

For A Season Tried With Fire

I'll be continuing my sermon from last week, preaching from 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 5. I'll be preaching from verses 6 and 7 tonight. I've been praying a lot for this message. I'm praying that right now throughout this service that God would do an unusual work here because this is a heavy subject, what I'm about to preach, and the true believer will understand what Peter is trying to tell us. As you recall, Peter was a fisherman, one of the disciples that was part of the inner circle, right, the three: James, John, and Peter. The Lord entrusted to him to lead the disciples, first among equals, as one person would put it. First among equals as a leader, it's really difficult when you don't know what to do. Has anybody ever felt like that here, leading something and it's just really tough, and God, I need something here, I need some help here? But if you depend on God that way, he's come through, right? He's come through because it's that reliance that when you're at the edge of where, wow, I know my limitations, that's where God wants us to be, right at the edge. Pastor Wajger Pat shared that with me many times in my prayer life, in my walk with the Lord. We want to be at the edge because that's where God does amazing things.

The sermon title is "For a Season, Tried with Fire." It comes from verses 6 and 7. Now, God has not changed in the way he purifies true believers in Jesus Christ. If you have believed in his promises and ultimately in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, he will test the validity of your trust, your faith. Let me repeat that again: he will test the validity of your trust, your faith in him. Words are important, are they not? And to see the consistency with your words backed up with your actions is what God wants us to experience. Have you ever been reading a passage where you're like, "Wow, that's difficult"? Whereas other passages go, "Okay, I've experienced that, not very heavy." But there are passages where you go, "This is heavy, this is an area I have not truly experienced, but I know I have to." Have you ever said that to yourself? I know I have to sometime in my Christian walk, that there is going to be experiences of heaviness. And when that time comes, and it will to every true believer, it will come. Are you ready? So Peter wants you to be ready, for me to be ready, for every true believer to be ready.

So let me read the text to you. Verse 6: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold

temptations." Verse 7: "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 honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Go back with me to verse 6. That word "wherein" is referencing to verses prior to it. We see Peter talking about suffering. As you recall, the diaspora, they were sent out by persecution. But then he also references, right, that was verse 1, and then he references in the security that we have. I preached on that last week, and that security is God's power to protect you, right? That's what salvation is, right? He saves you for your ultimate good, and out of the suffering, out of understanding your security, the believer, what is produced from those experiences, those experiences of all things—joy, right? Like rejoicing and trials, in all of our minds, you can go, well, that's a paradox. How can you rejoice while going through trials, right?

And so Peter wants to touch on that in this text because the work of God, the triune God, mind you, is at work in your suffering. God our Father, according to his mercy, we see that in verse 3, not just mercy but abundant mercy. You see that, according to his abundant mercy. So that's our Father, and then how merciful he is. How many times has he protected us from our own sin, right? How many times has he protected us from our own sinful actions? So many mercies, so many mercies, abundant mercy. And then he says, "Has begotten us?" Begotten us how? Again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If there was no resurrection, we have no lively hope, we have no living hope, another way of translating that. Because he lives, we live, and we live for eternal purposes.

And then beyond that, into the future, he has a marvelous inheritance for us. We see that in verse 4: an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. And then in this, let me get one more verse in there, verse 5: and then he keeps you by his power through faith. By the way, that's a gift from God. That faith is given to us, and he knows how much, how much we can handle, amen. So through faith unto salvation, he's going to bring us all the way to full salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. What is the last time? Well, that's when we are finished on this earth, whatever the task that God has given to us to finish. So that is what, where we greatly—so that's why the word "greatly" is there, because not just one or two, it's like many, many things that he has promised us as true believers, and he wants us to think about these

things. He doesn't want us just to gloss over. That's why he presents his statement and then he brings in why you should rejoice in verse 6. This is where you have great rejoicing, nothing else, nothing less. And then, and then it's good, it's good, it's all good. But then he throws in here in verse 6, my apologies, he says, "No, you're going to rejoice in heaviness." And by the way, it's going to be various trials, manifold temptations, various trials. There is going to be a lot of trials while you're rejoicing, and that's the paradox, but there's no contradiction here at all. And Peter is going to show us that there is none because, you see, this place, in contrast to these worlds, are apart.

