



# Message **Transcript**

**Rejoice Now**

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Well, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. Will you please welcome our Broomfield campus who's worshipping along with us? We are continuing to keep our Broomfield campus in our prayers as in two weeks, they are moving to two services. So that is so exciting. I want to let you know this week, before I get started, we had our first annual Senior Pastor and Wives Retreat for BRAVE Global. You can see a picture behind me, but we're down in Phoenix this week with some of our pastors, not our international ones, but our national ones who were together for a time of prayer and fellowship. And it was amazing. We had great times of prayer, great times of encouragement.

I show you this picture because when we were part of a former fellowship, one of the things we missed the most was the relationships we had with other pastors and their families. And God is building something extremely powerful through BRAVE Global and I wanted you to see what you're a part of. Kim and I came back extremely refreshed and very encouraged about all that God is doing as he's getting ready to plant more and more churches to the glory of God. Amen. Amen.

Well, let's pray this morning and prepare to hear the word of the Lord. So Jesus, we just come before your throne and we ask that through your living and active word that we would hear you, that you would speak directly to us, Lord, that we would be challenged, encouraged, and changed, Lord, that we would be built up in the faith and that Lord, you would speak directly to our hearts, both individually and as a church here today. And so Lord, for what you're going to do in advance, we give you all the glory. We give you all the honor. We give you all the praise because that is rightly

yours. And right now all God's people who are ready to receive his word, believe what he says own it and put into practice the very things he shows you agree with me by very loudly saying the word. Amen. Amen. Amen.

There are so many different ways that we can rejoice. And when it comes to rejoicing, it happens oftentimes very naturally. If you would've seen me on my wedding day, one way you would've known I was rejoicing is I smiled the whole day. I woke up smiling. I was smiling in the videos, in all the pictures, was smiling at the altar. And yeah, there were moments of tears, but I was just happy. I was happy the whole time. When each one of my three kids was born, I found myself immediately I cried, just wept at the glory of God, that God could form a life, that God could create such a beautiful being and somebody I'd never even met before, or didn't know, as I held them in my arms. I remember when Brooke, our first born was born and I held her for the very first time, I just started to weep. It wasn't like somebody pulled me aside and said, "Hey, if you really want to show your wife that you love your daughter, just make sure you show some fake tears." It was genuine. It was real.

Hey, y'all at Super Bowl 50, when we knew the Broncos were going to win, I was high fiving all sorts of people all over the place I'd never even met before. Nobody told me to do that. It was just part of rejoicing. Rejoicing is something that happens naturally when our heart is fixed on that which fills who we are. And what Peter is going to tell us today that what should be filling our hearts at all times is the joy that we find in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And if we find that joy in the Lord Jesus

Christ, we're to rejoice presently, we're to rejoice now regardless of anything else that's going on. When I was at Super Bowl 50, I knew out of the 75,000 people or so that were there that day, there were people there that had challenges and problems and lots of things going on. But because of the moment in our hearts being so filled in the moment, they were able to rejoice.

When it comes to the Lord Jesus Christ in our relationship with him, regardless of circumstance, God wants us to rejoice. He wants us to rejoice and he wants us to rejoice now. And so what we're going to take a look at this morning are three reasons that we should be rejoicing presently, not just in the future. Like on my wedding day, it wasn't like I looked back 10 years after we were married and said let me just smile about that, that was a nice day. It was in the moment. God wants us to be in the moment of our salvation and our moment with Jesus and how is it we can rejoice regardless of present circumstances that we're in. So with that in mind, I would invite you to open up to the book of 1st Peter chapter one, we're going to be in verses six through 12. So let me read those verses and then we will look at them together looking for the three reasons that we should be rejoicing presently.

Right after Peter finishes up his understanding of the gospel he says this, "In this, you rejoice. Even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials so that the proof of your faith being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And though you have not seen him, you love him. And though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice with

the joy inexpressible and full of glory. Obtaining is the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. As to the salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries seeking to know what person or time the spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you in these things which have now been announced to you through those who preach the gospel to you by the holy spirit sent from heaven, these things into which angels long to look." And here what Peter is spelling out for those that he's writing to that are going through crisis and trials and challenge in their life much like we do today is he's telling them to rejoice. Notice how he starts this section, in this you greatly rejoice. Well, in what? In our salvation that we've been chosen before the foundation of the world, that God through Jesus Christ resurrection from the dead has given us an inheritance, which is undefiled. It is reserved in heaven. It is kept for you. If you have called upon the name of the Lord, if Jesus is your personal Lord and savior, everything is secure for you and in this right now, regardless of any circumstance that you're in, what are you called to do? You're called to rejoice, right?

It's not something you should be forced to do or told to do. It's something that if you realize what God has actually done in your life, you will rejoice. Now let me just be clear on this, not all of you can rejoice because not all of you have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, right? I mean, God so loved the world that he sent his son Jesus. Here is message of everything God wants you to know. He sent his son, Jesus,

because you're dead in your sins. And there was no way for you to get to God but God, the father, sent his son who died in your place, who rose from the dead and through him, by believing in him and him alone for the forgiveness of your sins, you can be completely forgiven, you can have all your sins and guilt washed away and you can be assured not only of having Christ in your life presently, but you can be assured of the salvation that is coming, the salvation of your soul. And in this, you can greatly rejoice.

