

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Joy of Salvation, Part 2

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:8-9

Code: 60-8

Tonight again as we come to our time in God's Word, I want to draw your attention to 1 Peter chapter 1, 1 Peter chapter 1. This morning we looked at verses 3-5, tonight even as we did last week, we want to move ahead to verses 6-9, 1 Peter 1:6-9.

Peter's theme is salvation joy. He moves out of the wonderful doxology of praise to God in verses 3-5, and in verse 6 says, "In this you greatly rejoice." And he calls for praise to be given to God for salvation for the glorious eternal inheritance that belongs to the believer. Let's begin and you follow as I read verses 6-9.

"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, 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, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 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, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

Clearly the subject here is joy. Back in verses 1 and 2, the indication is that those who belong to Christ are chosen by God. Verses 3-5 tell us that that sovereign choice by God based on His great mercy has caused us to be born again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Christ. We have therefore been promised an inheritance which is our full and final salvation, and that inheritance can never perish, never be defiled, never fade away. It is reserved for us and we are reserved for it. Consequently, we greatly rejoice. Salvation joy is the theme that Peter has in his heart.

You know, throughout Scripture those who know the Lord and those who walk with God, those who put their trust in Him experience joy. For example, if you were to read through the Psalms you would find that a ringing theme in the Psalms is joy. In Psalm 4:7 it says, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." In Psalm 5:11, "Let all who take refuge in Thee be glad, let them ever sing for joy." In Psalm 9:2, "I will be glad and exalt in Thee; - " or rejoice in Thee " - I will sing praise to Thy name, O my Most High."

In Psalm 32:11, I believe it is, "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart." In Psalm 37:4, a familiar one, "Delight yourself in the Lord."

Psalm 43:3-4, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Thy holy hill, to Thy dwelling places. Then I will go to the altar of God, - " and then this wonderful line " - to God my exceeding joy; and upon the lyre I shall praise Thee, O God, my God." And then he asks the question, "Why are you in despair, O my soul?" When you have received salvation, you should never be in despair. You should always experience joy.

To sum it up, we could say that it is a Christian's duty to be as joyful as he can possibly be. We could also say it is God's purpose, and God's plan, and God's will to see that we are as joyful as we could possibly be.

Now the question comes, how do we get a grip on that joy? So many times we don't have that joy. We need to hear what Paul said, the command, "Rejoice," because there are times when we don't. How do we capture that joy? How do we learn to focus on that joy? Peter gives us the answer. He tells us here how we can make that salvation joy a reality in our lives. And it is a question of focus. It really all depends on what you choose to look at, what you choose to concentrate on.

The first thing - and we'll give you several - the first is a protected inheritance. That is the first cause of joy which Peter refers to. And notice it in verse 6, "In this you greatly rejoice." And we discussed this last time. What does he mean "in this"? He means in the salvation described in verses 3-5. In the eternal inheritance reserved in heaven for you which will never perish, never be defiled, and never fade. Because God has promised to you a protected inheritance which is the fullness of eternal salvation, you should rejoice. Rejoice in this, that you have a protected inheritance.

In Hebrews 10:32 says, "Remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of suffering, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated." In other words, you suffered as believers. "For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, - " Why? " - knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one." What a great statement.

The writer of Hebrews says you accepted joyfully the seizure of your earthly property because you know that you have a better possession and an abiding one, that is a property, a possession, an inheritance that could never be seized, and could never be confiscated, could never be stolen. That's the joy of anticipating your protected inheritance. Beloved, we should continually have joy because nothing can take away our eternal life, and nothing can remove us from that.

Now the second source of salvation joy we noted last time is not only a protected inheritance, but a proven faith. This is so vital. Verse 6 says also, "even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials." In other words, you rejoice even though you're going through

trials. And then verse 7 says, "Because of the proof of your faith."

Now you remember we saw last time that in that great verse 6, Peter gives us a real theology about trouble. He tells us trouble doesn't last when he says "for a little while." He tells us trouble serves a purpose when he says "if necessary." God brings it because it's necessary for our spiritual perfection. He tells us it brings pain and it's supposed to by saying, "You have been distressed." He tells us it comes in many forms by saying "various trials." And he also tells us that it doesn't have to diminish joy because of the little phrase "even though now."

In other words, even though you're having trial, it doesn't touch your joy. It has a purpose. It comes in many forms, brings pain, but doesn't last. It is for your perfection. It is for your spiritual development.

