

# In This You Greatly Rejoice



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*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.* 1 Peter 1:6 [\[1\]](#)

Rejoicing does not come natural to many people. Being full of joy such that your countenance is visibly changed is difficult for some. The Bible informs us in many places that we are to rejoice and let our rejoicing shape our thoughts and behaviors. Consider these examples:

But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You. **Psalms 5:11**

You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. **Psalms 16:11**

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart. **Psalms 32:11**

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth. **Psalms 66:1**

Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His works with joyful singing. **Psalms 107:22**

A joyful heart makes a cheerful face. **Proverbs 15:13a**

Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became

for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. **Jeremiah 15:16**

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.' **Matthew 25:21**

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13**

Christians of all people have reason to rejoice in God and live lives filled with joy because of His great gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. That is the context of the statement Peter makes in his first epistle, chapter one and verse six cited above.

The phrase that Peter begins his statement with, "In this", refers back to what he has just said in verses 1-5, capped off with the declaration that God's children by faith "are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

To fully grasp the gravity of the reason for our rejoicing, Christians should examine what Peter says in quick succession and without discussion beginning in verse 1. He begins by telling his readers that they reside in many places as "aliens" and that they are "chosen."

Peter means they are aliens in the sense that the nations in which they live, indeed the earth itself is not their permanent home. They are living as aliens in the land because their true home is heaven. When people place their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross for the forgiveness of their sins, they become citizens of heaven.[\[2\]](#) Eternity with the Father becomes their future residence.[\[3\]](#)

This citizenship is a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in

regeneration[4] and sanctification.[5] It marks every man, woman, and child who experiences regeneration, what is elsewhere called the “new birth”, as “chosen.” Sanctification is the outward manifestation of the truth that the Spirit of God has indwelt and empowered Christians to live a life dedicated to God. That is what is meant in the Bible by “present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”[6]

In 1 Peter 1:3 we read that by God’s great mercy He caused us to be born again. Elsewhere in Scripture we read that:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).[7]

And that:

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.[8]

The reality of this new birth, this exchange of the “dead in your trespasses and sins” life to the “made us alive together with Christ” life is demonstrated in the new life that we have the power to live. Paul wrote to the believers residing in Ephesus that:

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in

a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body and one Spirit*, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all... So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one *of you* with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. [\[9\]](#)

To the believers residing in Rome Paul said:

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. [\[10\]](#)

Therefore, Peter can speak of God's grace and peace being extended to His sons and daughters in fullest measure (v2). This in turn rightly leads to a living hope in Christ Jesus, buttressed by His resurrection from the dead (v3), and a promise of an inheritance in heaven, beyond the corrupting influences of the world system (v4).

Jesus is proclaimed by the writer to the Hebrews as both the author of our faith and the perfecter of it as well. [\[11\]](#) He is the author in the sense that the power of God to save any man or woman is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. [\[12\]](#)

What Peter is doing here friends, is telling us what we may celebrate, enjoy, and rejoice in. Our rejoicing is rooted in the immutable promises of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is this rejoicing based on God's unfailing promises toward us that provides a firm foundation that stands during the fiercest of storms.

Peter says to maintain a firm grasp on your joy rooted in your faith even when you are distressed by various trials. This is an important and significant truth to remember for what

follows in Peter's letter that we have considered here. We will consider the exhortations to stand firm in Part 2 of our look at "In This You Greatly Rejoice."

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### **Footnotes:**

[1] All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible, Lockman Foundation, 1995.

[2] Philippians 3:20.

[3] John 14:3; Romans 6:23.

[4] Titus 3:5.

[5] 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

[6] Romans 12:1

[7] Ephesians 2:1-5.

[8] Colossians 2:13-14.

[9] Ephesians 4:1-6, 17-32.

[10] Romans 6:1-7.

[11] Hebrews 12:2.

[12] Romans 1:16.