

The Privileges of the Christian

by Geoff Thomas

This sermon emphasizes the privileges of being a Christian, focusing on the trust, love, joy, and purpose that Jesus Christ offers. It highlights the importance of believing in Him, loving Him, experiencing inexpressible joy, and finding the ultimate goal of salvation in Him.

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:8, Matthew 11:28, John 15:11, Philippians 3:14, John 6:47, Romans 15:13, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Privileges of Christianity", "Joy in Salvation"

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Transcript

It's a great honor for me to be here. I've heard about this conference from Mark for so long and never thought I'd be able and privileged to speak to you. I'm so pleased to be here.

I want to speak to you from the first letter of Peter, chapter 1, verses 8 and 9. Then, 1 Peter 1, 8 and 9, Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith and the salvation of your souls. I want to speak to you tonight on the privileges of being a Christian.

I could speak to you about the responsibilities of being a Christian and referring to this same passage. All privileges lead to responsibilities. You know, mom and dad, they know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they speak warmly to you about Him.

They tell you you need Him and it would be wonderful if you had Him as your own personal Lord and Savior. And that's a wonderful privilege. There are millions of boys and girls in the world that have never heard of Jesus Christ.

That privilege, though, brings responsibilities. What will you do with this Jesus who is called the Christ? Or you may on Sundays come to a church, and it's not just a very formal occasion and people dress up and chant and behave in predictable ways. But the climax of the service after we've sung and prayed to God is that God speaks to us through His Word.

And we feel something of conviction and joy in hearing about Jesus Christ. Now that privilege is not given to lots of people. It's given to you.

Privileges bring responsibilities. So you must not just be a hearer of the Word, but you must do what the preacher tells you to do. And so here tonight we're going to look at the privileges rather than the responsibilities because I want to speak to you about grace and not about law.

You know there are people who think it's really a very hard life, the Christian life. You got in your car and your neighbor said, oh, where are you going? Oh, we're going to Dallas. We're going to Denton in Texas.

Oh yes, you're having a vacation? Going to the Rodeo? You say no, it's a conference. We're going to hear the Bible preached. And after they drove off, he turned to his wife and said, oh, what a life! What a life! They're going to hear the Bible.

They think it's a joyless life. And sometimes we do emphasize the places we don't go to and the practices we don't approve of and the language we don't use. People think they have to give up so much to become Christians.

We Christians never think like that. We've given up what we could never keep. And we've gained what we will never lose.

And Peter here in these verses that I've read in your hearing, Peter tells us about some of the great privileges that a Christian has. And the first great privilege that a Christian has that he is someone to believe in. Verse 8, though you don't see Jesus Christ now, now, not today, but oh, one day, but now you don't see Him, but you believe in Him.

How is that possible when I as a boy in school, I was converted in 1954 in a little Baptist church up the valley. Just an ordinary conversion. And I witnessed to my friends, and then someone would say, well, seeing's believing.

As though that just destroyed the whole case for Christianity. I heard some of you, you never saw your grandmother. She died when you were a baby or perhaps before you were born.

But your mother tells you stories about her and the love she showed and how she protected your mother when your mother was very vulnerable at one time in her life. And she talks about the fun they had together and what a lovely person she was. Do you believe in your grandmother? You never saw her.

But of course, you do believe in her. You believe in her through the testimony of someone who did see her and whose life was changed by her. And that's how it was with these Christians in what we call today Turkey, but then in Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia.

These places in the opening verses he tells us he's addressing the Christians. Jesus Christ never went to Turkey. He went to Africa.

He never came to Europe. When He was a baby, He went to North Africa, didn't He? To Egypt. He was there and protected from Herod.

But that wonderful evangelism of His over three years then, and He gathered 500 people. His flock. And some of them went, oh, they all went different places speaking of the transforming power of His life and His resurrection.

And they shared it with people everywhere. And some came to Turkey. And they said, ah, we've got good news for you.

And we can say that, can't we? Everybody in America. We have good news for you. We have a Savior for you.

