

1 Peter 1:7 – Part Z

1Pe 1:8 (NKJV) 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.

As we look at these two verses, I want us to appreciate where Peter is actually headed. He is getting ready to give to us a number of exhortations that lead up to his primary exhortation on how God wants us to live our life. That primary exhortation is given to us in [1 Peter 1:15-16](#).

1Pe 1:15 (NKJV) but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,¹⁶ because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"

Becoming “**holy in all of our conduct**” is the goal, so Peter will be giving us a number of strong exhortations to help us in reaching that goal. V13 – “**gird up, be sober, rest your hope**”. V14 – “**not conforming**”. V17 – “**conduct yourselves**”. Attached to the exhortation to be holy, these are amazing attributes to be developed in our lives.

Now, before we begin with v8-9, just think for a moment of all of the things that Peter has already told us. He told us in v2 that we have been chosen by God, that we are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit for obedience, that we have forgiveness (“**sprinkling of the blood**”). In v3, he says that he have been given “**abundant mercy**” and that we have a “**living hope**”. In v4 he says that our inheritance is “**incorruptible, undefiled, does not fade away**” and is “**reserved in heaven**”. In v5 he says that we are being “**kept by the power of God**”. Then in v6, he reiterates that because this salvation that God has given to us is so great that we can “**rejoice**” even when we are “**grieved by various trials**”.

Just the sheer magnitude and significance of those first seven (7) verses for a believer’s life is somewhat overwhelming to say the least. So, no wonder when Peter comes to v8-9 that he just breaks out in a kind of spontaneous praise for the greatness of all that God has accomplished for the believer. Not one of the descriptions that Peter has provided in the first seven (7) verses is related to anything that we have done, but every single one of them is a gift from God to those who are His children. Then, to make it even more emphatic, each of them are gifts that are completely undeserved. We should be overwhelmed by the love of God, by the mercy of God, and by the grace of God.

No wonder Peter says that we can “**rejoice**” even when things are very difficult. Peter uses the word “**rejoice**” twice – once in v6 and then again in v8. In fact, notice how Peter describes this rejoicing. In v6 he says that we can “**greatly rejoice**” and in v8 it says that we “**rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**”. Neither of these expressions of joy are just some kind of a minor utterance of a somewhat muted feeling that we have about these things. To the contrary, Peter is so overwhelmed and elated with all that God has done for the believer that it is like he simply cannot contain himself. He believes that what God has done for us as believers simply mandates that we “**rejoice**”. The Greek word for “**rejoice**” in both v6 and v8 is “*agalliao*” and is a very expressive word. It is derived from two Greek words. The prefix is “*agan*” and means “much”. The root word is “*hallomai*” and literally means to “jump for joy”.¹ So, when transliterated together, it literally means to “jump for joy much”. I love the way that Dr. Zodhiates defines the word. This is what he says: “*to exult, leap for joy, to show one’s joy by leaping and skipping denoting excessive or ecstatic joy and delight*”.² So, that is why the translators, with the

exception of the ESV, have translated it as “**greatly rejoice**” or something very similar. I like the way that the AMP Bible says it – “**be exceedingly glad**”. Then to even magnify this idea of rejoicing, v8 which follows is translated as follows: KJV – “**rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory**”, NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV – “**rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**”, AMP – “**exult and thrill with inexpressible and glorious...joy**”, ISV – “**rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy**”, RSV – “**rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy**”.

It is like Peter just does not know how to really express his gratitude and his thankfulness for all that God has done for him. If I can say it this way, he is still, after many years, still somewhat overwhelmed, overcome, speechless, astounded, and amazed by the goodness of God that has been given to the believer. It is like Peter is saying that it does not really matter what may happen to these believers because their salvation is so great and so glorious that nothing can remove them from the grace and power of God working in their life. They are utterly secure no matter what may happen to them. It does not matter what kind of trial that they may have to face. It does not matter how the world may perceive them and treat them. It simply does not matter. So, if we keep all of this in perspective to what Peter is leading up to, the outworking of this great salvation is that it will lead the believer into a life that is holy and honoring to God. No wonder Peter can simply say in v15-16,

1Pe 1:15 (NKJV) but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

Then notice how Peter will ultimately conclude this particular thrust of his letter in [1 Peter 1:18-21](#),

1Pe 1:18 (NKJV) knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.²⁰ He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

So, exactly what is Peter saying to us in v8-9? Well, the first thing that he is addressing is that we have never actually seen God or seen Christ. Now, this is really very significant. Why? It is because it is one thing to believe in something that you have personally seen, but to base your entire life on someone or something that you have never seen is a little different. In fact, he makes reference to this twice in the same verse – “**whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him...**” I want you to notice that in the first phrase “**having not seen**”, that it is in the aorist tense (or English past tense), and in the second phrase “**do not see**” that it is in the present tense. Peter had seen Christ. He had witnessed miracle after miracle. He had seen all of the glorious works that Christ had performed. He had even been caught up into the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration in [Matthew 17](#). Peter had seen it all, so believing for him was a little different. However, for these believers, their faith was not built on what they had seen or personally witnessed, but on the testimony of others. The way that Peter describes “why” they believed is given in [1 Peter 1:12](#) when it says,

1Pe 1:12 (NKJV) To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.

