

## 1 Peter 1:6 – Joy/Full – Exceeding Joy

Preached at King of Kings Church by Ian Fraser, 27<sup>th</sup> of December, 2020.

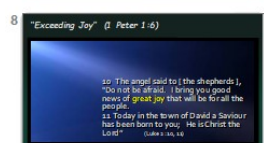
### Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

“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, 4 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. 6 **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while [if need be] you may have had to suffer grief [/heaviness] in all kinds of trials.** 7 These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 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. ”

### Introduction

#### Amazing things have occurred up into this week;

**Good and bad:** We learned of the astonishing attempt of a local adventurer, **Zirk Botha**, who launched off Kommetjie last weekend, to row to Rio de Janeiro in South America – an attempt he hopes to accomplish in 100 days! Building up to Christmas this last week was the news that the **“Star of Bethlehem”** would be visible in the West.



It was the unusually close conjunction of Saturn (with the rings) with Jupiter, our Solar System's 2 largest planets, not seen as close together for 800 years. Since their appearing in the East, earlier this year, they have moved closer and closer, with Jupiter almost eclipsing Saturn in the week of Christmas. Then **Christmas day** came!

**But sad things have also happened recently.**

The devastating **Masipumelele fire**. Some of our own family were sadly affected. We also learned this last week of the **highest national recorded COVID infection rate**. We have also been mourning the sad passing of **Ian Nash** on Christmas eve. Please remember Glynn and family in your thoughts and prayers.

**Isn't it amazing how we can find sorrow and joy mixing**, as it has for us this last year, and especially in the last few weeks? So it was when the Magi were led to the baby Jesus. **In a world of trouble, great joy filled the hearts of those Magi**, when they saw how God was leading them to where Jesus was.

Matthew's Gospel records that when they saw the star, they rejoiced with an exceedingly great gladness. It was a special type of joy. **It exceeded everything else**. That's what we want to look at this morning. "Exceeding Joy!" We want to learn of a joy that exceeds everything else in our lives.

**The joy of the Magi was one type of joy**. It came about because, while they were disappointed in Jerusalem because the one they were looking for was not there, the star which they had first seen in the East was still going ahead of them to get them to where they were meant to be. **It was a circumstantial joy**. It was a joy based on a profoundly meaningful event.

**But that is not the joy we are looking at this morning.** We are learning this morning of a joy that is even more profound and important. It is given a hint in the appearing of the angels to the shepherds that wonderful night of Christmas:

“10 The angel said to [ the shepherds ], "Do not be afraid. I bring you **good news of great joy** that will be for all the people.  
11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2 : 10, 11). This joy was not based on an event. It was a joy about Jesus Christ then, Jesus Christ today, and Jesus Christ always. That is what our text, 1 Peter. 1:6, explores.

In the same way that Jesus came as a source of joy into the world, so Peter writes that there is a joy for us in the world in which we live. What we live is termed, in v6 of the KJV, as a heaviness.

## 1. Joy in HEAVINESS of soul

“You greatly **rejoice**, though now for a while, if need be, you are in **the heaviness** of many types of trials” (1:6).

I want to point out three types of trials that may lead to the heaviness being spoken of here:  
heaviness due to

... **difficulties common to all**

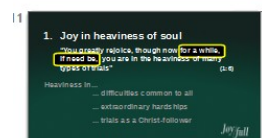
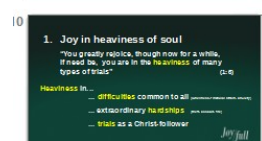
(loneliness, financial strain, anxiety, illness, accidents)

... extraordinary hardships

(theft, assault, the worst fire in Masiphumelele)

... trials as a Christ-follower, on top of everything

(opposition against you from family, work, or community”



**These trials may lead to a fundamental sorrow or heaviness of soul.** It is a spiritual thing that sits with you as a result of all you have faced. A friend who hasn't seen you for a while might be startled and say, "Dear friend, what has happened to you?" or you may look at yourself in the mirror one day and say, "Is that me? The lights have gone out. What has become of me?" What you are seeing may come from the long-effects of many types of trials and sorrows. You may be experiencing what Peter calls here, "the HEAVINESS of many kinds of trials". What you have gone through has affected your heart. Many of you know the experience of heaviness of soul.

