Series on 1 Peter.

The Journey –

As a kid I went to Walt Disney World with my cousin, Aunt and Uncle. My dear Uncle Tommy just did not care what he looked like when he walked around. He was wearing hat, maybe like a baseball cap, some kind of Mexican serape draped across one shoulder, tank top & short pants, very white legs, socks and sandals. Then a light meter for His camera which all hung around his neck, smoking his pipe. Me and my cousin just laughed and made fun of my poor, dear uncle. From many, many miles away you could see the word tourist stamped all over him. There was not attempt to fit in, be cool and he would have had no knowledge of what the word ‘hip’ even meant. Yet he had a great time!

This letter is written to Christians who are scattered throughout the Roman Empire. The lives they are aspiring to lead are going to be very counter-cultural to the normal citizen. They will face trials from the Roman government from time to time. The 2nd Century historian Tacitus writes that under the Emperor Nero many Christians were hung and burned alive in an attempt to light his garden. Many thousands faced wild animals or possible gladiators in the Colosseum. But most Christians were able to escape Rome, but they continually faced difficulties from fellow citizens. They were misunderstood, castigated from social groups, with wild rumors about what it actually meant to be a Christian. No one could escape this ongoing, daily stress of not fitting in with the culture around them.

Through this little book Peter will exhort those believers to continue on their faith journey until they finally see Jesus, at which point they will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

The Journey

1. Surprised by Joy 1 Peter 1: 3-9, 2:21-25, 3:17, 4:1-2, 12-13,
2. Don’t Go Back 1 Peter 1: 13-19, 2: 1-3, 4:3-7
3. Hold Hands 1 Peter 1:22-25, 2: 4-5, 4: 8-11
4. Shout 1 Peter 2: 9-12. 3: 14-16
5. Free at last 1 Peter 2: 13-20, 3:1-7, 8-12
6. Lifted Up 1 Peter 3: 8-12, 5: 5-10

Sermon #1:

Sunday, April 19th, 2020

Title: The Journey: *Surprised by Joy*

Text: 1 Peter 1: 3-9

Intro:

If you were going to write a note to someone facing hardship or severe trials what would you say?

I’m so sorry to inform you…

I hope you can make it…

Glad it’s you and not me…

It’s going to be terrible…Hide!!!...Run!!!

**But God! - Vs. 3 & 4**

Peter, after the initial greeting opens with praise and worship to God almighty!

Born again to a living hope!

What God gives me can’t no man take away! (protected by faith in God)

The truth is you never really get over being saved. You never outgrow the wonder that God almighty gave His Son Jesus for you and then the Holy Spirit drew you to His side! Even after you ran away, and may have spent years hiding from Him – but there He is persistently drawing us to Him to be born again.

Made new in the power of the Resurrected Life of Jesus!

I would be lost in my sin – But God

I didn’t turn over a new leaf, I didn’t just become moral, I didn’t just start attending a church God came to me and put new life in me. I was once dead but now I am alive.

Our testimony is not that we were

once immoral and are now moral

once selfish and are now generous

once a taker and now a giver….NO!!!

Our testimony is I was dead under the weight of my sin in unbelief, BUT GOD intervened in my life and caused me to be born again to a living hope!!!!

Not just the promise of heaven after I die but right now a living hope that is welling up within me!

I have something of God in me, this hope that rises up in the face of discouragement or despair.

For believers going through difficulty it would not be catchy phrases or Facebook memes that would carry them through – they had a living hope within them that stemmed from the life of the resurrected Christ and His Holy Spirit!

What God gave me, can’t nobody take away!

My body will grow old and weary, my nerves get frayed, my friends may reject me, my family may misunderstand what’s happening in my life, I might be ostracized at work, WHATEVER!!!!!

I have in inheritance. My body may be stripped naked and it looks like I have nothing – don’t believe it!!!

My body my be stuck in an ICU unit, with a trach breathing for me, I might be incoherent unable to communicate but I have an inheritance from God almighty that nothing I face on this earth will ever take away from me…

**GET REAL! – Vs. 5 & 6**

 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.   
**1 Peter 3:17 (NASB)**

1  Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,   
2  so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.   
**1 Peter 4:1-2 (NASB)**

*12  Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;   
13  but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.   
14  If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*   
**1 Peter 4:12-14 (NASB)**

In this book the reality of suffering is dealt with head on. Faith is not presented as the means to end the suffering but as the means to endure and outlast suffering. We are not trying to build some escape from the reality of this world.

**Rich Vagrants**

A faith that stands in the face of difficulty makes you a person who has something that no amount of money can buy.

32But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. **Hebrews 10:32-34 (NASB)**

**JOY UNSPEAKABLE & FULL OF GLORY**

Last week, in our Covid-19 ban of College Basketball I watched the 1998 Duke vs. Kentucky battle in the Great Eight round of the NCAA tournament. With only 9 minutes and 16 seconds left in the second half Kentucky was down by 17 points. Later I watched the 1998 Final Four games, UK was down to Stanford by 10 in the second half and Utah led UK by 10 at the half. Yet as I watched the replays I was relaxed and enjoying remembering the thrill of the Comeback Cats. When I watched those games live I was a nervous wreck and when Cameron Mills hit the shot heard round the Bluegrass I was estatic with joy.

How could I watch those games while perfectly at peace, no stress when my team is getting whipped? Because I knew the outcome. I knew my team was going to win.

When we have faith in Jesus, we know the outcome of this great game called life. While others are panicking, a nervous wreck it is a time for us to remember the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and all its implications.

When he was being murdered for his faith in Jesus, Stephen, the first martyr of the church said:

55  But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56  and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."   
**Acts 7:55-56 (NASB)**

* The disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit – Acts. 13:52
* The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit – Romans 14:17
* Now may the God of hope fill you will all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit – Romans 15:13
* You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit. – 1 Thess. 1:6

Joy is not the absence of difficulties but the presence of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus!

So many have reduced religion to some panacea that helps us avoid difficulties. Throughout 1 Peter he will never offer escapism as a viable option for the believer. We will have to walk through difficulties too. Yet because of the resurrection of Jesus, our faith in Him and the presence of the Holy Spirit we can have a real joy.

Bea Chastain – At a thanksgiving service standing to offer praise to the Lord. She said, without any weakness in her aged voice, “I am so thankful that my husband (who had recently died) is no longer in pain but is rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.”

**Prayer Time:**

Where are you right now?

Have you been born again? Do you have a living hope within you?

Have you experienced the living Jesus? K

Do you have more riches with God than you have on this earth? K

You must be born again to see heaven. (John 3:8)

Believer, are you experiencing the joy of your salvation?

Has the quarantine robbed you of your peace? Now is not the time for believers to panic.

Now is the time to Worship God!

Now is the time to Have Faith!

Now is the time to experience Joy inexpressible and full of Glory!!!