

# Praise God For Our Present Joy

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[ 0 : 00 ] We find our text today in verses 6 through 9. I think it might be helpful if we start back in verse 3. Remember, we're breaking a section apart into bite-sized chunks, like the mini-sized candy bars most of our kids got.

If they went trick-or-treating this week, they got the little tiny ones. Okay, there's a king-sized Hershey bar that's running from verses 3 to 12. We're breaking that down into mini-sized portions. We did 3 to 5 last week. We'll do 6 to 9 today. So let's start at verse 3. We're going to take 6 to 9 as our primary text, okay? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you've been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 27 ] though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Amen. It's estimated now that there are about 8.2 billion people who now inhabit the earth. That is an enormous amount of people. A number that I'm not sure that we can really fully comprehend and begin to grasp even. It's a lot of people.

And of course, that 8.2 billion people is represented by an enormous number of characteristics and defining characteristics and cultures that vary significantly from one to the next.

And yet there are some things that we can look at the world and we can look at every other human being in the world and say despite all the many differences that we do have, there are a few things that all of us have in common.

[ 2 : 37 ] And one of those things is that we're all trying to be and want to be happy. We want to be happy.

If you don't want to be happy, you're weird. In the United States, this is even written into one of our most important documents, isn't it?

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these unalienable rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Even our founding forefathers recognized that there is a consistency in the human condition. It's a consistent longing and what they framed as a longing and a pursuit of happiness, they believed that in the establishment of even our nation, they wanted to provide a culture and a situation where people could be free to pursue what would make them happy.

And as citizens of this great nation, we are grateful for that, that we do live in a place that we can pursue that kind of life. But everyone's pursuit of happiness looks different.

[ 4 : 11 ] Because what makes a person happy or what produces happy feelings, it all depends on the individual, doesn't it? And then it can get really complex, right?

Because what makes one person happy can be the very thing that makes the next person sad. If you're a baseball fan, perhaps you stayed up last night to watch game seven of the World Series. I wish both teams could have lost. I know Andy was pulling for the Blue Jays last night and it was looking pretty good for them until the ninth inning and then he would have been really happy had the Blue Jays won, but the Dodgers come in and the Dodgers win the World Series.

Their happiness is his sadness, right? It's the weird thing about happiness. There's other things about happiness we could say. Happiness is circumstantial. It lives and it dies on individual circumstances and situations.

And it's fleeting. What we want in life always seems to be just out of reach. And then the things that we actually have, we tend to have this sense of insecurity about them that at any moment, it can all just kind of unravel.

[ 5 : 32 ] That if the thing that makes us happy is money, there's a fear that comes along with that once we get the money. That, you know, if the market turns or something tragic happens in my life, I'm going to lose this thing that makes me happy.

Or if the thing that really makes you most happy is certain relationships, there's this fear that, you know, if I don't do this and I don't say this and I don't follow this kind of path then I'm going to lose this relationship that makes me so happy.

Or career, whatever. We fill in the blank. It's fleeting. It's here one moment and it's gone the next very often. So the pursuit of happiness, it tends to go on and on. Achieved by God's grace in part, but never really ultimately satisfying.

Now how's that for the start of a sermon? Y'all want to be happy and none of you are going to be. Well, there's something important that we need to understand about the pursuit of happiness.

And that is that happiness is not actually the fundamental desire of your heart. It is the outworking of a greater desire. And I think by way of definition, we can help ourselves here.

[ 6 : 44 ] We all certainly want to feel happy, but what our hearts really, truly crave is something that the Bible calls joy. Now there's synonyms to be sure, but they're different.

They're distinct from one another. Happiness is based on circumstances. Your team either wins or your team loses. You either get the job or you don't.

Joy, however, is something different than that. It persists even in the most devastating of situations. In tremendous grief, you cannot be happy, but you can have joy.

And that's really the longing of our hearts, isn't it? We want something that can transcend brokenness. Something that can transcend sadness.

Something that's stable and secure that will carry us through the dark moments of life that we know are inevitable. And through his word, God affirms again and again that you can actually possess a joy that is overflowing and abundant even when you cannot possibly feel happy about your life and its circumstances.

