

How to be Inexpressibly Happy

by REUBEN ARCHER TORREY—1856-1928

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: — 1 Peter 1:8

I have here a beautiful text, a text that you all know, but I wonder how many of you have ever pondered it enough to take in all its wonderful wealth of meaning.

A young woman in England many years ago always wore a golden locket that she would not allow anyone to open or look into, and everyone thought there must be some romance connected with that locket and that in that locket must be the picture of the one she loved. The young woman died at an early age, and after her death the locket was opened, everyone wondering whose face he would find within. And in the locket was found simply a little slip of paper with these words written upon it, "Though I have not seen Him, I love." Her Lord Jesus was the only lover she knew and the only lover she longed for, and she had gone to be with Him, the one object of her whole heart's devotion, the unseen but beloved Savior.

But it is to the last part of the verse that I wish to call your particular attention tonight, "Even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy."

This text informs us (and many of us do not need to be informed of it, for we know it by blessed experience) that one who really believes on Jesus Christ, our unseen, but ever living Lord and Savior, rejoices with "inexpressible and glorious joy." The Greek word translated "joy" is a very strong word, describing extreme joy or jubilant joy. The word "inexpressible" declares that this jubilant joy is of such a character that we cannot, by any possibility, explain it adequately to others. Everyone who really believes on the Lord Jesus does rejoice with an jubilant joy that is beyond all description. And those who do truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are the only ones who rejoice this way. Others may have a certain amount of joy, a certain measure of gladness, but the only people who really know "inexpressible and glorious joy" are those who really believe on Jesus Christ.

Who is there among us who does not wish to be happy? Happiness is the one thing all men are seeking. One man seeks it in one way, and another man seeks it in another way, but all men are in pursuit of it. Even the man who is "happy

only when he is miserable" is seeking happiness in this strange way of cultivating a delightful melancholy by always looking on the dark side of things. One man seeks money because he thinks that money will make a man happy. Another man seeks worldly pleasure because he thinks that worldly pleasure will make a man happy. Still another seeks learning, the knowledge of science, or philosophy, or history, or literature, because he thinks that learning brings the true joy; but they are all in pursuit of the one thing, happiness.

The vast majority of men who seek happiness do not find it. You may say what you please, but for the majority of men this is an unhappy world. I go down into the houses of the poor, I do not find many happy people there. I go into the homes of the rich, I do not find many happy people even there. Study the faces of the people you meet on the street, at places of entertainment, or anywhere else, how many really radiant faces do you see? When you do see one it is so exceptional that you note it at once. But there is a way, and a very simple way, a very sure way, and a way that is open to all, not only to find happiness, but to be unspeakably happy. Our text tells us what that way is. Listen, "Even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy."

This statement of Peter's is true. How do I know it is true? In the first place, I know it is true because the Word of God says so. Whatever this book says is true. In the second place, I know it is true because I have put the matter to the test of personal experience, and found it true. A good many people say, "I do not believe the Bible." Well, I do. I believe the Bible for a good many sufficient reasons; but there is this one reason why I believe the Bible that I wish to mention tonight: I believe the Bible because I have personally tested scores and scores of its most astonishing and apparently most incredible statements and found every one of them true in my own experience. Don't you think that if I knew a man who made very many statements that I could test for myself, some of them apparently incredible, and I tested these statements one after another through a long period of years, and found every one of them true, and never one single statement failed, don't you think that I would believe that man after a while? Well, that is just my experience with the Bible, and I believe it. I would be a fool if I did not. The statement of the text is one of those that I have tested, and I have found it true.

I was not always happy. Indeed, I was once unspeakably miserable. I had sought happiness very earnestly. I had sought happiness in amusement and sin, and found, not joy, but wretchedness. In my pursuit of happiness I had tried study, the study of languages, science, philosophy and literature, but I did not find happiness in these things. At last I turned to Jesus Christ and believed on Him, and I found not merely happiness, but something better, joy, "inexpressible and glorious joy." Whatever heaven may be or may not be, I know that on this

earth he who really believes on Jesus Christ, who puts himself in Christ's hands, to be led, and taught, and guided, and strengthened, puts himself in the hands of Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ to do all He will with him, I know that such a person finds "inexpressible and glorious joy."

