

– Unspeakable Joy

Unspeakable Joy

Seven UnCharacteristics That Can Change the World in 2017 – Lesson Three

As I considered a suitable picture to go with this lesson for the blog, the first thought that came to mind was a baby whose expression communicated nothing but pure joy. I found it. This was the very first pic that appeared on the site we use. Love it! Nothing brings a smile to our faces or makes us LOL more than a baby, and this precious one certainly does that.

In the first two parts of this series, “*Seven UnCharacteristics That Can Change the World in 2017*,” we examined unconditional love and undying gratitude. Today, we are going to look at the third one: *unspeakable joy*. That beautiful thought was penned by the Apostle Peter referring to our response as believers to our Savior.

*“Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with **joy unspeakable and full of glory**”* 1 Peter 1: 8 (KJV 2000)

Some may recall last September I wrote the lesson, *Cultivating Joy*, in which we discussed *joy* from the viewpoints of the Apostle Paul, James, the half-brother of Jesus, and Jesus Himself. One key takeaway was our need to allow the Holy Spirit the freedom to dig through and cultivate hard, crusty soil that can build up on our hearts so He can produce this much-needed fruit in our lives.

In this lesson, we are going to consider a couple of different viewpoints—a baby and his father. Let’s begin with some presumptive thoughts on my part as to what may be going on in the mind of that joyful baby pictured above.

From the Eyes of the Baby

Three *joyful* thoughts came to mind through the expression of this baby. First, there is obvious joy. No frumpy, frowning sour-puss look of dismay or discomfort. He is full of contentment, enjoying life as he knows it. Second, he is oblivious to what is going on around him—not a care in this world. Finally, he appears to be overcome with this joy to the extent he cannot contain himself. The fact that he is not afraid to break out that big smile, knowing he only has one tooth, is amazing proof! (Most men would not do that.) There are probably unintelligible utterances coming from him no one can understand—but God. And that does not bother him in the least.

From the Eyes of the Father

When my three children were born, I was there. When Gracie was born, I actually caught her coming out of the womb and then cut the umbilicus. I remember it like it was yesterday. I was present and equally excited when my two sons came into this world, just not as personally involved in their deliveries.

Unspeakable joy filled my heart as a proud father on each occasion. If you are a dad, you know exactly what I mean. Here is what I knew about our babies:

- They were unconditionally loved, even though they had not done one thing to earn it.
- They were completely helpless and could not survive alone.
- I would do anything within my power to care and provide for them – even to death.
- I knew the day would come when our babies would have to choose for themselves, regardless of what I thought, said, or did. But I would love them still.
- Nothing would ever be able to supplant or erase the memories of the joy of their births that makes me smile today even as I look at the picture above.

About this time some of you are thinking, “those times were great and I remember them fondly, BUT babies grow up and life interrupts even the most precious moments.” That is true for all of us as babies who grew up and became fathers who have to contend with the fact that at some point in our lives,

“Joy fades, reality confronts, and the enemy (Satan) does all he can to break up the party.”

I write and teach as a father who endured the gauntlet from the death of a child, to the distresses every marriage brings, and the challenges of dealing with three teenagers. I understand *faded joy* and *crust-overlaid hearts...* just like many of you have or now find yourselves smack in the middle of as you read this with some level of contempt for the lesson title.

Rediscovering, Renewing, or Restoring Joy Unspeakable

I have great news no matter where you are in the cycle of life. First, I want to share a few reminders from ~~a father's~~ our Father's point of view.

- You are unconditionally loved, even though you did not do one thing to earn it. God cannot love you more and will not love you less. No matter where you are; no matter what you have done. It is the “everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). Read and digest these verses:

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
(Romans 8: 38-39 NASB)

- You were completely helpless and could not survive alone, but GOD is your protector and defender.

"But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head." (Psalm 3:3 NASB)

- Your Father will do anything within His infinite power to care and provide for you – even to death.

"But God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8 NASB)

- God knew the day would come when you would choose for yourself; go your own way, regardless of what He had said to you and done for you. But He loves you still.

"And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20 ESV)

- God will not ever forget you and nothing can erase the memories of when you were born again in Christ. And that makes Him smile.

"Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me." (Isaiah 49: 15-16 NASB)

One final word of encouragement. Unspeakable joy is not as far away as you think. Finding or recapturing *unspeakable joy* in your life begins at the foot of the Cross and ends at the throne of our Father. David, shepherd, king, and a man of many failures whom God called, "a man after My own heart" pointed the way. David wrote,

"...in your presence is fullness of joy; in Your hand are pleasures forever." (Psalm 16:11 NASB)

Remembering the Cross of Christ was the place of your new

birth in Him will lead you like a baby to the throne of grace where it is ok to smile and laugh with unspeakable joy and utterances only He understands. That makes God smile, too.

Your desperate brother in Christ,

Walter