[ 8 : 05 ] It's something you can possess today and it's a source that is so stable and secure it can never actually be destroyed. And it is this present joy that Peter calls us to remember and praise God for in verses 6 through 9.

Remember, these verses, they come to us right in the middle of a larger call to worship that spans verses 3 to 12. And everything Peter writes here in 6 to 9, everything that he writes about Christian joy is meant to direct our hearts and praise to God.

That's its function. So we see the heading is actually in verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we get down here to these statements of joy, we realize that it's fitting underneath this umbrella.

So everything Peter's saying about joy, he means for us to then acknowledge and then turn it back to praise to God. He sees God as the source of it all. He sees God as the reason for it all.

And he's directing us to praise him on account of this. So the function then of 6 to 9 is a call to praise God for all the ways that he is working in us to produce and display this present joy.

[ 9 : 28 ] And I want to point out three facts about our present joy that Peter says should be at the heart of our sincere worship. Here's the first one.

Our present joy is focused on our future inheritance. Our present joy is focused on our future inheritance.

We get this from the very first phrase of verse 6. In this you rejoice. In what? In everything that he just said in verses 3 to 5.

He's building an argument. In this you rejoice. Joy is a disposition of the heart. It's given to us as a gracious gift from God.

God, to rejoice, the verb form, means to give voice to the joy that God has put there.

[ 10 : 24 ] To express it. And you'll notice in Peter's language that's what he's actually saying that these people are doing. He's saying in this you rejoice. There is something God has put in them and

they are expressing it because they've realized the goodness of God in it.

Now, interestingly, there are no explicit imperatives or commands here. He doesn't say, in this you must rejoice.

That's not the words that he could have said that. Certainly that would have been a fine command to give. But there's no imperative here. He's not writing an imperative. What is he doing? Well, he's not instructing these Christians to rejoice.

He's assuming that they already are. It's present tense. In this, we might say, you are rejoicing. In this, you are giving voice to the joy that God has put in your heart.

That's not because he thought the Christians in Asia were more mature than other Christians in other places. No, he makes this assumption because he understands joy to be a gift from God.

[11:40] a gift that is implanted into the heart of every believer at the new birth. Peter knows that. He's experienced that.

He's seen it now for three decades of his life as he's watched the Lord come in and bring life to dead sinners. And he's watched that joy be expressed again and again and again.

He knows this is true. He's at least aware that the Christians were engaged in expressing that joy even in tremendous hardship.

But I think he might be also assuming that they are not because they're better than anyone else but just because they're Christians. And he understands that to say you're a Christian and not to actually possess this joy is not really to be a Christian.

Those would be in contradiction in Peter's mind. Now notice what he says that Christians' joy is focused on. Christians express a present joy that's rooted in their hope of their future salvation.

[12:50] That's where it builds. In this? In what? In verses 3 to 5. That inheritance is what Peter covered there. God has given us the right to this inheritance by causing us to be born again through faith in Christ's resurrection.

That's verse 3. Our inheritance is unlike anything that we can comprehend now. It is imperishable. It is undefiled. It's unfading being kept in heaven for us.

That's verse 4. And God is keeping that inheritance secure as he is keeping us secure by faith until Jesus returns to take us home at which time we will receive that inheritance in full.

That's verse 5. So in what do Christians rejoice? In this they rejoice. In their future hope they rejoice.

And that is a transcendent joy. It can't be taken away. And it is very real no matter what the circumstances of our life may be. Tim Keller is really helpful here.

[14:01] He said the opposite of joy is not sadness. The opposite of joy is hopelessness.

Isn't that what Peter is saying? The presence of their joy flows directly out of the presence of their hope.

You can take the Christian and put them in devastating circumstances now and joy will persist. Why? Because the opposite of joy is not sadness and grief.

The opposite of joy is hopelessness. And the hope of the gospel is stronger than anything else that you will ever experience. you can be joyful even when you're sad.

Christians ought to be experts in joy because of what we have in Christ. No matter how grievous life gets in this we rejoice that Jesus has paid for our sin that he has risen from the dead that he ascended and sits on the heavenly throne that he will return to bring us home.

[15:12] In this we rejoice. In this we rejoice that God is keeping our future inheritance in heaven as he is sustaining our faith on earth. In this we rejoice.

