

THE ROAD TO GLORY

1 PETER 1:1-12

All God's people, at times, struggle with the problem of PERSPECTIVE

We struggle with panic and depression, . . .

when—like Peter— we take our eyes off God and His plan,...

and focus on our circumstances, on politics, or present financial crisis.

Familiar story of a **man who might be excused for taking his eyes off of God and focusing on his circumstances:** He'd had **"one of those days!"**

I'm writing in response to your request for additional information. In Block Number 3 of the claim form, I put, "Poor Planning", as the cause of my accident. You asked me to explain more fully. I trust the following details will be sufficient:

I'm a bricklayer. I was working alone on the roof of a 10-story building. When I completed my work, I had about 500 pounds of bricks left over. Rather than carry them down by hand, I decided to lower them to the ground in a barrel, using a pulley which was attached to the side of the building.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went to the roof, loaded the bricks, then went back down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 500 pounds of bricks. (You'll note in Block 11 of the claim form that I weigh 135 pounds). Due to surprise at being jerked off the ground, I forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the 5th floor, I met the barrel coming down... this explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone. I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were 2 knuckles into the pulley.

Fortunately, by this time I regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain. At the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground.... The bottom fell

out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approximately 30 pounds. I refer you again to my weight in Block Number 11 of the claim form. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the 5th floor, I met that barrel coming up again! This accounts for the two fractured ankles and lacerations of my legs and lower body. The 2nd encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks, and fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

I'm sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks, in pain and unable to stand... watching the empty barrel 10 stories above me... I again lost my presence of mind... **I LET GO OF THE ROPE ...**

While we chuckle at this story, there are times when each of us goes through considerable pain, and no one is laughing.

Some of us might be thinking:

"That's a perfect description of what my week/life has been like!"

The people who received Peter's letter knew the feeling.

Many, through no fault of their own, are ***suffering on account of their faith.***

Some are suffering at hands of Jewish families and neighbors.

They're ridiculed, attacked, fired from jobs and, in some cases, "buried".

By time Peter writes, many **suffer Roman persecution.**

Peter and Paul suffered under Nero.

For 250 years Roman emperors continue to attack people who trust Christ and refuse to renounce that faith.

In modern times too, many suffer for their faith:

Christians in much of **Africa and Asia** still suffer.

We've been reading about the persecuted church in **North Korea**.
This week we heard about 4 Christian villages in **Nigeria**—near Jos,
where Randy and Adena Wildman minister, that were wiped out.

Women and children killed; their homes burned to the ground.
When we lived in **Guatemala**, believers suffered under military
or guerilla attack against people who weren't totally committed
to *their* cause.

It's easy to lose perspective at times like that.

It's easy for us to lose our perspective in times like THIS too!

Principles Peter sets out are the same whether your life is
at stake,

or you're just suffering from others making fun of you,
or job loss because you won't play along with the system,
—even when we're suffering from concern about current world
conditions.

Peter's principles apply to all these situations.

We may not be persecuted today, but who knows about the
future?

What will we face in the rest of the 21st century? Will we be
ready for it?

There's still *another kind of pain*.

Some may be thinking: "I *wish* that's kind of suffering I was going
through. Those people were suffering because they stood for
what's right.

My suffering's my fault. I blew it; I'm facing consequences of
wrongdoing."

Peter knows the feeling. Remember life story of man who wrote
this book?

He's very human. Quick to jump in with both feet. Fails many
times

He has all the **right motives**, but the **wrong solutions**.

Over and over again he jumps too soon—in the wrong direction.
He knows pain of those who blow it big time.

In this letter to struggling, suffering, hurting believers, Peter gives principles to face struggles, and come out on top.

How do we triumph in "dog-eat-dog" world, when someone's out to get us?

Justly or unjustly we've become the target.

How do you face that and come out on top?

Peter writes to saints, suffering for their faith.

Initially Jewish persecution.

Now Roman persecution – Peter and Paul both died under Nero's attacks.

Peter writes to people living in the “frying pan.”

People who are suffering need encouragement.

Two key words: "SUFFER" and "GLORY"

Repetition and interweaving of these ideas points to theme of 1 Peter.

He shows relationship between PRESENT SUFFERING and FUTURE GLORY.

Two concepts are visible side-by-side through the book.

GOD USES SUFFERING TO PREPARE US FOR GREATER GLORY.

His purpose: to encourage us to remain faithful to God and to maintain a good testimony.

God will be glorified and we'll participate in His victory.

INTRODUCTION 1:1-2

Formal introduction: normal parts: author, recipient, greeting 1:1-2

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s **elect**, **strangers** in the world, **scattered** throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been **chosen** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of*

the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

Description of **recipients** emphasizes God's plan.

Both **suffering** and **glory** to follow are based on God's plan.

They are results of God's election.

Their election is in perfect harmony with God's plan and purpose.

Their sufferings are not fate or chance.

Everything works according to God's plan for our sanctification by the Spirit.

God has a plan which He designed in love for our good.

Through His plan, God will make us into all He wants us to be.

Through His plan, *with all its suffering*, the Spirit of God sets us apart and causes us to be conformed to the image of His Son!

HOPE WHICH CONQUERS EVEN IN SUFFERING

1:3-2:10

Peter presents the hope which enables scattered Christians to triumph while facing the severe suffering which lies ahead

Presentation of our FUTURE hope 1:3-5

The hope: God caused us to be born again that we might receive an incorruptible inheritance.

GOD CAUSED US TO BE BORN AGAIN:

* **That we might have a living hope 1:3** *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”*

Most people *despair* facing such great affliction; God's children can *rejoice*.

We have a living hope because it's based on Christ's finished work.

It's based on Christ's completed work, rather than our own.

* Hymn by Norman J. Clayton *

*My hope is in the Lord Who gave Himself for me,
And paid the price of all my sin at Calvary.*

*For me He died For me He lives,
And everlasting life and light He freely gives.*

Our living hope is guaranteed by the resurrection.

God accepts the work of Christ; therefore He accepts us.

[God caused us to be born again, for a 2nd reason:]

*** That we might have an incorruptible inheritance 1:4-5**

Our hope is reinforced because it promises an inheritance which cannot be damaged nor taken away from us **1:4-5**

“and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

It can't be damaged or lost— imperishable – undefiled – unfading

No matter what they do to us—they can't touch our inheritance!

It's already deposited to our account.

Great works of art have to be restored. One such project is the restoration of **Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper***. Thousands of dollars spent, attempting to restore fading colors. Even great masterpieces ultimately fade. But the heavenly inheritance that our Lord provides for us will never fade.

It's reserved in heaven for us.

We can't lose it. 1:5

Guaranteed because we're protected by His power—NOT
our power!

This inheritance includes our future salvation.

1:5b

It's not an earthly possession persecutors can strip from us.

It's **protected by God's power.**

Basis of our assurance: **God's guarding what's His!**

Purpose of PRESENT suffering 1:6-9 *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials."*

**Although we have this great hope for the future,
the present reality still has to be dealt with.**

The foreseeable, immediate future still brings suffering.

Yet, we can rejoice while suffering.

It's possible to rejoice, even while suffering,

because we understand the purpose for suffering.

The purpose of suffering: that our faith might result
in praise, glory and honor.

*** We suffer so our faith may be proven genuine.**

1:7a *"These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine"*

An assayer tests samples of gold ore to see whether there's
sufficient gold to make it profitable to operate a gold mine

The assayer's fire demonstrates that the gold is pure.

As WE pass through the fire, we demonstrate the reality of
our faith.

*** We suffer so God might be glorified through it.**

1:7b *"and [your faith] may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."*

God chooses the right method to accomplish His purpose.

Suffering proves the reality of our faith and produces praise
to God.

* **We suffer so we might learn true love, faith and joy. 1:8-9**

“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

The joy of the Lord shines through the tears.

The most joyful people in the world are those who've known the Lord as they pass through the darkest hours of the night.

Problem of PAST prophets 1:10-12 *“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the **sufferings** of Christ and the **glories** that would follow.¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.”*

The prophets never understood the concept of **suffering to obtain glory**.

When they saw teachings concerning **Christ's suffering and His glory**, they tried to figure it out, but it remained a mystery to them.

They couldn't reconcile glory with suffering.

Christ came to glory only through suffering 1:12

Even the angels didn't understand this.

It doesn't make sense!

They couldn't understand how Messiah could **suffer and receive glory**.

They couldn't see how suffering and glory work together.

Nevertheless, they predicted both aspects of His life.

They taught that Messiah would have to suffer before receiving His glory.

HOW ABOUT US TODAY?

Does God's plan make sense?

What does He want us to do when faced with suffering?

How should I react when facing difficult circumstances?

What difference will this principle make in my life this week?

Beekeeper told F.B. Meyer: Young bees are nurtured to ensure healthy development. Queen lays each egg in a 6-sided cell, filled with enough pollen and honey to feed on until it reaches a certain stage. Top is sealed with wax. When the occupant has exhausted its supply of nourishment, it's time for the tiny creature to be released from confinement. But what a wrestling, tussling, and straining it endures to get through the wax seal. The opening is narrow; in agony of exit, the bee rubs off the membrane that encases its wings. When it finally emerges it's able to fly!

He told of time a moth got into the hive and devoured wax capsules. The young bees crawled out without effort or trouble, but they couldn't fly. Soon the mature insects, seeing the unproductive state of new arrivals, stung them to death.

Pearls are product of pain. When oyster shell is chipped or pierced by a worm or boring parasite, a foreign substance, usually a grain of sand, gets in. The inside of the shell is made of a lustrous substance called nacre. When a grain of sand gets into a shell, the nacre cells get busy. They cover the sand with layer after layer of nacre to protect the soft body of the oyster. The result is that a beautiful pearl is formed. An oyster which hasn't been hurt doesn't grow a pearl--for **a pearl is a healed wound.**

Vacationer watched a lumberman jab his sharp hook into a log, separating it from others floating down a mountain stream. He

explained, "These all look alike, but a few are different. Those I let pass are from trees that grew in a valley, protected from storms. Their grain is coarse. The ones kept apart came from high on the mountains. From time they're small, they're beaten by strong winds. This toughens trees and gives them a fine grain. We save them for choice work.

That's what Peter is trying to tell us in this letter.

God's choicest work is done in those who've been through adversity.

Whether we're dealing with strong bees, fine pearls, or choice wood,

**GOD'S GREATEST WORK IS REVEALED
IN PEOPLE WHO COME THROUGH ADVERSITY.
SUFFERING IS THE MEANS GOD USES
TO PRODUCE WHAT WILL GLORIFY HIM!**

*There's no oil without squeezing the olives,
No wine without pressing the grapes,
No fragrance without crushing the flowers, and
No real joy without sorrow.*

Kristine Wyrzten used to sing a song called "The Fire" :

*I've been through a fire that has deepened my desire,
to know the living God more and more.*

It hasn't been much fun,

but the work that it has done in my life has been worth the hurt.

You see sometimes we need the hard times to bring us to our knees, otherwise we do as we please and never heed him.

For he always knows what's best and it's when we are distressed that we really come to know God as he is.

*"Now, for a little while, you may have had to **suffer** all kinds of trials, **so that** your faith--more valuable than gold, which perishes--though refined by fire, **may result in praise, glory and honor** when Jesus Christ is revealed."*