Maybe you didn't hear me this morning. I'm telling you, I know there's many of you that have had difficult weeks, I know some of you have dealt with depression this week, I know some of you may have lost a loved one this week. I know some of you may be struggling in your marriage this week. I know some of you may have kids that are wayward this week. I know some of you are wondering how you're going to find money to pay all your bills. Some of you are looking for employment. I mean, there can be myriads of challenges this week. I get that, but here's this, if you belong to Jesus in the midst of all of that, you can rejoice now. That's the point. He says, in this, you greatly rejoice. And what does he say? He says rejoice now, because... He's going to give us the first of three reasons.

And the first reason is this, rejoice now, because trials will show your faith in the gospel. Trials will show or will demonstrate your faith in the gospel. Notice this, he says, "In this, you greatly rejoice even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials." Okay? Now distressed means this, distressed is the emotional anguish that comes out of trials. That's what it means to be

distressed. It means that you're sad. It means that you're frustrated. It means that you're angry or confused or hurt or upset, or you don't understand why this is going on. That's distress. Various trials means this, it literally means in the original language, multicolored or multifaceted. How many of you know trials can come in ways you didn't even think they could come before. Right? And when they come, how many by show of hands here in Brookfield would say, I know what it means to be distressed. I've felt that internal anguish on the inside. I mean, that's what he's saying. It happens to all of us.

And he's saying even in the midst of that, you can rejoice. Even in the midst of trials, you can rejoice. Now, when we go through trials, I want to tell you something about trials, trials are difficult. Trials are challenging. Trials stretch us. And as the apostle Paul talked about trials, here's what he said in 2nd Corinthians 4:16 in following and he says, "Therefore, we do not lose heart but though our outer man is decayed yet, our inner man is being renewed day by day." Now notice what Paul says. Paul is writing. He's the one who's been shipwrecked. He's been abused by both those inside the church and outside the church. He's one who's been stoned. He's been left for dead. He's been whipped. He's been threatened with his very life. He's been in prison. He's on trial. Everything that could have gone wrong in this guy's life has gone wrong. And here's what he's says, "For momentary light affliction." What? Being jailed wrongly, being abused, being beaten, being hurt, having your family stripped away from you, these light and momentary affliction.

Why is he calling them that? Because he knows this, no matter what your trial is, if you're a Christian, let me tell you the truth about your trial, it's temporary. There's an end game to the trial. There's a season set for the trial. It's coming to an end. You won't always have this trial. Here's what Paul says, "For the light and momentary afflictions is producing for us in eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparisons. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

What's Paul saying? I'm looking ahead. This is temporary. You will get physical illness, you will have trials, you will have financial troubles, health problems, relational problems and here's what Paul says, you will have them and they're all temporary and both Peter and Paul through the inspiration of the spirit are telling us, regardless of circumstances, rejoice, because what's true about your life is the foundation of the bedrock of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that cannot be taken away from you regardless of circumstance, right? That's what he's saying, in this, you rejoice, in this, you celebrate because trials will show or demonstrate your faith in the gospel. He says, no matter what the multicolored distress that you have in your life, you can still rejoice. Why? Notice verse seven, so that the proof of your faith, the proof of your faith, trials prove your faith. He says being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire may be found a result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now notice this, he's comparing your faith to gold. Gold was the highest commodity in the first century. If you had a lot of gold, you were wealthy. If you didn't



have a lot of gold, you weren't. I mean, gold was considered the most precious item that you can have. And here's what he's saying, your faith is more important than the most precious item you can have. Your faith is more valuable than any amount of money you could have. Your faith is more valuable than any relationship you could have or any job you could have. Your faith is worth more than that. And he says, but notice what gold is, the better the gold, the more it's been tried by fire, because the way that gold becomes more pure is it gets set on fire and it boils and then you're able to take the dross off the top so that the gold is more pure.

And he's basically saying that in the same way that gold goes through heat so that you can take off that which is impure to get a more pure gold, God takes us through trials to remove some of the impurities that would otherwise be there to make our faith even more valuable than it already is. So when trials come, you need to understand this about trials, they're a blessing given from God to grow your faith so that your faith is more pure and unadulterated and looking forward to the revelation of Jesus Christ. As a Christian, trials may be uncomfortable. They will be. Trials may be difficult. They will be, but let me tell you something about trials, trials are good from God's perspective. Now, we don't like them. I'm not preaching this morning to saying, hey, when trials come, just tell God how much you love them. I'm not saying you love them. I'm saying rejoice in them that God loves you enough to grow you through them. In James 1:2 here's what he says, he starts his book by saying, "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you face trials of various kinds."

