

ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE SERIES BY PASTOR RICHARD BASED ON
THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS BY C.S.LEWIS

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 11 ~ Joy Under Attack
December 13th, 2020

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, please click on the link above to read the book and for today's Illustrated Message, please read **Letter 11**.

Screwtape says of the new set of friends; *“All these, as I find from the record office, are thoroughly reliable people; steady, consistent scoffers and worldlings who without any spectacular crimes are progressing quietly and comfortably towards our Father's house. I divide the causes of human laughter into Joy, Fun, the Joke Proper, and Flippancy. You will see the first among friends and lovers reunited on the eve of a holiday. Among adults some pretext in the way of Jokes is usually provided, but the facility with which the smallest witticisms produce laughter at such a time shows that they are not the real cause. What that real cause is we do not know.”*

Today we'll address these four topics; joy, fun, the joke proper and flippancy. Speaking about the *‘eve of a holiday’*, we're right now on the eve of Christmas, which brings great joy; joy looking at the lights and decorations, the songs of joy and hope, giving and receiving of gifts and much more. Satan however, does not understand or comprehend the cause of this kind of joy and the only thing he wants to do is put the kibosh or halt on it. There is joy when family or friends come together and this joy also, the devil hates.

Any kind of joy that is found in family and friends, and loved ones coming together over special occasions, is a counterfeit of the true joy that is found in the Lord and is never totally fulfilling without the Holy Spirit. Not that this joy isn't real, it is, but it's not the joy of knowing Jesus Christ. However much pleasure is derived from it at the time, it cannot fill the void within a person and can only be filled by being born again of the Holy Spirit.

The joy of the Lord cannot be counterfeited, conjured up or perverted, but simply is a work of the Holy Spirit alone within a Christian and is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

We read this in **Galatians 5:22-25**; *“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 [a]gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

Whether it is the joy of the Lord found in Christian faith, or the joy that is found in non-believers, it appears to be an emotion that Screwtape does not understand and will try to discourage at all cost.

Screwtape says of joy; *“Laughter of this kind does us no good and should always be discouraged. Besides, the phenomenon is of itself disgusting and a direct insult to the realism, dignity, and austerity of Hell.”*

According to Screwtape, joy and laughter go against all of hell's protocol. If you look around yourself today whether you are a Christian or a non-Christian, it's pretty evident that demons are trying to rob people of their joy, whether it is found in family, friends, loved one, over special occasions or if it's found in their Christian Faith; either way joy is under attack!

For the Christian, joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, it's a supernatural joy that can't be found in any other secular, non-Christian settings. Having said that, demons will *try* to rob Christians of joy, and if successful it will in turn rob them of their strength because the Word says that the joy of the Lord is their strength. He'll *try* to rob you of living and moving in the Holy Spirit. But this is only if you let him. Don't surrender your joy to the lies of the devil.

Romans 14:17 says; “*17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*” Even at Christmas when people focus on eating, drinking and celebrating with loved ones, if it’s not filled with the true joy of the Lord in the Holy Spirit, it will be unfulfilling.

James 1:2-4 says; “*2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces [a]patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be [b]perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*”

We’ll call this the ‘joy’ attack, when the devil raises up a demonic standard to rob you of joy at Christmas, joy of being with family, joy of gathering in a church service, just keep turning the joy up louder and don’t let him rob you of it.

1 Peter 1:6-9 also says; “*6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been [a]grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not [b]seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*”

As we speak, everyone on the earth is being grieved by various trials; yet as Christians we have the joy of the Holy Spirit in us and that’s what we’re to focus on. This joy will cause you to rise above the circumstances in every situation.

