

Series: 1 Peter

Title: REJOICING IN THE FIRE

Text: 1 Peter 4: 12-16

Date: August 4, 2011

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

1 Peter 4: 12: Beloved,...

Believers are “be-loved.” Be-loved of God in Christ by his sovereign grace choosing us unto salvation in Christ be-fore the foundation of the world. Be-loved of Christ who suffered and gave his life, redeeming us by his own blood, while we were as yet sinners. Be-loved of the Spirit of God who entered in when as yet we did not love God, creating and making us to know the love of God freely bestowed upon us in Christ—called “thy time of love” in Ezekiel.

1 Peter 4: 12: Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice...

It is one thing for us to know the teaching—the doctrine—that every believer shall face “the fiery trial”. It is one thing to have an understanding that the trial is “to try us.” It is one thing to know to expect the trial—it is not “some strange thing”—not foreign to God’s child, but of God’s will, by God’s appointment, given to us to expect clearly by our Savior. But it is something entirely different for us to rejoice in the trial. **But rejoice...**

Hawker’s morning portion—Psalm 107: 7: “And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.” Oh, but for grace—not only to submit to a painful dispensation, “but to rejoice in it, because it is the right way...the Lord is leading forth by a right way, to bring to a city of habitation whose builder and maker is God.”

Here are three reasons (and the only way) believers rejoice in the fiery trial.

Divisions: 1) v13: inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings **2) v13:** that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. **3) v14:**...for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:

I. REJOICE INASMUCH AS YE ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST’S SUFFERING

Notice, it does not say “trials”—but “THE FIERY TRIAL” What is the fiery trial spoken of here? Verse **14: If ye be reproached for the name of Christ.**

We are talking about suffering that is for an entirely different reason than getting payback for some evil we have done to men. Let that not be the reason for our suffering, believer. If so we have great reason to be ashamed. But the suffering this passage is speaking of is totally contrary to that and is no reason to be ashamed. Notice the word “Yet.”

1 Peter 4: 15: But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16: Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Christ is the Refining Fire and he is the Refiner. We are familiar with the scripture, “I am the LORD I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” It is true, we are not consumed because the LORD does not change. Our God is immutable and saves by sovereign, unchanging, unchangeable grace and love that is in Christ.

But the elect of God are not consumed—not burned up—because Christ is the Fire by which we have life and rejoice while the same Fire—burns up the dross.

Malachi 3: 1: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2: But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4: Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5: And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. 6: For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Illustration: That burns me up!

Malachi 4:1: For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2: But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3: And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

CHRIST THE WORD—THE NAME—THE FIRE—THE REFINERS FIRE--WHO BURNS UP THE DROSS, PURGED AND REFINES ALL THOSE FOR WHOM HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE.

When Christ came forth he burned up the false doctrines of men, AND he still does.
He burned up the false doctrine of man coming to God by the will of his own strength and his own wisdom!

John 6: 42: And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43: Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

They said this is a hard saying. Many who walked with him went back and walked no more with him

Christ the refining Fire burned up the false doctrine of man coming to god by the righteous deeds of his own hand.

John 9:4: I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work...15: 22: If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin....24: If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

Christ Jesus burned up the false doctrine of man cleansing himself by being washed any other way than in Christ's blood, made new in the heart.

Matthew 15: 2: Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread....9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. 10: And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12: Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

Beloved, think it not strange if you suffer reproach for the name of Christ, Christ did!

John 15: 20: Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21: But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22: If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. 23: He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24: If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25: But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

But rejoice. For it is by his suffering that we are redeemed. He drank the cup of God's wrath dry. He purged us of all our sin. All the sons of Levi—those he makes priest unto God—are purged by Christ and Christ is our only offering to God. Oh, rejoice—leap for joy—because you are partaking of what every saint has suffered.

Luke 6: 22: Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23: Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Christ promised this trial in our own households. . The problem is not that sinners do not understand the problem is they do! This is why we suffer insult and rejection for the name of Christ. This is truly the fiery trial of faith (Matthew 10: 34-38.)

II. SECONDLY, IF WE DO NOT WILT BUT STAND FOR THE TRUTH THERE IS NO ONE TO GLORY IN BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD—Oh, but what reason to rejoice!

1 Peter 4: 14: If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

If ye be reproached—if you stand for Christ in truth so as to truly have it cast back in your teeth by sinful rebels—rejoice, because none of us would stand with Christ were it not for the Holy Spirit of God resting upon us.

John 15: 26: But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even the Spirit of truth*, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: [the sure effectual result is] 27: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Every believer has been with Christ from the beginning—the beginning before the beginning—and the reason we bear witness is because the Holy Spirit of God of truth makes us speak truth and bear up by his glory resting upon us. This is the Fire with which we are immersed.

Matthew 3: 11: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

The Holy Spirit of Fire is our Protection.

Isaiah 4: 4: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. 5: And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence.

No suffering is easy. And we certainly could not bear up were it not for the glory of the Spirit by which God manifests his strength through our weakness. It will not be by our wisdom, our will, our reason, certainly not craftiness, but solely by his Spirit that he will save any. But this same Spirit upholds the believer.

Oh, if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, don't be downcast—leap for joy—for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

III. THIRDLY, REJOICE TO THE END FOR WHEN CHRIST RETURNS WE WILL FIND OUR SUFFERING WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE EXCEEDING JOY.

I Peter 4: 13: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Illustration: The three thrown in the fiery furnace Christ was in the midst, the glory of Christ rested upon them—unbound, set upon their feet, their clothes not burned, no hair singed, not even the smell of fire on them—because Christ was in their midst. And they were delivered with exceeding joy.

1 Peter 1: 13: Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Romans 8: 16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 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.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you—but REJOICE IN THE FIRE. But rejoice because we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you, and rejoice because when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. Rejoice in the Fire.

AMEN!