Same words. When you face those multicolored trials, consider it all joy. It means make a careful assessment when you're going through the trial and say to yourself, "I'm rejoicing in this." It's hard to do. It's counterintuitive. The only way you can rejoice in the trial is if you know God's sovereign over it, otherwise you're going to go to your own self and try to fix the trial. And let me tell you something, you can't fix anything. You can't do it. So let's talk about these trials, because these trials, there's benefits of trials, right? So I want to talk to you about out some of the benefits of trials today. And the first is this, trials reset our focus on Christ. Trials reset our focus on Christ. If you are truly walking with the Lord when trials come, guess what they do? They take your energy from what you are focused on and your daily living and all your challenges and everything else and they reset your focus on Christ.

I mean, you can be going along and doing all sorts of great things and all of a sudden, one of your children ends up in the hospital and it's not business as usual anymore. Everything stops and you're at the hospital now and you're dealing with this and what are you doing as a Christian? You're calling upon the Lord saying, "God, I need your help right now." I'm calling on him in a way of dependence that I may not have been calling on him prior to when the trial came. When you're looking for employment and you don't have a job, but the bills continue to come, as a Christian, what do you do? You begin to call on the name of the Lord more because you know that he's the only one that can provide. When you go through challenges in your marriage or trials in your marriage, it pauses the rest of your life because you need to stop and seek the face of the Lord.

Trials are good because it's God's way of saying, "Hey, remember me? The one that can do everything. Hey, remember me that all things are possible for me? Hey, remember me? I'm just trying to get your attention here. Remember me?" That's what trials are good for. They reset our focus on Christ and wouldn't we all agree that resetting our focus on Christ is a good thing. We all agree to that, we just don't want to have a trial. But it's usually through the trial we reset our focus on Christ, which is a good thing, right? Secondly, it does this. It reminds us that this world is passing away.

Amen.

Trials will remind us that this world is passing away. Now listen to me, we live in a world that we start to hunker down in very, very easily. Without thinking about it, we start to think about this world and our goals for this world and all that we're going to do in this world and all that we're going to accomplish in this world and all the things we're going to have in this world. Trials remind us that those things are so temporary and none of them really matter anyway. I mean, when you're going through a trial and you have a child who is sick or a marriage in shambles or whatever, you're going through all that, it's not the time where you're really sitting down thinking about, well, what kind of house do I live in? And what kind of money do I have? And you're dealing with things that are far beyond that. Trials remind us, hey, no matter what you try to control, no matter what you try to set up, you can't control this world.

And by the way, this world's temporary. And no matter how old you are, it's going to be gone that fast. It's a reminder that you're not going to live for this world,

but you're going to set your eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ. So let us fix our eyes upon him, the author and perfecter of our faith. Trials remind us that everything we think is so important here and all of our big dreams and goals and all of our stuff mean nothing in light of the eternity that is to come and trials help us do that. Trials not only reset our focus on Christ, but it reminds us that this world's passing away. That even our best efforts to do everything that we want to do for the Lord, don't work out. Now, let me just be clear difference between a consequence and a trial. Consequence is something you do that you brought on yourself, right?

A consequence is you spend more than you have, there's a consequence to that, right? A consequence is when you do something and there's a result. Trials mean this just came out of nowhere, I had nothing to do with this, right? And when trials come, even when you're serving the Lord, it reminds you, hey, don't worry, this world's passing away. God's going to get you through this. This is going to be over soon. Amen. And that's a good thing. We need to be reminded this world's passing away. Third, it does this, it rekindles our hearts for evangelism. Trials rekindle our hearts for evangelism. Let me tell you why. Because the longer you go through trials in this world, the more you will find yourself saying these words, come Lord Jesus and come quickly. I remember I used to hang out with some people that were like that. I thought they were kind of fanatics, these Jesus fanatics here. Here's what I found.

The longer I walk with Christ and the more I see the world while I have my eyes fixed upon Christ, the more I say in my soul, oh Jesus, please come, we need you. You need to right these wrongs. You need to come quickly and I'd love it if you came.

Now, I get this if you're younger, because I was a Christian at 18 and I realized like, I want Jesus to come, but I want to get married first. I want Jesus to come but I'd like to have kids. I've been to college, now I'd like to get a job. I mean, I get some of those natural desires, but let me tell you something, if Jesus came today, you wouldn't want any of those things. He's so good and he's so worthy that if Jesus came today, there's nothing on your calendar that's more important than meeting him. I'm just telling you.

And it rekindles our hearts for evangelism in this way. Christians, when you go through a trial, here's what it reminds you, I need to reset my focus on Christ. This world's passing away. I'm going to be with Jesus soon. Here is what it should also remind you, on your worst day, here's what you should realize, it's seasonal. It'll be over soon. For the nonbeliever under their best day, it's as good as it's ever going to get. Trials for the nonbeliever are just a foretaste of what's coming in hell. Like the worst day anybody's ever had on this earth, if a nonbeliever were to die and spend their first five seconds in hell, they would wish for that day. That's how bad hell is. And as believers, what we should be reminded of in the trials is as we're going through this painful suffering, as we're going through what we're going through, be reminded of the fact that for you, it's temporary, but for everybody in your sphere of influence that doesn't know Jesus, what they're about ready to experience is way worse than that.

