

## **The Joy Set Before Us (1Peter 1:8)**

**Introduction:** “*The Religious Affections*” indeed!

This is the verse Jonathan Edwards used as the basis of his book *The Religious Affections*. Our faith (discussed last time), produces certain things in us.

What would cause these people to endure such sufferings, to renounce all that was dear to them, to give up the things that were seen? These people seemed to be mad in the eyes of the world.

### **1. A love unseen**

Robert Leighton: “The soul that so believes cannot choose but love. It is commonly true, that the eye is the ordinary door by which love enters into the soul . . . Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, because you believe: which is to see Him spiritually. Many directions and means of begetting and increasing this love of Christ may be here offered; and those who delight in number may multiply them; but surely this one will comprise the greatest and best part, if not all of them,—Believe, and you shall love; believe much, and you shall love much; labor for strong and deep persuasions of the glorious things which are spoken of Christ, and this will command love.”

### **2. A joy inexpressible**

Through faith, it *is* possible in the midst of suffering and trial to experience joy. Faith overshadows the reasons for sorrow, and gives us the best reasons for rejoicing. 2 Cor 6 speaks of being "sorrowful but always rejoicing." How can we be at once sorrowing and rejoicing? Yet it is possible in the case of Christians.

### **3. A joy full of glory**

To take a glimpse within the veil,  
To know that God is mine,  
Are springs of joy that never fail,  
Unspeakable! Divine!

These are the joys which satisfy,  
And sanctify the mind;  
Which make the spirit mount on high,  
And leave the world behind. (John Newton)

G. K. Chesterton: For the Christian, joy is central, and sorrow is peripheral. For the unbeliever sorrow is central and joy is peripheral.

### **Conclusion: The end of our faith**

True faith is never alone. It produces religious affections. And these make all the difference in our lives.

Faith produces strong love, and affectionate desires, and delightful thoughts, and even joyful sufferings for his name's sake.