No circumstance in life can take that away. If you are in Christ today nothing can remove that hope. It is secure. Therefore we praise God for our present joy that is focused on this future hope.

That is the first thing. The second thing our present joy endures in present grief. Our present joy endures in present grief.

And we get this of course in verses 6 and 7. In this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire may prove to be and result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peter affirms here present joy does not exclude present grief. We need to get that right lest a sinful prosperity gospel take hold that tells us that as long as you do all the things the right way the Lord will give you happiness and nothing but blessing.

[ 16 : 58 ] That is not the gospel of the Bible. Peter reminds us of that. I don't even think Peter means to speak here of occasional moments of grief or a particular season of grief.

We understand that the intensity of our grief it ebbs and flows doesn't it? We have some times that are more significantly grievous than others but I think Peter's intent here is to characterize all of life in exile as a time of ongoing grief and trial.

though now for a little while he says that's being set in contrast to the future eternal hope that we have. So he's not saying that you may have a couple of weeks where things are just rough at work. That's not what he's saying. He's saying no while you are here in exile it's going to be bad. It's going to be rough and there's going to be seasons of grief through various trials and you already know that he says to the people that he's writing to.

He's talking about our time of exile. And the point is that no matter how intense our grief greater still is our joy in Christ. The point is that what is coming is far greater than what is.

[ 18 : 15 ] And it's in this we rejoice. Paul says it this way in Romans 8 for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

The glory that Peter says in verse 4 he can't really tell you exactly what it is. He can only tell you what it isn't. And that is it's imperishable and it's unfading and it's undefiled.

And certainly Paul knew suffering. How many times was he left for dead? And yet he says there's nothing I've experienced in this life that can even compare to what is waiting for me in glory.

He never denies that that suffering will continue to take place here. It will. That's life in exile isn't it? Now I want to say something about the necessity of this though.

Isn't that what Peter brings our attention to in verse 7? That now for a little while you have been grieved by various trials if necessary.

[ 19 : 25 ] What is the necessity here? Sometimes we rationalize that grievous trials are nothing more than Satan's attacks against us.

That if something bad happens to it it must always be Satan that's doing it. And certainly that's true in many cases. Peter's going to tell us in chapter 5 be watchful be sober.

your enemy is like a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour. Of course that's true. We need to frame our minds here appropriately.

The context of this passage suggests that the necessity of grief is laid upon us not by the work of Satan it's laid upon us by God himself. Peter isn't talking about the devil here.

He isn't even talking about fallenness here. He's talking about the necessity of taking us through difficulties and whose necessity is it? Well in context here it's God's necessity that he leads us through it.

[ 20 : 29 ] Well let's think about this for just a moment. Certainly doesn't mean that evil isn't working against us of course it is. But what Christians affirm is that God is sovereign over all things and will even use the tactics of the evil one to accomplish his good purposes.

What Satan means for evil God uses for our good. And we see this all over the scriptures don't we? We need only look at Joseph in the end of Genesis.

Goes through tremendous suffering and then at the end of the story you remember his brothers come and over and over they continue to apologize because they think that Joseph's going to kill them once his dad is dead.

And remember what Joseph says to them. He says I'm not going to hurt you and you can stop apologizing. Why? Because what you meant for evil God meant for good.

What's Joseph saying? That was your evil you shouldn't have done it that was sin that was evil that you brought against me but God is sovereign even over your works of evil and he uses all things for the good of those who love him.

[ 21 : 43 ] I think Peter is reminding us of that here at least in part. What exactly is God's purpose in this though? Of course we understand that present joy does endure grief but we don't always understand why the grief is necessary in the first place.

Why does God make it necessary? And Peter helps us with this here. Two things I think are worth noting. One, God uses trials to prove our faith.

He uses trials to prove our faith. That's his necessity laid upon us. We see it in verse seven. In this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith which is more precious than gold perishes though it's tested by fire he says.

What is God doing with this? What is the necessity of it? It's to prove our faith. The analogy here of the refiner's fire is so good isn't it? It's so helpful that Peter uses this particular picture.

The refiner doesn't put gold in the fire to punish it. God doesn't take you through the fire to punish you.