Share the gospel with them. It rekindles our hearts for that. It rekindles our heart. It thanks God that we're saved, that this is temporary and it reminds us that we have some people in our life that aren't, so pray for them and pray for opportunity to boldly share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Fourth, I would say this about trials and benefits.

Trials reshape our character. Did you know that? Trials have a way of growing our character in Christ, growing us in our Christ likeness. It's a benefit. I mean, all of us would say, I want to be more like Christ, I want to look more like Christ. What I find is through trials, God is able to shape more of that than in any other time in our life. Because if when we're going through trials and we're completely depending upon him and trusting him for the outcome of whatever we're trusting him for, we get to a place where we realize, man, my intimacy with Jesus is grown.

It's so important. And I would argue with you over the last 30 years of being a Christian that it's been through some of the trials and the hardships and the times in my life that I say, I hate this and I hate what's happening. That God has grown my characters in ways he never could have grown my character through blessing. And all of us would agree to that. All of us would agree to that. I mean, you've ever been through a trial before where you get on the other side of the trial and you're different than you were before you went through the trial and you say, thank God, thank you, Jesus for bringing me through that trial, I'm such a different person now, don't ever do that again, right? Have you ever had that? Right? Because we know we don't desire the trial, but we know that when we go through it, it's necessary for us and it helps us.

And that's why, here's the truth about trials, how many know here you don't get to pick your trial and you don't get to pick the time or the way in which the trial's going to come? If you did, it wouldn't be a trial. Trial means they come in ways you wouldn't pick at the time you wouldn't have wanted and that's when God's growing you the most. They never come in that timely way for us. They always come in a timely way for

who? For God. And we would say, if we had a way of resetting our focus on Jesus and reminding us that the world's passing away and rekindling our hearts for evangelism and reshaping our character, all of us as Christians would say, "I'm in. I want that." And it comes through trials. Well, I don't want that, right? And Peter's saying even, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you've been distressed by various trials, why? So that the proof of your faith, so that the proof of your faith be more precious than gold which is perishable even when tested by fire.

I'll give a fifth one. It won't be up on your screens, but a fifth one is it revives others hope in the gospel. It revives others hope in the gospel. Now, by show of hands, have you ever seen a Christian go through a trial where they hang onto Jesus and it encourages you by the way they do? You ever seen that before? Do you not realize that many times where God's taking you through a trial, it's not even about you it's about who's watching you? It's about who's seen you where other people are looking and they're thinking in their hearts, if I were going through that, I know I'd quit. If I were going through that, I know I'd give up. If I were going through that, there's no way I'd continue to pursue the Lord. If I were going through that, I think I'd be done with God and church for a long time. But I'm watching my friend over here and they're not only going through that, but they love Jesus even more. And so I need to have what they have. You ever seen that?

See, so when God's taken you through trials, it's not just personal for you. He's reviving the hope of the gospel in other people's lives as well because other people see

on display, you say you're a Christian, you say you believe, I get why, because you're all about blessing but when you go through trial, even your non-believing friends and your believing friends say you're going through a trial, they see it in your life and yet you're still rejoicing in the Lord, now non-believers and believers all like say this, whoever their God is, it's a God I want to serve. I see that that's genuine. That's real. That's authentic, right? Benefits of trials, right? And notice the outcome of the trials. This almost sounds heretical what Peter's saying, but notice what he says that they may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now what's he talking about? He's talking about your faith. He's to talking about our faith. Our faith, which is more valuable than gold is going to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And let's be clear, you'll hear me pray oftentimes I give God all the glory, all the honor, all the praise, it's all his. Amen. It's all his, but what Peter's talking about here is as your faith grows and as your faith is stretched and as your faith continues to be purified in the Lord because you're chosen and it's a guarantee you're going to heaven, let me tell you something else about your praise, your faith is going to result in being praised and given glory and being honored by who? Jesus Christ himself. Now it almost sounds heretical, doesn't it? That Jesus is going to praise you and give you glory and honor you, but it's not. That's what God's going to do for you. It's something we have to look forward to. You say Jesus is going to praise me when he comes? Yes he is. Yes he is. I mean, think about in Matthew's gospel, Matthew chapter 25, Matthew chapter 25. What's praise? First of all, what's praise? Praise is giving verbal



affirmation for a job well done, right? Way to go, good job.

In Matthew chapter 25, Jesus is telling the story about the parable of a talents, where he gives a man five, he gives a man two, he gives a man one. For the man that had five, he went and invested them. The man that had two went and invested them. When he sees them, when he returns from his journey, here's what he says to them, Matthew 25:21, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'" He says the same thing in verse 23 to the man that had two talents, his master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of things, enter into the joy of your master."

