

The Object of Christianity

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I Peter 1:6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

Superficiality is in! It doesn't matter what's on the inside, put a slick cover on it and make people feel good; that is what matters today. Recently, I heard a national figure say, "People will forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel." We've become a nation of false appearances, empty slogans, and emotional basket-cases. That's where we are. *Don't tell me the truth if it will make me feel bad. Make me feel good about me; make me feel that you feel good about me. Make me to feel, so long as you make me feel good.* That's who we have become.

Churches have got in on the superficial also. The shallow has stolen substance. There is very little immovable, steadfast, unshakable reality in the lives of even real believers. Many true Christians are like corks bobbing up and down and all around because there in to the "just make me feel good" mania also. There is little rock-solid, anchor-holding, well-grounded truth in them. Thus, when storms come and the winds blow and the rains pour, they are moved. Trials, problems, challenges shake them and leave them feeling displaced and depressed. That's what happens when your main concern is how you feel at the moment. If how you're feeling is one of your major concerns, if you're constantly evaluating your emotional state, you're going to be shifting. You will always be moved. There will be no stability. There can't be.

Many people say they are Christians, who have no reality of true Christianity within them, no shred of living substance. In short, they are not true followers of Jesus. They are a leaf blowing in the wind; they are tossed about by the unstable, erratic, and sometimes calamitous currents of life. The psalmist called them the chaff, "the chaff which the wind drives away."

Jesus ended His most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, by summarizing the sermon with an illustration. The sermon was about life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that Christianity is like building your house upon a reliable rock rather than upon shifting sand. You need more than appearances. You need more than feel-good slogans. You need more than elated emotions. What are you building your life on? Because when the storm comes, and it will come, what you are building your life on will be visible for all to see. You won't be able to hide it then. So much

about our Christianity today is a hollow appearance. I am amazed by how easy we are duped by the facade, the form, and the fakery. We don't care what's on the inside. For so many that's all Christianity is—a nice veneer covering a nasty core; “a form of godliness but denying its power.”

Too much of our Christianity today is plastic, unreal, and pretend. Our text gets to the reality of our faith. It tells us what is the beauty of our religion; it states what is the real of object of Christianity.

Are you a practicing Christian? I do not ask if you are a professing Christian; I ask are you a practicing Christian? We have a lot of profession and too little practice. Are you abiding, resting upon the real object of our faith? What is the purpose for which we have been saved? That is the question, not how I'm feeling today. The purpose for which God has saved you is stable and steadfast and it will go through whatever emotional state you may be in.

Some of you are battling depression. Some of you don't know what that's like. Some of you are pretty consistent in your outlook and moods, some of your moods shifts as much as the weather shifts. But the purpose for which God saved you is not dependent on any of that. It's always consistent and constant.

I. Making the Case For the Object of Christianity

I want to go back to Wednesday night. I know several of you weren't there Wednesday night but we'll catch you up to speed.

A. The Object of Christianity is God's Glory.

It's the glory of God! It is not verse 9; it is verse 8. Most people reading our text would have said, “Oh, there's the reason for our faith. He even says it—

“receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:9)

But that's not it. Let me just ask you one question. Many people believe the purpose of our faith is receiving the salvation of our souls. That's the essence of Christianity for most people today. I ask Jesus to come into my heart so that when I die I get to go to heaven and escape the bad place. That's the essence of their theology and they would look at a verse like this and say, “That proves it! It's to save my soul in the end.” But what purpose does that have? What objective does that accomplish? The answer is in verse eight, not verse nine.

*“whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and **full of glory,**” (1 Peter 1:8 emphasis mine)*

There it is. It's that word *glory*. That is the objective of God saving you. That's the objective of Christianity. It's the glory of God, not just getting you to heaven. Getting you to heaven glorifies

God; God is concerned about your eternal state, why would He send Jesus to die? But it has something to do with something far greater than you and me, something far greater than our eternal comfort and joys, it has to have something to do with the glory of God.

