

# Christ's presence and revealing in trials

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord should be pleased to help this morning, we would direct your prayerful attention to the first epistle of Peter, chapter 4, and verses 12 and 13.

The first epistle of Peter, the fourth chapter, and verses 12 and 13. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happen unto you.

But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

How many of the Lord's people know this path of fiery trial, and they are following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself had to walk this way.

And yet, how wonderful it is to realise, in the midst of these fiery trials, the Lord loves us. And it is because of his love that he leads us through these trials, that we might be brought nearer to him.

[ 1 : 26 ] We want, first of all, to look at this first word in our text, because it speaks of love. It speaks of the fact that Peter loved those to whom he was writing, and that the Lord loved Peter, and the Lord loves all his dear family.

What a wonderful word it is, beloved. And we want to feel that love in our hearts this morning, one to another, and to the Lord.

And we find this word in various places in the epistles, and the Apostle Paul used it on one occasion.

And it is a wonderful word in the epistles, and the epistles, and the epistles, and the epistles, and the epistles.

The apostle Paul felt the same love to the Corinthians that Peter felt toward those to whom he wrote. And Paul says to these Corinthians, therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast.

[ 2 : 45 ] And we need such a word as this, in the day in which we live. There are many who are not steadfast. There are many who are turning aside from the ways of the Lord, who are turning away from the word of God and his day.

We need this word, be ye steadfast, unmovable. The apostle himself could say, none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself.

We need to be unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, how often the Lord's servants feel that their labour is in vain.

And yet, when we read that promise in Isaiah, we know that God has said concerning his word, my word shall not return to me void, it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I have sent it.

And so, we find the apostle Paul using this expression, and how often Peter uses it as he writes his epistles.

[ 3 : 58 ] We have been looking recently into the second epistle of Peter, and in the third chapter of that epistle, he opens that chapter with this same expression, this second epistle, For, beloved, beloved, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, we need to be reminded, from time to time, of these things in the word.

We need to be reminded, of that last great day, which he speaks of in this third chapter, of his second epistle, and of how that day will ultimately come, when the Lord Jesus Christ will return, and his people cease to mourn.

Well, if we go on to the eighth verse in that same chapter, we see he uses this expression again, But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

How different our Lord looks at time, than we do. We think a thousand years is a long time, but to our God it's just like one day.

One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. And then, if you go on to the fourteenth verse, in the same chapter, he uses this same expression, that he begins our text with.

[ 5 : 44 ] He says, Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, are we among those, looking for those things, to come? That great day of the Lord, which will come as a thief in the night?

Are we looking for that? Are we looking for the Lord Jesus to return? Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent.

And we need such a word as this. And we need to be diligent in the things of God. Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace. When he comes, O shall we be found in Christ, in peace, only as we have an interest in his precious blood and righteousness.

Only as we are washed in that fountain that was open for sin and uncleanness. And only as we are clothed in that robe of his righteousness.

O to be found in that day in peace, without spot, we feel to be full of spots and blemishes as we look within. But as we look to Christ and to his righteousness, one day we shall stand before him without spot and blameless if we are among these beloved people.

[ 7 : 11 ] These people that he has loved from all eternity. O, and then see in the 17th verse of the same chapter. He uses the same expression.

And he says, Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall for him your own steadfastness.

O, Peter exhorts us in the last verse of that chapter to grow. Now, how can we grow in grace? Only as we are led into a path similar to the path of our Lord Jesus Christ, a path of trial, a path of suffering.

This is when we should grow most in grace, when we are passing through bereavement or affliction or some other trial, but grow in grace and in a knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How can we know Jesus Christ if we know nothing of the pathway that he trod while he is below? Beloved then, grow in grace and in a knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[ 8 : 37 ] And we know how John in his epistles uses the same expression. It shows the love that these dear men had as they wrote to these various churches and people.