I mean, do you see this? What do they do? God has given every believer a stewardship of everything he's poured into your heart to be faithful with everything he's given to you, to the extent that you're faithful, you will receive commendation, not from your pastor, not from your friend, but from the Lord, Jesus Christ upon his return, where you hear these words from the savior and Lord of the universe, well done, good and faithful servant. Not only did you do well on earth, but I'm putting you in charge of many more things. Come enter in the joy of my happiness. How incredible is that that Jesus Christ himself would give you commendation for the faith in which you're holding onto? Is that worth holding onto a trial to hear the Lord say, well done. I mean, that's praise.

And while we'll give God praise. And let's be clear here, all praise is worthy of God. We're not going to heaven so we get praised. I'm just telling you on the authority

of God's word that when you get to heaven, there is commendation for those who have been faithful to the things that God has entrusted to them, right? I mean, the Bible makes it clear in Ephesians 2:8 and nine that we are saved by grace through faith. It is not our own doing. It's a gift of God. So no one should boast. There is nobody that's going to go to heaven and say, "Look what I did, I'm awesome." Not one. We are nothing apart from the grace of God. But knows what verse 10 says, "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

What are we being praised for? That we would just be faithful enough to trust that God is good and that we would walk in the ways that he wanted us to walk and that we would allow him to do work in and through us in such a way that the world would know that he's the Lord. And then for that, he says, "Well done, well done." I mean, it's amazing to think that my savior, that I want to give all glory honor and praise to would give me verbal commendation upon my arrival into his kingdom. Now, what's glory? I mean, let's be honest, the scriptures make clear all throughout that we're to humble ourselves in the side of the Lord, that God opposes the proud, God opposes and resist those who say I'm awesome. God hates that. But guess what? When it comes to his glory, here's what glory is, glory is Christ likeness. Glory is the fullness of God. And in some measure, in some way, all believers in Christ are going to get share in a measure of God's glory.

The Bible tells us we get to be co-heirs in all of his riches. That Jesus is going to lavish us in his glory. That we're going to get to experience a part of our inheritance is

experiencing it with him. It's not just like he gives us stuff, we get to experience the glory of God that Jesus has had before the foundation of the world. That's amazing. It's worthy of rejoicing, because there's not one person on this planet that deserves any of it. It's all by grace. And then how about this, honor? Honor simply means rewards. Honor simply means rewards.

You can write this verse down and study it this week, 1st Corinthians 3:10-15 talks about rewards. It says be careful how you build your life. You can build on wood, hay or stub. You can build on gold, costly stones or jewels. Be careful how you build. Build on the right things. There will be rewards for how you build your life, right? And we've talked about this before, in heaven there's no comparison, in heaven there's no, how come he got that and she got this? There's none of that, but you are rewarded to the measure of your own faith. And here's the beauty of how God rewards faith. He doesn't reward you compared to somebody else. The guy that had two talents was rewarded for his investment of the two talents. The guy that had five talents was rewarded for his investment of the five talents.

If you're even a one talent person and you invest the one talent, you'll be rewarded in the fullest measure that you could possibly be rewarded. You're not rewarded based upon what you could have got done, you're rewarded that you gave God the allegiance of your entire life, right? And it's amazing. It blows me away. I mean, as I read these verses, I almost want to scream, no, God, I don't need that. I'm coming to heaven to give you all worship. I'm coming to you to give you all praise,

glory, and honor. And yet you would do that for me. I mean, it's amazing.

And when does this happen? At the revelation of Jesus Christ, at the apocalypse, at his appearing, at his second coming when he comes. And this is what we see in the gospels, because trials show your faith in the gospel. I mean, if you just take a look at the disciples for a minute, remember those guys, the ones who denied Jesus, the ones who deserted Jesus, I mean, these guys were no good for anything when it came to the gospel. And yet when we read on in the book of Acts, we see these same guys that deserted and denied Christ were celebrating that they were worthy of suffering for his name. Remember when they got arrested in Acts chapter five and they couldn't figure out what to do with these guys and they couldn't find anything wrong with them, so they just had them beaten?

Notice this in Acts 5:40 and 41, it says, "They took his advice. And after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the council rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for his name." Do you see how that works? You see how rejoicing now in the trials works? When Jesus is truly your foundation, regardless of circumstances that are going on, regardless of anything else in your life, if you know the Lord, you have a reason to rejoice and you have a reason to rejoice now. There's nothing more exciting that you'll ever have happen in your life than having a relationship with Jesus Christ. And if you have that, you'll have that now.

Now, I told you at the beginning of the message, if you were to see me in my

wedding day, if you watched the DVD of my wedding day, you'd see me smiling the whole time. Here's what that means. If you're married, it means I should be smiling all the time, right? It's not just celebrating the day, it's celebrating the relationship. It's not just the day I got saved that, oh man, I wept and I cried and it was awesome, I should be celebrating the Lord ongoing all the time. That's what Peter's writing about. Peter's writing about the salvation that you have you can experience now presently because of what's about ready to happen.

