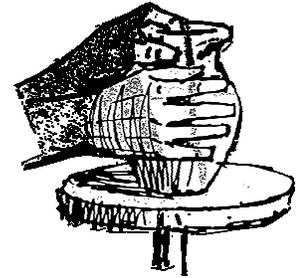


His Workmanship: Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



Vol. XXIV

February 1, 2015

No. 5

Isaiah 64:8

Inexpressible Joy in the Invisible Christ, by John Piper

"And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls," 1 Pet 1:8-9.

Peter's Description of the Life in Christ. Peter told the Christians what they were experiencing: *"You are loving Christ; you are believing in Christ; you are rejoicing in Christ with inexpressible and glorified joy; you experience all of that even though you do not now see Him."* Why? Why tell them what their own experience was? He wanted to describe for them the true life in Christ in such a way that, if they ever drifted from it, they would have a fixed standard to see clearly what was happening, so they could wake up and return to what they had lost. Being a Christian (for us) is like swimming upstream in a river of secular American godlessness. We swim with the stroke of love to Christ, and the stroke of faith in Christ, and the stroke of joy in Christ. While we swim, we do not get swept away with the godless toward the terrible cataracts of judgment downriver. God keeps us through faith, 1:5. He enables us to keep on swimming against the stream

with the strokes of faith, love, and joy, so that we don't get carried away in the current of Christlessness.

Our swimming coach, the apostle Peter, is on the shore watching us and following us. When we are swimming well, he calls out to us, *"Look, you're doing well. I'm putting a flag here just even with where you are in the river. Now mark this. This is where you are."* The reason is so that if we stop using the swimming strokes of love for Jesus, and faith in Jesus, and joy in Jesus, and begin just to float downstream in the river of godlessness, we will be able to wake up and look to the shore and notice that the flag is upstream. We will have a fixed point of reference to call us back to what a real life in Christ is.

Five Things about Christians. Peter said five things about Christians:

1. they love Christ;
2. they believe in Christ;
3. they rejoice in Christ;
4. they are receiving the salvation of their souls through all this; and they are experiencing this even though, like us, they have never seen Christ in person.

This is an authentic life in Christ: God is saving our souls by working in our hearts a love, a confidence, and a joy

that is against the stream of secularism, godlessness, and worldliness in our society. True life is loving Christ and trusting Him and enjoying Him. In other words, life in Christ is first and foremost a matter of the heart (love, trust, and joy), not a matter of external performances. Peter adds: *"in this you are now (progressively) receiving the goal of it all, the salvation of your souls."* The final full salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (v. 5) we are now receiving for our souls (in part) as we love Christ, trust Christ, and rejoice in Christ now," 1:5, 9.

Three Definitions. How do these experiences relate and how do we experience them? What do we really mean when we speak of loving Christ and trusting Christ and enjoying Christ? We start with three definitions:

- 1. Loving Christ.** Loving Christ means experiencing Christ as precious for all His character and virtue (cf. 2:7). In other words, love is attracted to the Beloved for Who He is.
- 2. Trusting Christ.** Trusting Christ means experiencing Christ as reliable in all His promises and all His counsel. Faith is confident in the Trusted One for what He will do.
- 3. Enjoying Christ.** Now what about

continued on p. 2

“...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy,”
—Colossians 1:11 *continued from p. 1*

joy? Peter said, *"We rejoice [in Christ] with inexpressible and glorified joy,"* 1:8. The more I consider Biblical texts (like Phil 1:25; Rm 15:13; 2 Cor 1:24), the less I think we should conceive of joy as separate from love and faith. Joy in Christ is the deep good feelings in loving Him and believing Him. It's the echo in our emotions—our hearts—of experiencing Christ as precious and reliable. It's the deep good feelings of being attracted to Him for Who He is and of being confident in Him for what He will do. Thus, joy is part of love and part of faith—because it would be a contradiction (wouldn't it?) to say, *"I am attracted to the preciousness of what Christ is, but I have no good feelings in this attraction."* What is attraction without good feelings for something? There may be terror in the attraction (as to a Lion named Aslan), but if there were no deep good feelings in it, it would not be experienced as attraction at all, but only as rejection.

It is the same with faith: it would be a contradiction to say, *"I am confidently trusting in what Christ will do for me, but I have no good feelings in this confidence."* What is confidence without good feelings of hope and assurance in the one you trust? There may be expectation of pain and suffering on the way, but if there were no deep good feeling that it will turn out well in the end, it would not be called trust or confidence at all. So I conclude that attraction to the ultimate preciousness of Christ (which we call love) and confidence in the ultimate reliability of Christ (which we call faith) are not less than a deep good feeling, called joy. They are more; there are other elements in them besides the deep good feeling of joy, but they are not less than joy. So this holy joy that Peter refers to in 1:8 is a constituent part of love and faith, and

together they are true life in Christ. This goes a long way to explaining why Peter calls this joy *"inexpressible and full of glory [or glorified]."*

