

More Precious than Gold

1 Peter 1:3-9 NIV

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5** who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proven genuine and result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. **8** Though 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, **9** for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Peter was not just an apostle, but there is a sense that he was the *leader* of the apostolic group. Peter was an important and influential leader in the early church. Considering that, the first Christians would receive this letter with a sense of importance. It's important to understand that the Church Peter was writing to was enduring the tests of difficult and persecution. The Apostle was writing to encourage and instruct the believers as they navigated these trials.

Vs. 1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus,
Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

- These specific areas were places where Christianity had extended in the first several decades after the beginning of the church in Jerusalem.

- It was most likely the route that the original carrier of Peter's letter followed in distributing the letter.
- This was not written to any one congregation, but intentionally written to *all* Christians.

Revelation 2 NIV

To the Church in Smyrna

9 I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **10** Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

Reading about the Suffering of the Believers in the early church is humbling and gripping. Yet to Suffer for the name of the Lord was considered an honor by many early believers.

Acts 5:40,41 NIV

40 ...They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Vs. 6,7

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Charles Spurgeon said; *“Indeed, it is the honor of faith to be tried. Shall any man say, ‘I have faith, but I have never had to believe under difficulties? Who knows whether thou hast any faith?’”*

- If gold is fit to be tested and purified by fire, then how much more our faith, which is far more precious than gold?
- God has a great and important purpose in testing our faith.

The Apostle Peter continues speaking to the Believer:

1 Peter 2

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

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15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

How the Believer should respond to Unjust Treatment

1 Peter 2

18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. **20** But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. **21** To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22

“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

- In case you didn't know God Keeps Really Good Records...
- Remind yourself of that Regularly...
- God is the Judge and he will Judge everyone.

1 Peter 4:5

“But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

Matthew 16:24

Jesus said to **His** disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

- That says a lot right there; For me to follow Him I must deny myself...
- That can be difficult to do...
- But when we do that, it is evidence that we are followers of Jesus...
- As Americans we have rights but may we always remembers our Eternal Citizenship is in Heaven...
- There will be times when all of us will be tested in this area. When we will suffer unjust treatment and we will be tested. Will you fight back like the world does or will we give it to God?
- God’s Word says, It is Commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering.

Commendable:

1. Due to grace
2. The spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace

When you suffer unjust treatment - “These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, ...may be proven genuine and result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Romans 12

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.

Peter's encourages believing wives with unbelieving husbands:

1 Peter 3

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, **2** when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

- This applies to any believing person with an unbelieving spouse...
- Genuine faith is demonstrated loudly through our actions...
- Often times the transformation of our day to day behavior is what convinces people who know us that our faith in God is real...

“These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, ...may be proven genuine and result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Suffering for Doing Good

1 Peter 4

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

10 For, “Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.

11
They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.

12
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” **15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason

for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Acts 5

41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

I read a story about a young Christian couple who's hearts were to write and perform Christian Music. This was during the 1960's which was in their words was a very chaotic era where America experienced a quantum shift in values. They began to wonder if God hadn't given up on the world. Across the nation, the educational system was being infiltrated with the idea that "God is dead". On a personal level, the Young couple and some of their church family had just been painfully falsely accused and belittled. Then they found out in the midst of all this that they were pregnant and wondered how they could raise a child in this world. One day they noticed a small blade of grass coming up through a rocky crag and in that moment the Lord spoke to them and that young couple named Bill & Gloria Gaither wrote the words to this song.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives

Closing:

Can I tell you something? Your going to be ok...

- Put your Trust in Jesus...
- Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing.
- it is commendable when you bear up under the pain of unjust suffering.

“These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, ...may be proven genuine and result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”