Rejoice now because trials will show your faith in the gospel. They will demonstrate it. And we talk about all these different things that can go on and all these different things that can happen. I mean, I just read an article this week, that this week in Iraq, there were four kids that were beheaded by ISIS because their dad was asked to recant his faith in Christ and he didn't do it and so they took care of his children. Is that a trial? That's a trial. That's a trial unlike many of us will ever have to go through in our life. But yet what? If you truly believe the gospel, what can you do? You can know that the Lord is sovereign working and all that and it doesn't change anything that's true about who he is. That's a trial and we live in a world where we think trials are those things that happen to other people and the things that happen to me are unfair, right?

You're going through a trial brother, you're going through a trial sister, but when I'm going through, it's just unfair the way they treated me. It's unfair the way God's... No, it's a trial. You didn't get to choose it. You're just being faithful to the Lord. And here was the result, right? Trials are good because trials will show your faith in the gospel to prepare you for the life to come. Number two is this, Peter says to rejoice

now, because distance will strengthen your fellowship with Christ. Distance will strengthen your fellowship with Christ. Notice what says in verse eight and nine, he says, "And though you have not seen him, you love him. And though you do not see him now, you believe in him. You greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

He says you don't see him, but guess what you do? You love him and trust him even though you don't see him, you love him and trust him even though you don't see him. I haven't seen the resurrected Christ in all of his glory, but I love him and I trust him. Remember after Jesus rose from the dead and he met all his disciples in the upper room and all were there except for Thomas. And as the disciples said to Thomas, "Hey, we've seen the Lord, " here's what Thomas says... Remember what he said? "Unless I can put my hands in his hands and put my hands in his side and feel the scars, I will not believe it."

And a week later, Jesus shows up in the same room. Now, Thomas is there. He says, "Peace be with you." He says, "Thomas, reach out your hands, put your hand here, put your hand in my side." And he said this, "Stop doubting and believe." And do you know what he went on to say, "You believe, because you've seen. Blessed or happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." We haven't seen him. I mean, it would make for a very crowded church service if Jesus and all of his glory would show up on a Sunday morning and we could call other people and say, "You want to be a BRAVE Church because Jesus is here." Right? I mean, if we could see him, it would

change things. But if we could see him, we don't have faith. We have faith because we can't see him. There's distance. He's seated at the right hand of God, the father almighty and yet we trust him. We believe that he is who he is. Right?

2nd Corinthians 5:6 and seven says this, "Therefore being always of good courage and knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." Okay? While we're at home in the body, we're absent from the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be in the presence of Christ for believers, right? As long as we're in our body, we're absent from the Lord. The Lord is seated at the right hand of God, the father almighty, for what do we do then? For we walk by what? We walk by faith and not by sight. Now, for those of you who are single, if you're dating someone and you move to different locations and you really didn't like them, this proverb may hold true for you, out of sight, out of mind, right? I mean, we thought we were close, but now that we're not seeing each other, I really don't miss them that much. But if you are dating somebody and you really have affection for them and you move away, this proverb may be more appropriate, absence makes the heart grow fonder, right?

Distance grows your love for one another. When I met my wife, I was living in Dallas, she was living in Chicago and by God's providence over the course of two years, we ended up back in the same area unbeknownst to each other. But before we could do that, we had telephones. We talked on the phone all the time. I mean, almost every night I would call her like at 7:00 at night and talk to like midnight or something like that. Why? Because I wanted every second of my distance to count. I was yearning to be together with my wife. I was yearning to be... I wanted her to be

around. I wanted her to be part of everything that was going on in my life and I wanted to be part of hers.

Here's the truth, if you really love Jesus, there's a yearning in your heart looking forward to the day that you can be face to face with Jesus, that you no longer need to yearn, that you no longer need to say how long oh Lord, but there's that yearning to say there's coming a day when I will be with him and I will be with him for all eternity. Now think of this for a moment. No matter how long you're going to live on this planet, I mean, let's say you're going to live 150 years, which I don't even know was possible, but let's just give you that. If you could live 150 years, in line of eternity, here's how long your life is... Ready? That's longer than what your life is. And what you get to do for eternity is spend all of that time in the glory of God with Jesus Christ and distance is actually a good thing because you're preparing for meeting your Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

This time is preparation. This is like dress for rehearsal for the final deal. This is what it's all about. We're to love God. And wouldn't you agree that it's not just in marriage, but it's in any relationship that distance stirs your heart and distance makes you want to be close to people. When we were at the Senior Pastor and Wives Retreat this week, one of the pastors who's going to be praying for us in Colorado Springs told a story that when he was a pastor out in Nevada, that eight, let's see, seven firstborn children of pastors in that small town had been killed tragically, seven of them, seven of them.

I mean, amazing, right? One day he's traveling with his firstborn who was nine



years old at the time going 60 miles an hour through an intersection and the student driver didn't see the stop sign, ran into them. And he told the story how he was thrown through the front windshield, how he punctured a lung, how he couldn't even breathe, how he was almost ready to pass out. And he kept climbing back to get to his son in the car who was hanging upside down and was turning gray. And he's calling all his pastor friends and texting them saying, "Please come to the scene. I need prayer. I need prayer. My son needs prayer." And they got there and started praying over his son before he passed out and his son's color started coming back. And then he was laying on the gurney and he had to tell him, "Get me up because I can't breathe on my back." And they airlifted both of these guys and told his wife, "Your husband and son probably aren't going to live." Right? And by God's grace, son and him both miraculously survived.