And may we feel that same love ourselves this morning. Love to the Lord and love to one another. What a wonderful psalm we feel that is, the 133rd psalm, where the psalmist says, Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

It's wonderful to feel that fellowship with the Lord's people. But, after then speaking in this one word of his love that he had for these people that he was writing to, Now the next thing he says in our text is this, Think it not strange.

We do so often think it's a strange path in which we're walking. Think it not strange. Because we're following Christ who had to walk this pathway before us.

Think it not strange. Now as I was thinking of this word strange, I thought of Joseph. That's why we read that chapter.

[ 10 : 04 ] Now you see a parallel here between Joseph and the Lord Jesus Christ. When those brethren of Joseph went down to Egypt, we find it recorded in the chapter that we read this morning that Joseph spoke roughly to them.

What do we read in that seventh verse of the chapter we read? Joseph saw his brethren, he knew them. And there again, friends, we can see the Lord Jesus Christ, he knows us, he knows all about us.

But Joseph made himself strange to them. think it not strange our text says. But these brethren must have thought it to be a very strange path, as now they were before this Lord as they spoke of him in Egypt, as he spake roughly unto them and said to them, whence come ye?

And they said from the land of Canyon to buy food. you see Joseph spake roughly to them in order to bring them to that place that we were reading of in the chapter.

When they had to say this, we are verily guilty concerning our brother. You see it brought home to them their sin and their guilt.

[ 11 : 41 ] As they said we are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon us.

Oh how distressed they must have felt as they wended their way back to their father Jacob. And how distressed they must have felt as they opened their sacks and found the money in their sacks.

You see all this was a strange pathway and we often have to walk in these strange ways. Perplexing things come to us we cannot understand.

But think it not strange says Peter concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. How Jacob knew the same path that these brethren knew.

When he said what he did in verse 36 in that chapter we read me have ye bereaved of my children Joseph is not Simeon is not and you will take Benjamin away all these things are against me.

[ 12 : 59 ] That's how we sometimes feel is it not when the Lord brings us into these fiery trials all these things are against me. But I believe friends we shall live to prove that all things work together for good to them that love God.

And that's why Peter says to us here in our text beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.

Don't you think Job knew something of this pathway? He certainly did. When those things were taken from him that we read of in the first chapter of that book and then he was smitten with boils from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet he must have felt it to be a fiery trial.

But what did he say later on friends? He knoweth the way that I take and when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.

The hymn writer says gold in the furnace tried ne'er loses aught but dross so is the Christian purified and bettered by the cross.

[ 14 : 24 ] All these things are crosses to the Lord's people. people. But oh let's come back to this word friends. Each time we come into a fiery trial think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you.

It does seem strange when these things come to us. But oh to remember what we have recorded in one part of the word of God concerning the Lord's people.

Those he loves with an everlasting love. How does the prophet Zechariah speak of the Lord's people? In that thirteenth chapter of that prophecy he says this I will bring the third part that's the remnant the Lord's living family in these days friends we feel to be more like a remnant than ever as we come among the twos and threes in God's house but the Lord Jesus has come down to that number in the promise that he gave where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them and so he says concerning his people that he loves I will bring and you know the very word bring there denotes that he's with them in it if we bring something to a certain place we are with that thing that we bring

I will bring the third part what a mercy friend to be among this third part this remnant the remnant according to the election of grace you see it speaks of the other two parts in the previous verse they should be cut off and die and I believe that speaks of the professors and the profane they should be cut off and die but the third shall be left therein and this third part is the Lord's living family those to whom Peter was writing the words of our text when he says beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you because the Lord says I will bring the third part through the fire not round it not round it we can't get round these things friends we have to go through the fire

I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined if we are the Lord's people we are likened to silver and to gold valuable in his sight we were looking at that word in Luke 15 the other evening where the woman lost the piece of silver and she swept the house now that piece of silver represents the Lord's people they're valuable and so the silver is found here I will refine them as silver is refined and if you turn over a few pages to Malachi you find the same thing there he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver and he shall purify the sons of