*“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
(1 Corinthians 10:31)*

Wednesday night we unpacked what that means and because it’s just one verse you have to get the context, right? When you pull one verse out of context you now have the pretext for a proof text, meaning you can take a text and prove anything you want to. You can make the Bible say anything you want to. But when you’re grammatically and historically honest with the text you can’t do that. The text frames its own explanation.

The word *glory* is difficult to define. It can mean:

**the honor, the renown, the praise-worthiness,
the majesty, the greatness of someone.**

Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 and Peter in 1 Peter 1, is saying the objective of Christianity is this—living your life and everything about your life for the glory of God. It’s the regulatory principle of the Christian life. Everything you think, everything you say, everything you do is measured by God’s honor, praise-worthiness, greatness, and renown.

B. This Object is Stated Repeatedly in the Bible.

If you know your Bibles, you know God says that very thing over and over again, and I think the most consequential place it was stated was in Matthew 22:36-40. A lawyer asks Jesus about the greatest commandment, and Jesus answers this way,

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment.

In short, love God supremely. What does that mean? Love God more than you love yourself or anything else. That’s it. What is God’s great command? What is God’s objective for you? That you would love Him more than anything else. And you say to me, “Boy, God’s really needy. Man, He’s needy. You mean He wants everybody in this room to love Him more than we love ourselves or our husbands or wives or children?” Yes. Does He have an emotional problem? Is He unstable? Is He insecure? No. Not at all. He’s the most balanced person in the universe. He’s the most emotionally stable person in the universe. God doesn’t have mood swings. Aren’t you glad? God loves you so much that He wants the absolute best for you, and the absolute best for you is to love God supremely.

There’s a second commandment much like the first.

“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

In other words, Jesus is saying, here is the regulatory principle for your life. You want to know how to order your life, live your life and be productive and fulfill the objective of Christianity? Love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself. Truthfully, if you do the first you will, automatically, do the second. It just happens.

But we have a little quandary here. Does that mean I love my neighbor as much as I love me? You would say, “Of course it means that.” However, I’ve got a problem. What happens if my neighbor and I want the same thing? Then what do you do? “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But I want this and he wants this and we both can’t have it at the same time. Then what determines what I do? We go back to I Corinthians 10.

In I Corinthians 10, Paul is giving us this same regulatory principle.

*“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
(I Corinthians 10:31)*

That’s another way of Paul saying what Jesus said. The greatest commandment is to love God supremely, to do everything for His glory, for His honor, for His renown, that means to love Him supremely. But Paul also couched that, just like Jesus did, in a practical way with how we treat others. Look at what he says in I Corinthians 10:24.

“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.” (I Corinthians 10:24)

Then Paul finishes the chapter,

“just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” (I Corinthians 10:33)

Paul is saying exactly the same thing as the great commandment. Love God supremely, do everything for God’s glory, but also esteem others better than you. Labor for their good and their salvation, even if that means saying no to your desires, your needs, and even your rights.

That’s pretty tough in America, isn’t it? Everyone is clamoring for rights. You’ve got to be right, got to be fair. But there’s nothing fair about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. There’s nothing fair or judicial or right about that. This is our model. Jesus is our model. I’m not supposed to be one of these people who are always demanding what is fair for me, “I want my equal share. I want what’s right.” No, Paul says, Jesus says, and now Peter is going to say, the regulatory principle and objective of why God has saved you is not so that you can go around demanding your rights and your equal share but that you could demonstrate the Gospel where God laid down His rights to love you and save you.

That's what we want to see here today. Now back to I Peter.

II. The Evidence of the Object of Christianity Working in Us

How do I know that I'm living my life according to that objective? How do I know? Peter gives us some tests. Look at verse six and seven.

A. The Test of Fire.

"In this you greatly rejoice,

What does he mean "in this"? It's a grammatical term called *the antecedent*. He's talking about something that preceded what he's saying now. What did he say before this? If you go back to verse three, he talks about this "living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that doesn't fade away, in heaven for you. You are kept by the power of God for salvation to be revealed in this last time."

