

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER SERMON SUMMARY, 2/3/13

1 Peter 1:6-9 — “Unreasonable, Inexpressible Joy,” Ryan Kelly

Series: *First Peter: Between Two Worlds*

In short: The Christian's hope is unreasonable because it is grounded in realities that transcend our life in this world, so that even our trials are productive for our joy.

SUNDAY'S OUTLINE

1. Christians Rejoice in God's Saving Work (3-6a)
2. Christians Rejoice Despite Various Trials (6)
3. Christians Rejoice in the Testing of their Faith (7a)
4. Christians Rejoice in the Outcome of their Faith (7b, 9)
5. Christians Rejoice in their Present Experience of Jesus (8)

HELP FOR OBSERVING, INTERPRETING, AND APPLYING THE SERMON TEXT

1. Sunday's sermon involved a certain apparent contradiction in the Christian life expressed in the title, “Unreasonable, Inexpressible Joy.” From 1 Peter 1:1-9, what is our rejoicing in, and what's unreasonable about it?

Our joy is in the salvation that Peter unpacked in 1:1-5. This joy is unreasonable, humanly speaking, because not only does it grow in spite of our trials but it is actually strengthened by them.

2. Peter speaks about believers experiencing “trials.” From 1 Peter 1:6-9, what do we know about these trials?

These trails are various, they are legitimately grievous, they are temporary, they are necessary, and they are productive for our refinement.

3. How should we talk about grief in relationship to joy? Does our joy cancel out our grief so that we shouldn't grieve? Does our grief have a part to play in our growth toward heaven? How do our answers to these questions effect how we process our own grief and comfort the grieving?

Grief and great joy are not incompatible. Think of Jesus weeping at the tomb of Lazarus. It is not necessarily a sign of spiritual weakness that we would be sad or grieved in our suffering. And yet, our grief, which is real, is also productive as it is used of God to refine us so that our faith is more precious even than gold. Our faith is not just tested, but purified by trials, and this is a reward that is greater in glory than all the grief we will know in this life.

4. Ryan used the illustration of an ice sculptor to relate the nature of God's work on us through our various trials. Sometimes he uses a chain saw, sometimes a chisel, and sometimes just warm water to smooth us out. What kinds of trials in your life or in the lives of people you love come to mind when you listened to our sermon, and how does 1 Peter specifically address that trial.

QUOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND OTHER MATERIAL FROM THE SERMON

- John Owen: “How, then, can we behold the glory of Christ? We need, first, a spiritual understanding of his glory as revealed in Scripture. Second, we need to think much about him if we wish to enjoy him fully. If we are satisfied with vague ideas about him we shall find no transforming power [revealed] to us. But when we cling wholeheartedly to him and our minds are filled with thoughts of him and we constantly delight ourselves in him, then spiritual power will flow from him to purify our hearts, increase our holiness, strengthen our graces, and sometimes fill us ‘with joy inexpressible and full of glory.’”
- C.S. Lewis: “Joy is the serious business of heaven.”
- Illustration: The “Box” effect in Albuquerque that makes our city a great home for the Balloon Fiesta gives us an illustration for suffering and the Christian. At one elevation, the wind blows in one direction, but higher up the wind blows in the opposite direction.
- Illustration: God works on us through suffering like a sculptor does on ice. Sometimes he uses a chain saw, sometimes a chisel, and sometimes warm water as to polish a refined area.