

# Jesus Christ Having Not Seen You Love

Well, good evening. We ended last week where the apostle Peter had previously spoken on the great and glorious things that are to come for every Christian on the appearing of Jesus Christ. The thought comes naturally of what the condition of believing souls be during His absence. Knowing our great future of attaining to praise and honor and glory at Christ's appearing, he brings to the present here on earth to bring to our attention the present Christian experience. That's where we're going to continue in our text. So, if you would, please turn to First Peter, and we will read from verse 8 and 9.

Verse 8 says this: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." God does not allow His own children to love more of creation more than His Son Jesus Christ. Even more, He will continue to put a greater desire to love His Son, so your love for Jesus Christ cannot compare to anything else in the world. He's going to do more of this in your spirit and your soul, where you look at the world, it just doesn't compare. The longer you live as a Christian, it's based on the love that He puts into us, the love of Christ that dwells in us.

So, let's go to verse 8 again. This verse ought to mean a great deal to us as believers, remembering that Peter had seen the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw Him personally, traveled with Him for three years, and those three years, he failed miserably. But one morning on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, the Lord prepared a breakfast meal for Peter and other disciples. They'd been fishing all night the night before, and He was waiting for Peter. I would have expected Him, and you would have expected Him, right? If it was any other man, it would come out of his lips: "Can't trust you, Peter. Why did you deny me three times? I'm going to have to put you on the sidelines; I can't use you anymore." No, when we're talking about Jesus Christ, that is not what He said to him, right? What did He say? Said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" from John 21:17. That was His question: "Do you love me?" The man who had been boasting about himself for over three years no longer brags at this moment. He just finally cries out in front of the Lord Jesus Christ, face to face, and he says this: "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." And the Lord Jesus said, "Feed my sheep, feed my sheep." He wanted from out of his lips to say, "You know that I love you, you know." That's John 21:16-17.

And what do we see? Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost, right? All the thousands of souls saved under that one sermon. So, the words that Jesus says

here were fulfilled, no longer in a bad way, no more denying, but all trust and love. What a great thing. Just imagine the complete transformation of Peter from who he was to who he is at the day of Pentecost. And then he says this, Peter says to us in his letter: "Whom having not seen, ye love." Now, we know we cannot love in our flesh. This must come from the Holy Spirit that makes Him real to us, amen. And this is the secret, this is the secret life of a Christian who understands the meaning of true love, the meaning of true love. When we love Him, everything else falls into place, everything. That's what made the difference in Peter's life: love. Everything fell into place. No course, no lesson on love can do that. It is a real affection, a real desire that God puts in us by the Spirit of God. It's something supernatural, and that's the most important thing, that's the most important thing that Jesus asked Peter to say, what God was doing in his own heart.

Now, I want you to look at that word "in whom." He just said "whom," but now he uses "in whom." This is all important because "in whom" is "in Christ," in Christ. But when you are in Christ, you see your own limitations, right? Do you see your own limitations? Do you see the pain of the flesh? Do you see the absence, physically, with the Lord? Yet, Christ is in us, in us with all of our limitations, with all of the pains that we suffer in this flesh, with all of His absence. "In whom, in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing." Faith reaches back not only between today and over 2,000 years ago but even deeper and more uniteable to the gulf that is stretched, that lies between earth and heaven, laid hold upon our living person, our living person. Faith that compels us to love, that compels us to love. This is the faith that God gives us. This is the faith that God gives to us, true faith that does not rest upon the heart. That's why I gave that analogy: reaches back and it reaches vertical to heaven, and it continually is an outgoing work. Faith has an outgoing work, and how does it work out? Trust, love, desire, possession, and expectation towards an unseen Christ, an unseen Christ. So, without "in whom," without that "in whom," our condition is disbelieving. It's not performance; there's nothing going forth in our lives, and that's why this word "in whom" is so important to the continuing of the text.

I like the way Paul puts it in Philippians 3:13-14. It says this—you don't need to turn there, but this is the way he expresses it—says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind." He's not talking about the cross, but his past life, "and reaching forth unto those things which are before." An ongoing work, right? Verse 14: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This is faith at its work, true faith. These verses encourage us as believers to focus on the future and not to dwell on our past achievements or our regrets. It's part of Paul's instruction to press forward towards the prize of God's calling in Christ.