Joy: You Become What You Crave. What gives joy its quality? I don't mean merely its intensity, but its moral character? What makes joy ugly or beautiful? Depraved or noble? Dirty or clean? The answer is that the thing enjoyed gives joy its character. If you enjoy dirty jokes and bathroom language and lewd pictures, then your heart is dirty and your joy is dirty. If you enjoy cruelty and arrogance and revenge, then your heart is mean, and your joy has a vicious character. Or the more you get your joy simply from material things, the more your heart and your joy shrivel up like a mere material thing. You become like what you crave. Peter said (v. 8) that joy in Christ is *"inexpressible and glorious."* How does it become glorious? The joy of craving the preciousness of Jesus and the reliability of Jesus is glorious because Jesus is glorious. You become like what you crave. Christians crave Christ. Therefore, they become like Christ. Christ's preciousness and reliability are inexpressibly great, and so our joy is inexpressible in Him. Christ has in Him all the glory of the universe and of God, and so our joy in Him is a glorified joy—that is, a joy being changed from one degree to another (2 Cor 3:18) by His glory as we are attracted by its preciousness and as we are confident in its reliability. We become what we crave, and what Christians crave above all else is the glory of Christ. So our joy is *"inexpressible and glorified"* because it is joy in loving Christ and trusting Christ Who is inexpressibly glorious.

Seeing What You Cannot See. But how do we come to crave the precious-

ness of Christ and trust the reliability of Christ if we can't see Him? How do we love Him and trust Him, if we can't see Him? Even though we don't see Him face to face with our physical eyes, we do see Him in a way that is even more important. Paul described his mission to unreached peoples (who could never see Christ physically) like this: *"I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named...but as it is written, 'They who had no news of him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand,'"* Rm 15:20-21. In the preaching of the gospel Christ can be seen in a way that is more important than seeing him physically. The gospels are better than being there! Hundreds of people in Jesus's lifetime saw Him physically but never really saw Him. *"Seeing they do not see,"* Jesus said, Mt 13:13.

There is a seeing that is infinitely more important than seeing with the eyes. Paul describes it like this: *"The God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ,"* 2 Cor 4:6. There is a spiritual seeing in the heart of the glory of God in the face of Christ, and without it no one is saved. Michael Card expressed the paradox of not seeing yet seeing in one of his songs:

*"To hear with my heart
to see with my soul
to be guided by a hand I cannot hold
to trust in a way that I cannot see
that's what faith must be."*

We See Him Through the Word of God. We see Him in another and more important way. How does this kind of seeing happen? It happens through the Word of God. When the gospel of Christ is preached, we can see Christ more clearly for Who He really is than many could see in His

continued on p. 3



Psalm 133:1

God makes my heart clean in 2015 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." —Ps 51:10

Inexpressible Joy, from p. 2
own lifetime. If you read the gospels with openness to Christ, you can see the true glory of Christ far more clearly than most of the people who knew him on earth could see Him—Nicodemus, the Syro-Phoenician woman, the Centurion, the widow of Nain, Zachaeus, the thief on the cross, the thronging crowds. They saw a bit here and there. But in the gospels you get four complementary portraits of Christ inspired by God and covering the entire range of His teaching and ministry. The gospels are better than being there. We are taken into the inner circle of the apostolic band where we never could have gone. We go with Him through Gethsemane, the trial, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the meetings after the resurrection. We hear whole sermons and long discourses—not in isolated snatches on hillsides but in rich God-inspired contexts that take us deeper than we ever could have gone as a perplexed peasant in Galilee. We see the whole range of His character and power which nobody on earth saw as fully as we can now see in the gospels: we see His freedom from anxiety with no place to lay His head, His courage in the face of opposition, His unanswerable wisdom, His honoring women, His tenderness with children, His compassion toward lepers, His meekness in suffering, His patience with Peter, His tears over Jerusalem, His blessing those who cursed Him, His zeal for the glory of God, His simplicity and devotion, His power to still storms and heal the sick and multiply bread and cast out demons.

True Life in Christ. Though we do

Discipleship Here At Home

Super Bowl Blessing, from p. 4 reach her. She emailed *Focus on the Family*. In return, she says, a *Focus* staffer responded with encouragement, information, and hope.

"It was so nonjudgmental," Susan says. "I kept thinking about what she wrote, and the commercial, and what Tim's mom said in the interview, and I made the decision to keep the baby." The baby's father never came around. He raged, threatened, and then simply checked out. Sure, Susan had friends and relatives, but she would essentially raise her child alone—alone, but not forgotten. *Focus* employees continued to check in on her. They sent cards and a gift for the baby. Avita Grace was born that September. She is 4 now, and has brought joy, fun, and faith to her mom's life. She loves coloring books, frilly dresses and bows in her hair, and talking about Jesus. As a working single mom, Susan now has less money, less sleep, less time, more laundry, more dishes, and lots more cleaning. But it's all drowned out by the love she's been given. "I think about the commercial, Tim Tebow, and the people from *Focus* daily," Susan says. "I am so grateful. If there hadn't been a Super Bowl commercial, if I hadn't been at the party, if someone had responded to my email in a different way... I will never be able to express the gratitude and love that I feel."

not now see Him, yet in another sense we do see Him far better than the thousands who saw Him in the flesh. We see the glory of God shining at every turn in the gospels. Because we see him with the eyes of the heart, we love Him and trust Him and rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. This is true abundant life in Christ.

