

The Surpassing Worth of Knowing Jesus

Introduction and Review

- We have been addressing the nature & purpose of joy in trials from James chapter 1 & 1Peter chapter 1.
- Peter described this joy in times of trials as inexpressible & filled with glory (1Pe. 1:8)!
- Last week we looked at the Nature of Trials, the Purpose of Trials, and our Response to Trials (rejoicing) from 1Pe. 4:12-19.
- Last week we also learned that joy comes from a right relationship with Jesus Christ & sharing His sufferings.

I. Genuine Joy In Christ (v. 1-6)

A. Christians need regular reminders (v. 1)

Disunity, financial troubles, sickness & many other trials already mentioned in previous chapters distract Christians & affect our joy. Therefore we need regular reminders that our joy is in the Lord who controls our circumstances.

B. Troublesome people affect our joy (v. 2-6)

BEWARE of Judaizers – *you must become a Christian Jew!* Religious people with old traditions, legalism & immaturity can negatively affect our joy. *Today people who demand baptism, speaking in tongues, etc.; you must become a Baptist, Pentecostal, Catholic... before you can be a Christian are negatively affecting our joy. People who place unwarranted merit in family's religious heritage, ministry activities, financial offering, talents & skills can negatively affect our joy (2:14-16)!*

II. Genuine Benefits With Christ (v. 7-9)

A. Knowing Christ far exceeds natural gain (v. 7-8)

A right relationship with Jesus has eternal benefits. God provides all of our physical & spiritual needs in this life & in eternity (4:19; 3:20). NOTHING on earth compares to knowing Christ, "I count everything as loss".

B. God's righteousness far exceeds natural gain (v. 9)

Righteousness means satisfying God's demand for perfection (Mt. 5:48; 1Pe. 1:16). No human accomplishment could

*ever satisfy this demand. God's righteousness is a gift of grace (Rom 3:20-22). **You cannot earn it & you cannot lose it once you have it – it is exceedingly valuable.***

III. Genuine Relationship With Christ (v. 10-11)

Paul now describes this lofty goal that makes all other goals appear insignificant. Higher than marriage, parenting, ministry, career, etc.

A. Knowing Christ personally & relationally (v. 10a)

Every true Christian wants to grow in relation to the person of Jesus. He is the Son of God with all the character & qualities of God (Jn. 14:9a-b). We desire intimate fellowship & communion – children, sheep, disciples, etc. (terms of endearment & genuine relationship).

B. Knowing Christ experientially (v. 10b-c)

POWER: *This is the power that delivers us in salvation (Rom. 1:16). It is available to us for daily living, enables us to resist sin & obey God (Eph. 1:19-20).* **SUFFERING:** *This power gives us the motivation & ability to endure any kind of suffering for Jesus with hope & joy – historically & present day (Rom. 8:16-18; **15:13**). This power enables us to deny ourselves (pleasures, desires & goals) & willingly submit to the will of God – "becoming like him in his death".*

This power only comes through knowing Jesus Christ!

The ultimate goal is to grow in our relationship with Christ until we get to heaven (v. 11). To gain Christ, be found in Him & know Him is the ultimate joy in life!

ILL: When you're young, you feel that real joy comes getting away from home, job, marriage & family, ideal home, electronics, travel, success & fame. But when older, joy comes from a good night's sleep, digesting food, less pain in body; ability to hear, see & touch; true relationships & friendships.

APPL: The same is true with us spiritually. When you become a Christian, you find joy in the simply things of life regardless of the circumstances. And Jesus is the source of it all. Jesus is the center & basis of our joy. A right relationship with Him makes everything else in life right.

CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brothers & sister in the Lord, what goals do you have for knowing Jesus? How well do you want to know Him? What value do you place on your growing relationship with Jesus? As you face life with all of its uncertainties, you must be certain about this one & ultimate – to know Jesus personally & experientially; to be found in Him growing through difficult circumstances of life and to have genuine joy through difficult circumstances for the remainder of your life.

If you are not a Christian, your goal should be to know Jesus too. But you need to know Him in salvation first before you can grow in relationship with Him. Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins & the power of the gospel is here to save you today. But you must trust Jesus for your salvation. You must believe in Him for yourself, no one can believe for you. Will you believe today?

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