Now, it's not a literal forgetting that he's trying to say here, but rather it's a shift, it's a shift, and it's an important shift, saying, "Don't think about these things in the past, what you have done." It's a shift to Jesus, to shift your whole mind to focusing on this one thing, is focusing on Jesus Christ. And God puts that faith in us; we should rejoice in that, we should rejoice what God is doing in our lives. Ephesians 3:18 puts it this way: the understanding of what faith does in Christ, it allows us to understand the depth, the length, the height, and breadth of the love of Christ. Forget the things that are behind, forget those things that are behind. This is not just resting upon Him, which is important, but it's not to stay there. He's saying, "You, the faith that God gives you, longs for greater and greater possessions of who? Of Christlikeness, of Him, more of Him, continually pressing forward." This faith, and Peter puts it like this: "Yet believing," pressing forward, "yet believing." That's where we're going to continue: "Though now you see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy." He did not say, "You ought to rejoice," here, right? He says, "You do rejoice, you do rejoice." Or back before, he doesn't say, "You ought to love"; he says, "You love," in the present tense, "You love." But the verse, two verses before, he says you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. He knows that there is a heaviness in this present love, in this present rejoicing.

So, he's not turning away, he's not turning away from the painful facts of anybody's troubled life. He's not glossing over that. He was not away, looking, as it were, from the top, looking down, as it were, into the dark valleys of our experiences. No, he took in all the burdens, the pains, the anxieties, the losses, the bleeding hearts, and the cares that burden any one of us, and he said, "In spite of them all, you rejoice." Think about the Israelites, right? When the pillar of the cloud was before the Israelites, when it was dark, it was bright. So, that's kind of the analogy that we see with the Israelites, with our own lives, with the darkness, darkness mixed in with the light. There are both that are played out in each and one of us as believers; we can't escape it. And our rejoicing should not be at the mercy, ought not to be at the mercy of our nature or circumstances. We know that, right? We know that we're not living this life by our nature or by the circumstances.

So, he's going to go into this more in this text. So, whatever your condition is, wherever you're at externally, whatever tendencies in the flesh, Peter emphasizes this cultivation of love, cultivation of joy, constantly. It's a constancy, and by doing so, we increase in our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Paul, going back to Philippians 4, he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always." He was in prison, we know that, with death at the door, and he said he felt that his friends in Philippi might think this exhortation in Philippians 4 is a little bit excessive, right? So, he repeats it again, he repeats again to show that he recognized the

apparent impossibility of obeying it. So, just as he's saying, "Rejoice always," people are thinking, "How can you?" So, he repeats again, "Rejoice, rejoice, because again I say, rejoice," under that same sense in Peter of how we are to live with rejoicing in Him.

Does that, in your heart, give you the sense of awe? Does your heart beat faster when you know, "Wow, I can experience love, I can experience joy, no matter how dark things may be, that God is going to allow me to love Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, rejoice in Him more and more"? See, that should compel us, doesn't it? Compel us to see the wonder of it all, the wonder of it all. See, Peter recognized this; he saw it in the people he was writing the letter to. Paul saw it when he was writing his letter, and we all can genuinely have that same love, have that same rejoicing, right now and forever.

And this solves a lot of problems. Just go back: every time you sensed the love of Christ, every time you experienced the joy of Christ in your life, how was your marriage in that situation, husband-wife relationship? How wonderful it is when you experience the love of Christ, the drawing of our hearts together like nothing else can. When we have this kind of love of Jesus Christ in our hearts, not only will it help you in your home, it will help right here in our church, because what Jesus does, He brings us together by His love, from one side to the other. So, this is all important to Peter. He knows that nothing's going to help solve the scattering, nothing's going to help with the trials that cause us to feel separated, as it were, but the love of Christ, rejoicing in Christ, that is what brings us together in our home and in our church. Loving Christ, all important, and it's a continual, again, outgoing effort that is that God gives to us. And that's why Paul says, "This one thing I will do, this one thing." He thought of a lot of things—it's another way of putting it—he was thinking about a lot of things that could be important, and yet he says, "This one thing: just forgetting the things in the past and just looking forward to the prize, the high calling in Christ Jesus." It's a high calling, a high calling. He didn't just put any calling; he says a high calling. There's nothing greater than that, of experiencing this kind of growth in Christ's likeness.