These men and women had the gospel preached to them through the apostles and other believers, it was clear and understandable, and they committed their entire life to Christ because they both heard and believed the gospel. I love the way that Paul says it in v8 in the NKJV – “**yet believing**”. I.e., even though they had not seen Christ, even though they did not personally witness all that He had done, even though believers were being persecuted everywhere – they still believed. The gospel is that powerful. By using the phrase “**yet believing**”, Peter is emphasizing how powerful the message of Christ is in spite of everything that the world would try and convince these believers of - even to those who had never actually seen Him. They had never seen Christ, never witnessed one single miracle, “**yet**” they believed, and it is not that they just believed, but they rejoiced in the gospel with “**joy inexpressible and full of glory**”. They were watching people be persecuted and martyred for believing in Christ, yet they rejoiced that they too were able to believe and follow Christ. They fully knew and understood that the same suffering awaited them, “**yet**” they believed. Please appreciate that this is the primary New Testament word for “**believe**” – “*pisteuo*”, and here it refers specifically to entrusting their life to Christ, to fully resting their complete confidence in the Person and work of Christ, and to depending on Him wholly for their salvation.

We live in a church age and spiritual culture that has so misrepresented the gospel and the cost of what it means to be a disciple and follower of Christ that those who really are following Christ in a biblical way are deemed as irrelevant, judgmental, and arrogant. I know that I talk about this often, but I am often so utterly bewildered, baffled, mystified, and confused at how many meaningless substitutes the church is inventing to replace the gospel. I have said it often, and will continue to do so, that the message and methodology of the Emergent Church, as well as the overall spiritual climate of the modern church in America, is so unbiblical that it defies spiritual reason. It is no longer the simple message of the gospel and of salvation by grace alone that dominates theology, but rather it has become methodology, style, and humanistic philosophy. Their methodology is to try and attract people with all of their cultural novelties and cute inventions such as storytelling. The new message is a contemporary, informal format with fog machines, strobe lights, and elaborate media presentations. For them, the gospel message is deemed insufficient, so it has to be improved, enhanced, and upgraded to a more culturally relevant format.

Listen very carefully. The gospel has no substitutes and needs no improvements. Then to make it even worse, it is an offensive message to a lost person! Unfortunately, that is exactly what the Emergent Church movement is actually trying to remove – the offense of the gospel. In their unscriptural need for redefining words, the modern church is evacuating out the words of Scripture and replacing them with cultural words that seem less offensive. For instance, “sinners” are now called “seekers”, “church” is a “gathering”. The word “emergent” is defined as an intellectual and spiritual movement away from traditional, rational truth. They define most of what is provided in Scripture as “myth”, so the doctrinal teachings on either God or Christ are defined as a simple progression of myths and narratives handed down by those who were ignorant or deceptive in their efforts.³ I have said it often, but that is what is so dangerous about their adoption of the Message Bible as their Bible of choice. It is simply a paraphrase, a very weak commentary, and when it is used as the primary text of a church, the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith are being completely lost. They are raising an entire generation of young professing Christians on a book that is not even a Bible.

They avoid absolutes and teach that the Bible is not absolute truth, and since we do not have absolute truth that we cannot be dogmatic about doctrine. The word that they use to identify this process is called “deconstruction”, or a license to redefine traditional doctrines of the church if it does not suit both personal or cultural preferences. They call it “reimagining Christianity” which means that they have the right to re-interpret long standing truth and doctrine. In essence they deny essential Christian teaching. They are elevating self and devaluing God. They believe that apologetics is an outdated attempt by confused and conservative Christians to persuade unbelievers to believe something that is not true. The word “theologian” is actually a term of derision. They teach that Jesus Christ was an amazing individual (not divine) that left behind a great legacy on how to make the world a better place. They believe that every fundamental teaching of the church is to be placed on the spiritual chopping block, redefined, and eventually discarded with what they call postmodern philosophy. They use the term “missional” to describe how they can make the world better through left wing social causes. Brian McLaren actually teaches that the Atonement, or death of Christ and His blood sacrifice, is for “vampire Christians” and is a form of child abuse when we teach it to our children. The list is so endless that I would not know where to start. Honestly, I have no sympathy for these radically unbiblical teachers like Brian McLaren or Rob Bell.

Then on top of all of this nonsense, we have the New Apostolic Reformation which was started by Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary which teaches that God is giving additional revelation apart from the canon of Scripture through revelations provided to a new era of apostles. He calls it the Third Wave. To add to their false teaching, they contend that the gospel message in order to be effective has to be accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles of healing to validate the gospel. The nonsense and religious rhetoric never seems to end.

So, why even mention this in a conservative, fundamental, Christ honoring church? It is because all of this false teaching, both from the Emergent Church and the New Apostolic Movement, has slowly found acceptance in many “seeker sensitive”, experientially oriented churches all over America. Unfortunately, the primary target is young people who are disillusioned with traditional churches, who love the informal relaxed atmosphere of many emergent churches, and who love the emphasis on creative worship through praise bands and media presentations. The strong teaching of the Word of God seems to have no real appeal whatsoever.

Then to add to all of the nonsense, the South Carolina Baptist Convention has unknowingly advanced much of this by promoting the Rick Warren Saddleback model of informality, soft messages, and social agendas as the cultural method for reaching people. They have openly critiqued small fundamental churches as being irrelevant to the culture and churches that most likely will not survive. My criticism of the South Carolina Baptist Convention is that their Saddleback perspective and subtle mandate for church is irrelevant to God and an offense to the gospel, and their model for success will ultimately be their death knoll. The church can never leave the fundamental moorings of Scripture, especially as it relates to the doctrine of salvation, and be successful. If media entertainment, social agendas, and cultural informality have to be the calling cards of the 21st century, then the church has no message and is doomed before it even begins.

ENDNOTES

¹ Strong, 907.

² Zodhiates, 64.

³ Slick, emerging-church-terminology, ep.

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