That is the flag waving on the side of the river of godlessness. If you are looking at it from downstream floating comfortably toward destruction, I pray that God will wake you up and open the eyes of your heart and set you rowing—not with legalistic strokes to earn anything from God, but with the strokes of love and faith and joy. That is true life in Christ.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- Christine Adams's 9 mo-old grandson, Ezekiel—kidnapped by his birth father 1/15; pray he will be found and for his mother Kayla Knighten
- Jordana Volpe—influenza B, high fever
- Tyler Huelsman—car accident; asks prayers for spiritual strength
- Frank Savarese—recovering from surgery on salivary gland; to return to work tomorrow
- Tracy Corray—recovering double kidney infections, stones, very high fever, severe pain
- Samantha Harrod—recovering from drainage of cyst infection, pain; may need further surgery
- Bill Dennis—in rehab following infected knee drainage; weak heart; pseudo-gout
- Ed Fink—prostate cancer; treatment for brain tumors
- Kaylee Chavez—age 10, at St. Jude's in Memphis for brain cancer treatment; donate at www.youcaring.com, type her name at top
- Judy Strand—hep C; on liver transplant list
- Chris Bennett, former member—all tools for biz stolen; recovering from fall, fractured pelvis
- Buford Wrather, Cheryl Reames's dad—stroke, complicated by Parkinson's; in CO Springs
- Mark Campbell—in hospital last week
- Sylvia Chapman, Brett's grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo
- Judy Sartin—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
- Brittany Tope's mother—breast cancer in spine; pain in broken ribs which tumor has injured; grandmother—on dialysis
- Pat Wilkes—knee pain; bursar impingement and torn tendon on right shoulder causing pain
- * Sharon Rupinen, Sandra Perry's sister—surgery recovery

·Kenny Boyd's coworker Kim Phillips—asks our prayers for heart problems

·Rick Robbins, friend of Howells—brain surgery

Travel The Lucases leave Tues for NY & DC
Directory Michelle Francke's new address: 451 Golden Cir, Apt 252, Golden 80401.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Tim Huelsman—asthma
- Bill Dennis—adjusting pacemaker and meds
- Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
- Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
- Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome
- Hannah Huelsman—polycythemia, thickening of blood; heart murmur, acid reflux, chest pain
- Kirk Johnson—MS
- Menards—aging; Lloyd, diabetes, weak;
- Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP
- Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes; heart valve issues recently diagnosed
- Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
- Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness



Exposing current thoughts & trends *abortion*

A Super Bowl Blessing, by Thomas Jeffries

Five years ago, a young woman named Susan went to a friend's house for a Super Bowl party. She was pregnant, scared, and alone. Earlier in the day, Susan had told her boyfriend she was expecting, and he did not react well. He insisted that she get an abortion, and Susan reluctantly agreed.

That night at the party, everyone gathered around the TV when *Focus on the Family's* "Celebrate family, celebrate life" commercial aired during the first quarter. Pam Tebow appeared onscreen, telling about her son Tim, the Heisman Trophy winning college quarterback. The room fell silent while the commercial played. Susan, however, had never watched college football. She couldn't identify a single player—except Tim Tebow. "A few weeks earlier, I was folding laundry alone and the TV was on ESPN," she says. "I was too lazy to change the channel and watched an entire special on Tim Tebow—literally the only college player in the entire country I could have named or recognized."

In the end, Susan Wood had gone to the party because she couldn't bear to be home alone, not that night. She needed to get out of the house and away from her own thoughts, if only for a few hours... anything to take her mind off the worry, the panic, the indecision, and the morning sickness. There were maybe 15 people at the party, but they were too busy talking and snacking and laughing to notice that Susan wasn't drinking, that she wore a distracted look and a manufactured smile. The room fell silent while the commercial played. Instead of the strident anti-abortion ad that Susan, her friends, and most of America were expecting, they watched a mother's heartfelt story about the survival of her infant son.

"I wanted to be critical," Susan says. "I wanted to bash this horrible 'anti-choice' commercial. But as we watched, everyone agreed that it was a positive commercial with an encouraging message—not one of judgment or condemnation." As other ads aired, Susan kept thinking about the commercial and felt a pit in her stomach. She stayed at the party, talking and watching the game, but she couldn't get that ad out of her head. *The Tebows were speaking to me*, she thought. *They were talking about my situation. What am I going to do?*

Back at home, Susan searched the Web for the ad. She found the commercial, plus an interview with Bob and Pam Tebow, Tim's parents. She learned that Pam had rejected a doctor's advice to abort her unborn son in the face of medical complications. She watched the commercial again. She felt like it was made just to

continued on p. 3



meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
720-295-4530

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
---------------	---------

Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, Lesson 3, "I Have Become A Christian! Now What?" Jim Reingrover

- **Sermon**, "Lessons from First Peter," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **Lessons from the Life of Christ, John 4**, How Jesus Preached the Kingdom of Heaven

Wednesday night: Daniel: Determined to Walk with God, Lesson 6, chapter 5