

1 Peter 1:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

Analysis

Peter addresses the paradox of Christian experience: simultaneous rejoicing and suffering. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice" (*en hō agalliaσthe, ἐν ὧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε*) uses the present tense to indicate continuous joy—not occasional happiness but abiding gladness rooted in salvation's realities (verses 3-5). The phrase "though now for a season" (*oligon arti, ὀλίγον ἥρτι*) acknowledges present trials are temporary—"a little while" compared to eternal glory. The conditional "if need be" (*ei deon estin, εἰ δέον ἔστιν*) reveals trials aren't random but divinely permitted when necessary for believers' spiritual good. "Ye are in heaviness" (*lypēθentes, λυπηθέντες*) acknowledges genuine grief and distress—Christianity doesn't deny suffering's pain but provides context and purpose. The trials are "manifold" (*poikilois, ποικίλοις*), literally "many-colored" or "various"—encompassing persecution, illness, loss, betrayal, disappointment, and countless other afflictions. Peter validates the reality of Christian suffering while anchoring joy in unchanging salvation truths: regeneration (v.3), living hope (v.3), incorruptible inheritance (v.4), and divine keeping power (v.5). Joy and sorrow coexist in Christian experience, neither canceling the other but both serving God's redemptive purposes.

Historical Context

First-century Christians faced diverse trials: official Roman persecution, Jewish opposition, pagan hostility, economic discrimination, family division, and social ostracism. Peter's acknowledgment of "heaviness" validated their suffering—the

gospel doesn't promise exemption from trials but provides theological framework for enduring them. The phrase "if need be" reflects God's sovereignty over suffering: trials aren't accidents but divinely ordained means of refining faith (verse 7). This perspective distinguished Christianity from Stoicism (which sought emotional detachment from suffering) and paganism (which had no redemptive meaning for pain). Peter's teaching equipped believers to suffer well—neither seeking martyrdom nor capitulating under pressure, but maintaining joyful witness through divinely strengthened endurance.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What specific trials are you currently experiencing, and how can you cultivate joy in salvation's realities while honestly acknowledging present pain?
2. How does knowing God permits your trials only 'if need be' for your spiritual good change your response to suffering?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	ῳ	ἀγαλλιᾶσθε	όλιγον	ἄρτι	εἰ	δέον	ἐστὶν
Wherein	G3739	ye greatly rejoice	for a season	though now	if	need	be
G1722		G21	G3641	G737	G1487	G1163	G2076
λυπηθέντες	ἐν	ποικίλοις	πειρασμοῖς				
ye are in heaviness	Wherein	manifold	temptations				
G3076	G1722	G4164	G3986				

Additional Cross-References

James 1:2 (Parallel theme): My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

1 Peter 5:10 (Parallel theme): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Romans 12:12 (Parallel theme): Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Romans 5:2 (Parallel theme): By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Matthew 5:12 (Parallel theme): Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Isaiah 61:3 (Parallel theme): To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

John 16:33 (Parallel theme): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

John 16:22 (Parallel theme): And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Psalms 34:19 (Parallel theme): Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

Psalms 119:28 (Parallel theme): My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.