***Omega: BIB 109***

***1st Peter – Always Be Prepared***

***Lesson 4***

***I. Paradoxes of the Christian Life***

🡪 We must not forget when Peter wrote this letter, he was writing to Christians who were living in a very specific time and place in history, and were facing some very trying circumstances. Thus one of Peter’s purposes in writing was to encourage his brothers and sisters to be bold in their faith, and to trust God would indeed cause all their trials to work together for good (Rom. 8:28)

🡪 What is a paradox? A paradox is a statement or proposition seemingly self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expressing a possible truth.

***A. The Paradox of Joy…***

1. DEFINED: Though our lives may be filled with trials and grief, they are also filled with JOY (Verse 6).

2. Almost from the very beginning (Genesis 3), the Bible shows us that this earthly life always holds the potential for suffering.

3. Though many kinds of suffering are common to all mankind, Peter is here thinking especially of the suffering that is often endured by Christians – in the form of persecution.

4. Why does God allow Christians to be subjected to unjust and often cruel treatment? Why does He permit the wicked to attack and harm us, resulting in suffering and grief?

A. The answer to such questions lies in the meaning of the word “trials”.

B. Times of persecution of Christians are trials in the sense that they put us to the test.

1. James 1:2-3

C. The Greek word translated “trials” (in both Peter and James) is peirasmos, a noun from the verb peirazo, which means “to prove, to try, to test, to put to the test,” or to be “put on trial,” as in a courtroom.

1. Job 1:6-2:10 & Gen. 22:1-12 & Ps. 17:3; 26:2

D. How can we endure under such circumstances?

1. Perspective. Peter says, that such trials come upon us “now for a little while, if necessary.”

2. Even if our sorrows are lifelong here, that is still “just a little while” in contrast to eternity.

3. Romans 8:18 and 2 Cor. 4:17

4. Also, we must remember that Peter says these things will happen only “if necessary,” i.e., only if God knows that we ourselves need the testing and strengthening of our faith that comes thereby

5. The paradoxical nature of suffering: Even though we may be distressed and put to grief by such trials, nevertheless, we are greatly rejoicing.

A. Vs. 6 “You Greatly Rejoice”… in the Greek, ***agalliaomai***

1. It means to be overjoyed, full of joy, jubilant

***Matt 5:11-12…"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12* "Rejoice *and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”***

2. Also…. Luke 10:21 and Acts 16:34

B. Vs. 8… You greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory

1. This great joy is described with 2 strong adjectives…

A. ***aneklaletos*** – inexpressible, unspeakable, beyond words

B. ***doxazo*** – glorious glorified, full of glory,

clothed in heavenly glory

C. This is all in the present tense. This means that we keep on rejoicing, even though we are undergoing trials and sorrows,

***in view of the salvation yet to come.***

***B. The Paradox of Faith***

1. DEFINED: Though we may be enduring trying times, that just makes our faith stronger (verse 7).

2. Here (vs. 7) Peter speaks specifically of “your faith,” a concept he has already introduced in verse 5, where he says we are protected by the power of God through faith.

A. Our faith includes both believing with our minds the facts that Jesus died for our sins and rose again, and believing in Jesus with a sincere confidence in Him, trust in Him, and surrender to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

3. Peter’s main concern here is to help us to understand why our faith is sometimes tested. It is a fact that our faith is often “tested by fire.”

4. The Apostle says that our faith is like gold in this regard (though it is actually more precious than gold). He is talking about the fact that gold, and silver as well, are tested for genuineness by being subjected to fiery heat.

A. Psalm 66:10… “For You have tried us, O God; You have refined us as silver is refined.”

5. QUOTE 🡪 Alan Stibbs, “Just as men use fire to distinguish true gold from counterfeit, so God uses trials to distinguish genuine faith from counterfeit profession.”

6. Herein lies the paradox… The very trials that bring such suffering actually result in the strengthening of our faith!

A. The purpose of this testing is not to try to cause us to lose our faith. It’s actually the opposite… the Greek word translated “tested” is dokimazo, which means “to put to the test with the expectation of positive results.”

7. Peter assures us of the ultimate reward for our enduring faith. He says the proof or genuineness of our faith will be made clear at the revelation of Jesus Christ – at the time of His 2nd coming.

A. At this point our proven faith will be rewarded with three things: Praise, Glory and Honor.

1. Praise: This means approval or recognition, commendation. This means that God will be commending us for passing the test of persecution.

A. Matthew 25:21 and Romans 2:29

2. Glory: This word literally means brightness, splendor, and magnificence.

A. Our new bodies will be raised is glory.

1. 1 Cor. 15:43 & Phil. 3:21 & 2 Thess 2:14

3. Honor: To be honored is to be treated as having value and worth.

A. In the last day, God will give us honor. He will tell us that we are “worth our weight in gold!”

1.”Well done, good slave.” Luke 19:17

***C. The Paradox of Love***

1. DEFINED: Though Jesus is hidden from our sight now, we love Him and trust Him anyway.

2. Vs. 8… The emphasis here is still on our faith in Jesus: “you believe in Him”; but added to the picture is our LOVE for Him: “you love Him.”

3. This love is deep and sincere desire for another’s well-being and happiness – agape.

A. We love Jesus; therefore we want to make Him happy. This means we surrender ourselves completely to Him, body and soul, in sincere obedience. (John 14:15)

4. Herein lies the paradox… We have never SEEN Jesus, but we love and trust Him anyway.

A. Hebrews 11:1 and 2 Cor. 5:7; 4:18

5. Even though Jesus is at the present time (“now”) hidden from us, we love Him anyway. We sense His presence with us (Matthew 28:20); we have fellowship and communion with Him even now.

A. The good news, though, is that this will change. Note that Peter says, YOU have not seen Him. Perhaps Peter is saying… But I have!

1. I have walked the earth with Him, heard Him speak, saw Him work miracles, watched Him ascend into heaven.

B. But Peter also says… You have not seen Him NOW. Here is another glorious implication… You do not see Him now… but YOU WILL! He will be revealed. 1st John 3:2

C. To think upon this truth should fill us with unspeakable joy!

***D. The Paradox of Salvation***

1. DEFINED: Though our salvation is a future inheritance, we are already receiving it NOW (Verse 9).

2. The outcome of your faith… The Salvation of Your Souls.

A. Does this mean that only your soul is saved?

B. Doesn’t the Bible teach about the salvation of body and soul?

C. The answers to these questions are rooted in the understanding of how salvation is related to our souls.

D. In this passage Peter is using the Present Tense: You are obtaining, you are receiving, you are now, presently, being saved.

1. The main target of our present salvation is our souls, our spirits.

2. We have already been “born again.” This is something that has happened to our souls… not our bodies. We are presently being sanctified by the Spirit; this is also happening to our souls.

3. On the flipside of this… We are still looking for the future redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23)

3. Herein lies the paradox – Though it will not be received in fullness until after death and after the final judgment, we are already experiencing it now.

A. Even though our bodies may be suffering as the result of manifold persecutions, we are at peace and in comfort in our souls. It is Well with My Soul…

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
***It is well, it is well with my soul.***

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
***Even so, it is well with my soul.***

***It is well with my soul; It is well, it is well with my soul!***