

Why God's People Have Reason To Rejoice 1 Peter 1:3-12

Intro: One of the greatest pressures the Christian faces today, as he always has, is the pressure to live by the world's values. But Peter in the first paragraph of his remarkable book hits the allurements of the world head on! He challenges us to consider that Christians have something in which to rejoice. We something the world doesn't have. We have something that we should not want to exchange for anything the world values--in a word, salvation! I hope that you will be encouraged tonight to value and cherish the joys of being a Christian and recognize the unique blessings we enjoy.

Rejoice that you are God's child!

Blessed be God... (an expression of joy and praise) who according to his great mercy (we deserved punishment but God pitied us) caused us to be born again (God who is the Father of our souls is also our spiritual Father). This new birth takes place through:

The seed of God which is the word of God--1 Pet. 1:22-25

Man's obedience to the truth--1 Pet. 1:22

If you are God's child you have reason to rejoice; for there is no greater position than to be a child of God. No human honor can be bestowed upon us that is greater than that!

Rejoice that you have hope!

Born to a living hope. Living conveys the idea of a hope that not founded upon fantasy or falsehood but reality and truth.

It is a living hope because it is grounded in a living savior!

When Jesus came forth from the grave he made salvation possible. He made it possible for us to have hope.

People today are searching for something that will give them tranquility in their soul, a sense of well-being. There are no sadder words than "no hope". There is no greater peace than to know that you have the hope of heaven when you die! Regardless of what may happen to you, if you are a faithful child of God you have hope when you die! What can the world give us that can bring such peace?

Rejoice that you have an inheritance.

A child receives the possession of his parents upon death. In the same way, God has an inheritance for his children. And there is no greater possession.

It is unlike an earthly inheritance--it perishes, it can be corrupted, it loses its shine.

But God's inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, fades not away
That inheritance is reserved in heaven for you! That means it is "guarded, protected, set aside, watched over" in our behalf. That's something to rejoice about! There is no greater possession! What can the world give us that can compare?

Rejoice that you are protected by God.

Christians not only have the assurance that heaven is awaiting them. They can have the assurance that they will be able to receive it.

We are "kept" (a military term meaning to guard).

We are protected by the power of God. There is no greater power than that which we experience as the children of God.

There is no one who can take our inheritance away! Jn. 10:27-29; 1 Jn. 4:4

How are we protected?

God's power for salvation is exerted through the gospel itself.

By faith--We must keep walking by faith. That means that we trust the provisions made for our forgiveness in the sacrifice of Christ. It means that we pursue and live by the truth that we know. And it means that we continue to look to God for further enlightenment and growth through study and prayer.

When we do that, a wonderful power works in our lives. It is more powerful than we can possibly imagine. Through it God is able to do "exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

That's something to rejoice about!

Rejoice that you will be saved even though tried by fire.

Peter tells us that there are times when our faith will be tested by life! (particularly Peter has in mind persecution for the sake of Christ; but the principle could apply to all of life's trials). The devil may use any difficulty of life to overcome us and make us give up. God uses these experiences for our discipline and perfection. Cf. smelting process.

The Christian can rejoice because the proof of faith results in praise, honor, and glory when Jesus comes.

When our faith is not destroyed by trial it is like gold refined by fire.

It is faith in its purest form.

This faith results in praise, honor, and glory.

Christians can have that faith in spite of the fact that they have never seen the Lord personally!

These Christians loved the Lord & believed in the Lord through the testimony of others who did see Him.

So can we! And in this faith we can rejoice with great joy because its outcome is salvation in heaven! We can rejoice because there is no greater perfection than that which comes through the trying of our faith.

Rejoice that you experience what prophets and angels wanted to know about!

We need to rejoice simply in the unique privilege of being a Christian!

Peter teaches that lesson by speaking of those who were interested in this salvation but who did not experience it in the way we have!

Prophets who were given the Holy Spirit received revelations about a person to come who would suffer and be glorified and who would bring salvation. They were eager to know who would fulfill these things and when. But they had to hear the disappointing words that the blessings of which they spoke were reserved for future generations!

Isaiah knew about the Savior! He would have given anything to read the stories of how Jesus was born of a virgin, of how he took away our diseases (the many miracle stories), of how he would die for our sins (but never knew the details).

But we can know the Savior!

It is we who have heard the gospel that are the beneficiaries of what Christ has done. Those who heard the apostles speak in the gospel what the Holy Spirit revealed to them are the ones who have reason to rejoice.

These things are things in which the angels themselves have an interest and curiosity.

We have the privilege of not only knowing about salvation through Christ. But knowing Him and participating in the salvation He has brought to the world. That's reason for all of us to rejoice! There is no greater privilege than to know Christ!

Conclusion: What a strengthening paragraph! In it Peter says to us, "There is nothing that the world can give you that can replace what we have in Christ. Rejoice in it!"