The joy found in special occasions with family, friends and loved ones in secular settings is temporary, but the joy of the Lord found in Christian Faith is eternal. The joy that the devil is wanting to quench and steal today for the most part is temporary joy, except where he’s trying to thwart the gathering of the local church which will affect the eternity of souls if they give in to it. Even if the doors of the church are closed, you can’t shut down the Holy Spirit. The devil has been working overtime on the church during this plague of sickness hasn’t he, making sure tight limitations of church services during both Easter and now Christmas are in place, yet he gave full reign to the demonic celebration of Halloween.... just putting it out there for thought. It’s obvious that this is and has been a satanic anti-Christ agenda meant to rob, kill and destroy the right for the local church ministry to be deemed as an essential service...after all...what can be more essential than the salvation of souls.

Screwtape says this about fun; “*Fun is closely related to Joy--a sort of emotional froth arising from the play instinct. It is very little use to us. It can sometimes be used, of course, to divert humans from something else which the Enemy would like them to be feeling or doing: but in itself it has wholly undesirable tendencies; it promotes charity, courage, contentment, and many other evils.*”

These diversions, which could be sports, entertainment, education, charitable events, concerts, theatre or just general fun, Screwtape encourages to use to divert Christians from what Jesus really wants them to be doing on Sundays or days when the church gathers.

In this present time, it appears that not only has the joy of socializing with family, friends and loved ones been removed, but also all the fun that is derived from sports and various entertainment venues.

As Christians our joy and fun are not taken away simply because it is not found in secular settings, and that is why we are able to maintain our joy and have fun whether it be in large gatherings or where 2 or 3 gathered in His name. Jesus says this in **Matthew 18:20**; “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*”

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Without Jesus in your life, there is no true joy or fun that can fill the empty void within permanently, so when everything else in the secular that brings this is being taken away, ask Jesus to fill the void with His Holy Spirit by becoming born again and make Him Lord of your life.

In these times of uncertainty, Christians have the assurance of God's provision and can not only have the joy of the Lord, but can maintain a worry-free life if they really believe what Jesus said in **Matthew 6:25-31**; "25 *Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one [a]cubit to his [b]stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not [c]arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"*

This scripture is so applicable for the times we're living in today with the global disease and fear that is paralyzing so many. Yet as a Christian, you don't have to succumb or surrender your joy and peace, because the Heavenly Father has your back. If you're not a Christian, one can understand the fear, panic, suicide, divorces, family divisions that you're going through.

In hard times when the joy of family, friends and loved ones is taken away, and the fun found in sports and various entertainment venues are closed, a good joke or two to help to lighten things up a bit can't hurt, or can it?

Screwtape says this about jokes; "*A thousand bawdy, or even blasphemous, **jokes** do not help towards a man's damnation so much as his discovery that almost anything he wants to do can be done, not only without the disapproval but with the admiration of his fellows, if only it can get itself treated as a Joke.*"

In other words, it's the evil things that are in a man's heart that are spoken, which would normally be offensive, can become non-offensive and even admirable if it is spoken as a joke. You hear it all the time in secular and Christian settings and if you pay special attention to what is being said behind the joke, it will reveal the true evil thoughts and intents of the person saying it.

Jesus says in **Luke 6:45**; "*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil [a]treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*"

Colossians 3:8-9 says; "*8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.*"

King Solomon says in **Proverbs 26:18-19**; "*18 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, 19 Is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "I was only joking!"*

In **Matthew 12:35-37**, Jesus says this; "*35 A good man out of the good treasure [a]of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*"

Screwtape says this about humour; *“And this temptation can be almost entirely hidden from your patient by that English seriousness about Humour. Any suggestion that there might be too much of it can be represented to him as “Puritanical” or as betraying a “lack of humour”.*

How often have you heard someone say; ‘don’t you have a sense of humour’, or ‘lighten up’, or ‘you’re such a prude’, etc? This is exactly what the devil wants you to see when you resist foul humorous jokes.

It’s important for the Christian to not buy into this lie that they lack a sense of humour or appear to be puritanical when they don’t participate in joking, whether it’s course jokes or family friendly ones that have an evil intent of the heart behind it.