People then say, "See! The objective of Christianity is getting you out of this world saved. Getting you out of this life, this temple, this body, and escaping hell. What do you mean that isn't the objective? He seems to be saying it over and again." Please hold on for a few more minutes and I will show you that this is not the final objective.

As I said, verses 3 through 5 is the antecedent. That's what precedes verse six and it is that antecedent that you rejoice. In other words, I'm looking forward to leaving this world. I'm looking forward to getting out of here alive. "Well," you say, "the statistics are that you aren't going to get out of here alive. One out of one die." I understand. But Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

When D. L. Moody was approaching that hour of death, he said, "Don't believe the reports in the newspapers of my demise, I will be very much alive." I plan on getting out of this world alive in Christ Jesus and I rejoice in that day. But Peter says, I don't want you to just rejoice in what's going to happen *someday*, that's not the objective of Christianity. Some people believe that's all Christianity is about. Many of the critics of Christianity, that's their major criticism. They say, "You believe in a Christianity that is just a pie in the sky by and by, but what does that have to do with today?" Peter is moving from the future to today,

"In this you greatly rejoice, though (establishing contrast) now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Peter is saying that right now as we go through this life, through this world, we will have various—many—trials and if you look at verse seven, the first reason for these trials, is that **the test of fire determines the genuineness of your faith.**

“... you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that (for this reason) the genuineness of your faith . . . may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

God brings trials. Everybody know what that means? Do I need to explain *trials*? T-r-i-a-l-s. Plural. Do you understand trials? What about pain? Suffering? How about adversity? Difficulty? What about hardship? Do you understand these? I'm not trying to be cute, I want you to pause for a moment and think because what I want to do right now is fight for your joy. This message is about fighting for believers' joy. I'm fighting right now, with God's help, for your joy.

I want you to stop and think about every trial, every day that didn't end the way you wanted it to was God's way of bringing fire into your life to test firstly if you're genuinely His.

It really bothers me when professing Christians never endure any kind of hardship or difficulty. I mean, life is just happy-go-lucky, wonderful, they have found their pot at the end of the rainbow and everything is wonderful. Do you know people actually can live that kind of life? Proverbs and Psalms is full of it. The wicked seem to have life so easy and even in their death they seem to die much easier than the righteous. It's a frightening thing when you don't have any adversity in your life, because Peter is saying God brings adversity into the life of His children to prove to them—He doesn't need it, He knows it—that they are really His and so that others can see it.

Why the test of fire or various trials? Because it is the best test or proof of our faith. We still cling to Jesus, even when Jesus doesn't seem to be treating us the way we'd like. Again, this is where superficial Christianity balks and actually mocks what I'm saying to you. They would say, “No, no, Jesus has come to die in order to establish your prosperity in body and in finances and in comfort and security.” I'm here to say that contradicts the whole spirit of Christianity. That contradicts the whole life of Jesus! Jesus wasn't spared any of that. He said, “I am your Teacher. I am your Master, if they've done this to Me, what do you think they're going to do to you?”

Those who are advocating a Christianity that is going to fix your life, are advocating a Christianity that does not correspond with Peter. My life is not fixed. If you get to know me, you see there is some problems there. You see humanness. You see issues. Guess what? If I get to know you, if you take your mask off, what am I going to find? The same. We're no different. We're not fixed yet. Jesus is not finished with us.

I really struggle in this way. Maybe some of you don't. I've met a few people along the way who have said they never question whether they're a child of God or if they're saved. I have. Every time I've sinned. Every time I blow it I'm wondering if I'm really a Christian. Would I have done that if I really loved Jesus? If I loved Jesus, I wouldn't have done that. That's how my mind works.

So I'm glad for texts like this that tells me God is bringing adversity into my life and the way I respond to it determines the genuineness of my faith. If I keep clinging in hope to Christ then something supernatural is inside.

There's a second reason the test comes. It's **because there remains a lot of corruption in us**. The issues are not fixed. It's Romans 6, "Knowing this, the old man was (past tense) crucified with Him." I am not who I once was. That person is dead, long gone, never to be seen again. You'll never see that Michael Durham again. That Michael Durham does not exist. I may act like that old Michael Durham but he does not exist; the new Michael Durham just sinned, and that's all that was. That person has died to sin, but sin hasn't died to me. I wish. But it hasn't. And because sin is still much alive in us, Jesus comes with the fire.