I. Why Those Who Believe in Jesus Christ Have Inexpressible and Glorious Joy

1. *First of all, those who believe on Jesus Christ have "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they know that their sins are all forgiven.* It is a wonderful thing to know that your sins are all forgiven, to know that there is not one single, slightest cloud between you and God, to know that no matter how many, or how great your sins may have been, that they are all blotted out; to know that God has put them all behind His back, where no one can ever get at them; to know that God has sunk all your sins in the depths of the sea, from which they can never be raised; that they are all gone. A little boy once asked his mother, "Mother, where are our sins after they are blotted out?" His mother replied, "My boy, where are those figures that you erased from your paper yesterday?" He answered, "I rubbed them out." Then she asked, "Where are they now?" he replied, "They are nowhere." "Well," she said, "that is just the same with your sins when God has blotted them out. They are nowhere. They have ceased to be."

Oh, friends, what a joy it is to know that there is not one single tiny cloud between you and the Holy God whom we call Father and who rules this universe. Suppose that you had offended the laws of the nation and had been sent to prison on a life sentence, and a pardon were brought to you, do you not think you would be happy? But that is nothing compared with the joy of knowing that your every sin is blotted out. Some years ago Governor Stuart of Pennsylvania determined to pardon one of the prisoners in the Pennsylvania State prison, so he sent for Mr. Moody and said to him, "I have determined to pardon one of the prisoners in our state's prison, and I want you to go and take the pardon to him. You can preach to the prisoners if you want to while you are doing it." So Mr. Moody went, carrying the pardon with him, and before he began to preach he said, "I have a pardon for one of you men that the Governor has sent by me." He did not intend to tell who it was who was pardoned until the sermon was over, but as he looked around on his audience and saw how anxious they all were, how eager they were, how a very agony of suspense was in their faces, Mr. Moody thought, "This will never do, I can't keep these

men in this suspense," so he said, "I will tell you now who the man is," and he read his name from the pardon. Do you not think that, that was a glad moment for that one man out of those hundreds of prisoners, a glad moment for the one man who had the Governor's pardon, and who could walk out of prison a free man? Yes, but that is nothing to knowing that the eternal God has eternally pardoned your sins. Every true Christian knows that, he knows that every one of his sins is forgiven. How does he know it? Because the Bible says so in many places.

For example, it says in Acts 13:39, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."so we know it because God says so. But no one but the believer in Jesus Christ knows that his sins are all forgiven. If anyone who is not a believer in Jesus Christ says, "I know my sins are all forgiven," he says what is not true; for he does not know it, and cannot know it, for it is not a fact; but a Christian knows it because the Word of God says so.

The Christian knows his sins are all forgiven for another reason, that is, because the Holy Spirit bears witness in his own heart to the fact. One day, when the Apostle Peter was preaching to Cornelius, the Roman officer, and to his household, he said, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."(Acts 10:43), and everyone in his audience believed it. The Spirit of God descended right then and there and filled their hearts with the knowledge of sins forgiven, and they "began to magnify God" with jubilant hearts and jubilant voices. I tell you that was a joyful meeting.

A king, a great king, once wrote one of the greatest songs that ever was written. That song has lasted through the ages. It has been sung and is still being sung by thousands. It has been sung by millions, and though it was written many centuries ago, it is just as sweet today as the day the king wrote it. The man who wrote this song was a great king, the greatest king of his day, he was also one of the greatest generals of his day, one of the greatest generals of any day. He had great armies, the all-conquering armies of the day. He had a magnificent palace. I do not suppose that any other earthly king was ever so beloved as he was. His song was about joy and about happiness. He does not say in that song, "How happy is the man who is a great king," or, "How happy is the man who is a great general." What does he say? "Blessed is

he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" (Psalm 32:1, translated literally from the Hebrew): "There is no happiness like the joy of knowing your sins are all forgiven." Oh, what a joy thrills the heart when a man knows that his sins are fully, freely, and forever forgiven. That is one reason why he who believes on Jesus Christ is inexpressibly happy, and you can have that inexpressible happiness today. I do not care how black your life may have been in the past; I do not care how far you may have wandered from God; I do not care how old you may have grown in sin; if you take Jesus Christ today for your Savior and your Lord, and believe on Him, your every sin will be blotted out, and it will be your privilege to know it.

