

Standing Fast in the Grace of God

"Faith" – That Shines Through the Fire

1 Peter 1:6-9

The believer's faith in the Lord is the only thing, at times, that will get us through our darkest hours.

"Throughout Scripture, God's people live by faith; but the idea of faith develops as God's revelation of grace and truth, on which faith rests, enlarges. The OT variously defines faith as resting, trusting and hoping in the Lord, cleaving to him, waiting for him, making him our shield and tower, taking refuge in him, etc. Psalmists and prophets, speaking in individual and national terms respectively, present faith as unwavering trust in God to save his servants from their foes and fulfil his declared purpose of blessing them...The NT regards self-despairing hope, world-renouncing obedience and heroic tenacity by which OT believers manifest their faith as a pattern which Christians must reproduce...Hebrews and 1 Peter present faith as the dynamic of hope and endurance under persecution." (Baker's Dictionary of Theology)

The faith that saved the believers Peter was writing to was the very faith that would see them through those dark hours they would face (this was written to a very persecuted Christian people).

I. FAITH BRINGS HOPE – VS. 6A

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice"

A. The source of faith – grounded in living hope

"Wherein" – points back to our living ("lively") hope in verses 3-5.

B. The song of faith – gladdened by grace

1. It was because of this hope that they (and we today) could “greatly rejoice.”
2. The word for “greatly rejoice” (ἀγαλλιάω) means to leap for joy. It’s in a form showing continuous rejoicing even amid trial.

C. The strength of faith – Glowing in a godless world

Hope of heaven gives reason to rejoice when the world gives none.

It is the hope of heaven that should, in the deepest, darkest hours of despair, keep us pushing forward.

Matthew 5:12

¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Acts 2:26

²⁶ Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

- The same grace that secured our inheritance (vs. 3-5) now encourages our rejoicing. Faith draws strength from the grace already received. That’s why we call it “living faith.”

II. FAITH WILL BE TESTED – VS. 6B-7

A. The purpose of testing – Divine necessity (“if need be”)

1. There will be “seasons” of testing and trials. The idea behind the word “seasons” (ὀλίγος) is that of duration and not degree (the trials are brief, not necessarily *light*) – “for a little while.” Our trials may feel long and heavy, but in light of

eternity they are “for a little while” – just a passing “season” on the way to glory (cf. 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 5:10).

2 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

1 Peter 5:10

¹⁰ But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2. The phrase “if need be” (εἰ δέον ἔστίν) is an indicative phrase, not a subjunctive one. In other words, Peter is not expressing uncertainty (“if it happens to be needed”) but assumed certainty within a personal context (“since it is necessary in your case”).

It’s like saying, “If (as is indeed the case) it has become necessary for you to be grieved by various trials...”

There will be times of trials for us that are necessary – they have been deemed so by our Heavenly Father as being “needed” for our good and for His glory.

B. The pain of testing – deep grief (“heaviness”)

“Heaviness” (λυπηθέντες) – means to be grieved and is often translated “sorrow.” Faith does not remove sorrow but gives grace within it.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

⁸ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

C. The pattern of testing – diverse trials (“through manifold temptations”)

1. “Manifold” (ποικίλοις) is a word that means variegated or multicolored (like the skin of a leopard or veined marble, etc.). These times of necessary testing and trials will be varied, and for some, may even be many.
2. The word “temptations” (πειρασμοῖς – put to the test, described as “tried with fire” in vs. 7) in the KJV once carried a broader meaning – *testing or proving* – not merely enticement to sin as in modern usage (although it did carry that idea as well). Peter speaks here of outward trials allowed by God to prove faith, not inward solicitations to evil. Yet the rendering is fitting, for in every trial the believer faces both a testing from God and a temptation from the enemy. (James 1:2-3; 13-14)

God tests our faith to refine it while Satan tempts us to doubt or despair within that same circumstance.

D. The product of testing – proven faith (vs. 7a)

1. “That the trial of your faith” – the “trial” (δοκίμιον) is the tested quality of faith. Here, the word is used to refer to the genuineness of faith.
2. The trying of our faith is said to be “much more precious than of gold that perisheth.” That’s hard to accept when we’re in the middle of the

fire, but God knows what that fire is meant to produce.

Earthly gold can buy relief from many troubles, but only a proven faith can bring peace within them. Gold perishes with time; tested faith endures for eternity – and that's what God values most.