You get the illustration of gold being tested by fire. Gold may be the most precious and enduring metal but when it's mined out of the earth, it's full of impurities and things other than gold and the only way man, even modern man to this moment, knows how to remove the impurities out of gold is through fire. The smelter with his furnace heats up the gold until it becomes liquid. The impurities rise to the top and he removes it that so what remains is pure.

What God is doing is taking His blast furnace for a moment or a season in your life and He's blasting you. Not because He hates you, certainly not because He doesn't love you, but because He does. Because He loves you, He puts on the heat so that those impurities rise and He can scrape them off. That's why trials often hurt us.

Let me give you an example. Why does it bother you when someone says something to you that's offensive? Why? Because at that moment you're not being treated the way you think you deserve. The remaining selfishness (i.e. sin; that's all sin is) in me is saying, "Hey, that's not right. That's not fair. You deserve better than that. You didn't do anything to that person. Why are they treating you like this? Why aren't they recognizing you're not that kind of a person? You deserve better." The pain you are feeling is a result of *self* and God has taken the fire to it to expose that.

Every time you feel pain, you ought to ask yourself, "Why am I feeling pain?" I'm not saying there are not legitimate pains in life, you're going to see this in a moment, but many of our crucibles, those moments of difficulty that come into our life, God is simply exposing me and my corruption, bringing it to the surface so He can deal with it.

The superficiality that is plaguing Christianity today does not want to deal with this corruption. They want a gospel that says, "You're forgiven, now you're in the kingdom and now life can be merry and when you die you get to go to heaven." They don't want to deal with the remaining sin. There is no Gospel if sin is not dealt with—all of it. People want their faith to simply and only make them feel good.

Let me give you another example because if we don't you'll only think of offenses. What does *offense* mean? It means sin. The Bible uses the word *sin* and *offense* interchangeably and what does it say sin is? Sin is coming short of the glory of God, living with this regulatory principle of loving Him supremely and loving others as yourself, remembering everything is about His glory and beauty.

My dad was 52 when I was born and when he was in his 70s and struggling with his health he would say to me, “Son, if you live long enough you’re going to get old.” If he said that to me once, he said it 100 times. “If you live long enough, you’ll get old.” As the aging process works its toil on the body, certain things stop happening. Things don’t work like they used to. Sickness and illness and disease begin to rob you of vitality and strength and stamina. What happens when you lose a loved one? What happens when disease takes them? What’s going on in the heart when that happens? That’s a legitimate pain—what is it telling you?

You will either respond to physical suffering of your own or the loss of a loved one biblically to the glory of God, loving Him supremely, or you will respond loving yourself and glorifying yourself supremely. The difference will be this: you will allow Jesus to maintain your hope so that when you sorrow you will also rejoice. This is what modern Christianity just cannot get. They cannot get sorrowing yet rejoicing, this divine tension in the Christian life. But we know what that’s like—Christians have genuine sorrow.

Nobody likes it when they can’t walk anymore or they can’t hear like they used to. Nobody likes going bald. I don’t understand guys that shave their heads. I don’t want to lose one hair! We don’t like it but we respond to those things over which we have no control that are genuine reasons for grief and sorrow by trusting that our Father is too good to be unkind and too wise to be mistaken and He is sanctifying us. Or, down deep in our hearts—we may not express it, we may not even be consciously aware of it—we will resent God. We will resent what He has given us because we don’t think it’s what we deserve.

There’s a third reason why God brings the test of fire: **because this glorifies God.**

In the fourth chapter of 1 Peter, Peter is writing to believers who are about to enter a time of persecution, just like you and I. Twenty years ago I was saying this day is coming and now it’s here. I’m telling you, within 10-15 years it’s only going to get worse and Christians will have to endure much more suffering than just ridicule. It’s coming. This is what was going on. The church was beginning to enter that phase, kind of like we are, maybe a little further along. Peter says this,

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.” (1 Peter 4:12-14)

Those who may be attacking you, they are blaspheming God when they attack you but you, by enduring with rejoicing—that’s the key term—you are glorifying God. In other words, you’re making God look good when you do that. He is good and you’re putting a telescope to God and showing the world He is as big as He really is. You’re magnifying His renown, His greatness, His majesty. This is the way Christians live because there is substance to their life.