2. *In the second place, those who believe on Jesus Christ rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they are free from the most grinding and crushing of all forms of slavery, the slavery of sin.* There is many a slave in this audience tonight. Some of you are slaves of strong drink. Some of you men and some of you women are slaves of drink. You know you are slaves of drink. Some of you are slaves of drugs. Some of you are slaves of an uncontrollable temper. Some of you are slaves of acts of impurity or impurity of thought. Some of you are slaves of other sins. The grossest, vilest, most degrading slavery in the universe is the slavery of sin. Yes, many of you here tonight are slaves. But the Lord Jesus says in John 8:31, 32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He says again in the thirty-sixth verse, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." There is not a slave in this building tonight who cannot have his chains snapped in a moment, yes, in a moment, by the mighty Son of God, if only he will believe on Jesus and trust Him to do it. How many a man and how many a woman I have known who once were slaves of sin in its most degrading and hopeless forms, who now are free.

One of the dearest and most honored and most useful friends I ever had was Sam Hadley of New York City. Sam Hadley was once hopelessly enslaved by sin. Strong drink had utterly mastered him and undermined his character. He had committed 138 forgeries, and was being sought for by the police. One night, after having spent the night before in a New York jail with the "shakes," in a mission meeting a few blocks away from the jail he cried to Jesus to save him, and Jesus saved him right then and there; and I have often heard him say that never from that night had he ever had the

slightest desire for that which had enslaved him more than anything else, intoxicating drink. My, what a happy man he became! All who knew him testified that he had "inexpressible and glorious joy." I wish you could have looked in Sam Hadley's face and seen the joy in that redeemed and radiant countenance. But we do not need to call Sam Hadley back from heaven to testify, for there are hundreds of people right here in this building tonight who once were complete slaves, who now are God's free men and free women, and who could testify to the fact. That is one reason why we are inexpressibly happy, because we are free. How the Southern Blacks rejoiced when they came to understand they were set free. They shouted and sang, "Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!" Why? Because once they were slaves, but now were free. No wonder, then, that we rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because we know that we are free, and free forever.

3. *In the third place, those who believe on Jesus Christ rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy," because they are delivered from all fear.* There is nothing that darkens the human heart more and robs it of all joy and fills it with gloom than fear in some of its many forms.

Those who truly believe on Jesus Christ are saved from all fear. They are delivered from all fear of misfortune; they are delivered from all fear of man; they are delivered from all fear of death; they are delivered from all fear of eternity. Do you know, friends, that to a true believer in Jesus Christ "eternity" is one of the sweetest words in the English language? Oh, how it makes our hearts swell, that word, "eternity." But "eternity" is not a sweet word to the unsaved. Write these words, "Where will you spend eternity?" on a card and hand it to a man who is not a Christian, and they will make him mad; write these same words, "Where will you spend eternity?" on a card and hand it to a Christian, and they will make him glad. Why is it? Simply because a true believer on Jesus Christ is not afraid of but delights in thoughts of eternity. Why, to him who believes on Jesus Christ eternity is glory.

4. *In the fourth place, he who believes on Jesus Christ rejoices with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because he knows he will live forever.* Is not that something to rejoice over? Is it not wonderful? We read in 1 John 2:17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. We all know that it is true that "the world passes away." We certainly ought to know it by this time; but it is equally true that "he who

does the will of God lives forever."

Sometimes as we ride along our beautiful roads we see the stately mansions of our multimillionaires, and one will think, "It must be very pleasant to live there." Well, I suppose it must be, but think a moment. How long will these people live there? Perhaps the father of the household may live there ten years, possibly twenty years. Then where does he live? Some of the children may live there twenty, thirty, possibly, forty years, then what? The grave. I tell you it is not worth much after all. But the Christian looks on, and on, and on, to a life that has no end, to a life that is eternal. Glory!

5. *In the fifth place, those who truly believe on Jesus Christ rejoice greatly with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they know they are children of God.* It is a great thing to know that you are a child of God. How does the Christian know it? He knows it because God says so in John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" A child of God, think of it! Sometimes as I have traveled around the world someone would point out to me some man, and say, "That man is the son of such and such a man, naming some king. Would you not like to be the son of a great king? Just look at that young man. He is the son of a king." In one country many years ago, when the king business was better than it is today, I was taken up and introduced to the son of one of the reigning monarchs of Europe, and the man who introduced me whispered to me, "He is the son of So-and-So" (naming the king). Well, what of it? He was a fine man in himself, but what if he was the son of a king? I am a son of God, and that is far greater, and every believer in Jesus Christ in this building tonight is a child of God, the child of "the King of kings." And any one of you here tonight, if you are not already a child of God, can become one in an instant by receiving the Lord Jesus.
6. *In the sixth place, and very closely connected with the last, true believers in Jesus Christ rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.* Is that not wonderful? We are so familiar with it we do not stop to take in the meaning of it. One of England's dukes lay dying. He called his brother to him, the one who would succeed to the title, and said, "Brother, in a few hours now you will be a duke and—and I will be a king." He was already a child of the King and in a few hours he himself would be a king. I, too, will be a king in a few days. You may say, "It may be many years." Well, many years