[ 18 : 17 ] Levi and purge them as gold and silver and just as the gold smith when he's purifying his gold leaves that gold in the fire until he can see his own image in it so the Lord leaves us in the fire until he can see his own image in us until we're more like him oh do we know this pathway through the fire I will refine them as silver is refined I will try them as gold is tried oh yes gold in the furnace tried ne'er loses all but dross so is the Christian purified bettered by the cross now where does it bring the believer when we come into these trials it brings them to the throne of grace how much prayer would there be friends if we had no trials how much real prayer would there be how much wrestling prayer would there be without these trials they shall call on my name that's what follows the refining of the silver and the refining of the gold they shall call on my name we can think of many friends in the scriptures when they were brought into these trials they called upon the

Lord's name think of Jacob when he was left alone what did he do he wrestled and there wouldn't be much of this wrestling prayer friends without these trials but wrestling prayer can wonders do bring relief in deepest straits prayer can force a passage through iron bars and brazen gates they shall you see the Lord intends to bring his people to this place of prayer this wrestling prayer how they called upon God when Peter was in prison how they prayed earnestly for his release they shall call on my name and I will hear them God is a prayer hearing and answering God as we're brought to call upon his name they shall call upon my name and I will hear them and then you know it is to bring us to this this relationship with

God when we're brought through the fiery trial we begin to feel our relationship with him and he with us when he hears our prayers when he answers our petitions then we come to this I will say it is my people my people do you want to be among this people like Ruth of old thy people shall be my people thy God my God well we must expect these fiery trials it is my people the Lord says and they shall say the Lord is my God oh what a wonderful thing friends that we have several in the word of God that could say this my God you think of Daniel when he was placed in the lion's den and that was a fiery trial we know we can also speak of the three

Hebrew children who actually went into the fire we were reading about them this morning before we came out they went into the fire and yet all that was burnt away was their bonds they came out of that fire bettered by it because they had been with Jesus the king saw a fourth person with them in that furnace and he says he is the light of the son of God and so they had the Lord's presence with them in that fire but Daniel when he was in the den and the king came to him in the morning what could he say my God has sent his angel and has shut the lion's mouth that they have not hurt me oh when we can say this friends my God how wonderful it is we cannot always say this sometimes we have to say what the hymn writer did my

God my father blissful name oh may I call thee mine my always sweet assurance claim a portion so divine but there are times and there were those in scripture who could use this expression wonderful wonderful thing that is spiritually when the king sends and looses us and we feel again that freedom in the things of

[ 27:11 ] God and liberty and power the king sent and loosed him even the ruler of the people and let him go free he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his substance to bind his princes at his pleasure and teach his senators wisdom you see his captivity was turned he was brought through the trial and as he looked back upon it he could see the lord's hand in it because he said to those brethren it was not you that sent me here but God he could see the lord's hand in it all and there are times when you and I can see the lord's hand in all these is to bring us nearer to himself what does the hymn writer say about it trials give new life to prayer trials lay us at his feet lay us low and keep us there oh there's a purpose in it we are not then to think it strange think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happen unto you but oh

I like these but in the word of God because you often get a contrast following these but instead of being sorrowful and sad we are to rejoice why we are to rejoice in these trials in as much as we are partakers of Christ's suffering what a mercy friends to feel that we are following in the footsteps of the lamb that we are following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ who had to suffer you see in the first verse of this very chapter that is plainly set forth by Peter he says for as much then as Christ has suffered in the flesh arm yourselves likewise with the same mind we are to follow in the footsteps of Christ rejoice then because you are united to the

Lord Jesus Christ you have an interest in his sufferings and what he has done as we think of this second verse rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings we think of the dear apostle Paul and what he says concerning this oh how wonderful that chapter is in the Philippians when he comes to speak about these sufferings of Christ and what does he say he says what things were gained to me those I counted lost for Christ you see he had been speaking of the way he had been brought up as a Pharisee and how that he had been touching the righteous of the law blameless as he thought but what things were gained to me those