3. "Though it be tried with fire"

There is an old fable that says the gold objected to the heat of the furnace and asked how long it should be expected to endure such heat. The answer was, "As soon as the refiner's purpose is accomplished." "And when will that be?" asked the gold. The answer was, "When the refiner can see his own face in you." – Robert C. Shannon

God allows the fire of trial until the reflection of His Son can be clearly seen in us. When He can see His image in us, the work is done, and that's more precious than any gold.

E. The praise of testing – Divine approval (vs. 7b)

This trial that they were facing, and the trials that we will face, have a purpose – to "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

1. This is demonstrating that when Jesus comes back for His children, and we stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ, our faith should be found to be genuine in these character traits – praise, honor, and glory.
2. Part of our reward at the Judgment Seat will

come from how we responded in the fire – whether we trusted God, glorified Him, and praised Him through the trial.

Every trial and affliction faithfully endured now will result in eternal commendation then.

2 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

2 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

James 1:12

¹² Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

1 Peter 4:13

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

III. FAITH REJOICES IN THE UNSEEN – VS. 8

A. The affection of faith – love for the unseen Lord (vs. 8a)

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing..."

The believers' love for Christ was demonstrated in their believing. Though they had never seen Him, they trusted Him completely. Grammatically, Peter

joins these ideas as evidences of genuine faith – love and belief in the unseen Christ. Their love expressed itself through faith, and their faith was made visible through love.

John 20:29

²⁹ Jesus saith unto him, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

This is the essence of true Christianity: to love the Lord whom we have not seen, to trust the promises we have not yet received, and to rejoice in the salvation that is sure.

Peter and the writer of Hebrews stand side by side on this point: faith takes hold of what the eyes cannot see. We love an unseen Savior, believe unseen promises, and rejoice in an unseen glory – and that's the very definition of faith.

Hebrews 11:1

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

B. The adoration of faith – joy beyond expression (vs. 8b)

“Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory”

1. “Unspeakable” (ἀνεκκάλητος) – literally, without words, unutterable (only time this Greek word is used). There are no words to describe our joy, it is too deep for words.

Romans 8:26 [similar word used]

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

2 Corinthians 9:15

¹⁵ Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

2. "Full of glory" (δεδοξασμένη) – praising God to everyone we meet, demonstrating how good our God is.

C. The assurance of faith – unshaken joy

Trials in life may affect our happiness, and even cause us sorrow, but they should not steal our joy. The Spirit supplies the inward rejoicing even when our outward comfort is gone.

John 16:22

²² And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

IV. FAITH REACHES ITS GOAL – VS. 9

A. The present reward (vs. 9a - "receiving") – grace experienced by faith

1. "Receiving" (κοιζόμενοι) – "to receive that is promised." Though grammatically present tense, every New Testament use of this verb points to future recompense.

Ephesians 6:8

⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done in his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

1 Peter 5:4

⁴ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye

| shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

2. The word is used proleptically (anticipatory; foreshadowing) – a present form describing a certain future reality.
3. Believers rejoice now because faith already grants the assurance and foretaste of that salvation (John 5:24; Rom 5:2).

| John 5:24

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

| Romans 5:2

² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

4. Our trials deepen that assurance: faith presently enjoys what it knows will soon be complete.

B. The promised reward (vs. 9b) – glory experienced in fullness

“The end of your faith, even the salvation of *your* souls.”

1. “The end (τέλος) of your faith” – the goal or consummation of faith, not its cessation.
2. This goal is “*the salvation of your souls*” – final deliverance, glorification, and complete conformity to Christ.

| Romans 8:30

³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also

justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

3. The same faith that sustains us now will culminate in sight when we stand before Him.

1 John 3:2

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit, through Peter, has shown us what a faith worth having really is.

- It begins with hope – grounded in the grace that saved us.
- It grows through testing – refined by the trials that shape us.
- It rejoices in the unseen Christ – sustained by a love the world cannot understand.
- And it ends in glory – when faith becomes sight and salvation is complete.

The same God who keeps our inheritance (vs. 4) also keeps our faith (vs. 5). Every season of heaviness is part of His design to make that faith shine brighter at the appearing of Christ.

A violin maker was once asked how he chose wood for his finest instruments. He replied, "I look for trees that have stood on the mountainside, where the wind has beaten them and the storms have scarred them. The fibers of such wood are toughened, and the tone will sing."

So it is with faith — God uses the storms of life to build a faith that will one day sing His praise in glory.