[ 23 : 14 ] Your punishment was endured on the cross. All of it. There's nothing left for you to pay. He may let you face consequences for your sin in a refining way but he doesn't put you in the fire because he's mad at you.

He doesn't put you in the fire so that you can maybe fulfill something that Christ left unfulfilled earlier. No, the great gospel that we have is that Christ bore it all. God doesn't take you through the fire to punish you.

Neither does he take you through the fire to weaken you in that he desires to discourage you and tear you down. No, that's not what he's doing either. Rather, the fire, the refiner's prior, it proves the authenticity of the gold.

gold. It shows this is the real thing. This isn't a counterfeit. This isn't fake. And then it brings to the surface certain impurities.

It's called dross. That the refiner, after having put the gold in the fire, can begin to remove the impurities so that he might increase its quality and its value.

[ 24 : 30 ] Peter says, this is God's purpose. He takes his people through the fire. Why? To prove the authenticity that this is not a counterfeit.

Now, Jesus helps us with this, doesn't he? Jesus, do you remember the parable of the sower and the seed? Jesus says the sower goes out and he's spreading the seed and it falls on four different types of soil.

Remember, one of those soils was the rocky soil. It sprouts up immediately and it shows, at least for a little while, that it is real and that it's going to bear fruit, but then the sun comes out and it can't handle the heat and it burns up.

What's Jesus saying? Jesus is saying the same thing Peter is saying, that you can put a Christian in the fire, at least a professing Christian in the fire, and it's going to prove whether or not they're really a Christian. God takes us through the fire to separate the sheep from the goats, to show who is his and who isn't, but then he takes us through the fire in order that he might purify his people.

It brings out those impurities, doesn't it, our suffering. And God wants to purify his people. So what is the necessity of the trials?

[ 25 : 54 ] Well, God uses them to prove our faith. Of course, Peter is arguing there from the lesser to the greater. If we're concerned to do this for gold that perishes anyways, how much greater value is your soul that God would do this with you?

Second thing here I think we see is that God uses trials in order that he might bring us a great reward. He uses trials in order to bring us a great reward.

And we get this year at the end of verse 7. So that the tested genuineness of your faith may prove to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, whose praise and glory and honor is he talking about? That's the question, isn't it? Does Peter mean that for those who are faithful and they endure the suffering and God proves their faith that when Christ comes it will be will produce an even greater praise and glory and honor that we then give to the Lord Jesus at his return?

That could be what he means. I think he's actually referring to a praise and a glory and honor not that Christians are giving to Christ at his return but that Christ is giving to his people when he returns.

[ 27 : 11 ] I think that's what Peter means to say here. That God takes us to this trial in part to prove our faith and purify us. And those who have a tested genuineness of faith when the Lord returns, he's going to say, well done.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter now into the everlasting joy of the Lord. Why does God take us through this? He takes us through it to prove us.

He takes us through it in order that he might reward us. All Christians endure the fire and all Christians receive the rewards.

It's amazing. Now why is Peter going through all of this? Here's what I think he's doing. I think he means for this to be a comfort to us. Our present joy, it does not just endure this life of trial but it is strengthened by God's grace because of the life of trial.

Now, this present grief, it increases our longing for the future inheritance and the security of that inheritance brings incredible joy in the here and now.

[ 28 : 23 ] And for this, we must praise our great God. Maybe I can just say one more thing before we move on.

And this is for those of you who maybe you're not a Christian. Or you're trying to sort out exactly what you think and what you believe and you're not exactly sure where you're going to land.

And I want to give you something to think about and it's this. The fact that true joy exists in tremendous grief is part of what Peter means to say about the goodness of Christ.

Christ. In this section, Christian joy is far more profound and meaningful than the temporary and fleeting feelings of happiness.

It's greater than that. There's no such thing as a life on this earth that isn't touched by grievous trials. Everyone experiences that in a fallen world.

[ 29 : 26 ] And those who spend their lives chasing after a hopeless happiness that's entirely based on individual circumstances will in the end still feel unsatisfied.

But whatever it is that you're chasing, whatever that brings those temporary fleeting moments of happiness, happiness, it's never going to satisfy. But what Christ offers us in the gospel produces a profound joy that not only exists in grievous trials but is ultimately strengthened and more vibrantly displayed in them.

