

1 Peter 1:8-9

⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith --- the salvation of *your* souls. *ESV*

Have you ever received a pleasantly disproportionate reward for a completed task? Have you ever been utterly doused with an enviable inequitable prize for very little effort? In our world we thrive in a system where the laborer earns his fair wages and the system of wages and salary is monitored carefully for its ethical equality. It isn't often that one receives reward for labor that is *not* on some sort of predicted scale.

But that's now how the world of grace in Jesus Christ works (our salvation). God's economy is so different than ours. While certain elements of our world may reflect heavenly values, **God's grace transcends what is deemed by us as fair and equitable.** Through Jesus Christ He supersedes all logical deductions, equitable rewards and pragmatic systems.

Peter says that in Jesus Christ we find joy that is so overwhelming that it is inexpressible! This joy is reserved for those who will trust in a God Who will not live by their estimation of what is fair. But He will always act on what is true!

To know Christ personally, the Holy Spirit must reveal Him to you. The nature of faith is that one must not depend upon sight in order to take hold of something that is true. Peter knew that it is not the physical association with Jesus that he had that joined him to his Savior. He knows Jesus by the revealing work of the Father.

The blessing of our salvation is that we need not to have been there with Christ in His earthly tenure in order to be there in the future with Christ, or to be with Him now. By our faith, which is equal to the sight-filled experience, we have potential to benefit to the same degree from a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. This truth is the source of the believer's joy.

"We are chosen for joy. However hard the Christian way, it is both in the traveling and in the goal, the way of joy...The Christian is a man of joy. The Christian is a laughing cavalier of Christ. A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces." --William Barclay

The cause for believer's joy is that they are now receiving their salvation and will fully consummate their salvation on the day of appearing before Christ.

The cause for believer's love for Jesus is that they have set their heart on Him who is delivering them from their present sin and will fully deliver them on that last day.

The present participle provides the reason. The NIV translates it best grammatically:

"for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." NIV

There is too much belief that joy only "awaits" the believer. Even commentators such as Martin Luther on Peter and Jude indicates that joy is something that cannot be known by believers today, but that it is only to be experienced in the fullness of God's presence on that future day when Christ returns.

Peter explains that joy has been inaugurated in the heart of the believer upon salvation and will be consummated eschatologically on the day of Christ's appearing.

We cannot rely upon our 5 senses to know God. Faith isn't one of the 5 senses. We must be satisfied with faith in God being enough, just as God is satisfied that it is enough. We can and will experience overwhelming joy when we give ourselves to a faith-filled relationship with Jesus Christ. By faith in Jesus Christ we receive the

greatest inequitable reward of the universe: a personal relationship with God.

This faith is a trust in the unseen Savior which results in a complete deliverance from the condemnation that is justly deserved. This deliverance is given to us in spiritual terms because our souls are corrupted by sin and deserving of God's judgment. Because the problem of sin exists deep within us, even to the invisible soul, no physical object can remove the stain of sin. No baptism water, no church membership roll, no good deed can penetrate into the inner man to deliver one from their sinful condition. **Since God is the One Who does the saving He is the One Who determines the means by which a soul receives salvation.**

God has declared that salvation is given by the means of faith by His grace. The converting of a sinful soul to a righteous soul is based upon God's declaration that faith, that trust in Jesus Christ's substitute sacrifice for sin, is enough to satisfy God's righteous demands. The benefits of salvation seem so "one-sided" and inequitable when one considers what takes place in the transaction. God receives the sin, and we receive His righteousness and all of its benefits. **This hardly seems fair, and that's exactly the point of God's grace and mercy.** God isn't fair towards us in His gift of salvation, He is just and merciful and gracious. But He is fair in the meeting of His own demands. He Himself paid the entire penalty for our sin through Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary so that the balance of eternal holy justice is weighed out perfectly.

Peter says that this faith in Jesus Christ results in an inexpressible joy and glory that wells up in a believer to its fullest because the Christian has come to know Who it is that has given him such an undeserved prize.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. What is grace?
2. Why must God reveal Himself to us in order for us to know that we need Him to save us?
3. What does it mean that those who place their faith in Jesus Christ are continuing to be saved?
4. What is necessary to please God? (see Hebrews 11:6)
5. What have you learned from this lesson that shapes how you view the free gift of salvation offered by God to us?

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