are only a few days on the scale of eternity. And, if you really are a believer in Christ Jesus, if you have a real living faith in Him, you, too, will be a king in a few days.

There was never a royal pageant sweeping through the streets of London at any coronation comparable in glory to the glory that awaits you and me just over yonder. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:4). We may be poor today. That does not matter. This life will be over in a moment and the other life begun, and that life is eternal.

7. *In the seventh place, those who truly believe on Jesus Christ, those who throw their hearts wide open to Him, is those who surrender absolutely to Him, rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because God gives them the Holy Spirit, and there is no other joy in the present life like the joy of the Holy Spirit.* One Monday morning, in Chicago, my front doorbell rang. I kept Monday in those days for my rest day, and had a notice above the doorbell, "Mr. Torrey does not see anyone on Monday." The maid went to the door, and there stood a poor woman. The maid said, "Mr. Torrey does not see anyone on Monday. Did you not see the notice over the doorbell?" She said, "I knew that, but I have got to see him and you just go and tell him a member of his church must see him." So the maid brought her into the reception room. She was a washerwoman. The maid showed the washerwoman a seat and came upstairs and said to me, "There is a woman downstairs who is a member of your church and says she has got to see you." So down I went.

As I entered the room she arose and hurried toward me, and said, "Mr. Torrey, I knew you did not see anybody on Monday, but I had to see you. Last night after I went to bed I was filled with the Holy Spirit right there in my bed, and I was so happy I could not sleep all night, and this morning I had to come and tell somebody. I could not afford to give up a day's work to come around and tell you about it, but I knew I must tell somebody and I did not know anybody I would so like to tell as you. I know you won't be angry." Indeed, I was not angry. I was glad she had come, and rejoiced with her, that old washerwoman filled with the Holy Spirit and so full of joy that, poor as she was, she had to give up a day's work to go and tell somebody she loved all about it.

Before I came to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ I was one of the

bluest men who ever lived. I would sit down by the hour and brood. I have never known what the blues mean since the day I really became a Christian, absolutely surrendered to God. I have had troubles. I have had losses. There have been times in my life when I have lost pretty much everything the world holds dear. I know what it is to have a wife and four children, and to lose everything of a financial kind I had in the world, and not know from meal to meal where the next meal was coming from. I was absolutely without resources, living from hand to mouth—from God's hand to my mouth. I have known what it is to be with a wife and child in a foreign country where they spoke a strange language, and for some reason or other supplies did not come, and I did not know anyone in the city well enough to turn to for help; but I did not worry. I knew it was all in God's hands, that it would all come out right somehow, and of course it did come out right.

The first time I ever visited London, thirty-nine years ago last September, I was planning to spend two weeks in England, and then start for America. I expected to find money waiting for me when I reached London, and I reached London with a wife and child, and not a letter and no money. But I said, "The letter and the money will come tomorrow or the next day." My wife made some purchases, taking it for granted we would have money when the purchases came home; but the money did not come. Day after day passed, and the dresses came home and it was about time for the landlady to come with her board bill. It came to be the very last day before our boat started, and not a penny in sight. I went down to the bank. I did not know a soul in London. There were three or four million people there then—a stranger amid three or four millions of people, money absolutely gone, three thousand miles from friends. I did not worry. I knew the money would come. I did not know how it would come, for the source I expected to receive it from seemed utterly cut off; but yet I was happy. Why? Because I was a child of God; I had the promises of the Bible; I knew they were absolutely certain. I never lost an hour's sleep. I never worried. I just trusted. It seemed as though I would have to be fed somewhat as Elijah was, but I knew I would be fed. I knew my wife and child would be provided for. The money came, and I sailed on the steamer I expected to sail on, with every penny due paid, and money in my pocket. Friends, a Christian is happy at all times and under all circumstances. We rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" every one of the twenty-four hours of the day that we are awake, and sometimes in our sleep. You, too, can have

that joy.

II. How to Get This Inexpressible and Glorious Joy

Now arises the question, "What must anyone here tonight who does not have this inexpressible and glorious joy do to get it?" I have really answered that question several times in what I have already said, but to be sure that we all really understand it, let me answer it again, or rather let my text answer it, "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." The text tells us that the way to obtain this "inexpressible and glorious joy," the way to be inexpressibly happy at all times and under all circumstances, is just by believing on the unseen Christ Jesus. What does it mean to believe on Jesus Christ? There is no mystery at all about that. It simply means to put confidence in Jesus Christ to be what He claims to be and what He offers Himself to be to us, to put confidence in Him as the One who died in our place, the One who bore our sins in His own body on the cross, and to trust God to forgive us all our sins because Jesus Christ died in our place; to put confidence in Him as the One who was raised from the dead and who now has "all power in heaven and on earth," and therefore is able to keep us day by day, and give us victory over sin, and to trust this risen Christ to give us victory over sin day by day; and to put confidence in Him as our absolute Lord and Master, and therefore to surrender our thoughts and wills and lives entirely to His control, believing everything He says, even though every scholar on earth denies it, obeying everything He commands, whatever it may cost; and to put confidence in Him as our Divine Lord, and confess Him as Lord before the world, and worship and adore Him. It is wonderful the joy that comes to him who thus believes on Jesus Christ. But one must really believe on Jesus Christ to have this joy.

Merely being a member of a church is not enough. Merely being baptized is not enough. Merely reading your Bible is not enough. Merely praying is not enough. Merely going to church is not enough. Merely going to the Lord's table and partaking of the Lord's Supper is not enough. But if you are a real believer on Jesus Christ, if you have put all your trust in the Lord Jesus as your atoning Savior and your risen Savior, and your risen Lord and Master, and surrendered your thoughts and life to Him utterly as your Lord and Master, and are confessing Him as such before the world, if you have thrown your heart's door wide open for the Lord Jesus to come in, and live, and rule, and reign there, you will have "inexpressible and glorious joy" at all times and under all circumstances.

All anyone has to do, then, to be inexpressibly happy at all times and

under all circumstances, is to believe on Jesus Christ. It does not make any difference what his circumstances may be: he may be rich or he may be poor; he may be highly educated, or he may be ignorant; he may be in good health or he may be a hopeless invalid; he may have been a moral, clean, upright man, or he may have been the vilest of sinners, it matters not. Everyone who believes on the unseen but living Christ will find "inexpressible and glorious joy." I can bring scores, hundreds, thousands of witnesses to prove that. You cannot bring a single witness on the other side. Col. Robert Ingersoll delighted to say, "It doesn't make one happy to be a Christian." How did he know? He never tried it. You can search the earth through and you cannot find me one single man or woman who was ever an out-and-out believer in Jesus Christ, a real wholehearted believer in Jesus Christ, one who had surrendered all to Jesus Christ; I say you cannot find me even one such man or woman who will deny that Jesus Christ gives "inexpressible and glorious joy" to those who thus believe on Him. Here, then, is the way the case stands: Every single competent witness, that is, every witness who has ever tried it, testifies that believing in Jesus Christ does bring "inexpressible and glorious joy," and these witnesses number thousands, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands, people from every rank of society and culture, and not one witness on the other side. Is it demonstrated or not? It certainly is.

I take it that I am speaking tonight to reasonable men and women. You desire "inexpressible and glorious joy." I have told you how to get it. There can be no doubt about it. The evidence is overwhelmingly convincing. There is, then, but one rational thing for you to do, believe on Jesus Christ tonight. Will you do it?

Once a man who was utterly miserable came to me. He was a rarely gifted man, a brilliant scholar, but utterly miserable. If ever I saw a man in hell he was the man. He had attempted suicide at least four times. He had been so near succeeding in his attempts that on two occasions it had been necessary to pump out of him the poison he had taken and thus bring him back to life. I urged him to believe on Jesus Christ. He replied, "I cannot, I have sinned away the Day of Grace." Day after day I talked with the man and always I had but one message, and that was, "Come to Jesus Christ. Believe on Jesus Christ." At last, one day the man did come to Jesus Christ. He found "inexpressible and glorious joy." Sometimes I have seen that man when his face was radiant. Out of hell into heaven by just believing on Jesus Christ! Will you take that same step now?

R. A. Torrey Archive