

# 1 Peter 1:1-12

## Choose Joy

To get the full background of 1 Peter go to the refuel website: [www.usfbc.com/refuel](http://www.usfbc.com/refuel)

Author: Peter – even though he was called unlearned and ignorant in Acts 4:13 – which basically means laymen without formal schooling – essentially saying he wasn't a professional religious leader (gives me hope). His training was far greater than sitting in a classroom. He followed the maker of heaven and earth.

Date: Between AD 60-64 – During the huge persecution of Nero

Reason: Peter was writing to Christians living in modern day Turkey who were under persecution. Nero chose the Christian community to blame for fires he had set to burn down buildings in order to create a new empire. As a result, a vicious persecution against Christians began. Peter wrote this epistle to strengthen them during this extremely tough time. Nero blamed them in order to take the focus off of his own desire to build ambitious buildings, killing anyone in the way. He spread rumors like the Lord's Supper was cannibalism and even called Christians atheists for not believing in Rome's religion. As a result he made a public spectacle of them, by crucifying them and using them as street lamps – setting them on fire in cages and hanging them in the streets.

Peter wrote this letter to teach the suffering Christians how to live victoriously in the midst of the hostility. He did this through themes such as:

- Don't lose hope
- Don't become bitter
- Trust in the Lord
- Look for His second coming

He does this by asking his reader to live lives that are obedient, yet victorious, in order to evangelize to the hostile world around them. Peter provides this encouragement through a combination of proclamation and exhortation. However, one of the proclamations is that suffering is inevitable for followers of Christ. The underlying theme of 1 Peter seems to be: Christians learn that hardship is not outside of God's sovereign will and is used by God to fashion us according to Christ's image.

### 1:1-2

**v. 1** – Apostle – Jesus Christ designated Peter (Back in Mark 3) as an authoritative messenger and interpreter of the Gospel. Not just giving good advice but giving commands for the church. Foreigners – displaced, exiles, strangers, pilgrims – This doesn't mean the same thing as the exiled nation of Israel in the OT. It is actually talking about people who are Christians are exiles because they suffer for their faith in a world that finds their faith off-putting and strange. Our citizenship is in heaven.

**v. 2** – This greeting blows me away. We see all parts of who God is involved with our salvation. The trinity saves sinners, uniting them to Christ so that they will walk in obedience to Him. The father foreknows, the Spirit sanctifies, the Son cleanses. Christ's blood completely atones for sin and brings the believer into a relationship with God

Salvation - being rescued from God's judgment or wrath on the last day. Also, the future glory believers will enjoy.

### **1:3-9**

**v. 3** – The main theme for this section is introduced here – God is to be blessed and praised for his saving work.

We need to be born again because sin's presence in us causes spiritual death. Paul is giving hope to his readers by saying that because they have been born again they know they have eternal life. This is the expectation he is talking about in v. 4

Resurrection – it's only because Jesus rose from the dead that we can have a sure confidence that we get this inheritance, we get these blessings, we get God now!

**v. 4** – Inheritance – the land God promised to his people

This inheritance of eternal life with God, free from pain and suffering, is the hope they need to get past the trials that were happening right then.

We can never lose the inheritance – Peter emphasized the security and certainty of the reward awaiting believers.

**v. 5** – Their faith, believing in what they can't see, is what God shows his Power through until they receive the inheritance. His power protects us to make wise choices and endure suffering until it is time to claim our inheritance. Our faith is how we see God protect us.

“God's power does not shield believers from trials and sufferings, but it does protect us from that which would cause us to fall away.” Faith and hope are ultimately gifts from God.

**v. 6** – Hold on to that joy – even though you are going through these trials

**v. 7** – Why does God allow suffering? Verse 7 answers this question. Sufferings test the genuineness of someone's faith.

Proved genuine – Clay pots were baked to give them strength. Any ones that had flaws cracked. The ones that survived were “proven genuine.”

Gold – When gold is heated to a melting temperature impurities rise to separate them from the pure gold, then the refiner skims the impurities out. What is left is absolutely pure gold worth more than you could ever think of. Peter tells us that your faith, when it remains strong through many trials, is worth more than this pure gold.

When your faith remains strong through a trial you will receive praise, honor and glory when Jesus returns.

May be found – live in such a way that when you are judged by God, you may be found pure and genuine with your faith.

**v. 8** – they have never seen Jesus, yet they believe in Him and love Him.

**v. 9** – Why do they have love and joy? They have it because of the hope of future salvation through Jesus.

## 1:10-12

**v. 10** – OT prophets would prophesy about the coming messiah, wishing God would tell them more about Jesus. Peter tells us that those messages were for the Christians being persecuted, to give them hope.

**v. 11** – The readers of Peter’s letter were actually living in the time of God’s grace and not His wrath. This was the age of fulfilment of the prophecies.

Spirit of Christ – The Holy Spirit sent from Jesus. – This shows us how Jesus has always existed, even during the OT times.

Peter is trying to get the Christians at that time to understand how to deal with the persecution. It’s almost like how the x-men are mutants and humans are trying to eradicate them because they are afraid of them. They don’t want to turn into them; in fact they want to control them because they aren’t following the “rules” of society. They have become a driving force, changing the way we think. Sound familiar? Persecution actually creates a stronger faith.

“The persecution of believers and the abduction of the school girls from the north highlighted several times in prayer reminded participants of places in Nigeria where celebration of belief in Christ is not celebrated, but cursed,” Cearley said.

Though persecution remains, God is using it to bring Nigerians to Himself, Bryson said.

“[Persecution] is making the church stronger,” he said. “We are hearing reports of large numbers of Muslims coming to Christ in spite of these persecutions.”

Following Jesus in Nigeria can result in a variety of consequences, Bryson said.

“Some of the persecution is ‘low level,’ such as families excluding someone who has accepted Christ,” he said. “It can also be very violent such as homes being burned and converts being killed.

“Sometimes a new convert will have his wife taken away from him and his children also. Usually the wife will be taken back by her family and then given as a wife to another man.”

<http://www.commissionstories.com/africa/stories/view/hope-in-a-persecuted-nigeria?cid=twitr>

That story says that persecution is making the church stronger. What? I mean come on, would you be crying out to God asking why are you allowing this to happen? I’d be like...stop the suffering!

We don’t face trials like the Nigerian Christians do. So what does that have to do with us? Peter tells us that when things get tough, maybe you fail out of school, maybe you can’t get a job, maybe someone in your family has developed cancer, maybe you’ve been raped and you don’t know what to do, maybe you can’t get past your past and it affects your daily life, whatever you are struggling with today Peter is telling us to choose joy. All we have is hope in God knowing that He promises us that He will never leave us or forsake us. The fact that our faith is the guarantee of our inheritance, which is eternal life, is shielded by God’s power. We can choose joy knowing that God is with us.

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. (Jeremiah 17:7)

Baby Bennet is 21 months old – Tonight I choose joy

“So you may be wondering how we are doing now. The family and out of town friends have gone home. The celebration services are over. And the four of us remain.

Well, we sure are learning that the grieving comes in waves. There are moments in the day where I am doing great and then something triggers a memory of Bennett and the next thing I know, the tears are falling.

Yes, we miss him. I long to hold him one more time and hear his sweet voice say mama. I long for the five of us to hold each other and have one more family hug. But honestly, I’m learning to long for God even more. I don’t want Bennett to be back here with us. I want us to be there with him! But until then, God is teaching Ben and I what it looks like to have an eternal perspective as we live here and as we grieve the loss of Bennett.

And one of the biggest lessons so far is that being joyful is a choice. It’s an overflow of trusting God’s plan and our role in His greater story. And it’s hard. Really hard. But it doesn’t mean walking around with a smile on your face pretending to be ok. It means fighting back the lies and bitterness and choosing to only focus on the things that reinforce God’s truth.

So tonight I go to bed rejoicing where God has me because I know it’s right where He wants me...trusting Him more! Whatever storm you find yourself in or disappointment that overwhelms you, if you are where God wants you, then it’s worth being joyful about too!”

### **Choose joy, regardless what is happening, and then your faith will be proven genuine**

Why choose joy? Because through joy your faith is strengthened knowing that God’s ultimate purpose is to make you more like Him. Then you will focus on how good He is and instead of asking “Why am I going through this?” you will ask “How is God going to use this to help others come to Him and experience his abundant grace and peace?” But that will only happen when you are refined as Peter says when you suffer.

Hope – not wishful thinking but confident optimism based on the promise and person of God. I used to hate using the word hope because it sounded so flighty – I hope this happens, I hope I get an A, I hope I find a girl who likes me, I hope that some money falls out of the sky. But after realizing how Peter was using hope, I’m starting to realize that hope is not so much wishful thinking but confident optimism. And that confident optimism can produce joy when things are going terrible. Great expectation. We find out what we’re made of when our faith is tested!