PRECIOUS KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF JOY

Part 1: The Joy of the Lord: An Abiding Inheritance in Christ

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening Scriptures: Jesus on Joy

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. – John 15:11

Truly, truly I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy. – John 16:20

Therefore, you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. –John 16:22

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. – John 16:2

His lord said to him, 'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' – Mt. 25:21, 23

B. Opening Prayer

C. A Couples of Stories

- What George Mueller said (is what all good pastors try to do)
- What Rodman Williams said
- What Jane Ritzema did (and how poor pastor Dean felt!)

D. My Mission In this Series: To survey some important biblical truths that I believe God is pleased to use to establish His children in the Joy of the Lord. *In other words, I want to place in your hands some Precious Keys to the Kingdom of Joy!*

E. My Message In the Weeks Ahead: Three Main Points:

1. The Joy of the Lord—and the Lord of all Joy—is our ABIDING inheritance in Christ

2. Though the Joy of the Lord is always present; it also GROWS as we grow in wisdom, faith, and obedience

3. To fully enjoy the Joy of the Lord, you must kill all the killjoys!

Note: Extra added bonus: I hope to unveil to you today God's weapon of mass destruction of all killjoys! So listen up!

II. (#1) THE JOY OF THE LORD—AND THE LORD OF JOY—IS OUR ABIDING INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

A. The Holy Family (God Triune) is one Happy Family

- Divine joy belongs to the very essence of the divine nature (1 Tim. 1:11, The Gospel (Good News) of the Glory of the Blessed (Happy) God)
- The Three Persons chiefly enjoy and delight in each other
- But they also joy in all the works of their hands (Creation, Providence, Judgment, Redemption, etc.) "All that the LORD pleases He does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps." (Ps. 135) "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning . . . saying, 'My counsel will stand, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure." (Is. 46:9-10)

(Note: God has ordained and freely chooses to experience other, "darker" emotions, but they NEVER cancel His eternal joy)

- The great purpose of God for Man was that through his freely chosen obedience to Him in Garden of Eden, he should "enter into the joy of his Creator and Lord!" (HSL)

B. Sin alienated mankind from experiencing the life and joy of God

C. Through the work of Christ, God's original purpose is fulfilled in His People: They are united with, and enter into, His Holy, Happy Family!

D. First Love, First Joy: The Day the Saints acquired a holy taste for the Joy of the Lord! (Rev. 2:1f)

The experience of conversion was essential in the religious life of the slaves. For the only path to salvation lay through that "lonesome valley" wherein the "seekers" underwent (conviction and) conversion, an experience which they treasured as one of the peak moments in their lives. Of his conversion the salve George Liele wrote: "I was convinced that I was not in the way to heaven, but in the way to hell. This state I labored under for the space of five or six months . . . I was brought to perceive that my life hung by a slender thread … and I found no way wherein I could escape the damnation of hell, only through the merits of my dying Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.…" Abandoning himself to prayer, Liele (finally) found relief and "felt such love and joy as my tongue was not able to express. After this I declared before the congregation of believers the work which God had done for my soul."

- On that day, his hunger for love and joy was *satisfied;* on that day, his hunger for the FULLNESS of love and joy was *created* . . . and the great question began!

E. When we inherited Christ, we inherited an ABIDING Joy

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. – John 15:11

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. –John 16:22

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* abundantly. – John 10:10

- The joy of the Lord is a spiritual aqueduct, opened up through spiritual rebirth. It is ever flowing and always accessible through God's truth. As we grow in truth—understood and obeyed—we grow in joy. But even so, the River of Life within is flowing now to stay!

F. As we come to understand God's purpose for His people, we realize that one day we will most certainly inherit a PERFECT joy! (Rom. 8:29-30, "For whom He . . .)

G. More next time on growing towards perfect joy.

V. CONCLUSION:

A. Summary: Three Precious Keys to the Kingdom of Joy:

- Get a glimpse of the Ever-Joyful Triune Lord who has made you part of His holy, happy family
- Dedicate yourself to understanding His joy-inducing and joy-preserving truths, believing them, and put them into practice (Next time)
- Gird up the loins of your mind to kill all kill joys, discerning them, resisting them, and shaking them off into the fire! (Time after that)

B. Joyful Christians: They Make it a Place of Springs! (Psalm 84)

Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee;
In whose heart are the highways *to Zion*. (Or, whose heart is set on pilgrimage)
Passing through the Valley of Weeping
They make it a place of springs;
Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from strength to strength;
Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.

C. Once such guy: Thomas Calhoun: A Guy Who CHOSE joy!

MP: The Joy of the Lord is the abiding, ever growing gift of God's Spirit *to those who just do it:* Who CHOOSE to rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS!