grave years from now w/this same defeatist attitude & they're going to put on your tombstone - "Here's lies a man who never grew beyond his despair."

That really struck him. His life did change. Tragic to think that we spend years wallowing in t/same personal failures when God has given to us t/resources in X to overcome them.

Edwards - "I'm resolved to live as I wish I had when I come to die."

You can't possibly know how much this point speaks to my own heart! I've preached this to myself over and over again. I can remember in my early years of school and ministry, when I was in my 20s and early 30s, how many people told me, "Tony, you have great potential. God has gifted you. Steward it well." That's t/sort of thing that you hear when you're a young man. People don't say that to you anymore once you turn 40. There are times I'm literally plagued w/the thoughts of growing old, mesmerised w/how fast time goes by. Our lives are literally a puff of smoke. Can't help but wonder how much time I've blown by not being staunchly disciplined. I think this is something I'm really learning at this point in my life.

Satan loves nothing more than to see God's saints fritter their lives away dabbling in nothing of eternal significance knowing that this not only steals our joy, but it robs us of t/great potential God has given us.

Someone once said that "The greatest waste in the world is the difference between what we are and what we could be" [Ben Herberster]

REMEDY: BE DISCIPLINED

We're told in 1 Tim. 4:7 to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness. We need to battle w/all of our might against t/laziness of

t/flesh in our fighting t/good fight of faith that our joy be full.

5) We Have Bad Theology

Our understanding of God and the Bible is wrong. For example, there's a theology out there that says that all Xns are to be healthy // happy // have all of their worldly desires fulfilled. That Xnty doesn't mean you should ever suffer or struggle.

Other side of that coin is==>

If you don't have all of this "stuff" then it means you aren't being blessed by God, or He's somehow angry with you or punishing you.

That's all bad theology. Bad theology can be sacrilege. (WDYMBT?). to misrepresent what God says about a matter is to misrepresent God. To misrepresent God is to misrepresent his character. It's a perversion of His name, the embodiment of who He is. We don't want to do that, right?! Good theology glorifies God and brings us joy.

Truth is that suffering and pain are part of our lives, even as believers. That's t/unpopular message that CHs ignore in their quest for paper mache' Christianette & t/building of CH Mega-malls. Paper mache' Xnettes won't stand t/test of eternity & neither will CH mega-malls.

And the truth is that ==>

We must enter the K.D. of God through many tribulations (Acts 14:22), and we are not only privileged to believe in X, we are also privileged to suffer for him (Phil. 1:29) and we are not to be surprised at t/fiery ordeal that comes upon us for our testing as though some strange thing were happening to us (1 Peter 4:12).

Understanding that all of this isn't driven by chance, but by a loving Father who cares for us, will bring us joy. Misunderstanding this will bring us guilt, doubt, frustration.

Warren Wiersbe tells of a leader in his church who was going through a tremendous time of trial. She had a stroke, her husband had gone blind, and then he had to be taken to the hospital where they were sure he would die. He saw her in church one Sunday and assured her that He was praying for her. 'What are you asking God to do?' she asked. 'I'm asking God to help you and strengthen you,' He replied. 'I appreciate that,' she said, 'but pray about one more thing. Pray that I'll have the wisdom not to waste all of this!'" [cited by Warren Wiersbe in James commentary]

An older saint years ago told me as a young Xn, "Whatever I go through in life, I ask myself the question, 'What does God want me to learn through this?'"

I can't think of a better attitude. You can only ask that question if you believe that God is sovereign. If God's not in ultimate control over everything you experience, then all you can do is say, "Gee, God, Did you want me to learn something or did this just randomly happen?"

Not like t/story about a skydiver, on his very first jump, who discovered that his parachute wouldn't open. As he was plummeting toward the ground he saw another man flying upward past him; so he called out to him, "Do you know anything about parachutes?" The man going up replied, "No . . . do you know anything about gas stoves?"

We're not talking about random happenings w/a clueless Creator. Remember last time I gave you several principles that we learn from our passage in 1 Peter, one of which was the ==>

"Principle of sovereignty - God is in control of our suffering"

So, as someone once said, "When you find yourself in the fire, remember, God's hand is on the thermostat."

This is all for our ultimate good and His ultimate glory. In that truth there is great joy, isn't there?

HEB 12:7-11 - 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom {his} father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are

illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He {disciplines us} for {our} good, that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

ROM 5:3-4 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

REMEDY FOR BAD THEOLOGY: THINK BIBLICALLY

(Prov. 23:7 - If you think bad theology you will act in keeping w/that)

6) Some May Be Unregenerate (Rom. 15:13)

That is, there are some who go to CH, have a superficial belief in X, but that belief falls short of genuine saving faith. People like that will never find joy until they be found by X in a saving relationship with him. Romans 15:13 says that joy and peace comes through believing (in JC).