Spurgeon one time said, "The steps by which we ascend to the place of joy are usually moist with tears." And he said, "Amid the ashes of our pain lie the sparks of our joy, ready to flame up when breathed on by the Holy Spirit." Joy comes out of pain.

Now why is that this is so? How can we have joy in pain? Verse 7, because it "proves the validity of our faith." It proves our faith. And it proves that our faith is "more precious than gold, which is perishable even though tested by fire." We have a proven faith.

Do you remember what we said last week, that the great comfort of the believer is to know that his faith is real? Not proving your faith to God, He knows. But proving your faith to yourself so you can rest confident in that faith. Sometimes a person will come and say, "Boy, I'm insecure. I don't know if I'm saved. I don't know if my faith is real. I doubt whether my faith is real sometimes. I'm not sure I'm saved."

And very often there's nothing that can be said to increase that confidence because that confidence is going to come when that person passes through trials. And when severe trials come and go and you're still believing and you haven't shaken your fist in God's face and walked away, that's the evidence that your faith is real. And when you have that proven, and tested, and tried, and revealed genuine faith, then there's joy in your heart, exhilaration in your heart, and you can truly rejoice.

I rejoice in a proven faith, which to me is far more precious than gold, even when it's been tested by fire. It can't touch the treasure of a proven faith. Don't you rejoice in that? Don't you rejoice in the confidence that your faith is real, and your salvation is real, and your inheritance will genuinely come to pass?

Now let's go to the third thought here. Peter telling us reasons for joy reminds us that a proven faith along with a protected inheritance should cause us to constantly rejoice. Then thirdly, introduces to us another very important reality and that is a promised honor, a promised honor. And I believe in verse

7 he lays it out for us in magnificent terms.

He says, "The proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." You rejoice in your protected inheritance. You rejoice in your proven faith. And I'll tell you, you rejoice in your promised honor. I rejoice when I look ahead. I rejoice in the prospect of what God has for me in the future by His grace.

Now just a technicality in this verse, the word "that" at the beginning of verse 7, *hina* with a subjective in the Greek indicates purpose. And what he is saying here is that the proof of your faith - and then he describes the faith as more precious - but it is the faith which will be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So it's not only the joy of proven faith, but it is the joy of anticipated reward. The proving of faith is not here the main thought. The proving of faith is not the purpose. The proving of faith is the means to the purpose, the means to the end, the means to the goal, and the goal is praise, and glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. That's the goal, your eternal reward.

So, you greatly rejoice because of your eternal salvation. You greatly rejoice through all the troubles and trials of life, which are simply ways to prove your faith because a proven faith will ultimately be an honored faith. And true faith will come through it all, and in the end praise, and honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now I don't want to blow your spiritual fuses, but I want you to understand something here. The praise, and the glory, and the honor, I believe, has to do with you. It has to do with you. In other words, God wants to grant you praise, and God wants to grant you glory, and God wants to grant you honor. It doesn't say here that it will result in us praising, glorifying, and honoring Him, but that we may be found because of our faith worthy of praise, worthy of glory, worthy of honor when Jesus comes. That's incredible to think about. I mean, to imagine that we will someday see the Lord and receive from Him praise is incredible, incredible.

Look at 1 Peter 2:20. In the middle of the verse, "If when you do what is right - " you see it there? "If when you do what is right and suffer *for it* patiently and endure it, this *finds* - " what? " - favor with God." Isn't it wonderful to know that you can have favor with God? That you can please God?

Go back to Matthew chapter 25 for a moment, that great sermon of our Lord on the second coming. Matthew chapter 25, you remember this statement in the parable of the talents? Verse 21, "His master said to him - " the servant who gained five more talents " - Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I'll put you in charge of many things; enter into the - " what? " - the joy of your master."

Did you know you can make God rejoice? I can make God rejoice. God will say, "Well done, good faithful slave. I'll put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master." Verse 23 says the same thing to the one who gained two talents, the very same thing. We will receive praise from God because of salvation.

Look at Romans 2:29. "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; - " and listen " - and his praise is not from men, but - " what? " - from God." True faith receives praise from God. That's an incredible thing because true faith is a gift from God. What a thought. He gives it to us and then praises us for it.

What generosity. When we face Jesus Christ at the revelation, at His appearing, at the *apokalypsis*, the unveiling, the manifestation of Christ, we will receive praise from God. I believe that has to do with verbal praise. I believe that's when God will commend us verbally. "Well done, good faithful servant." We will find praise from God to us.

The second term that Peter uses is glory. Praise and glory. And I believe, again, he has in reference here the glory that we receive. Look at Romans 2:7, as long as you're there. It says to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality - " implied, God will grant " - eternal life." In other words, here he's talking about believers and he says it is the pursuit of believers to seek glory, and honor, and immortality. Verse 10 says, "Glory and honor and peace - " implied, will be given " - to every man who does righteous deeds, to the Jew first and also the Greek." And again God's going to give us glory.

If the first one, praise, means verbal commendation, this means perfection of person, perfection of person. God is not just going to give us verbal commendation. He is going to give us His glory. He is going to endow us with His glory. Jesus Christ, you remember, it says in Scripture, John 1:14, was God incarnate, and it says, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus was God's glory incarnate and the Bible says that when we see Him we'll be what? We'll be like Him. So we'll possess the glory of God, so we will receive verbal commendation and perfection, eternal glorious perfection of person, in Christ's likeness.

And the third word Peter uses is the word "honor." What does he mean by that? Probably rewards. If we sort these words out, they may really be overlapping synonyms, but if we look for a unique meaning in each, the first is verbal commendation, the second is perfection of person, and the third is rewards, honor from God given to us because of our service rendered to Him.

In Revelation 22:12 Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly, My reward *is* with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." And He comes to give rewards. First Corinthians chapter 3 discusses the service that we render and the fact that He will come to reward us. Second John 8 warns us not to

lose those rewards, but in faithfulness to receive a full reward.

It's really an unbelievable thought, really an absolutely incredible thought that God who alone is worthy of praise, God who alone is worthy of glory, and God who alone is worthy of honor will give all three to us. You say, "How can that happen?" Because we will be at that moment in time made in the exact image of whom? Of Christ. And because we are made in the image of Christ, full possessors of the righteousness of Christ, fully endowed with that perfection of body and soul that only eternity can produce, we will then be worthy of praise, and worthy of glory, and worthy of honor.

And when will it happen? At the apocalypse, at the revelation of Jesus Christ. That refers to the day of Christ, to the time when He returns to judge and reward His redeemed people.

Notice 1:13. Peter really has this on his mind, as do all suffering believers, I think. "Gird your minds for action," he says, 1 Peter 1:13, "Keep sober *in spirit* - " or maintain your priorities " - fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you - " when? " - at the revelation of Jesus Christ." And what is that grace? What is that gracious gift that God will give? Praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

First Peter 4:13, he says, "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." Rejoice now, that in your faithfulness and rejoicing here, you will be rewarded by a greater rejoicing at the revelation of Jesus Christ when He comes. In some sense our eternal reward, of course, is connected to our faithfulness here. And he seems to be saying we will be rewarded with a greater joy if we have expressed a greater joy in this life.

First Corinthians 1:7 also refers to "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," and in the next verse, "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." So we would tie the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is that unique time in which the Lord comes to reward His redeemed people. That is our promised honor. It will be unfolded in that time.

What a glorious reality that is, to realize what Paul says in 2 Thessalonians, he says that the Lord is coming - marvelous passage - He is coming. "*This is* a plain indication - " verse 5 " - of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." He'll come from heaven and give us relief from all affliction.

He'll "deal out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day." So He

comes to judge the wicked and be glorified in His saints on that day.

Paul says in that familiar text I mentioned this morning, "The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be ours in that day." And so the proof of our faith here, found to be genuine here, will be gloriously rewarded at the apocalypse of Christ.

Would you notice one thing? It doesn't say that our faith has to wait for the rapture to be found genuine. Our faith, already proven genuine, awaits its eternal reward. There's no insecurity in this. The proof of the faith already tested results in the honor, the glory, and the praise. So this is not teaching that we'll never know until that time. We can know as our faith is proven. No insecurity here, only that a promise is very clear, a proven faith verified as real by trials can live in eager expectation of eternal reward. If that doesn't give you joy, you're earthbound. Think of what you'll have in heaven.

We discussed it some this morning, the perfection of body and spirit, the authority and dominion, the power and presence of sin forever broken, never again its crippling effect on life and relationships, perfect freedom from all evil, nothing to defile, perfect pleasure, perfect knowledge, perfect comfort, perfect love, perfect delight, perfect peace, perfect joy. And we rejoice now in the prospect of that.

So, in that great time when the Lord Jesus comes and is revealed, He comes to judge the wicked and reward His own, we will be with the Lord in fellowship. That's the supreme relationship of heaven. We will see the Lord in close and intimate communion. That's the supreme vision of heaven. We will be loved and adored, and that is the supreme honor of heaven. We will reign and share His glory, the supreme privilege of heaven. And we will serve and that's the supreme duty of heaven. What an honor.

Do you remember Luke chapter 12? Let me just refer to it briefly, verse 35. "Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps alit. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the doors* to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself *to serve*."

You remember that in our series on heaven? The incredible reality that when Jesus comes for us, not only will we serve Him but He will what? Serve us. He will serve us. He will have us recline at table, and will come up and wait on us. Praise, glory, and honor given to us.

Peter says no matter what your circumstances, no matter what your trials, you should have full joy, you should greatly rejoice in your protected inheritance, your proven faith, your promised honor. Fourthly - and this is so magnificent - we find joy in a personal fellowship, a personal fellowship. And I would perhaps say that in many ways this is the sweetest of all sources of joy, wonderful to contemplate.

Notice verse 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.” Why do you rejoice? Why do you greatly rejoice? Why is your great joy inexpressible and full of glory? Because you love Him, and because you trust Him, that’s the two things he says. You love Him, and you believe in Him, and you’ve never seen Him. Peter exalts love and trust.

Can I tell you right now that that is a profound statement in that verse? I am convinced beyond equivocation that the two key ingredients in any meaningful relationship are love and trust, love and trust. That is the essence of relationship. It is the source of surpassing joy in any relationship. Violate love and the relationship disintegrates. Violate trust and the relationship disintegrates. There’s some real deep pathos in this verse, deep pathos.

Which of the apostles apart from Judas, most demonstrated a weak trust and faith in Christ, which one? Which one? Peter. Which of the apostles of Christ, apart from Judas, had to face Jesus Christ and have his love questioned? Which one? Peter. Peter was the leader to whom it was said, “O you of little faith.” Peter was the leader to whom Jesus said three times, “Peter, do you - ” what? “ - love Me?” And I see here some very beautiful humility. And Peter commends these suffering believers and says to them, “You’ve never seen Him and you love Him, and you don’t see Him now but you believe in Him.” And the pathos in the background is the humble attitude of Peter because in his heart he is saying, “You’re far beyond where I am, or where I was, because I saw Him and I couldn’t sustain my love, and I saw Him and I couldn’t sustain my faith.”

Peter, in true humility, reflects on the difference between himself in the past and these troubled Christians. He had seen Christ, walked with Christ, been with Christ over three years and he demonstrated a weak faith and a weak love. And they had never seen Christ, and yet their faith was strong, and their love was true in the midst of the same kind of trials to which Peter succumbed. And so there’s some deep pathos in this beautiful verse in the heart of Peter as a humble, humble man is opened up.

Would you notice that first phrase in verse 8? “Though you have not seen Him”? “And though you have not seen Him. Oh that’s such a profound statement. You see, it’s usual to trust and love someone you’ve seen, someone you’ve touched, someone you’ve come to know. But these Christians had never met Jesus Christ. Like us, they never looked into His face. They never touched Him. They never ate with Him. They never walked with Him. They never talked with Him. They never heard His voice. They never felt His hands. They never gazed into His eyes. “And yet,” he says, “you love Him.”

Present active indicative, *agapa*, you are loving Him, constantly the love of choice. That word expresses the love of the will. You’ve chosen to be faithful in loving Him. And that, to me, is the

essence of joy. It's that intimate love relationship you have with Christ.

Now let me just take this a little bit deeper. I believe that what Peter is saying here is categorically the description of the essence of what it means to be a Christian. If you ask me what is a Christian? I will tell you it is someone who loves Jesus Christ with the love of the will, who loves Him. I don't believe there's any better way to describe the essential expression of the new nature than to say it loves Christ continually.

I love the Authorized translation of 1 Peter 2:7, "To those who believe, He is precious." And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be - " what? " - *anathema*, devoted to destruction, cursed." The Christian can best be described as someone who loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's really where you need to probe when seeking to determine someone's relationship to God. Ask them what they think of Jesus Christ. And if they describe an intimate and consuming love for Christ, that's the mark of a transformed heart, loving Christ. First John deals with that so wonderfully. First John, do you remember, 4:19? "We love Him because - " what? " - He first loved us." That's reciprocation. It is the essence of spiritual life to love Christ. That's why the Scripture says that the law is fulfilled in loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Listen to what Paul said at the very last verse of Ephesians, 6:24, "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible *love*." Isn't that wonderful? "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible love." That's basic.

And I would dare say that anyone who says they don't love the Lord Jesus Christ could never be a Christian. That's the essence of Christianity. Jesus said it in John 14:15, "If you love Me, you'll keep My commandments." Verse 21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me." Verse 24, "He who does not love Me does not keep My words."

In other words, Jesus linked loving Him with obeying Him, loving Him with keeping His commandments. And so, a believer is one who loves Christ. And so Peter says, "I really know that your joy flows out of your love for Christ, an unseen Master whom you love."

And then secondly he says, "And though you do not see Him now - " implied with the physical eyes " - but believe into Him - " *eis* actually in the Greek. In other words, even though you don't see Him you believe in Him, you trust in Him. So there are the two elements of a relationship: Love and trust.

And you remember, I'm sure you do, John 20:29, Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see and yet - " what? " - believed." Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed. Those are the two things that bind us to Christ in intimacy:

We love Him and we trust Him.

Beloved, may I say to you the soul that believes cannot but love, and the soul that loves cannot help but believe? You remember 1 Corinthians 13? "Love believes all things." Let me put it to you this way. Faith accepts the record of Jesus Christ. That record portrays Him in all His beauty, and all His loveliness, and leads us to loving Him. The more faith can know of Christ and have that knowledge possess the heart, the stronger love becomes, because the more faith believes the truth of Christ, the more marvelous and lovely He is seen to be, and the more such trust elicits love to one who is so wonderful. So believing and loving, loving and believing defines our intimate communion with Christ. You love Him and you believe in Him.

How is that manifest? You long to promote His glory. Is that your longing? You long to serve Him with your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. You delight in His beauty. You love to talk about Him. You love to read about Him. You love to fellowship with Him. You desire to know Him better and to know Him deeper. You're compelled in your heart to want to be like Him. That's the expression of the love trust relationship.

Robert Layton writing in 1853 in a wonderful commentary on 1 Peter said this. "Believe and you shall love. Believe much and you shall love much. Labor for strong and deep persuasion of the glorious things which are spoken of Christ and this will command love. Certainly did men indeed believe His worth, they would accordingly love Him. For the reasonable creature cannot but affect that most which it firmly believes to be the worthiest of affection. O this mischievous unbelief is that which makes the heart cold and dead toward God. Seek then to believe Christ's excellency, and His love to us, and our interest in Him, and this will kindle such a fire in the heart as will make it ascend in a sacrifice of love to Him."

That's the living heart of our relationship to Christ. We trust Him and we love Him. Do you enjoy that kind of relationship? That's cause for joy, isn't it? Do you ever just read about Christ and rejoice? Do you ever come off your knees in prayer, having communed with Him, to rejoice? Do you just rejoice because you believe in Him, and you are confident in that faith? Do you sometimes just feel a thrill in your heart because you have the joy of loving Him?

Personally, I think we would all agree that love felt is far more wonderful than love received. My love for others is much more exhilarating to me than their love for me. I am much more thrilled with loving others than I am about them loving me. Because when I love them, I experience the love. And I rejoice in my heart out of the joy of loving Christ. That's thrilling to me. In many ways more so than His loving me, for I can feel deeply my love for Him. So we rejoice.

And what makes us rejoice? A protected inheritance, a proven faith, a promised honor, and a personal fellowship. And it gives us - notice at the end of verse 8 - "rejoicing that is joy inexpressible."

What does that mean? *Aneklalt*, it's above language, it is above speech, "higher than speech is what that literally says." It's so divine that exceeds the power of speech and thought, you can't communicate it.

It's hard enough to communicate loving other people. I mean, we try in the human realm. Songs about love are ad infinitum, ad nauseum, aren't they? I mean, we just keep piling them up, trying to express all the feelings of love from a human to a human. But the love that we have for Him, inexpressible, higher than speech. By the way, that's the only place that word is ever used.

And then it adds this incredible statement, "And full of glory." What does that mean? I believe it means it's energized and endowed with divine glory. It is a supernatural endowment. What a thought. What a thought. It is the fruit of the Spirit, love. It is the fruit of the Spirit, joy. The love that we have for the Lord is not a human love, it is a divine glory infused into us which energizes our hearts to love God with a love that He gives us. And we rejoice with a joy that is the joy of the Spirit. Our joy, then, is the radiation of a heavenly joy because our love is the radiation of a heavenly love. So we rejoice.

And then Peter gives us one final thought. We constantly should experience joy because of a present deliverance, a present deliverance. Beyond the future inheritance and honor and alongside the present personal fellowship is the promise of a present deliverance. Verse 9, "Obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

I don't think he's looking at the future here. He doesn't say, "you will obtain." It's present tense, "obtaining," here and now, present. You could literally translate this, "presently receiving for yourselves." It's the middle voice. The word, by the way, *komiz* means "to receive what is deserved, to win something that is due to you." And joy inexpressible and full of glory links not only to verse 8, but also to verse 9. Flowing out of that personal fellowship we have with Christ through love and trust is the outcome of our faith, which we have here and now obtained, namely the salvation of your souls.

So you now possess the outcome of your faith, or the result, the end, the result of your faith, the logical end of it, the logical result of it, even the salvation of your souls. What salvation? That ongoing present tense deliverance. What does "soul" mean? The whole person, the whole person, you. You could read it this way. "You rejoice because you presently have obtained and continue to hold the logical result of your proven faith, even the constant deliverance of yourself."

From what? Oh, what do we need to be continually delivered from? Sin, guilt, condemnation, wrath, ignorance, distress, confusion, hopelessness, everything that's fallen and defiling. It's not a future thing he's talking about. We're delivered - we're delivered from the power of sin. We're delivered from its delights, from its passions and pleasures. And in exchange for that He gives us new life and unspeakable joy.

We have a constant present tense salvation. That's what he's talking about here. The present result of your proven faith is the ongoing deliverance that you enjoy. Our salvation right here and now rescues us from sordid damning, scarring delights, and causes us to long for Christ.

Our salvation present tense, to make it a prosaic picture, calls men and women to drink no longer from the filthy, vile mud puddle of sin, but the crystal streams of the fountain of eternal life. And so here we are in this world and we're under all the pressures, but sin no longer has what over us? Dominion. We are no longer its slaves. We are no longer in bondage to it. And so we have joy. Joy, not just in the future, joy in the present because of a present deliverance. And so, there's even joy in our trials because the Lord delivers us from them all. There's no trial that ever comes our way that the Lord won't make a way of escape.

Well, there's really no reason that we should lose our joy, is there? We can look to a protected inheritance. We can thank God for a proven faith. We can hope for a promised honor. And we can enjoy a personal communion and fellowship and a present deliverance. Beloved, you need to tap the resources of joy that are available for you as a Christian.

Jesus said in John 15:11, "These things I have spoken unto you that My joy might be in you, *that* your joy might be full." He wants us to know joy. And we will know that joy as we focus on these great realities.

Jean Sophia Pigott many years ago wrote a lovely hymn. The words of one verse go like this, "Jesus, I am resting, resting, In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the sweetness of Thy loving heart." Isn't that beautiful? Are you resting in the joy of who He is? And finding the sweetness in His loving heart?

Many centuries ago Bernard of Clairvaux wrote what has now become a familiar hymn, "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts." It's nothing new. Whether you go back a couple of generations to the lady who wrote the hymn, or centuries to Bernard of Clairvaux, the Christians who tap their spiritual resources lived in joy no matter what the circumstances were. And I don't think God expects us to live in any different way. I trust that you will know the joy that Christ longs to give to you. Let's bow together in prayer.

Would you just take a moment in silence and would you, if you need to, pray the prayer that David prayed, "Lord, restore to me the joy of Thy salvation," and would you ask the Lord to give you the fullness of His joy?

And would you ask Him to help you to see that protected inheritance? And would you thank Him for that proven faith, and that promised honor? And would you tell Him you love Him and trust Him, and

that you're rejoicing in that personal relationship? And would you thank Him for that constant present deliverance which, even now you enjoy, as He gives you victory because your faith has overcome the world? Ask Him to fill your life with joy, the joy of the Spirit.

Father, we would pray also for those who do not know Christ, for whom this joy is a fantasy. O Lord Jesus, may they receive You today, opening their heart, accepting the gift of salvation which You offer through Your death and resurrection, receiving the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Work Your great work in every heart, that we may know joy that will redound to Your praise forever and ever.

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