Precious Keys to the Kingdom of Joy

PART 3: KILLING THE KILLJOYS!

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening Scriptures:

12 And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; for though You were angry with
me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. 2 Behold, God *is* my salvation, I will trust
and not be afraid; for YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength and my song; He also has become my
salvation." 3 Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 And in that day
you will say: "Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make
mention that His name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things; this *is*
known in all the earth. 6 Cry out and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great *is* the Holy One
of Israel in your midst!" – Isaiah 12

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink," **8** for His
disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. **9** Then the woman of Samaria said to Him,
"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (*She said this
because* Jews have no dealings with Samaritans). **10** Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew
the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him,
and He would have given you living water." **11** The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing
to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? **12** Are You greater
than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his
livestock?" **13** Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,
14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst. But the water that I will
give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." --- John 4

B. Opening Prayer

C. Opening Remarks: Wells, Springs, Rivers, Oceans . . . of JOY (our theme)

- Promised
- Granted
- Growing

D. Review:

1. Sermon # 1: **The Joy of the Lord is an Abiding Inheritance**

- The Holy Family is a Happy Family
- Sin alienated mankind from experiencing the life and joy of God
- GOD HAS OPENED FOR US THE WELLS OF SALVATION: 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!

- Key Texts

"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 well is full, the spring is bubbling, the water in aqueduct is ever flowing! BUT . . .

2. Sermon # 2: **The Joy of the Lord is ALSO a Growing Reality**

- <u>God's Part:</u> God has predestined us to grow in our conscious enjoyment of the joy of the Lord! (Rom. 8, Gal. 5)

The well water becomes easier to access; the spring springs up higher and more often; the river flows more freely and fully!

- <u>Our Part:</u> The Joy of the Lord is *watered by wisdom, nourished by faith,* and *deepened by lifelong obedience*

- Paul's letter to the Philippians supplies us with *many wise principles to believe and obey:*

  1. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude (which primes the pump of joy)
  2. Ponder and express confidence in God's eternal purpose for you
  3. Remind yourself that God is in control of ALL events, and working them for the good of His people
  4. Focus on the Future (heaven above, heaven and earth up ahead)
  5. Learn the Secret of Contentment

3. SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO OBSERVE:

- These principles are invitations to focus on *positive, uplifting* truths of God
- I call this "The Principle of Positivity"
- Paul expressly teaches this principle in Philippians 4

[8] Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good reputation—if there is anything excellent and anything worthy of praise—set your mind on these things. [9]

- This is the Default Position of the Christian Mind! (HSL)
- This is how we draw deeply from the wells of salvation; how the water that Christ gives up springs up more and more into eternal life; how we maintain, cultivate, and grow in the joy of the Lord: *We fight, and fight hard, to maintain the Default Position of the Christian Mind*
- And one more thing: *As we are about to see, this Principle of Positivity is God's weapon of mass destruction against all killjoys!*

4. Today's Message: **To Fully Enjoy the Joy of the Lord, We Must Kill the Killjoys!**

II. TO KILL THE KILLJOYS WE MUST STAY ON THE NARROW ROAD

A. Key Text:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who are entering through it. [14] How[3] narrow is the gate and difficult the way that leads to life; and how few are those who find it! – Mt. 7

[8] Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good reputation—if there is anything excellent and anything worthy of praise—set your mind on these things. [9]

- The Example of Br'er Rabbit and the Tar Baby (Slide Show)
- MP: To enjoy the joy of the Lord, we must abide in the Default Position of the Christian Mind; we must stay on the narrow road, practicing the Principle of Positivity!

III. TO KILL THE KILLJOYS WE MUST LEARN TO DISCERN, RESIST, AND REPLACE

A. Discern

Now this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in correct knowledge and all discernment . . . – Phil. 1

[12] For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you yourselves need someone to teach you once again the basic principles of the oracles of God; indeed, you have come to need milk, and not solid food. [13] For everyone who partakes of milk alone is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is still a child. [14] But solid food is for the mature, whose senses have been trained by constant practice to discern both good and evil. – Heb. 5

B. Resist

Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. – James 5

14 Therefore stand, having girded your loins with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace[2]— 16 in all of this taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. – Eph. 6

E.g. Shaking off a wasp! (Tammy)

C. Replace:

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good reputation—if there is anything excellent and anything worthy of praise—set your mind on these things. 9

Illustration: My Joyful Truths (I worship with them!) / What are Yours? (HSL)

III. TO KILL THE KILLJOYS WE MUST BE AWARE OF THE LEADERS OF THE PACK! (OR, THE COMMON KILLJOYS)

A. Doctrinal error, lies, and misunderstanding:

9 Now this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in correct knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent[1]

B. Backward Eyeballs (Preoccupation with the Past):

But this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Past stuff I did: Receive forgiveness from the Lord
- Past stuff people did to me: Forgive them in principle; give them over to the Lord for His discipline; forgive them in person when they repent—and be wise till they do!
- E.g. A ball and chain

C. Self-centeredness:

Do nothing from selfish ambition or hollow conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each of you regard the others as more important than himself; 4 let each one look out not only for his own interests, but for the interests of others as well.

- Antidote # 1: Center on the Lord and His work (1 Cor. 15)
- Antidote #2: Center on other people and how we might minister to them according to our unique gifts and opportunities

D. Earthly Mindedness:

17 Brothers, join in following my example, and note well those who walk according to the pattern you have seen in us. 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you now even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly await the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body, that it might be conformed to His glorious body, according to the exercise of that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself.

15 Now when one of the men who were seated with Jesus at the table heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will dine[5] in the kingdom of God!" 16 But Jesus He said to him, "A certain man prepared a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 Now when the time for the banquet arrived, He sent his servant to those who had been invited, saying, 'Come, for the banquet is now ready!' 18 But one after another[6] they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have purchased a piece of land and need to go out and look at it. I ask you that you consider me excused.' 19 Then another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to inspect them. I ask that you consider me excused.'—Luke 12

E. Fear and Anxiety:

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

F. Preoccupation with your own works to the neglect of Christ's:

7 But whatever things were gain to me, I count them as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things as loss in view of the surpassing worth of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which comes through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God based on faith— 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 so that by all means[1] I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- Beware legalism, restlessness, drivenness
- Real Kingdom work is done out of grace and rest, at the joyful sound of His voice!
- Openness to joy, play, creativity!

G. Conclusion: What do these Common Killjoys have in Common: Negativity!

- Spiro Agnew: "Nattering Nabobs of Negativity"!
- Doubtless there are others: By their fruits you will know them!
- By the Principle of Positivity we will be able to discern them, resist them, and replace them with GOOD NEWS!

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary: Precious Keys to the Kingdom of Joy

- Fix your gaze on the ever-joyful triune God who has made you part of His holy, happy family, enabling you to draw joyfully from the wells of salvation!
- Dedicate yourself to learning His joy-producing, joy-preserving, joy-enhancing truths—and to believing them and put them into practice
- As you walk down the road of life, beware of the Tar Babies, beware of the Killjoys, beware of the Nattering Nabobs of Negativity. Through the study of Scripture and the practice of the Principle of Positivity, learn to discern them, resist them, and replace them with Good News!

B. Thus drawing with joy from the wells of salvation, you will become a blessing to the Lord, yourself, and your world:

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.
-- Psalm 84

C. Closing Illustration:

- Thomas Calhoun: A guy who chose JOY!
- Let us choose to do the same!