We have a Teacher for you. We have a Great Shepherd who will look after you and protect you. I have good news for everybody here tonight.

Good news about Jesus Christ. And so, they wanted to know more about Him. And they came to believe in Him and believe big truths so that these two letters that Peter wrote, they were full of meaty doctrine and a great concept of God and of Jesus Christ.

Because Peter, you see, was an eyewitness. He was there. He was there when Jesus called Him when He was repairing His nets with His Father.

He was there on the Mount of Transfiguration. He was there in Gethsemane. He was there in the Upper Room.

He went into the tomb and He saw it. It was empty, but the great clothes were there. He was an eyewitness.

And that is how we are Christians in Denton tonight. We are here not that Jesus ever came to America, but because people who were His eyewitnesses Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and others, they saw Him and they recorded this extraordinary life. The most wonderful years in the history of this planet when Jesus lived.

The most wonderful week. The most wonderful days at the end of His life. No days can compare to them.

And there's a record of them. And we believe because of this. I was saved, I said, in 54.

And a few other boys in 55. And we started a Christian gathering in school. And one of the boys, he was called Neil Kinnock.

And Neil Kinnock then became a prominent politician. He led the Labor Party in a couple of general elections against Mrs. Thatcher. And he was interviewed.

People were interested, asked him questions about his religion. And he said, well, I just admire Christians, but I could never take a leap into the dark. That's what he said.

And so I wrote to him. Dear Neil, remember those days when we had Bible studies and you came along and you were interested? And you know, becoming a Christian isn't easy. It isn't a leap into the dark.

It's coming to the light of the world. It's coming to Jesus Christ. And we learn about Him.

And we want to know more about Him. And we ask questions. And we feed our minds and our understanding and our affections are stirred.

And our conscience is troubled too. But all about Him. And then we believe in Him.

It's a special word here. Not believe about Him, but believing right into Him. You know there's a great database.

You teenagers, you know what a database is, isn't it? You all know about IT much more than we allsters. There's a database in which every piece of the Greek language has been recorded. I mean, people like Plato and Aristotle and the philosophers, and then Thucydides the historian, and then the great dramatists and poets.

All of that. Every bit of Greek that men have ever found. Classical Greek.

It's all on this database. And then common Greek as Greek changed over the years and it came to the New Testament. And the New Testament's on it too.

And then it's added to all the time. They find pieces of parchment preserved under the Egyptian sun. Letters to a wife from a soldier and bills and contracts.

And then they are published and immediately then the people who run this website, they add it to it. So, it's an enormous help if you're a scholar. And so, say you take this phrase now which Peter uses here and which is used in the New Testament about believing into someone.

So you type it in and then you push a button and then it searches very quickly through all this Greek. And then it prints out. And you have a piece of paper and you look at it.

And to your surprise, the only place in all the world where this phrase to believe into someone is found is the New Testament. In other words, it was invented by the Holy Spirit. It was invented by the apostles.

It's the same thing. To explain to us what is the nature of saving faith. It's not believing about Him, but it's believing right into Him.

Being joined to Him. Jonathan Edwards called saving faith a connecting grace. It plugs us in.

It grafts us into Christ and His life. And we become joined unbreakably, eternally to God the Son so that His life is yours and your life is His. And that's what a Christian is.

You can only explain the heroism and courage and the wonderful patience of a wife looking after her husband when he gets forgetful at the end of his days and she's so wonderfully patient and loving because the strength and the patience and the joy and the peace of Jesus Christ is in her. What a privilege to be a Christian. Let's compare it to a proposal to marriage.

You know, a young man and woman, older men and women, they get married too, you know. And they meet in a conference like this. They talk to one another.

And then, oh, they talk. And they talk. So the husband comes home and he says, where's Cindy? She's on the phone again.

Upstairs, there she is talking to this man in her life. And they sit together and they eat together and they walk. And she's watching him.

She's looking at him. She's evaluating him. How is he with his parents? How is he with her parents? How is he with other women? What are his values? What are his ambitions? What does he want to do in life?

What's his goal? Is he patient and humble and sweet? Because when you go into marriage, you know, there's no back door you can get out of if it doesn't work.

You don't think like that. A Christian, if he's getting married. And finally, on a moonlit night, he gets down on his knee and he brings a little box out of his pocket and he proposes.

Will you marry me? He says. And when she says, I do, it's not because of the moonlight or the ring. It's because she's grown in appreciation and knowledge and understanding and wisdom and love.

She wants to go where he wants to go. And then we say this phrase, they were joined together in marriage. Now that's a picture of what it is to become a Christian.

You come to church and you listen to the preacher and you have young people's meetings and conferences and there are camps and there are books and you read and you hear about Him. And you grow in your understanding of who this extraordinary, uninventable Person is. And your heart is drawn out to Him.

When He says, come to Me, then you know the One who you're going to. You've learned about Him and you know why you need Him. And when you think that the future is just impossible without Him, and you are joined together with Him, you trust in Jesus Christ.

Let's talk about trust. I think faith is a rather strong Latin-based word, isn't it? It's a rather hard and tough word, faith. But trust is a nice Anglo-Saxon word and it's a gentler word, isn't it? Trust is something you know.

You've got it or you haven't got it. You can measure that, can't you? When you wake up in the night and you turn over and you look at the digital alarm clock and it says 3.30, you know how accurate those clocks are and you can trust it. They're reliable.

A wife trusts her husband. He's not home tonight. It's late for him.

He's usually home at this time. But you trust him. You know he's not fooling around.

Your children said they'd be home by 9.00 and now it's 10.00. Something's happened. You trust them because that's the sort of children they are. That's the sort of husband you have.

And so too, this is the distinctive characteristic of the Christian. The distinctive privilege that every Christian has. We trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do. Our lives are not falling apart because we know the One who's in charge of our lives. He's got all authority in heaven and earth, He says.

He's in control of our lives. I believe in Him. I've never seen Him, but I know Whom I have believed.

I know this Savior, the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus my mother and father knew and the preacher knows and my friends know. I'm safe in His presence.

I trust Him. Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee. That's the voice of trust.

That's a Christian. That's salvation. That is eternal life.

We trust everything about Jesus, everything that He's done, especially when He died on the cross and He cried, it is finished. We trust those words. We don't have to make a contribution because it will be us and it will be spoiled by us.

We can't make a sinless contribution because we drink iniquity like water. So we trust in Him, in what He has done, in His achievements, in His righteousness, His perfection, His loveliness, His beauty, and in His atoning death. We trust in these things.

My friend Reg Burrows, he's a pastor. He's retired now. He was shaking hands at the door with people as they left one Sunday morning.

A little old lady came up to him and she shook his hand. She said, oh, Mr. Burrows, I hope I manage to do enough for God to accept me. Now it's very helpful to a minister when somebody says something like that because then we can understand just where they are in this journey into a living, saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

A remark like that tells us that they haven't understood Christianity. They haven't understood the Gospel. They haven't understood grace.

They are showing their lostness. They think God's made a contribution and then we need to make a contribution. Then God will accept us.

But we are saved by the achievement of someone else. By what that person did. That's what saves us.

We never manage to do enough. We never do because of ego and pride and self-pity and all the things that spoil our lives in this world. I've never prayed a sinless prayer.

I've never done a sinless action. I need at the end of every day to say, sorry, Lord, about today. Forgive another day, Lord.

My best things, I have to say that. We are saved by the achievement of somebody else who never had to say sorry at the end of every day. The lovely beauty, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, high above the heavens.

This is the extraordinary life of the Man Christ Jesus. The Son of God. Saved by what He did.

Christmas comes and then we have the sound of music and all those lovely songs. Maria in the end, the stern, grieving widower, the captain, he collapses before her and wants to marry her. And she can't get over it.

She is just amazed. She's such a simple peasant girl and got a good voice. There she is.

And so she sings then. She's puzzling over why is it that God has allowed this fellow to fall in love with her? And she sings, and you remember what she sings? She sings, Somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good. You know? That's what she says.

Doesn't she? I helped an old lady over the road. I was kind to my parents. I wasn't nasty to animals.

And I was patient with people. God saw all that, and so He gave me this rich dude. I have three daughters and my youngest, you know, she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth.

So it all works out for her. She passes, goes to university, meets Glenn, a lovely fellow, marries him, gets a job as a teacher, has three children. She tells me the next thing.

I say, oh, Flee, how is it that everything seems to happen to you like this? She says, Somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good. She knows it's a heresy. And she likes to tease her old man about it, doesn't she? Now the Christian doesn't think like that.

We don't think like that at all. The Christian says, because of everything that Jesus Christ did, God has blessed me. Oh, what wonderful blessings! I've got in my life His mercies in you every morning.

It's faithfulness. It's immeasurable. You can't see the east or west of it.

How kind, how good, how patient He is with me. He's forgiven all my sins. And so a Christian, and then you see a Christian is someone to believe in.

Oh, we want to believe in such a Savior, don't we? I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, trusting only Thee, trusting Thee for full salvation, great and free. That's the response to this amazing love that Jesus had seen the fire on us. He'd seen it.

He knew about everything. The things done in darkness. The things that God has veiled from those who know us best that we're so ashamed of.

He still loved us. He still loved us. We join to Him by saving faith.

Well now, who are you going to believe in? If you say no to my Savior again tonight, who are you going to trust in? It can't be Hollywood after all the ugly disclosures. The foundations have gone there. That's hollow and ugly.

Sportsmen? What figures are there? Philosophers? Writers? If you reject my Savior, Jesus Christ, who have you got to look into? When you get married? When you get children and they're sick? When you've got bills to pay and you're getting older and the grandchildren are quite demanding too, and you're getting nearer death, who have you got? Who do you have? If you say no to Jesus Christ, who have you got? Look, there's this wonderful privilege. A Christian has someone to believe right into, to trust. You can rely on Him completely.

And the secondary privilege that a Christian has here, a Christian has someone to love. Verse 8, whom having not seen, you love. And it's the same illustration I'll use again about your grandmother.

Mom takes you upstairs and she puts you in bed. And you say, tell me a story, mom. She says, oh, it's late tonight.

Tell me about Nana. Tell me about Nana. Oh, please, please, mommy.

Please tell me about Nana and the cows. Oh, you've heard that story, so tell me, mommy. So, she starts to tell you how you went blackberry picking with jars in a field and you were picking and the cows got very curious and they all started to come nearer and nearer.

And then they started getting a bit faster. And how your mother got a bit frightened as they came. She picked you up then.

She picked her daughter, your mother, and carried her over the stream and dropped you over the wall and clambered over the wall. The cows all came and looked at you and looked at your mother. Ah, you love the story.

And when your mother tells it, you know her eyes are filled with tears as she remembers that wonderful person who loved her. And you love her. You love her, though you never saw her.

You love her because your mother, whom you just adore, your mother loved her and owed her so much. When you read a great biography of Lloyd-Jones or Spurgeon, in the end, you love these people. You love them.

You don't want it to end. You start to read a few pages less because you don't want it to end. You're so filled with admiration that this world is seeing so terrific a person as some of these people are.

Peter tells us what he had seen. He told them. We went into the room together.

It was just James and John and I. There was her mother there. Jairus and his wife. And there was just the little girl and Jesus.

There were seven of us in the room. They all spout out and they listened. They know the story.

Oh, they love to hear it again. And he went over to the bed and he held her by the hand, her cold, dead hand. And he said to her, Talitha cummi.

I'm sorry, that's our language. It's Aramaic. I just see it so vividly in my mind, little girl.

My mother said it to me when I was a boy by Galilee. My mother would wake me up in the afternoon. She'd know I'm asleep throughout all the afternoon.

I wouldn't sleep at night. Talitha cummi, she'd say, get up now. Get up.

And you build up this picture. And it's a wonderful picture. And you start to love, not only believe in Him, but to love this man.

He's pure gold. He's so approachable. Women absolutely trust him.

They bring their little children and they give him for him to hold and he prays God's blessing on them. And that comes not because they'd actually seen Jesus, because the Pharisees saw him and they saw him raise Lazarus from the dead. That didn't make them Christians seeing Jesus.

If Jesus came back today, you might think, ah, I'd believe in Him then. No, you wouldn't. There's a real coldness in your heart towards Him about having Him as your Lord to serve Him for the rest of your days.

You always have an excuse. It's always so inconvenient just now, isn't it? Just never quite the convenient time to be trusting in Jesus Christ and repenting of your sin and starting to follow Him. You need a work in your heart, Jesus calls it, the drawing.

The drawing out of the poison of unbelief. The drawing of new affections for Jesus Christ. No one can come to Me except the Father who sent Me.

Draw Him. You need to be drawn. It's not just the physical sight, but the drawing of love.

He wraps cords of love around you in a meeting like this. And He starts to pull you to Himself out of your unbelief. He's just tugging you and saying, I'm saying this to you.

That's why He sent the man from Wales. That's why He brought you here. You might know this Jesus for yourself.

And you might love Him. And we do love Him. Now when I say that, everybody here who is a Christian feels, oh, I wish I did love Him more.

Oh, it's my chief complaint that my love is cold and weak and faint. I'm sorry that I don't love Jesus more. Every Christian, the most mature Christian here and the youngest Christian is saying that just now when I say, we do love Him.

We say, but I do love Him. I do love Him. I love the Lord.

Oh, for grace to love Him more. That's what we feel. And every one of us is feeling that.

Sometimes we feel if we had a better preacher, we'd love Him more. Well, we always want to blame something out there. The trouble is in here, isn't it? There was the great preacher Isaiah.

And he was preaching what poetry, what passion, what pathos. The greatest of all the writing prophets. And there he is and he was preaching to them and telling them of the Messiah who would come.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He told them.

They didn't understand. It was to them as if he was getting excited about a branch of bleached wood blown by the wind in the desert. A root out of dry ground.

There was no beauty that they desired him. And he says, who's believed? I'll report. To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And he's talking about a touch from heaven.

You've got to have a touch from heaven. It's no good my laying hands on you. You don't want a touch from a Welshman.

But oh, you do need the touch of God. Oh, you must have that. And you must be in your praying saying, Lord, touch me.

Lord, don't let me go away untouched. A Christian then is someone who has someone to believe in and someone he loves. And my mother was converted to the influence of my grandmother's brother, Uncle Oliver, who was converted in the 1904 revival.

And well, he couldn't go anywhere. He'd see a crowd of people. He'd speak to them.

And he'd carry a text around town. He'd have children's meetings. And he'd see my mother then for years afterwards.

And he'd just say to her, do you love him, Bess? Do you love him? Because in a simple way, sometime during the first world war, 1917, 1918, she'd given her heart to Jesus Christ. I had immense influence over me. Twenty years later, she sang hymns to do every chore when she vacuumed and when she washed and she cooked and she dusted.

And she'd be singing how sweet the name of Jesus sounds. Oh, for a thousand tongues. My friend Brian, my best friend, he said to me when we were about 15, he said to me, your mother's remarkable, isn't she? I said, yes.

He said, the way she sings hymns. I thought, oh, his mother doesn't sing hymns. I thought every mother sang hymns.

Do you love him? Do you love him? That's the great challenge, isn't it? Why do we love him? Why is it impossible for us to stop loving him? Well, because of his teaching, isn't it? When he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and he taught them saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God. Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

William Shakespeare never said anything as wonderful as that. Charles Dickens, never. All the great American writers, European writers, Tolstoy, they didn't say anything as wonderful as Jesus.

Sometimes, you know, we read the Bible and it's wonderful. The Word of God, the words of Jesus. Wonderful words of life.

We have them. We love his teaching. We love his tenderness.

And we love the way he saw the dirty feet. And he did something about it. He took the basin of water and the towel and he washed 24 feet.

Got the donkey dung off them. Dried them. They sat around in embarrassment as he humbled himself.

What a man. He had so much on his mind then and he did that. He loved his neighbors himself.

How wonderful. We love him when they drove nails through his hands and feet. He didn't say, you wait till my father gets you.

He said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. We love him, don't we? We love the Lord Jesus Christ.

We love the way He died for us. You know what happened a week ago today in Carcassonne in France? We know about it because one of my former students, Elizabeth, she's living there now. She came to faith in the church where my son-in-law pastors in London.

And she was baptized by him and she came and studied art in Aberystwyth and got a first. And she met Hicham. And Hicham is an Arab.

His father in Tunisia is an imam. And through the testimony of his brother, he came to faith and oh, he made such progress and such growth. And they live in Carcassonne.

He's the pastor of the church there and she's expecting their sixth child. And last Friday, a week ago today, an Islamic terrorist went into the supermarket and started killing people. And then he took the checkout girl, Julie, hostage.

The police arrived. And there was a very brave, wonderful policeman, Arnaud Beltrame. And he went up unarmed and he said, let her go and I'll come instead of her.

Oh, the terrorist is very pleased to get a policeman. And she came out and he went in and he cut his throat and shot him dead. And the marines went in and there was a gunfight and the terrorist was killed.

A week today. And Julie, this checkout girl, they talked to her afterwards and she said, he gave his life for me. He had himself killed so that I could live.

Now what does a Christian congregation do? Well, they are active. They go around the supermarket the next day in the area where this terrorist grew up and they gave out a special leaflet that he's written, a little booklet, called, Are We in War? And last night then, they hired the local cinema. Cinema people dropped their movie and they showed then the film, The Case for Christ.

The story of Lee Strobel's journey from atheism to living faith. And they had a book table out and it was full of French Bibles and tracts and leaflets. Everyone went.

170 people tried to get into a room with 150 chairs last night. They wrote to me this morning about it. We love him because he gave his life.

He gave his life. That life. Not a trashy life.

This beautiful, perfect life. And he gave it as the Lamb of God without spot and without blemish. He gave it in sacrifice because that is how God is.

That is the nature of God that without the shedding of blood, there's no remission. There's no forgiveness. God demands a Lamb.

God provides a Lamb. God becomes the Lamb. He finds the Lamb in His own heart, in His own bosom, and He gives Him His own dear Son.

He died for me. He gave His life that I might live. We love Him.

Well now, if you say no to my Savior again, who have you got to love? Who do you have? Who is there? A couple of years ago, we finished our lunch. The children went next door then where the TV set is and where they do this sort of thing. And we had coffee and shortbread cookies.

There was a bit of a silence. And Glyn then said, if there was some great figure, some great leader in the world today you'd like to meet, who would it be? Well now, that is a conversation stopper. And we waited and we thought.

Britain and our politicians and Europe and Asia, India, China, Africa, the Americas. Now, we can thank God that there are some governors and congressmen, vice presidents. We'd like to meet them.

We were silent and then my wife said, Nelson Mandela. I'd like to meet Nelson Mandela. Yeah, that would be typical of some men.

But, my friends, if you're going to reject Jesus Christ, whose picture are you going to put up? Whose books? Whose speeches? Who will you travel to listen to? I've got someone now. I'm going to follow Him. Here is someone.

You can believe in Him. You can trust in Him. Here is someone you could love.

And thirdly, here is someone who makes us full of joy, inexpressible and glorious joy, he says. Verse 6. Now, there are times when we weep because we're Christians. We can break our hearts.

We can have our grief. We don't shrug. Things really hurt us.

And we experience pain. And I couldn't be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and tell you it's going to be joy all the while. There's a joy that seeks us in our pain.

There's a strength from Heaven that helps us in our losses and crosses. But there's a joy about the Christian life. The Apostle was caught up to the third heaven.

We're told that the converted eunuch went on his way rejoicing. We're told when Philip preached in Samaria, the place was full of joy. He could have said full of repentance.

He could have said the Ethiopian went on his way repenting and that's true. Or believing. That's of course true.

But he says, oh, he was a joyful man after he met Christ. After he confessed Him, there was something in his heart that had never been there before. There were joy bells ringing in his heart.

His chains had fallen off. His heart was free. The prison doors were opened.

He had a liberty that he'd never known before in his life that God gives us such joy. It's joy unspeakable as the old King James phrase. Indescribable.

How do you describe emotions? How do you describe flavors or scents? How difficult it is to use words to go into another medium. And so, he says, oh, I wish I could describe this joy to you. How it's so real.

It means that my back is bleeding and my feet are in stinks. No bed. Midnight.

And yet, my friend and I can sing together to the Lord. And the whole prison can know what joy there has come into the prison because two servants of Jesus Christ are there. And it's in pictures like that that we begin to see that joy.

The disciples were full of joy and the Holy Spirit, it says, that's not saying they were regenerate. It's saying much more than that they were regenerate. It's saying, ah, Jesus Christ was so real and joy-giving to them.

What a privilege it was to be a servant of Jesus Christ. What joy! It's indescribable and it's full of glory. In other words, it's not manufactured.

It's not changed the lights. Turn the lights down. Let's sing and repeat and repeat again.

And saying, now, won't you come in a long, long appeal just to get people out of their seats? I mean, if Jesus was here, I'd be telling you all to come to the front. But the Word is nigh you. You've heard the Word.

It's nigh you. It's in your heart. It's in your mind.

The Word of faith that I preached you, it's as close as that. That's how close Jesus is to Christ. You don't need to come to the front.

He's there. He's been speaking to you tonight. My Savior.

Where two or three gather, He's there. He's here. What a blessed guest has joined us in this conference tonight.

Joy inexpressible. And it's full of glory. In other words, it's not human tricksters and human psychologists and man manipulators.

It's God present. The glory of God. The joy of heaven to earth come down.

It's that. It's God's reality. My friends, we live in an age where people are crying out for happiness, aren't they? On Monday morning, there'll be thousands of people all over America going to a doctor and saying, can you give me a little pill? I'm feeling depressed.

And there'll be young people with all their life before them. It's alcohol and it's drugs. Isn't it? That's the reality.

And relationships. If you say no to my Savior, I'm saying, you know what your future's going to be. The ruin that many of your friends and brothers and sisters, members of your family, the mess they've made of their lives because they've kept Jesus at bay, arm's length away, not believing in Him.

This joy is full of glory. It's a pure, it's a heavenly, and it doesn't cloy. We don't get fed up with it.

Who are you going to turn to for this joy? If you reject again Jesus Christ, here is someone, you can trust Him. You can love Him. He gives you joy.

And last of all here, He helps you achieve your goal in life. There's a goal. There's a purpose in life.

There is. You're on this planet. You've been given life for a purpose.

You're receiving the goal, the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls. You've got something that will never be taken from you. You've got a purpose in life.

This is a frustrated generation. Your friends in school, you know, they don't know what life is all about. That's why they're trying drugs, isn't it? They have a goal.

They say, I'd like to earn \$100,000 a year. And then, they get \$100,000, and then they grumble about taxes, and you can't do much with \$100,000. It wasn't a strong enough goal to live for for a greenback dollar.

And then, some never attain the goals they've set for themselves. They're unrealistic. Many have no goals at all.

But Peter says, we receive. We get. We get what we were made for.

Why God made us. Why He redeemed us. What our purpose in life is.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But we never do it perfectly. We would do it perfectly.

But we achieve more and more of satisfaction for the Lord. I do it for the Lord, not for me. The goal.

We receive the goal of our life. The salvation of our souls, that's how it ends, isn't it? You're not just a body. You are a soul, aren't you? You are an animal.

Well, it's just a body. I put a jug of water down and he'll drink it. I'll give him some food and he'll eat it.

I'll bring a mate and he'll copulate. Because he's just an animal. People who aren't aware that they are souls resort to the animal dimension of their lives, don't they? Eating, drinking, copulating.

I drive up to Everest with my town of 50 years along the clifftops in a road from Aberaeron. There's a view which is particularly moving to me. The green grass of a large field goes down to the cliffs.

And then there's the Irish Sea and the sun is setting. And there are some cows in the field. Beautiful sight.

Do I hear one cow saying to the other, lovely sunset tonight, Broadwyn? No, I don't hear the other cow saying, yes, it is a great sight, isn't it, Gladys? I'd be a vegetarian if cows could speak to one another. But they can't. They just look at the grass.

At their instincts. That's all. They don't see the glory of God.

They don't see it. Your soul is ruined by sin. You're not seeing the power and glory of God in this world.

But my Father made it. Through Jesus Christ He made it. Without Him, there's not anything made that was made.

This is my Father's world. This is my Savior's world. And that's what your goal is to please Him and honor Him and look forward to being with Him and to a new heavens and a new earth when He will de-sin this groaning universe and there won't be one rogue molecule in all the world that doesn't show the righteousness of Christ.

A new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells. I want to be there. I want to see that.

And come with us. We'll do you good. Come with us.

Don't be in unbelief any longer. Don't go on now finding another excuse tonight why you're not going to trust in Jesus Christ, that you're going to come to Him. Now, coming to Jesus Christ is a movement of your inmost being, your heart, your life, as the Holy Spirit takes the Word that's been preached to you about His Son and He makes you ready to say, I'm not going on any longer in my unbelief.

I'm going to turn from it. I'm sorry that it's been so long. I'm sorry that I had one vain excuse after another.

And from now on, I'm going to trust in Jesus Christ. Now, you've got to say it. There's no formula at all.

But you've got to start speaking to Jesus Christ about you and Him. Just somewhere quiet. Oh, now, of course, we pray.

Now, but you keep praying until you know He's answered you. You keep praying until you have the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. And you'll know by a peace, a trust, a joy, a rest.

Because He promises that. Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Oh, I can cope with a crowd this size, Jesus says, if all of Denton comes, if all Dallas, if all Texas, all get into their cars and buses because Jesus is here.

I can cope. All men with their antagonisms, all women with their phobias, all children with their anxieties. You come.

You come. You give your heart. You give your life.

It's just a movement now. A private movement. You begin to talk to Him about your future.

And you say it's unbearable without Him. Why you've been away so long, you're sorry. And from now on, you're going to follow Him.

We want you. That's why Jesus Christ has brought you here tonight. Do you know that? That's really the reason that you could have these wonderful privileges, someone to believe in and love and give you joy, and you have your souls saved, and you receive the purpose in life.

I can't understand how anyone can hear this offer of what the Lord will do for you tonight and go away saying no. How can you do that? When He's brought you here and He's telling you of these wonderful benefits, these wonderful blessings and privileges? You come to Him. You come to Him just as you are to just what He is now, this welcoming, loving Savior.

He that comes to me, in no way will I cast them out. However bad it's been, however hypocritical, you may be thinking, oh, if the people sitting next to me knew what sort of man, what sort of woman I was, they'd move away in shock. You come.

You particularly come to this Savior just as you are. Let's pray. Lord, You've brought us here to meet with Jesus Christ, how privileged we are.

There are people meeting a prison warden tonight. There are people seeing a doctor and a surgeon tonight. There are people meeting crooks.

There are people who are going to hurt them tonight. There are men who are going to abuse them, but we've met with the lovely, loving, sweet and holy Jesus Christ. Oh, thank You for being here, dear Savior.

Thank You for Your kindness and patience with us for so long. Now we come just as we are without one plea, without any excuse. Please take us.

Please receive us. Please, from now on, help us to live with Thee and for Thee. We ask it for Your greater glory and our eternal good.

Amen. And now we'll sing our last hymn.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/geoff-thomas/the-privileges-of-the-christian/>

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