

1 Peter 1v8-9: Finding inexpressible joy in the midst of trials

6In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

When it comes to Christians suffering through trials there are two dangers. One is the claim 'if only you have enough faith, then you won't suffer'. Peter says the opposite to this in v6-7: God gives us trials to strengthen our faith!

The other danger is those who imply that the Christian life now is so full of trials that it is a joyless 'grin and bear it' until we get to heaven. But Peter counters that too. In v6 he says 'we greatly rejoice' in all that God has done for us in Christ. Then in v8 he says we are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. This is joy in the midst of trials.

How does this work?

By having our joy bound up with Christ. For he can never be taken away from us, even by the worst trials in this world. Infact trials serve to deepen our dependence upon Him, to grow our love for Him even though we do not see him now with our physical eyes. It is as we go through trials that we see him more clearly than ever before.

As we go through trials God is weaning us off finding our joy in the fleeting pleasures of this world, perhaps by removing them altogether, in order to wean us onto finding our joy in Jesus Christ. In our growing relationship with him we experience a 'glorious' joy, because it is a foretaste of the full joy we will experience when we join him in glory.

So as Christians we experience this strange combination where those things that can be the most painful in this life actually serve, under God's direction, to bring us the greatest, longest lasting inexpressible joy because they help us to see with greater clarity what really matters, where real, lasting deep joy is to be found...in seeing Christ.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, though I do not see you with my physical eyes I can see you with the eyes of faith. And I love you. I trust that the trials you are taking me through are part of your greater purpose that my joy in you would increase. Help me keep my eyes upon you today so that I would see you at work.

In Jesus name