So he's telling this story, my wife is boiling listening to this story, I'm getting choked up listening to the story. All I want to do is talk to my son. So it's like 9:00 at night. So I text my son, "Hey buddy. I just want you to know how much I love you. Can't wait to be back with you. Just want to give you a hug." And I get a text back, "Dad, it's nine o'clock, I'm in bed. Quit texting." When we call out to Jesus like that, he never says he's too busy. He never says, why are you yearning for me like that? He gets it. He created us for that, right? And God wants us to yearn for that relationship with him. God sends us through trials and the different things we go through so that we can know that the one supreme being and the one source of joy in our life that we can bank on no matter what is our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and he's trying to

get us to grow that all the time.

And if he's the center of that, if he's the center of our joy, distance will actually strengthen our fellowship or our relationship with him. Amen. And that's what he's saying. And he says, in this, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. Now, here's what inexpressible joy means, I can't even tell you. I mean, you'll see in a few weeks when they interview some player often national championship team and they put a microphone in his face and they'll say, what are you feeling right now? And what do they usually say? It's just awesome. I don't even know how to describe it. And that's basketball y'all. I mean, it's basketball. It's not even football, it's basketball, right? Sport, it's sport.

If we saw the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ and somebody was in interviewing us at the glory and the coming of Christ, hey, what do you think? What do you think about that? We wouldn't be able to talk. We don't know what it's going to be like. Some of us will be dancing. Some of us will be on our face. Some of us will just be weeping. Some of us will just be... I mean, we don't know, but it'll be inexpressible joy. And here's what Peter's saying, "Don't wait for the day that you meet Jesus. Just know that that day's coming and look forward to it and be rejoicing every day presently, because someday that day will be the day." Now, here's the truth. The day's coming sooner than you think and the truth is everybody that predicts the day is 100% wrong.

So we don't know the day, but at some point in time, we're going to meet the Lord, Jesus Christ. And here's the question, have you been developing that relationship

and are you ready so that if he came today, you would be, "Yes, he's here." Because that's what Peter's saying, we have the ability to rejoice now. And then finally he says this, not only can we rejoice because of our trials and rejoice in our distance where we would say, "Hey Jesus, if you were here, it'd be so much better." No, it wouldn't. He's given us his holy spirit who goes with us wherever we go, but he says also rejoice now, because why? Because God's wisdom will surprise your fervency and worship. God's wisdom will surprise your fervency and worship. The more you learn about God's plan of salvation and what he's been planning from eternity past to eternity future, you'll be blown away and you'll rejoice, not only what God's done for the world, but what God's done individually in your life.

Notice what he says. He says as to this salvation that I've been telling you all about, the prophets who prophesied of the grace of God that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries seeking to know what person or time the spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow. And here's what he says about them. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you in these things which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the holy spirit sent from heaven, these things into which angels long to look. Now, that is a long statement about the glory of God in salvation and what he's done.

It means even the prophets that were called of God, men who spoke the word the holy spirit put in their heart, who prophesied the coming of Christ, they still didn't understand exactly what God was going to do. Even the ones speaking on God's

behalf didn't understand the fullness of it. I mean, when you read through the Old Testament, you read that Moses was writing in Genesis 3:15 about the fact that there was going to be enmity between Jesus's seed, God's seed and the Satan's seed. And that one day Jesus would crush his head, but he would bruise his heel. That was prophesied all the way back in Genesis 3:15. And what we see is that Jesus was going to be born in Bethlehem. And Micah 5:2, we see that Jesus was going to be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. We see all the things in the Old Testament that the prophets were prophesying and yet the prophets themselves were making careful inquiries saying, well, when's it going to happen? We're the prophets and we don't even know when it's going to happen.

I mean, because God is so wise and so mysterious in the way in which he revealed it, that the more you study the plan of salvation from eternity past, the more you want to say this, whoa, glory to God, that he would love us enough to do that, that even the prophets themselves who were speaking on its behalf were looking in to do this. And the prophets talked about the fact that Jesus would suffer and that he would triumph and that he would rule and that he would save. And even though they were the ones predicting it, they didn't know what it was going to be like. And then we see the spirit of God. The holy spirit of God always wanted to reveal the resurrected Christ.

It was his job. They were seeking to know when the spirit of Christ within them was indicating the times that he would come. I mean, everything in the Bible is inspired by the holy spirit of God. It's why when you read the Bible, oftentimes it's the Bible that's reading you. It's why there's certain days when you're reading God's word or

hearing God's word preached in the church, there's just certain days, especially that grip your heart and say, that was for me, that was God's living an active word coming through to me. Right? I remember when I was being called to ministry and there was no doubt in my mind that God had put a call in my life to do ministry and I kept asking the question, God, why me? And the reason I wanted to know why me is because in my understanding of what a pastor needed to be, I was none of those things.