The rejoicing in the trials, Peter gives us a reason for enduring trials down here in this life, which he says, "now for a season." That trials will not be long compared to eternity, compared to eternity. Last time, you see that in our day, there is way too much emphasis on the present, the here and now. How is it displayed? Well, psychology hasn't done a good job in the Christian space. Materialism has not done good in the church, but it slips in. Psychology slips in, materialism slips in, and we need to be on guard because when we start focusing on the present and not eternity, there's something wrong with our lives. And that's why he puts this in here for us to remind ourselves: we are not just living for the present. He wants to develop ourselves, not into a full of ourselves, but full of someone else, full of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for his glory.

Is that you tonight? Do you sense more of him in your life than the things of this world, in yourself? Because if you are having trouble with this, your world is falling apart, not for the right reasons, for the wrong reasons. Something is deeply wrong with your soul. And so Peter wants us to know, don't get this wrong, right at the very beginning. Instead, if we do have some introspection, which is fine, we see that in Scripture, examining ourselves, right? Nothing wrong with examining ourselves, we ought to do that. But here it is: to look outward to our great God, is to look outward. And there's a paradox too, isn't it? You're looking introspectively, but what are you looking for? Something outside of yourself, something outside of yourself, beyond yourself, upon who? The great God, our Father, who has a marvelous inheritance. There it is, outside of yourself, right? That inheritance is not here, it's up there waiting for us. That's one thing among other things.

And then what? That we should stop this attempt to improve our old nature through the power of the flesh. And that's why he puts in the power of God, not the power of flesh. God is the one who is in the business of improving us, not us. He is the one who is trying to bring us to a maturity in our Christian life. God's way of improving us is through various trials. As you recall, Jesus told us not to be dismayed. He said that in the world we would have troubles. In epistles to the Hebrews, we learned that God tests us by trials and troubles. James wrote about the testings, right, that come from God. And Paul had a great deal to say about suffering. Now Peter comes along and says the same thing. There's consistency, isn't there? And that's what we should observe.

And it's not popular to teach that God will prove us and lead us to maturity through suffering. It's not a popular teaching, but man, it is embraced by those that are experiencing God in revival. Look at the suffering saints who are being persecuted. Why is God moving? Because they embrace suffering. Let that be a lesson for all of us. Are we embracing suffering like every saint that we read from Scripture, right? I just named a few, but also right now, what's going on right now with our brothers and sisters all around the world? Thank God if that is your experience, amen, because that's how God works in our lives. 'Cause if you are the center, if people are encouraging, "You are important," they have it all wrong. It's not about us. Great things don't happen out of us, only by our great God, only by our great God. We are nothing until the Spirit of God begins to move in our hearts and lives.

We see that in verse 2, through sanctification of the Spirit. Your sanctification is dependent on the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit. All of that is not from you, it is of the work of the Spirit, right? So we see Father, Son, Holy Spirit, triune God, right, in the first few verses. And so we have nothing to offer to God. We have nothing to offer God. He is giving everything in this picture. He has everything to offer to us, but we have nothing to offer to God. We need always to remember that our trials are only temporary. See that in the text, verse 6: "though now for a season." And I said that the season, it's not like our seasons that we have—winter, fall, right, summer, spring. But if you contextualize it, right, you got four seasons in a good place like here in California throughout the year, so in the year, it's a small time, wherever that is in that year. But what he does, what this text is saying, is the season is the temporary life we have here on this earth, while you are living from the day you become a Christian all the

way to your death. And that's how we are supposed to look at eternity. That's what he wants us to impress in our lives.

And Paul says the same thing in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." So the things that are at our fingertips, which we consider so valuable, are not really of value to God. Material things, they are simply passing things when measured in the perspective of eternity. Because why? Everything temporal is destructible, it's going to be destroyed, right? Everything is going to be destroyed on this earth, and we're going to see that later on in Peter, in his book. They are corruptible, and they can be defiled. And so he mentions all three of those of the temporal life. And again, lastly, the things of this world do fade away. The things we cannot see are the eternal things; they are to God real value.

Alright, let's go to verse 7: "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 honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." There are various different kinds of trials that God sends or allows to happen in the life of a believer. And in order to test your faith, my faith, it is said he does not only when he thinks, he does it when it's necessary, not based on our right determination, but his determination. If it's necessary for what? For the important thing that he has in mind, that your faith will be expressed. Your faith has an expression. Trials are therefore tests for the ultimate goal of the test that God is working in your life, not only to make your faith express itself, which we're going to get to, but also to make it more pure, to make it more pure. So faith has an expression, and it has a way of purifying. And he wants, God wants to do both in your life, both in your life. He doesn't just want you to talk, but he wants you to experience what you say, you see.

