

Great Rejoicing and Manifold Trials

by H.J. Vine

The elect of God experience great rejoicing and manifold trials because of the hope of glory and salvation in Christ, and to prove the quality of their faith.

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 1:5-6, 1 John 4:19

Topics: "Trials And Faith", "Eternal Hope"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the great rejoicing experienced amid many trials by the elect of God, emphasizing the purpose of trials in strengthening faith and preparing believers for the glorious day of Christ's coming. Peter and Paul both point to God as the source of blessings and the giver of a living hope through Jesus Christ, encouraging believers to greatly rejoice in the midst of trials. The trials believers face serve to prove the genuineness of their faith, more precious than gold, and will result in praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Great rejoicing amid many trials is the experience of many today, and these things have marked the elect of God from the earliest days of the Faith. Peter wrote to those who were "scattered," and he desired that "grace and peace" should be multiplied unto them. Writing of God's salvation, he said, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials (or temptations)" (1 Peter 1:6).

But what was it caused than to "greatly rejoice"? and why were these "manifold trials" allowed?

The Holy Spirit gives us the answer to both questions, so that our hearts may be comforted, our spirits cheered, and our footsteps quickened as we pursue the onward path to the glorious day of Christ's coming.

Notice how Peter turns the heart in thanksgiving to our God and Father. He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). Beginning with the same words, Paul, in Ephesians 1:3, also turns to the same Source of all blessing, saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." This latter speaks of what is ours now in Christ, whereas the former speaks of what shines as a bright hope before us. From whichever standpoint we view what our God and Father has done, we may

well bless Him. He has blessed the redeemed in Christ in the heavenlies now, and He has begotten them again to a living hope.

This hope centres in our Lord Jesus Christ. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." The unfading inheritance, and the great salvation of God soon to be revealed, but known already to faith, are secured in Him who tasted death for us and who is now crowned on high with glory and honour. Because He is there, it can be said, the inheritance is "reserved in the heavens" for us; and we are "kept guarded" here by God's power through faith. The inheritance is kept where our Saviour now is, and we are kept here while He is on high--kept "UNTO SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME" (1 Peter 1:5).

This answers our first question. It is this which causes the heart to greatly rejoice; so it is said, "WHEREIN YE GREATLY REJOICE." Those to whom Peter immediately wrote had believed on the One who had suffered in this world, who is now glorified on high. His sufferings and the glory to follow had long ago been foretold. The Old Testament Scriptures pointed forward to a time when Israel should be blessed through Him, when all nations should call Him blessed, when all the earth should be filled with the glory of the Lord, when all flesh should see His salvation, when men shall walk in the light of the Lord and learn war no more. The One who is to bring all this to pass is already exalted, and He is ready to re-appear at the appointed time. Then the glory and the salvation which centre in Him will be revealed, and the waiting time will give place to songs of praise and scenes of gladness, peace, and blessing. Therefore the apostle said, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice." The One who had redeemed them by His blood was exalted in glory already, and all was safe and secure in Him.

This, known to faith in the Holy Spirit's power, might well cause those who believe it to greatly rejoice. More, however, has been disclosed concerning this hope of glory and salvation than is mentioned by Peter. The Spirit through Paul has shown in 1 Thessalonians 4 that the LORD HIMSELF will come for us before He shines forth in glory with us! And if the former causes the heart to greatly rejoice, surely this may well cause us to rejoice still more! caught up to meet Him in the air before His public appearing, we shall be for ever with the Lord! Glorified together with Him before we appear with Him in glory, we shall see Him and be like Christ! We shall see Him as He is!

Along with the rejoicing, however, at the present time, there is something quite different: "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials (or temptations)." It was so in the earliest days, and it is so now as the Lord's return draws nigh. Great rejoicing and manifold trials are still the experience of numbers of those who are saved by grace, who are being "kept by the power of God through faith."

Thank God it does not say the rejoicing is only for a while; but it does say "for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness" through the trials. Seasons run their appointed time, and they are necessary. The autumn and the cold of winter pass. The spring and summer follow; and the results of deepened rooting and vitality appear. The season of heaviness or of being put to grief is necessary. "If needed," for "a little while," says the apostle, "ye are put to grief by various trials." They are not all the same, they are varied; and there is a reason for them all. That reason is given by the Spirit of God, and answers our second question--Why allowed?--"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

God sets such value upon faith, He allows its quality to be evidenced. Gold perishes, though valued by men so highly. The proving of our faith is much more precious. Gold is for present use, and fire purifies it. The trial of our faith yields for the future something that will not perish, that is abiding. In a coming day the full answer to one question--Why these manifold trials?--will be displayed in glorious splendour: "found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Not one pang will be regretted then. Not one sorrow will be repented of then. Not one tear or trial--passed for ever--will be considered useless then. Shall not the exceeding joy, peace and beauty of those longed-for scenes cheer us on through this season of trials, as we remember that the present proving of our faith shall yield such riches of praise, honour and glory for our Saviour's day?--for the day of the One who loves us above all else? for the day of Jesus Christ, our Lord, when He appears? With Himself and His worthiness before us, steadfastness will mark us, and goodness and mercy will follow us.

In the gladness and glory of beholding His face, knowing the greatness of His unchanging love--the love which proved itself to be divine and trustworthy at the cross--praise, worship and adoration shall fill those holy courts where the Son of God is pre-eminent. No wonder that the apostle said concerning Him to the saints who were passing through the season of heaviness and manifold trials, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Peter, though he himself had failed, had been maintained in faith, by the intercession of Jesus, when he was tempted. At his restoration Jesus questioned him as to this, he insisted that the Lord knew that he loved Him. And now he speaks with confidence of those who believed, but had not seen the Saviour. Peter knew they loved Him amidst all their trials and temptations. It is because He first loved us that we love Him. The law demanded it, but did not produce it. God's love in Christ has triumphed in this. Said John, "We have known and believed the love that God has to us." And again, "We love because He has first loved us" (1 John 4:19, N.Tr.). Also, "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us." What more could He do? Well, He intercedes for us on high, for He loves us unchangeably and eternally. Moreover, as we have said, He is coming again to receive us unto Himself. God's purpose shall be fully accomplished. Surrounded by the redeemed--all like Him--He shall be seen in His glory, "the Firstborn among many brethren." And "though now ye see Him not, yet believing," says the apostle, "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Blessed be His holy Name.

Yes, the rejoicing may be great with good reason. The trials may be manifold for a season. The glory of which our precious Saviour and Lord is the rightful Head and Centre shall soon shine forth. Already He is glorified with the Father. Soon He will take us up to His Father's house. There we shall behold Him as He is. He Himself shall be the crown of our brightest hope. Blessed be our God and Father whose counsels of love designed it all, who purposed the glorious pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, His well-beloved Son, our Lord.

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