Monty Williams is the assistant head coach of the NBA team, the Oklahoma City Thunder. Last year he was the head coach of the New Orleans Pelicans when after five years he finally lead the team to the playoffs and after loosing in the playoffs was suddenly fired. But the worst was yet to come. Two weeks ago his wife, Ingrid was killed in a car accident. She was only 44. Another car driven by 52-year-old Susannah Donaldson crossed over the median and hit Ingrid's SUV. The accident report said Donaldson, who was traveling at 92 miles per hour in a 40-mile zone, swerved to avoid another vehicle and hit Ingrid's car head-on.

At the funeral Coach Williams, a believer, got up and went to the pulpit where he eulogized his wife. You can see the video of his remarks; it is all over the Internet. He said in his eulogy:

Psalms 73:1 says, "God is good." And I John 4:16 says, "God is love."

During times like this, it's easy to forget that because what we've gone through is pretty tough and it's hard and we want an answer. We don't always get that answer when we want it, but we can't lose sight of the fact that God loves us and that's what my wife and that's what I, however badly, exhibit on a daily basis. But God does love us.

He loved me so much that he sent his son to die for my sins, and I for one know I'm not the man that you guys see every day. And only God could cover that.

He loved me so much that he gave me a wife that loved every part of me, and she fit me perfectly, and I know different players that I've had over the years probably got tired of me talking about my wife. I used to think to myself, "Who else was I going to talk about?" So, that never bothered me.

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

All of this will work out. As hard as this is for me and my family and for you, this will work out. I know this because I've seen this in my life.

When he said that, I perked up. Let me tell you why. That's I Peter 1! You see, so many wrongly assume that Christianity is built on the whisper of a hope that this *might* be true. So many, even within churches, not having genuine faith, believe that Christianity is really a hope-so-religion. I hope *this is so*. You bank your life that it's going to be so therefore you conform to whatever that form of Christianity says, whatever a church says.

But Williams says it's not fantasy. It's not a leap into the dark. Biblical faith, as I've told you over and over again, is evidential faith—faith built upon evidence. He knows this is going to work out because he's already experienced it in his life when he's gone through difficult times. This is the most difficult, but in difficult times God has always worked it for my good, why would He not do it now? This is what Monty Williams is saying. "He's committed to me. I've seen the reality of my faith and it works. It will work this time."

Let's return to the eulogy.

Now, I'm gonna close with this, and I think it's the most important thing that we need to understand. Everybody's praying for me and my family, which is right. But let us not forget that there were two people in this situation. And that family needs prayer as well.

And we have no ill will toward that family.

In my house, we have a sign that says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." We cannot serve the Lord if we don't have a heart of forgiveness. That family didn't wake up wanting to hurt my wife. Life is hard. It is very hard. And that was tough, but we hold no ill will toward the Donaldson family, and we as a group, brothers united in unity, should be praying for that family because they grieve as well. So let's not lose sight of what's important.

A few days ago I discovered that Chris Paul of the Los Angeles Clippers told the Associated Press that Williams was "a special, special man. That was probably one of the most powerful moments of my life, sitting there and listening to him have the strength to stand there in front of his children and ask everybody to pray for the other lady that lost her life." David West, a player for the San Antonio Spurs, said. "I thought that showed strength and courage I've never experienced in my life." He was making it personal. He had never experienced that kind of strength in his own life. He had bad things happen in his life and he didn't face them that way. That's what he was saying.

You tell me, who does that glorify? It glorifies God who gave and is giving Monty Williams strength to endure the test of fire right now. God is glorified because such a response is not normal human strength. There is something divine, supernatural, heavenly that is occurring in those moments. Christianity is not some form of stoicism where you exhibit a stiff upper lip and you refuse to cry or show any emotion. No! Peter will make sure you know that's not what he's talking about.