REMEDY: SALVATION

Here are six things that might steal your joy: Toleration of sin; Ignorance; False Expectations; Lack of Discipline; Bad Theology; Unregenerate heart.

I can't even call this a long intro. It's more of a further extrapolation on what we've been learning from 1 Peter chapt. 1.

God's desire that his children have joy. Rem. Jesus said (John 15:11). True Joy is sovereign joy & that's been our main point t/past several weeks==>

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

I have to give you at least one good quote from another source using t/phrase "sovereign joy" - here's one by John Piper==>

". . . the key to Christian living is a thirst and hunger for God. And one of the main reasons people do not understand or experience the sovereignty of grace and the way it works through the awakening of sovereign joy is that their hunger and thirst for God is so small." [John Piper, The Swan is not Silent: Sovereign Joy in the Life and Thought of St. Augustine, 13]

I trust that your appetite is still not completely quenched for hearing God's Word.

Someone once told me about a traveling preacher who came through some farmland. He stopped to preach and one elderly farmer showed up. In fact, that elderly farmer was t/only one who showed up. The t/preacher, never wanting to miss an opportunity to preach, even in t/hearing of one, waxed eloquent . . . for 2 hours. When he was done, he asked the farmer what he thought. The old gentleman scratched his beard and thought a moment, and then said, "Just because one cow shows up for dinner doesn't mean I feed her t/entire silo!"

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

By way of reminder as we conclude this AM, these are different components or ingredients of all that is salvation joy.

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

"The Sovereign mercy of God fuels the sovereign joy of our salvation"

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

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

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

That is, genuine salvation and new life in X will evidence itself in our persevering in t/Xn life. It's part of our salvation joy, that God preserves us in order that we may persevere.

Where we left off last time, with five characteristics of this persevering faith . . .

1. It's A Persevering Faith That:

a. Results in Joy (6a)

In this you rejoice . . .

In what? The entire context of vv. 3-5 {restate}

In [all of] this you (Pres. tense) are rejoicing . . .

(1) Not usual word for Joy in NT (χαρά) - ἀγαλλιαῶ

A word that's always used in NT to describe great or lively joy. what we could call "salvation joy."

Secondly (we have a persevering faith that) ==>

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

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

(1) We find ourselves looking 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,

Remember, one of the things we emphasized last time in verse 7 is that==>

(a) Suffering Has a Purpose (Principle of Beneficiality)

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.

In order that the testing of your faith being more precious than fine gold which is perishable, being purified through fire, might pass the test and be found [true] . . .

i. That's what it's all about! [^]

This actually forms what is called a purpose (ινα) clause in the Greek. "In order that" (for the purpose of). What? Testing your faith.

ii. Word δοκίμιον (testing)

Ancient assayer's word used of testing t/genuineness of precious metals - sep. t/gold from t/dross (*genuine, without alloy*). Faith isn't found true (genuine, real, saving) until it's under fire/tested.

That's true for all of us. When someone makes an initial profession of faith in X we don't rest easy as if it's a done deal. Time and testing will show whether their faith was saving faith or counterfeit faith.

I think of children. We do our best to raise them in t/nurture & admonition of t/Lord, but at some point their initial expression of belief has to gel in their hearts. At some point they turn a corner. If their faith is genuine, that will really demonstrate itself in an adult manner, most likely in their teen years. That's where t/rubber meets t/road. Do you really believe this Jesus stuff you were taught. If you do, then make a stand for him.

That's true of us all. Our faith is tested, much like Abraham who believed God & it was credited to him as righteousness.

iii. Look at the Contrast in v. 7

the proof of your faith, being more precious than fine gold which is perishable, being purified through fire might pass the test and be found [true] . . .

Your faith, if genuine, is more valuable than fine gold.

If you doubt that, think of it this way. What would you trade for your faith? If someone could offer you anything you could ever desire, physical health, billions of dollars, more power & prestige than anyone on t/world. Fame beyond imagination. So much money, fame, power that your name would be known by billions from Boston to Beijing.

Someone who has t/ability & authority to give you all of this comes and says, "Here it is. It's all yours in exchange for your genuine faith."

Would you do it????? You wouldn't would you? You see, your faith is indeed==>

... more precious than fine gold

No genuine believer in JC would trade anything for a knowledge of Him!

Gold, power, prestige, all that stuff is what? "perishable." All t/money in the world // all t/power // prestige // stuff can't compare to t/pearl of great price, to t/treasure hidden in t/field.

That's why it's "Persevering Faith" - an element of t/Sov. Joy of our Salv.

1. A Persevering Faith That:

a. Results in Joy (6a)

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

There's more. It's also a P.F. that==>

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)

Get there next time.