

# Focused Faith | 1 Peter 1:3-9,13 | 6/12/14

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- Introduction
  - We will be working through the epistle of Peter and look at what it means to have a faith that can withstand anything.
  - Peter wrote this Epistle as an encouragement to Christians, because when his letter was penned Rome was ruled by Nero who seemingly let his city burn to the ground.
    - However he chose to blame the Christians that they were responsible for the devastation to the city.
    - So you can imagine the persecution that the Christians would have then received.
    - They would have been yelled at, beaten and treated very poorly because of their beliefs.
    - So Peter's letter is full of encouragement for the Christian.
      - To trust in the Lord and to never lose hope, to not become resentful.
      - However one of the truths that is in this scripture is that as a Christian we will not be immune to suffering.
      - Peter didn't write the letter to tell them oh don't worry you will never suffer because you are a Christian, no he said you will suffer BUT do not lose faith and use the hope that you have in Christ to keep you going.
      - He even goes as far to tell us that our faith is strengthened in these trials.
      - That even though we may think that a trial is hard and difficult but our faith can actually be strengthened during these times.
  - This same encouragement for Christian living that Peter has for the Christians of his time apply just the same to us.
  - It gives us encouragement for Christian living so that we might by faith live our lives as Christ has called us to.
    - Because without faith we have nothing, our religion is nothing.
    - It is mandatory that a Christian have faith.
  - **Read 1 Peter 1:3-9**
- We have faith in our Salvation, which gives us hope. | 1 Peter 3-5
  - **Read 1 Peter 1:3-5**
  - Peter begins his letter of encouragement by reminding the Christians of the hope and the truth of the new birth that was provided to them by God's mercy.
    - This is fitting, as it is foundational.
  - When we look at having faith that is focused, the most important thing that we can focus our faith in is our Salvation in Christ that we have received because of God's mercy.
  - The foundation of our faith and our hope rests solely on the mercy that God has bestowed up on by giving us a way to a new birth into a living hope that is through the resurrection of Christ.
  - Because without this we have no hope at all, we have nothing to focus our faith on if we do not have this.
    - If we are going to have faith and hope to be able to get through life at all we must be strongly rooted in the most important truth and that is our Salvation and the results of that Salvation.
    - This is the most important truth that we must have faith in that we must be focused on in everything that we do.
    - It is the spiritual core for the Christian, without it we have nothing.
  - To have faith is belief, trust and confidence

- As we talk about faith it's important that we clarify what it means to have truth faith in something.
  - Faith is to believe from the heart
    - We must truly believe in our hearts that what we are putting our faith in is true.
    - If we are considering our faith in something to be purely knowledge of something then we are deceiving ourselves.
    - True faith is to know in your heart that it is true.
    - The heart is the deepest most truthful part of a person.
    - What is believed there we fully embrace and belief it to be true.
    - Take love for example if you say you love someone but don't truly mean it in your heart is there a difference? Yes there is.
  - Faith is to trust
    - To have faith in something is to fully trust in it.
    - If you say you have faith in someone to complete a task but you do not fully trust in their abilities then you do not have true faith in that person.
    - But if you truly have faith in someone you fully trust in their ability to see something true.
    - Think of the trust that it takes if you are to trust someone with your life. This is what true faith in someone or something is.
  - Faith is to have confidence
    - To have faith is to have confidence, which is the feeling of being certain that something will happen or that something is true.
    - You are confident in that person that no matter what your belief will not change.
    - No matter what someone else may say you are confident of the outcome.
  - If our faith is truly based on these ideas then we can have that resilient faith that can withstand anything the world may throw at us.
- We have a new birth
  - To have a new birth is to be born again
  - Peter reminds them of the most crucial importance to their Christianity and that is that they have been born again and have been received into the family of God.
  - This new birth is a free gift from God that requires our faith to believe that it is true for us to receive it.
    - Ephesians 2:4-9
    - Our Salvation hinges upon God's grace and our faith to believe this truth.
    - It is foundational to the lives of the Christian to have this faith for their Salvation,
    - But also to keep our focus on this gives us hope in every aspect of our lives.
    - We cannot overlook or disregard the significance of this.
  - **Through faith we are saved, through faith we have hope and we are strengthened and encouraged.**
- A living hope
  - Because we are born again and have a new birth as a child of God we have a living hope.
  - This hope is not based on circumstances of the world or our surroundings but it is a living hope that comes from God.

- The hope from the world is dead as it has no eternal promises or benefits while the living hope that we have from God gives us life, in fact it gives us eternal life.
- There is active power in this living hope that it can actually do something for us
  - Just as God’s word is living where by the reader who believes in the truths of the scriptures can see the power that is given to them from it because the word can transform them.
  - In the same way the living hope that we have with Christ has power that can encourage and strengthen us in any situation that we may be in.
  - There is no living hope in the world that can do that.
- This hope is real but this hope is only realized if we truly have faith.
  - Our true faith, which is to believe in our hearts, to trust and to be confident, this faith provides us the living hope of God.
  - If life gets rough and instead of holding onto the living hope our faith wavers and we lose our trust and lack confidence that God is going to come through
  - Then we lose track of the living hope that God has freely given us.
- **What are the differences you see between the hope that the world provides and the living hope we have because of Christ?**
- An imperishable inheritance that is uncorrupted and unfading
  - Peter continues to encourage the persecuted Christians in how to look past the troubles and to instead look forward to their eternal inheritance
  - By reminding them that we have an imperishable inheritance because of our Salvation that is we being Christians will no matter what spend an eternity in Heaven.
    - Matthew 25:34
      - “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”
    - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
      - “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.”
  - This is a core truth that Peter is encouraging us Christians with.
  - He is showing the persecuted Christian to look beyond all the troubles that they may be experiencing and have faith in the inheritance that they would be receiving, which is eternal life with Christ.
    - This eternal life is also one that comes with joy, peace, no more suffering, no more evil and is full of love.
    - Revelations 21:3-4
      - “Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look! God’s dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist, grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away.”
    - By having faith to believe in this it gives us power to be able to get through any of our trials because we have a sure hope to look forward to, we know where we are going.
  - This is an inheritance that can never be removed or taken from us because of God’s power.