So that's why we're going to see how God works in this text. And he says that your faith is to be more precious than gold, more precious than gold. Gold is, as you know, a precious metal. They call it a precious metal, by the way, not just any kind of metal, it's precious in our creation. But it is perishable. But your faith, on the contrary, is not perishable. And so to make gold as pure as possible, it has to be freed from everything that diminishes its value, everything that diminishes its value. In order to

achieve that, a process is needed whereby it is kept in the fire and is being smelted, it's being smelted. And in that way, everything that is not gold will float to the surface and will be removed. Do you notice in your life that there's something that you haven't noticed about your heart, and then God brings it up to light, to your conscience, and you're now aware, like, that's been there? Have you experienced that? That's God. Only God can reveal the deep thoughts of your hearts, right? "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That's God.

He wants to bring it up to the surface, and he will, in the fire. And that is the same with your faith. He wants to purify you of all of the bad elements of your life. And this test makes us more and more pure in the process of this purifying work. We're going to see also that Israel is going to have to endure in the great tribulation. In the great tribulation, we see that in texts like Malachi 3:1. So the purifying process is executed by not just any smelter, but God himself as a smelter. He determines the level of the temperature of the test with a view to the genuineness of your faith. Okay, you say this about your belief and your trust in God, I'm going to test you with it now. Don't go and say, "I'm not going to say it then." At least that's what my sinful state wants to do. But no, he wants us to say right things about him, isn't that what love is? It's not just an emotion. Words are important to God in any relationship, particularly, I'm talking about marriage. It's a beautiful thing when you say something and you do it, amen.

God wants to do that with us. And he will not surpass what the faith that he's given to us to bear beyond it, 1 Corinthians 10:13, right? He knows, he's giving us the faith, and he's going to determine how much we need to bear in certain seasons of our life. And the result of his perfect wisdom in doing this, by the way, to become completely visible at the revelation of Jesus Christ, who will then be glorified with all the other saints. What? And all who believe. That's found in 2 Thessalonians 1:10, to all who believe. That's how we're going to be found, true believers, not false. Then it will become visible to all the eyes how precious the faith that you and I have, that enabled us as believers on earth to endure everything that God sends in our way, everything. He will be given the one that will be given all praise and honor and glory.

This is the purpose of all of it, by the way, is that out of our lips, when we're, after all the trials, right, all the testings that he experienced, that out of your lips, he wants us to be found. Look at it with me, verse 7: "that, tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Let's just take that word "praise." So praise is reflecting on the testing, the trials that you have experienced, that out of those things, after it's all done, that you can praise him, that you can honor him, that you can honor him for what he has done in your life, and then you can give him the glory, that you can give Jesus Christ the glory. It will all become visible one day at his appearing. That's the moment that all of us, another reason to rejoice in, amen, this love and grace that he gives to us for trusting in him in the most difficult circumstances, that it will be all for a purpose.

And Peter uses a very, a good illustration here, a wonderful word, "precious," precious. There's a subjective and an objective explanation. So the subjective is the honoring, that's a subjective, you're honoring the person. It's also objective to the value, to the value, the glory, the weight, you see that. And so how many times have you heard this word "precious" in your life? How was it used? Some examples: you say, "That's a precious child." Why, why would you say something like that, right? Well, he honors or she honors his father and mother. That's when you would use "a precious child," right? "Wow, she's so valuable," or "he is so valuable." Why? Because the way that the father has or the mother has valued them by saying, "You're my child." Right? A good father and a good mother will appreciate their children. So, "You're my child, I'm going to give you things because you're my child," you see that. So the child is the object of the value based on the premise of the person putting on the value. And that's how God the Father looks at us. He sees, he wants to see us honoring him, right? He wants us to see what value he sees in us by what he gives to us.