Ephesians 4:29-31 says; *“29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary [a]edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* So don’t grieve the Holy Spirit by corrupt talk and course jokes.

Ephesians 5:3-5 continues saying; *“3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For [a]this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”*

Screwtape says this about being flippant; *“Among flippant people the Joke is always assumed to have been made. No one actually makes it; but every serious subject is discussed in a manner which implies that they have already found a ridiculous side to it. If prolonged, the habit of Flippancy builds up around a man the finest armour-plating against the Enemy that I know, and it is quite free from the dangers inherent in the other sources of laughter. It is a thousand miles away from joy it deadens, instead of sharpening, the intellect; and it excites no affection between those who practice it.”*

The definition of flippant is; *not serious about a serious subject, in an attempt to be funny or to appear clever.* It’s impossible to not notice a flippant person.

In hard times when the joy of family, friends and loved ones is taken away, and the fun found in sports and various entertainment venues are closed, there is a temptation to become flippant about political leaders that have placed restraints on our lives, that have led to the hard times that you are now experiencing. I believe it’s important to voice opinions on present day issues and it can be done without being flippant. A good example of this can be found in the following scripture.

Jesus says this in **Luke 13:31-33**; *“31 [a]On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.” 32 And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be [b]perfected.’ 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.”*

In the onslaught of persecution of the church today, through church closures or reduction of church attendance, if you feel it’s not of the Lord, maybe you need to stand up to it, but not be flippant about it. It’s not about being rebellious to the leadership in the land, but you’re letting them know that you have a call and election of God on your life that you have to fulfill to preach and teach the good news of Jesus. You have a call on your life just like they have a responsibility on their life as a political leader. However if you feel led to shut your church, maybe you need to examine why you’re in ministry and is the call of God real in your life....just food for thought.

If you truly know the call on your life, if you see a sick person, pray for them that they would be healed, cast out the devil, pray for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now is not the time to close the church doors to the needy world right now, but to swing it wide open to meet their spiritual needs, so they can receive peace and joy in the Holy Spirit through coming to know Jesus as their Lord.

Facetime, Facebook, Zoom or any other media venue for church meetings won't last for long, because if they can close the church down while the grass is green, what will happen when it gets dry and they start pulling the Christian media venues? The church is the body of Christ with a clear command to not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, Hebrews 10:25. As a Christian leader, you have to have the Holy Ghost resolve in spite of fear and lie driven tactics of the devil; to preach, evangelise, give out tracks and Bibles, lay hands on the sick, feed the hungry, clothe the naked to reach the lost at whatever the cost. Again, it is not about being flippant to political leaders or Christian leaders who are closing their doors, as they're doing what they feel is right, but as a Christian leader, you need to know what your call is by God. I'd rather fulfill the call of God than to kneel to the fear of man.

Jesus was straight up with the political leaders of His day, he spoke exactly what was on His mind to say without an attempt to be funny or to appear clever or disrespectful.

In **John 18:33-37** Jesus also said this to Pilate; *"33 Then Pilate entered the [a]Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" 35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." 37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."*

Again, Jesus was straight forward with Pilate, but not flippant and the truth be told, Pilate was the flippant one with Jesus.

Luke 23:8-11 also says; *"8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11 Then Herod, with his [a]men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate."*

Jesus was always serious about serious subject matter with political leaders and never attempted to be funny or clever with them, but plainly spoke the truth and let it speak for itself. As Christians, we are to be led by the Holy Spirit and not by the flesh, speak when we are supposed to speak and not speak when we're not supposed to speak.

Matthew 10:16-20 says this about times of persecutions, which churches are facing right now around the world; *"16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless[a] as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."*

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This is the power of the Holy Spirit in action to give you words to speak at the right time. Again, do not mock, scoff or be flippant with people or political leaders, but be bold and know what the call of God is on your life.

For teaching on the Holy Spirit, please go to the [Holy Spirit Power Series](#) on our website.