

“Your Faith Will Get Tested”

1 Peter 1:1-12

It is hard to believe that nearly thirty-nine years have passed since my wife, Roxanna, and I, along with our 5-year-old and 2-year-old little boys, loaded everything we owned into the back of my father-in-law’s cattle truck and a twelve-foot U-Haul trailer. We were moving to Colorado Springs to attend Nazarene Bible College to finish our education for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. That was a real faith-venture and would be only the beginning of many faith-ventures in years of ministry that were to come!

2020 was a crazy year! And the “crazy” has not seemed to let up very much as we move into the early days of 2021! We’re left wondering how all of these things will end up? When will the craziness and chaos end? One thing is certain – God is in control and our faith in Him and His ability to care for us in chaotic situations is what sustains us in the long run.

There is a lot to unpack in the first twelve verses of 1 Peter 1. But it is important to notice where Peter begins. “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!” (v. 3a). The word “praise” or “blessed” in the King James Version, is a word that in English is “eulogy.” We normally hear “eulogies” read at funerals of loved ones and friends. Peter is eulogizing the living, faithful God!

It is as if Peter, who is writing to some discouraged, lonely, troubled Christians, says, “The place where we need to start when we’re at a low point is with praise to God.”

Peter expresses praise for the gift of faith and tells us that faith flows from God’s mercy. David prays in Psalm 25:4-6, “Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are my God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.”

It is God’s mercy that characterizes who He is and how He relates to people. Peter was grateful that God could so radically change a person’s life that it was like starting all over again. Salvation would bring new life! A person’s slate could be wiped clean! A person could receive a “new lease on life” and be restored into a right relationship with God – through faith! He had discovered that by confessing his sins to God and asking Christ to come into his life, he could be forgiven completely for his sins and have a right relationship with God.

Peter turns his attention to the promise of an inheritance in verses 4 and 5 and tells us that it is “an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, 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.”

This inheritance is eternal, “kept in heaven for you.” Nothing can take it away because it is “shielded by God’s power.” However hard life gets, never forget what God has done for you in the new birth or what He has promised you as your inheritance. There is always hope when you

and I allow God to take control of our lives. Your faith will get tested! However, even when things seem to be spinning out of control, your faith in God will remind you that He is still in control!

In verse six, Peter addresses their grief in all kinds of trials. "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials." It's a strange teaching – "rejoice" in your trials. WHO WANTS TO DO THAT! We all have had things come into our lives that if we had been given a chance to vote on them, we would have voted NO! "No, I do not choose to go through that trial!"

Rejoice! Our trials are "for a little while." There is a wonderful contrast between "for a little while" and Peter's description of their inheritance that "can never perish, spoil or fade" (v. 4) – it is this, someone has said, "Our pain is passing; our inheritance is permanent." Warren Wiersbe said, "A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted."

Your faith will get tested! Hear what Peter says, "these (trials) have come so that your faith – of much greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor, when Jesus Christ is revealed" (v. 7).

It wasn't long after we moved our little family to Colorado Springs to attend NBC, that we found ourselves in a very difficult financial situation. One particular evening, Roxanna and I sat down to pay our bills – tithe first, always – then the rest - electric, gas, car payment, etc. When we were finished, we had nothing left, ZERO, nothing! We had no food in the house, nor, money to buy groceries – ZERO!

The next morning, Roxanna was walking toward the kitchen and she overheard our five-year-old say to his little two-year-old little brother, "Don't ask Momma to fix us food this morning, Buddy. We don't have any and if you ask her, it'll make her cry!" Talk about ripping your heart out!! Roxanna did what momma's do and kept the boys busy playing with their toys and things to keep their little minds occupied.

That same night, our doorbell rang. I opened the door, and there stood Rosie and Stan Huntsman. Rosie was a joyful soul, and she had this very big smile on her face that stretched from ear to ear. She said, "Dan, we were at the grocery store tonight and I reached for a gallon milk, and God said, 'Get another one.' I reached for a dozen eggs, and God said, 'Get another one.' God said, 'Get two of everything and take the second portion to Dan and Roxanna and the boys. Dan, we don't want to offend you, but would it be okay if we brought these groceries into your house?'"

Rosie and Stan Huntsman brought so many bagsful of groceries into our house that night that our five-year-old and two-year-old little boys thought it must be Christmas! We had said nothing to anyone about our need; but God knew! We sat our two sons down that night and talked to them about how God provided our needs through Stan and Rosie Huntsman's obedience to Him.

I don't know if Stan and Rosie have any idea as to how that one act of obedience impacted the lives and future ministry of a young Nazarene Bible College family. I have told that story of God's

faithfulness and Stan and Rosie's obedience everywhere I have been! Those two little boys are now 44 and 41-years-old. They have families of their own now. They have told the "Rosie" story to their kids and many others.

Your faith will get tested! In the end, your faith will be proved genuine!

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