But it's not a very manly word, I would say. I don't think men would say, "Oh, that's precious." You know, you would probably hear that more from women. But here it is, Peter, this man of, you know, rock, Jesus calls him, says this word "precious." So men, start using "precious." Big, rugged man, as fit as Paul—Peter did it. So he speaks of the trial of our faith being precious and uses the word seven times, so that's important to catch. And we shall see that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold. And then let's just look at the word "gold." Okay, gold is mined,

okay? It's put in a smelter. The smelter is hot, okay, really, really hot, to the point of melting the metal. And the purpose is not to destroy the gold; it is to purify the gold. When the gold is melted, the dross, the impurities, is drawn off to get the pure gold. And then later on, Peter will also make an application of this regarding the suffering of our Lord. He says that we have been redeemed, not with gold or silver, but with something infinitely more precious than that, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. We'll get there.

When God tests, it's not to destroy us or to hurt us or harm us, but he wants pure gold. And that is the way he will get it. That is the way he wants us to be developed. And at the time of testing, the dross is drawn off, and the precious gold appears. And that is God's method. That is the school that he has put us into. Let's not back down, wherever you are, because this is the way he teaches us, very much, in every believer. Because you and I are not adequate to live the Christian life. Another way of putting it: we need God in all the areas that he is testing us. Have you thought about all the areas that he's testing you and considered what he's doing there, and there, and there, and there? Because they're various, aren't they? It's not just one here; it's like another one sprouts up, another one sprouts up, another one sprouts. And what is coming out of your mouth after it all happens? Is it consistent? Is it found in praise, honor, and glory? Because we ultimately come to God as sinners, and what he begins to do, yes, we are justified, he says it, and then he wants us to express it. And we're going to express it like this: we're down here as sinners, and he's going to purify us. He's going to boil, he's going to take out all the impurities, and he's bringing up to our pure, where now this statement, the declaration, is now expressed.

He saves us all by his grace through the blood of Christ, and then he wants to live in us. I mean, that just blows my mind. He wants to live in us and through us. And he's going to teach us through our trials. He is drawing us closer to him through this experience. There are no shortcuts to maturity, no new methods. As I stated earlier, God does the same work he has been doing all the way from the beginning of the first church. There are no shortcuts, no new methods. This is the way God does things. The appearing of Jesus Christ, this is where I'm going to end. At the appearing of Jesus Christ, we will thank God, all the praising and honor and glory is thanking God, all that for all of our trials, for all of our trials. I don't know if my theology is correct here, but I think he's going to help us

to reflect on all the trials, and we're going to get to praise and honor and glory for those trials. I don't think it's going to be empty. There's going to be that time where we're going to actually, he's going to want us to say these things about him and his presence.

So here's my application: experience more of his trials and embrace it. I told you passages in the past, don't flee from tribulation, from Romans. Don't flee from trials. This is the method of God. This is the method of God. And I want everyone here to be able to go and say, "Praise, honor, glory, praise, honor, glory." We could do that here in our testimony time. We could do that when we're together, and we're just enjoying fellowship, whenever going through whatever trials you're going through, that you can say at the end of whatever it is, or maybe if you're more holier than I am, and you can do it while in the trial. That's my prayer, because that's not for me, it's for him. It's not for you, it's for him. All of us in this room that are believers, all for him. And we want to make much of him, don't we? Don't we want to please him, Father, Son, for what he is doing in our lives? And may we be found more pure on top of the expressions at our Lord's appearing, and that we will look forward to these things more with embracing and more thanking, amen.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you so much for the way you work in our lives. I praise your name for it. I honor you, I glory in you. I lift up my brothers and sisters, Lord, that are experiencing or have experienced heaviness for a season. I pray, Father, that you will, that you will continue to help them as you are in the walk with you, Lord, and that their relationship would just get closer and closer. And we will see that in each and one of our lives, that there is someone else that is helping us to experience this trial that we're experiencing, and that we will be to make much mention of him. And then, as we do so, as we do that, Lord, bless our church, Father, with conversions. Because we know there are unbelievers in this room that don't know what it means to live for something eternal, that all that their life is, is all about the temporal, and they're not even thinking about the eternal. Lord, I pray that they would feel the weight of their sin, that they don't know you, that in their sin, they're nothing without you. All these promises are nothing to them, but they have empty promises that this world promises but does not ultimately give what is promised. But you, Father, do. Your promises are fulfilled, and we saw that in the text this evening. Father, work in both us as believers, as well as the unbelievers here, that they might be found in Christ, and that all their lips, they will be

able to honor, praise, and give you all the glory. Let this be so, in Jesus' name, amen.