

Brokenness

Facing Down the Ugly “I”

Re-Routing: God’s Back Roads to Joy—part 3

May 5, 2019

Re-routing review: Let’s look at our definitions of joy and how God “backroads” us to get there!

Joy definition #1: Certainty

Re-route to joy #1: Shattered dreams.

Joy definition #2: Hunger

Re-route to joy #2: Unmet longings.

Joy definition #3: Belovedness

Re-route to joy #3: Brokenness.

DAY 1: “1st thing love”

1. You usually hear bible teachers define sin and teach the ramifications of sin. Sin is most often associated with *actions*.

2. What you don’t normally hear is the category of “*relational sin*.”

3. It comes very naturally to fallen human beings to just “expect” that people in my life will help me not feel lonely. “That’s their job,” we think.

4. Is it because God is invisible that we rarely, if ever, imagine that He should be our highest priority, relationally?

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

5. What do you think Jesus is telling us to do in v. 37?

a. What do the words, “all your heart... all your soul and all your mind” say to you?

b. After the command to love God (v. 37), Jesus gives the priority of this command in v. 38. What do you think He means in v. 38?

6. What do you think this has to do with loneliness?

DAY 2: "2nd thing loves"

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

1. Yesterday we looked at Jesus' insistence that what we most need is a "1st thing love" that is centered on God.

2. Today we'll look at the next two verses.

3. What does Jesus say priority #2 should be?

4. Jesus describes the type of love we are to have in v. 39. What do you think He means?

5. You often hear people say, "I can only love someone else if I 'love' myself." That's *not* what Jesus means. Jesus assumes we already "love" ourselves, meaning, we daily make sure our needs are met.

6. Loving others means using that same intentionality to meet the needs of others (physical, relational, emotional, etc.). Loving others mean we use the same intentionality to meet their needs when we are around them!

7. Now, notice the priority of this command to love others:

a. It is the second most important command!

b. Commands one and two sum up the whole Old Testament!

8. What would that mean for you? How would you need to think differently about the way you love people?

DAY 3: Why am I lonely?

1. We're aware when someone fails to love us like we think they should. We feel lonely. We "naturally" assume that there is something wrong with them in their failure to love us.

2. What we rarely see is that the failure to have a:

a. "1st thing love" relationship with God. This failure begins the loneliness experience! What strikes you about this truth?

b. "2nd thing love" *toward* others, regardless of their failure of response. This failure deepens the feelings of loneliness. What strikes you about this truth?

3. What we often fail to see is that when we don't love like we're supposed to love, we will also feel lonely. We RARELY associate loneliness with a failure to love on our part!

Philippians 2:3 (RSV) Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

4. We are naturally driven by self-centeredness ("selfishness") and pride ("conceit," that which believes I deserve better treatment and priority treatment from others).

5. What do you think Paul means by "*in humility count others better than yourselves?*"

6. These verses confront us with an awful truth. We are more concerned about getting love than giving love. And when the amount of love we think we deserve falls short, we "turn off the spigot" of our love for others.

7. When there is tension in your relationships with someone, do you usually think of your tendency to arrange for your own welfare first, or worse, at the expense of others?

DAY 4: Brokenness and Belovedness.

1. When we are confronted with the reality of a deep-seated self-centeredness that drives our relationships, we are humbled and crushed.

2. Our third “**backroad**” that God “**re-routes**” us to is **brokenness!**

3. And our third definition of “**joy**” is “**belovedness.**”

4. Psalm 51 is David’s prayer of confession over the self-centeredness that drove him in his relationship with Bathsheba, and the awful aftermath with her husband, Uriah.

5. There are two themes:

a. Notice how seriously David takes the awfulness of his sin.

b. Notice how the grace of God affects his attitude toward his future.

6. Underline words that depict how he sees sin. Circle words that depict how God will see him!

Psalm 51:1 (RSV) Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:8 Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice.

⁹ Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will return to thee.

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance.

¹⁵ O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*¹⁶ For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased. ¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a **broken spirit**; a **broken and contrite heart**, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

7. What do sense about “brokenness?”

8. “Belovedness” means that no matter how deep our sin, there is something deeper that defines us—it’s how God sees us after our sin!

9. This “joy” is that God sees us at our absolute worst and still wants us! We ARE His beloved!

DAY 5: Relational impact and the problem of loneliness

1. We are blind to how we impact someone relationally. When inadvertently torpedo the very relational joy we think we want. And at the core of that is the discovery of our self-centeredness.

Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. ² But the Pharisees ... muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

2. Those considered the outcasts loved to be around Jesus. They hated to be around the Pharisees.

a. What was the relational impact of Jesus? _____

b. The Pharisees? _____

Luke 15:11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

... "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

3. The father illustrates how God sees repentant sinners! Grace is undeserved kindness.

4. The prodigal son had an older brother.

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

5. Why do you think the older brother was angry?

a. At his father? _____

b. At his brother? _____

6. Think about a difficult relationship in your life. What do you think has been your relational impact on that person? What impact would you like it to be?