There is another test that Peter states,

B. The Test of the Abiding Presence of God.

How do you know you have the substance of real Christianity? Because you have the sense of the abiding presence of God. The object of Christianity is not limited to difficult times. God's goal for you is that you are filled with a constant joy, a joy that is impossible to explain and that the glory of God consumes you.

"whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory," (1 Peter 1:8)

Peter is setting up a parallelism. A parallelism is simply two identical or very similar statements of faith and love.

“whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing,

Love and believing. Do you see this? And because of that,

you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,” (1 Peter 1:8)

Rejoice. Present tense. Right now. Not when you die and go to heaven, right now. What's Peter saying? He's saying those who have real faith in Jesus Christ produces a love that will love Him supremely. Do we do that perfectly? Do we do that consistently? No. We've already dealt with the remaining corruption in us. But faith produces love because faith trusts what God says about Himself and about you. When that happens, you are able to experience an affection.

I began this message talking about affections and emotions. All we want to do is feel good. Peter is not countering that by saying, “Well, Christianity is some emotionless religion. Christianity bypasses the emotions.” No, quite the opposite. If you really have faith you will love Jesus and you will believe in Him and that right now, not in the pie in the sky by and by, right now you will have joy inexpressible and consumed with the glory of God.

This is what it means to live in and by and to the glory of God. You demonstrate that nothing is more delightful, pleasurable, and satisfying than God. This faith working through love produces a real joy.

This means life, no matter the circumstance, course, or condition you can be as joyful in God right then as you can be in prayer or study of His word. That's the objective of God. The objective is not that you have joy only when you're at church singing great songs being led by a great worship team. God's objective is that you are full of this inexpressible joy day in and day out, living by this regulatory principle that everything is to the glory of God.

This is where it becomes so hard to help people see what I'm about to say. God does not mean for you to live just by the highlights of joyful seasons. He doesn't intend for you to look back in six months and say, “Boy, that was great, I wish I could do that again.” God's objective right now is that you, by faith, see Christ and take Him at His Word. When you do, the love that He will pour in your heart by the Holy Spirit will cause a joy that is not meant to last momentarily but be sustained as you continue to trust.

The reason you don't always feel this joy and glory is you're not trusting. If you trust Him, you love Him and you feel affection for Him. What kind of love is it that doesn't feel anything? Man, my wife and I have been married for 35 years and I still feel things. Is it always the same? No. It's better. It gets deeper and more intimate.

I want to conclude by asking the same question I began with. Is this your experience? Are you a practicing Christian? Again, I'm fighting for your joy. Christians here may say, “I have seasons of that joy inexpressible and full of glory, it comes but it also goes,” and God is saying, “My Son

died not for seasons but for all the time. You can live on a plane of sustainable, constant, immovable, inexpressible joy.” When you’re not, it’s simply because you’re not trusting. When you don’t trust, you don’t feel love. At that moment you’re trusting, but you’re trusting you and living for your glory. You’re consumed with you and your renown and reputation and comfort, security, and greatness. But when you turn away from you and trust God, then you begin to affectionately desire Him and that produces joy inexpressible.

It does not matter the task, the condition, the circumstance, or the trial, you can be aware of His presence if you are committed to His glory all the time.

I want to alleviate some concerns. I’m not there yet. I’m preaching an experience I have yet to experience continually. I have it but then it gets disrupted. I’m just telling you the truth. But this is my goal. When I hear some of the songs we’ve heard this morning, my eyes cannot stay dry—and I have a dry eye condition—because that is the heartbeat of my soul, I’ve got to have it. There’s more. I’m constantly praying, “God, You’re better than my experience right now and I want it. You’ve purchased it for me, give it to me, I know it’s mine. Open up my soul so that I can receive it. I believe You!” And the joy comes as a result of the affections we have.

Well, I pray you will fight with us for your joy and the joy of those who are yet to be saved. Amen.