**I want to encourage you. You are not alone.**

**Jesus knew about this heaviness:** Remember what was prophesied about the Christ to come: "He was despised and rejected, a man of suffering, and familiar with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). Jesus knew an underlying drone of sorrow, a heaviness of soul. Perhaps for the first time, as you think on these things, you are beginning to realize that you are not merely stressed, or depressed, or anxious, or grieving. What you are facing, deep down in your inmost being, in your soul, far below the circumstances of life, is a heaviness **as a result** of what you have gone through. Jesus was familiar with this condition.

**The Apostle Paul endured heaviness of soul:** Paul spoke of **being sorrowful**, yet always rejoicing (2 Corinthians 6:10). The word he used is the same one used by Peter in our text.

**Jesus suffered heaviness such as we will never know.** He described His heaviness in the Garden of Gethsemane as a sorrow of soul near to the experience of death itself (Matthew 26:38).

## Two consolations may be drawn from this v6:

- (1) “heaviness for a while” – God determines how long our experience of heaviness will be, or how intensely it weighs upon us;
- (2) “heaviness if need be” – God only allows what is necessary for you & me. Peter writes that any heaviness we experience that is not of our own sinful making is “suffering according to God’s will” (4:19).

> **His heaviness “then”** is a parallel for **our** experience **“now”**.

If you are going through this kind of experience, our text this morning is to encourage you that there is a joy for your soul which exceeds it.

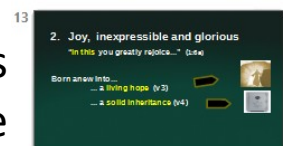
## 2. Joy, inexpressible and glorious “In this you greatly rejoice” (1:6a)

Scripture urges us to be born again. This new life is the work of Jesus Christ in our souls. He is our true Life and Joy.

If you have trusted Jesus Christ to be your Saviour from God’s judgment, you are born anew into... (3 “into”s)

... **into a living hope** (v3)

based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from death. This resurrection is an historical, verified event (cf. Frank Morrison “*Who moved the Stone?*”; Josh McDowell “*Evidence that Demands a Verdict*”; CS Lewis “*Mere Christianity*” and “*Miracles*”; Lee Strobel “*Case for Christ*”, South Africa’s Judge



Claasen's "*The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the perspective of a High Court Judge*", and many others).

... **into a solid inheritance (citizenship) (v4)**

based on Heaven's quality & security

- it can't perish (*my shares that came to nothing*),
- it won't spoil (*my inherited trailer that rusted away*),
- it doesn't fade (*the glory of fame & achievements fade*)

... **into a (ready-to-be-revealed & kept for you) glory-End (v5)**

- "ready-to-be-revealed" – illustrated by 1-way glass

- "ready-to-be-revealed" – every now & then God shows Himself through the glass, to show how real this "ready-to-be-revealed ἀποκαλυφθῆναι" is – as a present-generating joy:

# The story of a friend suffering from leukaemia, aggravated by compromised lungs as a result of a premature birth. The news and experience of his condition led him into a time of heaviness of soul. Then he contracted COVID-19, and was almost gone. Then he had a dream of how God assured him that he knew him, that it was going to be ok, and how God visited him in power. In just over 48 hours he was out of ICU, into a general ward, and then home with oxygen, on the load road to recovery:

The point, therefore, is this: we should not put our joy in the things of this life. The only way to live, according to this text, is to take hold of the joy that is in Jesus Christ. He is the Living God who one day will remove the thin pane of our physical covering. Then we will realize that He has been in our face all the time.

### **3. Joy IN heaviness of soul**

"In this **you [now] greatly rejoice** though now..."

... **these trials will end** - “a little while” (v6)  
... **your faith will be proved genuine**

- “better than gold” (v7)

(One of our own number: robbed, beaten, and having lost all in the Masiphumelele fire: Messaged me, “God is good all the time” and came to church the next day, to worship – **that** faith is proved to be genuine, for sure!) - he shows us what joy **IN** heaviness is like.

... **you will receive Christ’s praise, glory & honour** (v7)

(welcomed by Christ’s “Well done”, and by those who were touched by Christ through your faith & service in Jesus’ Name [cf. Luke 16:9]).

Jesus Christ: Joy that exceeds heaviness of soul.