Going back to "yet believing," now this text, just like with Paul in the "one thing," brings about an intense activity, right? When you focus on one thing, what happens? You tend to focus better, right? When your mind is scattered, you're just all over the place; things are just chaotic. But when you focus on one thing, it implies an intense activity, intense activity of our whole being, essentially every part of us: our heart, our will, our body, our mind, the power that God gives us, verse 5, to make every effort to make more of Christ our own. Is that you tonight? Do you sense that kind of intensity of your whole being towards Christ? Because it minimizes the distance between us and Him.

Think of a vanishing point. If you know what a vanishing point is, it's where parallel lines seem to converge at a single point on the horizon. You can see that when you see the sunset going down; you see that things just line up. So, the way that Peter brings it about is like that, where love and joy meet in one point. And that's why he connects these two things; they're inseparable when it comes to what God reveals in our lives. So, "believing towards whom you rejoice," this act of trust brings joy that is real, and there is nothing that sheds peace over the heart as an absolute reliance upon Christ, who is worthy of our trust. This simple reliance upon and longing after Jesus Christ that starts with a little desire upon our salvation grows into greater and greater desires, satisfying every area of our lives. That's what happens to a believer.

Another way of putting it: our mind finds the truth, our will finds the commands that we can obey, our love is found in His love, our hope is only found in Christ, our fears are found in the right kind of fear, our sins, they are forgiven, our weaknesses, He makes strong in His grace. And to all that, we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, the answer is fullness, no longer emptiness, supply for all of our soul's need. So, "believing towards Him, we rejoice," amen.

Loving Christ brings rejoicing to your heart. Are you rejoicing, Christian? You should be. You are a child of the King, and you have an inheritance coming to you someday. How wonderful it is to be His child, how wonderful it is to be His child. But note that this joy exists strictly upon your faith. How are you going to use the faith that God has given to you? Think of it: it's like electrical wire. God gives you sort of an electrical wire that plugs into His source of power, verse 5, and the lights go on. Your life is now a new creature, you're a new creature in Christ Jesus. But as soon as your faith is disconnected, by you allowing that faith to no longer increase, and you just want to stay the way you are, you are instantly disconnected from His power, and no longer His life is flowing through you. That's how faith operates. He gives us, He helps us to steward it by His word, and the more we engage in His word, more faith is increased. And that's why Peter goes on at the very beginning with doctrine and life, because he wants us to believe in these things, that it's real, and it can really be true faith that grows and grows and grows into greater and greater maturity. This is all important to Peter; this is all important to God as His child.

Look at Romans 15:13 with me, Romans 15:13. It's a great text to really bring what I just mentioned about the analogy of the electrical wire and the power of God. Says this: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Don't you want more filling of His joy, all joy? Is that your experience, all joy? Because He gives us the capacity to experience all of His joy and peace in believing. There's that faith, "that ye may abound in hope," that your future just gets brighter and

brighter and brighter. Is that you? Because that's what He wants for you. He wants you to abound in greater hope and future, but it could only be done by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit. So, present joy upon present faith, because, another way of putting it, we cannot be satisfied for today's hunger by yesterday's meal. Think about that. Faith has to be operating every day, right? That we may be fed by His word every day, fed.

Now, notice in the text: "joy unspeakable, joy unspeakable." The depth of the joy that a believing soul has in Jesus Christ are not to be spoken. An attempt to speak of the joy we have in Him cannot be used by any human vocabulary. We can understand this. I'm a father, we have my wife, as a mother, we have many in this room that are fathers and mothers. We have dynamics of parents and children, husbands and wives. And when you, you know this, when the love and joy you have runs deep, we often say, before saying "I love you," you say, "You have no idea how much I love you, you have no idea how much I love you."

