

“Our Risen Savior Gives Us Joy in the Journey”

(1 Peter 1:3-9 – Easter 2 – April 12, 2026)

1 Peter 1:3-9 – ³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴*to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,* ⁵*who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* ⁶*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,* ⁷*that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,* ⁸*whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,* ⁹*receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.*

Dear Redeemed in Christ, who have a living hope through His resurrection from the dead:

Imagine going on a long journey without any destination. You just get in the car and travel on, day after day, with no idea where you are going. It may feel like adventure at first as you explore the world. But when it came to facing unforeseen hardships, like a broken-down car, financial shortage, or sickness, you might begin to wonder: “Why am I going through all this? What is the meaning in this aimless journey? I want to go home.”

How different it is when you go on a journey with a meaningful destination. Imagine living in a distant country for many years, as life has taken you here and there. But now, you are excited about moving home, where you can be near loved ones. Even if there are hardships on the way, the meaningful destination makes it all worthwhile. There is a joy in the journey, as you look forward to coming home and sharing good times with loved ones.

That is how it is for us as believers in Jesus. We are on a journey through this world, on our way home. This is how the apostle Peter addresses believers at the beginning of this Epistle: “*to the pilgrims of the Dispersion*” (vs. 1). Believers in every age have been dispersed here and there, living as pilgrims in this world. But our citizenship is in heaven. We live by faith in Jesus, who died for our sins and rose to give us eternal life. He has gone ahead to prepare a place for us in His Father’s mansions (John 14:2). We look forward to Him bringing us to our heavenly home, to be with all our loved ones in Christ forever! While we are on our way, **“Our Risen Savior Gives Us Joy in the Journey.”**

1) We rejoice with a living hope, looking forward to our heavenly home

First, we rejoice with a living hope, as we look forward to our heavenly home. In view of this Peter begins with a doxology of praise: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord*

Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (vs. 3-5).

The fact that God has begotten us again to this living hope reminds us that there was a time when we lived without it. Lost in sin and unbelief, we lived “*without Christ... having no hope and without God in the world*” (Ephesians 2:12). Our hopes were centered, not in God’s promise of eternal life in Christ, but only in the life we could gain in this world.

Even now, our sinful hearts lead us to focus more on earthly than heavenly things. Sometimes we lay up treasures for ourselves in what is *corruptible* – money, possessions, inheritances, and all that seems to make life secure here and now; yet how quickly such treasures can be used up or lost to others who covet them. Sometimes we seek satisfaction in what is *defiled* by sin – impure desires that promise pleasure for the moment; but later they leave us burdened with shame and regret. Sometimes we get our hopes up in what is *fading away* – things that seem to bring new excitement and happiness in life; but with time and age, they lose their beauty and luster, become old and worn out, and wither away.

At times, we get so focused on the passing things of this world that we lose focus on our eternal destination in heaven. No wonder we can feel anxious and depressed at times, when earth-bound hopes disappoint us. If God had left us in our own aimless path of sin, we would be left clinging to dead hopes, not living hopes. That journey would have ended, not in eternal life, but in eternal death and hopelessness.

But God, “*according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*” God sent His Son to die on the cross for all our misplaced hopes in what is corruptible, defiled, and passing away. Jesus redeemed us from our aimless wandering in paths of sin – not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). God gave His Son over to death for our sins; then He raised Him from the dead on the third day for our justification (Romans 4:25).

Now God has begotten us again to a living hope, by joining us to Christ in baptism and faith. We were born again of water and the Spirit, who gives us faith. He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-6; Titus 3:5). We were united with Christ in His death to sin and raised to a new life in the power of His resurrection (Romans 6:2-11; 1 Peter 3:21). We were made children of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) of “*an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*”

Now that we have been raised with Christ, we rejoice with a living hope. We look forward to Him bringing us to that wonderful heavenly home, where there will be no more corruption, death, or decay; no more defiling effects of sin; but we will be perfect in body and soul. We look forward to that place where nothing will fade away or disappoint us; but we will experience unfading joys in the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2) We rejoice with genuine faith, strengthened through our earthly trials

Our risen Savior gives us joy in the journey, as we look forward to our heavenly home. This joy is not diminished by the hardships we face along the way. Rather, our risen Savior enables us to rejoice with genuine faith, as He strengthens us through our earthly trials.

As it says: "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (vs. 6-7).

When it speaks of genuineness of faith, it means a tested genuineness. It is like gold. Since this precious metal is so highly valued, it is tested by fire to prove its genuineness. The dross is removed and it is shown to be pure. Yet even gold is perishing.

How much more valuable is our faith, by which we are united to Jesus in eternal life! And how valuable is the tested genuineness of our faith. In this world, we experience trials of various kinds. We are grieved by sickness, injury, suffering, and death. We are grieved by temptations of the devil, who wants to hurt and destroy our faith. We are grieved by persecution and evils of the world as we bear a cross after Jesus.

Our trials, which are *"for a little while,"* are not meant to destroy our faith. They serve to strengthen our faith and prove it genuine. Luther put it this way: "Fire does not impair the quality of gold, but it purifies it, so that all alloy is removed. Thus God has imposed the cross on all Christians to cleanse and to purge them well, in order that faith may remain pure, just as the Word is, so that one adheres to the Word alone and relies on nothing else. For we really need such purging and affliction every day because of the coarse old Adam."

How often when our faith is tested, we fail in our complaining and bitter attitudes, and we give in to sin. Yet the test of a genuine faith is not that we are perfect, but that we cling to Christ alone for our salvation. As we cry out to God in repentance, He leads us all the more to rely on His Word and promises in Christ, who endured His fiery trials and cross for us with perfect obedience, and who rose again for our justification (Romans 4:25). Through faith in our crucified and risen Savior, God forgives us and counts us righteous.

This gives us confidence as we bear our own crosses and follow Jesus through our trials. In our weakness and suffering, we cry out to Him to deliver us; and He leads us all the more to rely on His Word and promise that says: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we feel grief and fear in the face of death, Jesus comforts us by His Word and promise: *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live”* (John 11:25).

As we cling to His Word, our earthly trials do not hurt our faith or destroy our hope. They make us heavenly minded, focused on that which is eternal in Christ. The end result is that the tested genuineness of our faith *“may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls”* (vs. 7-9).

3) We rejoice with inexpressible joy, receiving the glorious end of our faith

Therefore, our risen Savior gives us joy in the journey, in the living hope, the genuine faith, and the inexpressible joy He gives. For we are receiving the glorious end of our faith. We are inheriting eternal life in Him!

We have not yet seen Jesus with our eyes. Yet by the grace of God and His Spirit’s work in us through the Gospel, we see Jesus by faith and believe in Him. We believe that He loves us so much that He gave Himself unto death on the cross for our sins; and He rose again to give us eternal life and hope. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)!

Already, we are receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls; already we have eternal life in Jesus (John 5:24). We look forward to arriving at our glorious destination, when we will be home with our loved ones in Christ in heaven’s joys forever!

This gives us joy in the journey: *“joy inexpressible and full of glory.”* Already, while we pass through this world, we rejoice in things too glorious to speak awaiting us in heaven. *“The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”* (Romans 8:18). Indeed, who can fully express in earthly language the joys we will experience when Jesus brings us into those heavenly mansions He has prepared for us in His Father’s house – joys which will never fade but only increase through eternity? Who can fully express the joy when faith is turned to sight in the presence of God, and we will join our voices with all the family of God in Christ and all the host of angels, in that joyful doxology of praise:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.