Only Jesus can give true hope. Only Jesus can bring this joy to the longings of your heart. So what do we find here from Peter?

We find that our present joy, it's focused on a future inheritance. We find also that it exists and it endures in present grief. There's a third thing.

Our present joy is a sign of God's gracious work in us. Our present joy is a sign that God is doing something in you.

[ 30 : 51 ] Verses 8 and 9. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

Obtaining the result of your faith, the salvation of your soul. Now essentially what Peter is doing here is saying that faith in and love for Jesus for these Christians and by extension us doesn't make a lot of sense.

It doesn't make a lot of sense. We would look at someone like Peter and we would say it makes sense that Peter loved Jesus and that Peter believed in Jesus.

That makes sense to us doesn't it? Why? He was one of Jesus' closest friends. Hand selected by Jesus to be an apostle and a disciple.

He spent three years of his life following Jesus around Israel. He listened to every sermon. He heard every discipleship lesson.

[ 32 : 16 ] He saw every miracle, even the ones that some of the disciples didn't get to see. Peter got to see them. He'll say later in chapter 5 that he is a witness, an eyewitness of the sufferings of the Lord.

He watched him from a distance suffer leading up to the crucifixion. He was a witness of the empty tomb. He saw Jesus even after his resurrection. He saw the things that Jesus was doing even before his ascension.

We would look at Peter and say, that makes sense. It makes sense that Peter would be so sure. It makes sense that Peter would love him so much that Peter would believe in him and have all of this joy. He was there.

He saw it. He heard it. None of these people that he's writing to had any of those experiences. They didn't see Jesus.

They didn't see him suffer. They didn't see him raised from the dead. They didn't see him ascend to heaven. They didn't see any of that. They weren't even like Paul who didn't see those things but at least experienced a post-ascension appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 33 : 24 ] They didn't have that either. And yet Peter says, you haven't seen him but you love him. You don't see him now but you believe in him and you rejoice.

And the question is, how is this even possible? Isn't this some of the struggle with some of the people that we try to evangelize and our best apologetic efforts?

We can give all of the best arguments for Christ and all of the best arguments against whatever it is that they believe. And still yet they may say, well, if he would just show up, that would just make

things a lot easier, wouldn't it?

The problem is the next time he shows up, it's going to be too late. What is it that Jesus says? He says it to Thomas. John chapter 20.

Blessed are those who believe though they have not seen. And that is almost every Christian who has ever lived. And that's who these people are that Peter's writing to.

[ 34 : 31 ] But the question is, how is this even possible? How is it that they can have this assurance and joy that the people that we're trying to evangelize that have not yet come to faith in Christ don't seem to possess that they don't have?

Peter's saying the joy that you have is coming from God. It's not coming because things just make sense to you in a way that they don't make sense to others.

It's coming from God, he says. Now two words I think stick out here. One is you're rejoicing with a joy that's inexpressible. Now remember, joy is the disposition of the heart.

It's something that God puts in us. To rejoice is just to give voice to that. So it's almost a paradox here. Peter is saying you are expressing something that's not possible to express.

What does he mean? It means that it's impossible to really fully articulate and grasp and even fully understand exactly why you believe and your friend doesn't.

[ 35 : 37 ] God is doing something in you, which is where the second word I think helps us. He says this joy that you rejoice with, it's inexpressible and it's filled with glory.

It's touched by the divine. It comes from God. And then he wraps it all up in that last phrase.

Obtaining. Present tense. A lot of people take this as future tense. But that's not what Peter says.

He doesn't say, and you will obtain the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

He says, no, you are presently obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. And what does all of this mean? That these believers, they may not be able to understand everything that's happening in their hearts, but what they can understand is that this is something God is doing in me.

And even now, as I look ahead to that future inheritance, even now, I'm already receiving in part what God has waiting for me in full in heaven. And the reason I know it is because of this faith and hope and joy that is in me.

[ 36 : 40 ] It's not self-generated. God puts it in us. And he gives it to us as a gift at the new birth as we come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Why do you believe Jesus? Well, yeah, it's certainly credible. But even Jesus said some people could see me raised from the dead and still not believe.

Faith isn't ultimately about the evidence. What's happening in your life? God is being merciful. And he is being gracious.