- What greater hope can we put our faith in than the truth from God's word that nothing can separate us from our inheritance.
    - Romans 8:37-39
      - "No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"
    - True faith in this will strengthen us in all that we do and it will make our faith able to withstand even the darkest of times.
      - If we believe in our hearts that we will receive our inheritance of eternal life.
        - Which will be to live with no more grief or pain and to live eternally with God who will show us love forever and ever.
      - If we trust that this is true, that we trust this truth with our lives.
      - If we are confident and so confident that there is nothing that can change our minds, no matter the trial that we may be going through.
      - If we have true faith in our inheritance we WILL be strengthened and we will be able to live the life that God has called us to live.
    - If we have true faith in this there is no trial that we cannot handle.
    - Our faith will be strengthened
    - **How has your faith in your eternal inheritance strengthened you?**
- Rejoice in our trials | 1 Peter 6-7
  - **Read 1 Peter 6-7**
  - Peter speaks about rejoicing for not only in the hope that we have in the truths of Christ regarding our Salvation and eternal inheritance, but also in our trials.
    - This one can be hard for us to understand how can we rejoice when we go through a difficult time in life, how can we rejoice when our faith is tested.
  - We see that God has his reasons and as Peter says is to see the genuineness of our faith.
    - It is one thing to say that you have faith, to say it with your mouth that you believe in something.
      - We looked at what faith consisted of which was belief from the heart, to have total and complete trust and confidence.
      - So how does one know if they have true faith?
    - Does our faith hold up in a trial?
      - A hard time in life is truly when our faith in God in our faith in the hope that we have in the truths of God are tested.
      - **It is easy to have faith when times are good, but can you have faith and maintain hope when life is at its worst?**
        - Scripture has made it VERY clear that God is not interested in people that only seek him when times are good and they are getting blessed, God wants people who seek him and love him no matter the circumstances.
    - When we are squeezed this is where we will show God what is truly on our hearts.
      - If we say we have faith but when tested our hearts pour out disbelief and lack of trust for God then we truly didn't have faith in him to begin with.

- If we are squeezed and life is hard, but we maintain our faith and look to God's promises then our hearts show that we have true faith by believing, trusting and having the utmost confidence in God.
    - Can we maintain our faith in God like Job?
      - Job 1:20-22
        - “Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of Yahweh. Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything.”
      - Job's faith was genuine.
    - We must have faith in God during our trials.
      - In any and all trials of life our faith is tested, if we truly have faith and believe in the truths of God it will give us encouragement and hope to get through them all.
    - Importance of our faith
      - Peter tells us that having genuine faith is more important than any material possession.
      - There is no greater thing that we can have than genuine faith in God, which gives us living hope.
      - I hope that we all will never discount the importance of faith.
  - Trials are temporary
    - We can also see from this passage that Peter gives us hope in that our trials are temporary.
    - Our trials will not last forever, there is always an end.
    - We can be comforted knowing that all we have to do to endure a trial is to keep our eyes to the heavens to have unwavering faith in God.
  - Trials gives our faith endurance
    - James 1:2-3
      - “Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”
  - The results of our genuine faith
    - Peter concludes his audience by telling them that by showing this genuine faith that it will result in praise, glory, and honor for Jesus Christ.
    - When we show faith in God we give him praise, we give him glory and we honor him.
    - By maintaining faith we show God that we truly believe in his truths and we do not doubt his word.
    - Because to have lacking faith is to doubt the truths of his words.
  - **Have you seen your faith strengthened by a trial in your life? What helps you to keep your faith in your trials?**
- The results of the Christian who has genuine faith in Christ. | 1 Peter 1:8-9
  - ***Read 1 Peter 1:8-9***
    - This passage sums up the results of a Christian who has true genuine faith in Christ.
    - We believe we have faith in God even though we have not seen him, we love him and rejoice in him even though our eyes have not seen him.
    - This is faith to believe without seeing. Because anyone can believe something that they see with their eyes, but for those that believe when they do not see is faith.
      - Hebrews 11:1

- “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”
- As Christians we have never seen Heaven, never seen an angel or the face of God.
- We have never seen someone resurrected from the dead.
- Yet regardless we have true genuine faith in the truths of God’s words that they are in fact true.
- We believe, we have faith IN God and everything that he has told us and that he does even if we have never laid eyes upon them.
- This is the walk of a Christian.
  - 2 Corinthians 5:6-7
    - “So, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. **For we walk by faith, not by sight,**”
  - A Christian walks in obedience in faith to Christ. To obey God’s command having full faith in them that they are true.
  - This is how we must live out our lives to always walk in faith and not by sight.
  - By doing this we show our love and our belief in God, and for that we will have a true living hope that is unlike anything in the world.
- 1 Peter 1:13
  - “Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be serious and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”