That's the kind of deep work that His love, Christ's love, and His joy does in our lives. It's so deep, it's, you can't even utter. There's just no human vocabulary to explain it. So, he says, "joy unspeakable." The joy which can be manifested in all its magnitude has actually a very small magnitude. Let me say that again: the joy which can be manifested in Christ in all its magnitude has a very small magnitude. Christian joy is unspeakable because, just as you cannot teach a blind man what color looks like, we, those of us who have been married, it's hard to explain that love that we experience. We saw our bride, as a husband, and a bride sees her husband. You get the idea: that wed love, that runs deep, doesn't it? That was really deep love, right? But the love of Christ, the joy of Christ, runs deeper. There is no human type of experience of love that compares to the joy that we experience in Christ. That's another way of putting it: it's so deep, it's so deep, it's so good, and that's what He wants for us continually. Again, faith operates continually, true faith.

We see this in the secular world, even, when they talk about love. They can't even describe it, so they use poetry. You see that: a lot of poetry about love, because even the world can't really comprehend love. When they do try to experience it, it comes out poetic, and we see exhaustive things, and they, this doesn't compare, because, honestly, cannot use human vocabulary, as I mentioned. So, do you recall the Queen when she came to Solomon? It's kind of like this. She said, "The half had not been told." The half had not been told what we're experiencing. Another way to explain it: the love and the joy of experience here on this earth, I don't even know if it's half, but it's going to be so much more, so much more. Cultivate that in your heart, cultivate how much more you can experience the love and joy of Jesus Christ.

Now, let's look at that last part, where it says "full of glory." We saw glory in verse 7, but now we see "full of glory, full of glory." This is reference to God's presence manifested in His greatness, full greatness, full beauty, full perfection, and it's all experienced by God's grace and salvation. Only through God's grace and salvation can we experience the full glory, because he says there, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We're going to experience full of His glory one day, and that's an experience that is going to be an experience that we have never experienced in this life. It's going to be a wonderful day, is it not?

I'm going to end with verse 9: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." So, this is saying "receiving," it's another way of translating, "you are presently receiving for yourselves." And what is it? Presently receiving, yourselves, possessing of your faith, a deliverance from the power of sin. See, that's what the end of faith is: that the power of sin will no longer be bound on you. God is helping you with delivering you from the power of sin. The end is, you no longer have sin, and it's done through the power of God, verse 5. Verse 5 says this: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Romans 6:22 says this: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Wow, another thing to just dwell on: being free from sin and having the fruit of holiness. We're going to go into holiness soon, but we get to experience full holiness in Him and towards the end of everlasting life. This is going to be continually going on for eternity, world without end, another thing to dwell on.

In another sense, we are waiting to receive the full salvation of eternal glory in the redemption of our bodies. And here's where I'm going to close, Romans 8:23: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." What we're experiencing in our body is temporary.

Always remind yourselves of that. Whatever your experience, or whatever you're going to experience in the future, whatever it may be, this is God's plan for you: that one day you'll no longer have to groan in this body of yours, because waiting for you is that adoption, the redemption of your body. What a wonderful time that's going to be, what a wonderful time it's going to be.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank you so much for all that we have in Christ. Christ is our all in all, from beginning without end. We thank you for the salvation we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for giving us Thy Holy Spirit, giving us faith to believe, giving us love while in this flesh and the trials that we have in it. We thank you, God, that you're helping us now and every day in faith. I pray, Father, for my brothers and sisters in Christ, that they may experience more love of Jesus Christ, more joy in Jesus Christ, that they may be edified, that they may be equipped, that they may be more godly witnesses for

the Lord Jesus Christ where they're at, because there's nothing like God dwelling in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing to compare to what we have in Christ. God, deepen this kind of relationship with them, Lord, and as they do so, Lord, strengthen their homes, Lord, bring them closer. God, unify them more in their marriages, unify them more as godly fathers and mothers and parents and lost children. God, I pray that it will be displayed well in the homes, that will be displayed well in our church as well. Bless to this end, Father, but we give you all the honor, glory, and praise, in Jesus' name, amen.