I was not like the perfect guy that lived the perfect life. I had too much sin in my past. I didn't feel like I fit. Why me? Why would you want me? I'm not your guy. You got it wrong. My friends are better speakers. My friends are better leaders. My friends have lived more morally, I'm not, why me? And I remember one day I was reading the word in Matthew 13:16, where Jesus was talking and it was as if God was speaking directly to me. And I was reading my name in there as I was reading, even though it's not written in the text and I was asking why me? And he said, but bless are your eyes, Jeff, because they see, and your ears Jeff, because they hear for truly I tell you that many prophets and righteous men desire to see what you see Jeff, and to hear what you hear Jeff and they did not see it and they did not hear what you hear.

And I was like, okay, so you want me to do ministry for you because I know you. He's like, "Yeah." It's God's written word. I mean, and the more you see how living and active his word is and what the spirit of Christ does to magnify Jesus, the more it will grow your fervency and worship. Like God cares about all my questions and God cares about me and God allows me to lay down at his feet the things that are concerning to me and God will do a work. And then how did this gospel come? I mean,

what's God's plan of salvation? It comes through the preached word. Those who preach the gospel. That's why Paul tells Timothy to preach the word. That's why Paul says in Romans, faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

When you hear the word of Christ preached, you're actually hearing the Lord when it's preached faithfully. When you're reading the word, you're hearing God speak directly to you. And it was the apostles who went out and began to preach the gospel and others beyond them that started to preach the gospel. And it was through the foolishness of preaching that God started saving souls and edifying and sending people all around the world. And when you realize that God uses just knuckleheads and that's his only choice, it's amazing. Like how in the world can God get his work done when he only has us to choose from? I mean, that blows me away. To God be the glory. It's a mystery. And here's what he says then, these are the things which angels long to look into, angels long to understand this. I mean, even the angels that are created beings that are on the throne of God, they don't even get the majesty of his plan of salvation.

They're always searching and looking in. Do you realize the angels look upon the church and look upon Christians to see what God is doing? Paul talked about this in 1st Corinthians 4:9, he says, "For I think God has exhibited us as apostles last of all, as men condemned to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." You realize the angels look down upon us to give God glory? I mean, the purpose of the church, which is described in Ephesians, specifically in Ephesians 3:10, why did God create the church? Why? So that the manifold wisdom of

God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places, that when we gather as a church and we seek the face of the Lord, when angels look down and say, "Wow, these creatures that you created from dust, that you put your spirit in are giving you all sorts of glory, praise God."

You realize when one sinner repents of his sin, who rejoices in heaven? Angels rejoice around the throne in heaven. They're watching what goes on. They're ministering spirits for what's happening here, which is why at the end of the Bible in the book of Revelation, the 66th in chapter five versus 11 and 12, we hear about the angels. It says, "Then I looked and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders." And listen to this, "And the number of them was myriads of myriads, which means countless and thousands of thousands saying in a loud voice, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'" What are the angels doing? They're worshipping the Lord. What are we going to do? We're going to worship the Lord. The more you realize God's plan of salvation for the world, the more you'll say God to you be the glory.

And the more you think about it individually, the more you'll say to God be the glory. I mean, just think about your life for a minute. What chasm did God cross for you? I mean, what sin did God have to forgive for you? I mean, what kind of mercy did God have to demonstrate for you? I mean, in what kind of way did God have to come around you and demonstrate that his love for you was greater than your sin? What did that look like in your life? That's what we see here in the text. That God is worthy of

being praised. That God is worthy of being worshiped. That God is worthy of being... We're worthy to rejoice in him now because of who we are in Christ. Even if you're going through trials, even if God seems distant, rejoice in him.

Why? Because his manifold wisdom has made known how much and how great his love is for you. Amen. Amen. So the way I want to close our service today is by us being able to rejoice by taking a meal together called the Lord's Supper. And in a moment, both campuses are actually going to come forward and pass out the elements. I encourage you to hold them in your hand and we'll come take them together. But as you take the elements, there'll be two cups stacked on top of each other, just take both, hold them in your hands. They represent the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, but I want us to pray because anybody, you don't have to be part of BRAVE Church to take communion, you need to be part of the body of Christ. And anybody who's part of the body of Christ is welcome to take this meal.

So I just want to pray for us and make sure our hearts are ready to receive. So Jesus, we give you all the praise, glory and honor. Lord, and in this place, Lord, there are some who are here that have never claimed you to be their personal Lord and savior. And if that's you here today, here's how you can pray. Lord, I know today I'm a sinner, but I believe you died on the cross for my sin and rose from the dead. And right now I confess you as my personal Lord and savior. And Lord, for those of us who have done that, even as we hold these elements in our hand, as we see the bread and the wine, Lord as we hold them in our hand during the singing of the song, Lord, just remind us of all the sin you've forgiven in our hearts. And Lord, let us reflect on your



goodness to us in Jesus' name. Amen.