And he is awakening you by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. And he is putting this joy in you that is inexpressible and it is touched by the divine. It is filled with glory.

And even now, if you're in Christ, if you're trusting Christ and you have this joy, even now, you're already receiving this salvation that you will receive in full in heaven.

[ 37 : 41 ] And so Peter says, so why don't we just take some time to praise God? Let us bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for our future inheritance but then also for our present joy.

God is doing this in us. We are being saved. Now Peter's argument in these verses, it's not just to say that you can have a present joy.

It's to say that if you're in Christ, you already do have a present joy. It's there. There's no explicit command. There's no explicit challenge. If there's an implicit command, it's this.

It's that we need to give voice to the joy that God has put there. This should affect the way you sing on a Sunday. This should affect the way that you view the trials around you.

It doesn't mean that you shouldn't feel grief and that there's not going to be lots of times where you're overwhelmed by that grief. That's not what it means. It just means that there's going to be a persistent joy that you can give voice to genuinely in the midst of it.

[ 38 : 46 ] It should affect the way that you live with your wife. I mean, you should be the ones that are leading in these expressions of joy in your home.

It should affect the way that you're parenting your kids. Does not this present joy give us reason to temper our anger and our frustration? We could go on.

If there's a command that's implicit, it's that. Express what God has put in you. If there's a challenge that's implicit here, it's this. Don't ever let the grief of this life mute the expression of your joy.

Praise God anyways. And I want to close by giving you an example of that. Many of you have probably heard the story many times of Horatio Spafford. Spafford was an American lawyer in Chicago in the mid-19th century. Successful. Very wealthy. He had built a great business.

[ 40 : 01 ] He was also a Christian, a faithful Christian. He was even an elder in the Presbyterian church there. In 1871, in the spring of that year, Horatio Spafford invested most of his fortune in real estate in the northern part of Chicago.

And those of you who remember your history lessons know that it was in October of the same year that the great Chicago fire took place and basically wiped out the city. Everything Horatio Spafford had invested was gone, was lost.

And he was basically left starting over. But the thing with Horatio Spafford is that is not the, that is certainly probably the least of his hardships that he endured.

Two years after that, as he's building up his business, he and his wife decide to plan a trip to Europe. They're going to go and they're going to hear his friend D.L. Moody preach there. Just before they're due to leave, business emergencies came up.

Spafford decided to stay back a little bit longer, but he sent his wife and his daughters on ahead of him. He boarded the ship. They headed out across the Atlantic Ocean. And the middle of the night, they were hit by an iron vessel.

[ 41 : 10 ] The ship sank. Spafford's wife survived. All four of his daughters died. She finally makes it to Wales and she sends a message back.

All it says is, saved alone, what shall I do? A few weeks later, Spafford gets on a boat and he heads to meet his wife in Wales.

His daughter said that on the way over, the captain of this particular ship, it was a later daughter that he had, was very kind to show him where his daughters had died as they were passing over. And as you can imagine, he's overwhelmed by grief and that. He can't sleep. So in the middle of the night, he gets out pen and ink and he just begins to write what's in his heart. And the first thing that he wrote, when peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say, it is well.

It is well with my soul. Spafford's life didn't get any easier from there. He and his wife were blessed to have a few more kids, but just a few years later, his four-year-old son tragically died.

[ 42 : 36 ] He lived the rest of his life under immense grief that impacted him significantly. There are even times that we can discern biographically that he didn't really make great decisions all the time, even great theological decisions on the basis of his grief.

And yet, his faith and his hope was in the Lord Jesus. And the point in sharing this story is just to remind us that though all of us will endure suffering, some of us will face ongoing and at times excruciating grief during this life.

And Peter doesn't mean for us to acknowledge that just for a moment or for a season. He means for us to recognize that all of life here is going to be like that.

The intensity will ebb and flow, but there will always be grief. But even then, those who know the joy of God in Christ can sing with Spafford.

At least it's well with my soul. That was true for the Christians to whom Peter wrote this letter. That is true for you and me who are in Christ today.

[ 44 : 00 ] And it can be true for those of you who will repent and turn to Christ now or in the future. So let us praise God for this present joy.

Amen.