I counted lost for Christ he began to see more in Jesus Christ as he went on and he says yea doubtless I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord there again we have the apostle Paul being able to say my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but done that I may win Christ oh he realized there was everything in Christ for his soul and he realized without Christ he must be lost and so he says and to be found in him this is the greatest thing friends we can ever seek after to be found in him to be found in him just as

Noah was found inside the ark to be found in this safe place this rock of ages to be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law he felt now that his own righteousness was like filthy rags he must look to the Lord Jesus Christ alone and know that his righteousness has been put upon him the righteousness which is of God by faith and then he comes to this that I may know him oh that I may know him is this our language this morning friend that I may know him more his beauty trace his majesty adore live near his heart upon his bosom lean obey his voice and all his will esteem that I may know him that is to know Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection and this must be known first the power of his resurrection it's known when we're born again it's by the power of that resurrection we're new born but after knowing something of the power of his resurrection he says that

[ 33 : 08 ] I may know the fellowship of his suffering this is what we have in the text the fellowship of Christ's suffering how can we have any fellowship with Christ and his sufferings if we know nothing of this pathway of trial the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death but says Peter rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings we're walking in the same steps that he walked in we're following him doesn't Peter say something about that walking in his steps yes in the second chapter he says who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness by whose stripes we were healed for even here unto were ye called because

Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth what a mercy friend to be a partaker of Christ's suffering if we look at our trials in this way how different they will appear then we shall know what Peter meant in the first verse when he says think it not strange concerning the fiery trial because we can see now that we are following in the footsteps of one who suffered for us on the tree at Calvary and in the garden of Gethsemane in as much as we are partakers of Christ's suffering this is our lot friends below to be partakers of Christ's suffering that when his glory should be revealed oh to look forward to this when his glory shall be revealed and when will that be when he comes again the second time with all his holy angels when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy what a day that will be friends when the

Lord's people see him face to face when they will be glad also with exceeding joy I think now what John says in his epistle he says this beloved now are we the sons of God yes in this pathway of trial in this pathway of suffering we are the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is we shall see him as he is what gladness what joy will the Lord's people know then when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy so you see friends we have in the first verse our pathway here below and we have in the second verse what we are looking forward to that time when we see the

Lord Jesus Christ without a veil between this will make all the difference to our sufferings here below if we can feel that we are partakers of Christ's sufferings that we have fellowship with him in his sufferings that we know what it is sometimes to go to Gethsemane and to the cross at Calvary and to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happen to you but rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's suffering that when his glory shall be revealed he may be glad also with exceeding joy that will be the lot of the Lord's people when they see the king in his beauty when they behold the land that is very far off they will be glad also with exceeding joy what a wonderful thing to look forward to it the

Lord help us then to see all our trials in the light of this text to realise that we are following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and that we are partakers of his sufferings may the Lord add his blessing to his own word amen amen with amen on some beyblim so you cannot you know the Kait One, shepherd divine, our wants we leave in this our evil day.

[ 39 : 09 ] To all I thank you for us, give the power, the trust, and pride. Long as our fiery trials march, long as the cross we bend, for let our souls on daily cast in prayer, the season prayer, in number 1010, I can.

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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Love him out.

Till now I shall be found.

He is the cry of every heart.

[ 42 : 30 ] I will not let it go.

I will not let thee tell unless.

So still thy name to me.

With all thy grace, salvation, blessed.

And say Christ, I will not let thee.

[ 43 : 41 ] Amen. Amen. O Lord do bless thy own word Enable us to see that we are partakers Of Christ's sufferings here below May we be looking forward to that day When we shall be glad also with exceeding joy Be with us during the interval of worship Grant us fellowship in the things of God And pardon all that thou hast seen amiss in our service Come up with us again in the afternoon we beseech thee And help us then We ask it in the name and for the sake Of Jesus Christ our Lord And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus The love of God our Father And the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit our Comforter Rest and remain with us now and evermore

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen