

GLORY In The Midst Of SUFFERING?

I Pet. 1:1-8; 5:10

I. IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING.... RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE BORN FOR GLORY:

I Pet. 1:2-4

The **glory of God** means the *sum total of all that God is and does*. Glory is not a separate attribute or characteristic of God, such as His holiness, wisdom, or mercy... everything that God is and does is characterized by glory. He is glorious in wisdom, and power, so that everything He thinks and does is marked by glory. He reveals His glory in creation (Psa 19), in His dealings the people of Israel, and especially in His plan for our salvation.

When we were born the first time (physically) we were not born for glory. (I Pet. 1:24) Whatever feeble glory man has will eventually fade and disappear.. but the glory of the Lord is eternal. The works of man done for the glory of God will last and be rewarded. (Gal. 6:9; I Cor. 15:58)

A. *We were born unto glory: 1:2-3*

As chosen by the Father this plan to bring us into glory took place in the deep counsels of eternity; we knew nothing about it until it was revealed to us. (Eph. 1:4-11) This election was not based on anything we had done, because we were not even on the scene. It was not based on anything God saw that we would be or do.

To **foreknow means to set one's love upon a person or persons in a personal way**. As far as **God** is concerned I was saved when He choose me in Christ before the foundation of the world. As far as **Christ** was concerned, I was saved when He died for me on the cross. But as far as the **Spirit** is concerned, I was saved the day I heard the gospel and received Christ. Then it all came together as the three Persons of the Godhead brought me to salvation. (Cf. Romans 8:29-34)

B. *We are born unto glorious hope: I Pet. 1:3-4*

1. It is a **living hope**, grounded on the Living Word of God. (1:23)
2. It is an **inheritance** (1:4), for we are included in Christ's last will and testament. (Rom 8:17-18; Eph. 1:9-12)
3. It is **incorruptible**, for nothing can ruin it.
4. It is **undefiled**, it cannot be stained or cheapened in any way.
5. It is **eternal**, will not grow old, cannot wear out, nor can it disappoint us in any way.

C. *The saved are kept for glory (1:5)*

1. Kept is a military term that means "*guarded, or shielded.*" We are constantly being guarded by God, assuring us we shall safely arrive in heaven.
2. Kept by the power of god... our **faith** in Christ so **unites** us to HIM that His power now **guards** us and **guides** us unto glory.
3. We are literally **guarded for glory**.... (Rom 8:30-34). If any believer were to be lost, it would rob God of His glory.

4. God is so certain that we will be in heaven that He has **already given us** His glory as the assurance. (Jh 17:24; Eph. 1:13-14)

II. IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING...WE ARE BEING PREPARED FOR GLORY: I Pet. 1:6-7)

We must keep in mind that all God plans and performs here is preparation for what He has in store for us in heaven. He is preparing us for the life and service yet to come.

Nobody knows all that is in store for us in heaven. But this we do know: *Life today is a school in which God trains us for our future ministry in eternity... for the 1,000 year reign, and eternity itself.*

This helps explain the presence of trials and sufferings today. They are some of God's tools and textbooks in the school of Christian experience.

Peter writes about the **trials** (includes tribulations, persecutions, testings, **general problems**) we all face.

A. **Trials meet our heart (life) needs: "If need be"** vs. 6

1. This indicates there are special times when God knows we need to go through trials and through suffering.
2. Sometimes it is for **chastening...**
3. Sometimes it is for our spiritual **growth...**
4. Sometimes it may to **keep** us from **sinning...**
5. We can **trust** our Father to know best.

B. **Trials (testings) are many, and varied or "manifold."**

1. Literally means "**variegated, many-colored.**" God uses same word to describe His grace in I Peter 4:10.
2. God gives sufficient grace to meet the need. (James 1:1-3)
3. Trials are varied and God matches the trials and testings (**sufferings**) to our strengths and needs.
4. No matter the difficulty... God the Father can be trusted. Consider Christ's suffering as depicted in Isaiah chapter 53.

C. **Trials (sufferings, testings) are not easy:**

1. Trials produce what he called **heaviness!**... the word means "**to experience grief or pain.**"
2. It is used to describe our Lord in Gethsemane (Matt 26:37) and the sorrow of saints at the death of loved ones. (I Thess. 4:13)
3. **We must not deny our trials** or play like they don't exist; nor should we allow ourselves to be **bitter, resistant, or despondent. God is at work.**

D. **Trials are controlled by God: "for a season"**

God permits us to go through the furnace of testings, sufferings, trials...**but He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat.**

If we rebel He may need to **reset** the clock; but if we **submit**, He will not permit us to suffer beyond His purpose or above what we can endure. (I Cor. 10:13) What will we learn from the trial, testing or sufferings?

III. IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERINGS... WE HAVE GLORY NOW: I Peter 1:8-12

I will be brief about this aspect, but consider these blessed truths: **Here are directions for each one of us to be enjoying the present glory now, even in the midst of trials.**

A. A glorious love... life with the Savior, 8a

1. How precious His true love for each of His own. This is the love He has brought about in our hearts for HIM.
2. How precious when we **return His love** back to Him. There is something wonderful that takes place in the our hearts when we daily (and often during the day) tell Christ of our love. Such actions has a great impact on our daily lives -- our behavior and thought life. Bath your heart in His love and grace.

B. A glorious trust... “yet believing”, 8b

1. Faith means **surrendering** all to God and **obeying** HIS Word in spite of circumstances, and consequences. Do we walk in this kind of trust?
2. **Love and trust go together**, when you love someone, you trust him. And faith and love together help to **strengthen hope**, confidence and assurance.

C. We Rejoice in Him... “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” 8c

1. He is writing to those who were in the midst of fiery trials, testings, losses, sorrows, afflictions.
2. Maybe we find it difficult to rejoice **over** the circumstances, but we can rejoice **in** them by **centering** our hearts and minds on Jesus Christ.
3. Each experience of trial helps us **learn** something new and wonderful about our Savior.

In the midst of suffering -- Abraham, Daniel, Paul, David and a host of others learned much from their times of suffering. Abraham came to know God as “*Jehovah-El Shaddai*” (Almighty God) (Gen.17:1-5) A study of the lives of each of the others will make us much aware of their experiences of suffering and the subsequent growth in their lives because of suffering. (Consider Psalm 27, 37, 62, etc.)

4. Note the joy He produces is “**unspeakable and full of glory.**” This is a joy so deep and so wonderful that we cannot even express it, yes even words fail us.

IV. IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING.... GOD IS BRINGING GREAT GOOD: I Pet. 5:10

A. We have His Grace: 5:10

I Pet. 1:10; 2:3; 4:10; Heb. 4:16; James 4:6; and I Pet. 5:12; Rom 5:2

B. “We are called unto His eternal glory...” note all we have already seen.

C. He is Building US ...

1. **By making us perfect:** which means “to equip, to adjust, to fit together.” It is the same word as used when they were mending nets in Matthew 4:21 which is translated “to mend.”
God uses several tools to equip us: His Word, the Holy Spirit’s ministry, and also suffering. According to Jude 24, His purpose is to present us “*faultless, complete, holy, blameless before His throne.*” But this after we have “**suffered awhile**” by which He is seeking to rid us of the dross of sin, to make us more Christ like.
2. **By establishing us:** This means “to fix firmly, to set fast.” Christians must not be unsteady in their stand for Christ. Our hearts need to be established. We see the beauty of the rainbow which arches the heavens and spans the plain -- for it is glorious and rare. But alas it is not established, it is here and it is soon gone -- made up of sunbeams and raindrops. Even creation will be changed in a day to come when God makes all things new.
Do you *know by faith* that *He is establishing you*, making you secure in Him, secure in daily life with and in Him. Are you firmly fixed in Him?
3. **By strengthening us:** **God’s strength** given to meet the demands of life. (II Tim. 1:7; Eph. 6:10) We are to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
4. **By settling us:** And this means “to lay a foundation.”

The house which was founded on the rock (as Christ told the parable in Matthew chapter 7) stood fast for it withstood the storm.

A believer who is equipped by God will “*continue in the faith grounded and settled.*” (Col. 1:23)

“*As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.... rooted, grounded, established in the faith...*” Yes, in Him, Col. 1:6,7

We become more settled in -- our aims, purposes of life, settled in our walk in Christ, consistent, always abounding in the work of the Lord. (I Cor. 15:58)

Settling may well come from suffering -- For the worst thing we can do is to vacillate -- to be inconsistent, changeable, and undependable. Some times through suffering and trials we see the mightily Power of our God.