

**“JOY IN SERVING CHRIST”**  
**LUKE 10:17-24**

What gives you joy? What stimulates you to be happy?

- ✓ When the children and grandchildren come over for the weekend.
- ✓ Enough rain and not too much sun (heat) in August to keep your yard alive.
- ✓ All green lights on 377 on your morning commute.
- ✓ One more diet coke in the fridge when you thought you had none left.
- ✓ When you tell a new friend your age, she argues with you that you are 10 years younger.
- ✓ Charles Schultz said, “Happiness is a warm puppy.” One day this week I looked out a window and saw Raye Jeanne sitting on a bench in our flower garden and next to her was our dog, Hugo, sitting tall, looking into her face, and her arm was around his neck, stroking his back. Yah — warm puppies...

As you think about serving Christ, what makes you happy? What makes you happy in teaching AWANA? Or serving hospitality? Or sharing the gospel? Or teaching Sunday School? Or setting up chairs? Or... Where do you find your joy in the ministry of the church?

Twice in Luke’s gospel we have seen Christ send out people on gospel and ministry ventures. Both times He commissioned them with a task: preach the message of the King and Kingdom and heal the sick (to authenticate the Kingdom message). And when the 72 came back, they were filled with joy — they did it! They were successful. Jesus doesn’t deny their reason for joy, but He also reorients their joy from smaller joys to greater joys. And the joy for the 72 informs us about what our joys should be as we serve Christ.

Why are we joyful? Why *should* we be joyful in our sacrificial service? Luke 10 gives us a pattern for joy —

**WHEN SERVING CHRIST REJOICE LIKE CHRIST.**

When serving Christ, find your joys where He tells you to find joy, and where He Himself finds joy. While the commission of the 72 was a unique event, there are principles in that service that connect well to us, including how we think about our service. Though there is hardship in ministry (v. 3), we must also see the joys of ministry. As we think about our own ministry of Christ (whether it is at home or abroad, long-term or short-term), let’s cultivate three joys in our service.

1. Rejoice in Ministry **PRIVILEGES** (vv. 17-20)
  - ✓ Rejoice in Christ’s **EMPOWERMENT** (v. 17)
  - ✓ Rejoice in Satan’s **DEFEAT** (vv. 18-19)
  - ✓ Rejoice in Heavenly **SALVATION** (v. 20)
2. Rejoice in Christ’s **JOYS** (vv. 21-24)
  - ✓ Rejoice in Christ’s Joy in the **FATHER** (v. 21a)
  - ✓ Rejoice in Christ’s Joy in the Father’s **REVELATION** (v. 21b)
  - ✓ Rejoice in Christ’s Joy in the Father’s **RELATIONSHIP** (v. 22)
3. Rejoice in Christ’s **BLESSING** (vv. 23-24)

## 1. Rejoice in Ministry PRIVILEGES (vv. 17-20)

### • Rejoice in Christ's EMPOWERMENT (v. 17)

- ✓ When the **72 returned** (remember it is probably 72 and not 70 disciples, v. 1), they probably came back to a predetermined location; when they were all gathered, Jesus addressed them.
- ✓ We don't know how long they were gone but it was likely short — perhaps a short number of weeks?
- ✓ What Luke is careful to note is the attitude with which they returned — **joy**.
- ✓ This joy is despite the promise of Jesus that they were being sent as lambs amongst wolves (v. 3). They would have had difficulty and hardship. And yet they were joyful. (A lesson for us — hard things do not preclude the ability to rejoice.)
- ✓ Why were they joyful? Because they saw the power of Christ at work in their lives and service.
  - They called Him **Lord**, a recognition of His sovereignty and mastery over all things (e.g., 5:8, 12).
  - While they said that the **demons** were subject (submissive) to them, the key part of the phrase is **in your name**. Their power was not in themselves, but in the work of Christ. They only had power over the demons as Christ granted them power. That was their joy.
  - The use of the “name” of Christ is not that they simply named Christ and the demons came out like a magical incantation (cf. the response of the demons to sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13ff); it is that Christ endowed them with spiritual authority to cast out the demons on this event.
- ✓ What the 72 experienced is what every believer experiences; wherever a believer successfully carries out ministry responsibilities, we can be sure it is God who is at work in/through us (Phil. 2:13). The sense is amazement — “You used *us* to do *that*...!” (e.g., 2 Tim. 2:20-21).

### • Rejoice in Satan's DEFEAT (vv. 18-19)

- ✓ They are particularly amazed to see the limitations of Satan's power.
- ✓ Jesus offered a commentary on Satan and their labors — ***I was watching Satan fall...***
  - He is not speaking of Satan's literal fall from Heaven; it's a figure of speech for defeat.
  - But the image is vivid — ***I was watching*** indicates that He repeatedly saw defeat after defeat of Satan as the demons were being cast out and as people were trusting in Christ.
  - And Jesus particularly emphasizes the defeat and fallen nature of Satan — “I was watching Satan like lightning, from Heaven — ***fallen!***”
  - While the end of Satan is not yet accomplished, this is one of several texts which indicates that Satan must submit to God; he cannot impose his will on God (Jn. 16:33; 1 Jn. 4:4; Rev. 20:2-3, 10).
- ✓ Jesus also reminds the 72 of His promise for them (v. 19 is a promise to the 72, not to all believers, but it does reveal Christ's authority).
  - In their commissioning, Jesus gave them ***authority to tread on serpents and scorpions...***
  - ***Scorpions*** are used several times of demons (Rev. 9:3, 5, 10); this parallels Rom. 16:20.

- This doesn't picture a final end of Satan and his demons, but it does reflect the defeat of Satan promised in Gen. 3:15 that will be accomplished by the Messiah.
- And it is a particular promise for the 72 that in this venture, Satan could not inhibit their ministry or ***injure them*** — what Christ commissioned them to do, they would do.
- “The disciples are secure in God's hands. Nothing can really hurt them...” [Bock]
- ✓ The 72 then and we today should be comforted that Satan is a foe who is defeated.
  - We must be careful not to minimize the power of Satan (Jude 9; Dan. 10:12-13).
  - But we also must not attribute more power to him than he has; he is a finite being and limited.
  - There is nothing that God desires or decrees that can be inhibited by Satan. He is completely under the authority of God. Just as the 72 could be confident in God's provision for them, so we can be confident that Satan will never do anything to us or our ministry that God hasn't decreed.
  - “...the might of Satan, the prince of all diabolical powers, is already broken....Satan is a conquered enemy, and where action is taken in the name of Jesus, the Conqueror, victory is gloriously assured.” [Geldenhuis]

• Rejoice in Heavenly SALVATION (v. 20)

- ✓ Despite the legitimate joy by the 72 in God's authority over Satan, Christ says there is a greater joy.
- ✓ That joy is that ***your names are recorded in Heaven***.
  - The word ***rejoice*** is a present tense — they are to constantly rejoice in this truth.
  - That ***your names are in Heaven*** is a figure of speech for their own position in Heaven and the security of salvation. It is a declaration that eternal God knows them personally and His chosen, drawn, saved, and preserved them in their salvation.
  - Both the OT and NT refer to a book in which the names of God's people are recorded (Ex. 32:32; Is. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 2:17; 13:8).
  - To have your name in that book is a promise of certainty and safety. Every name in that book is written indelibly and only the Godhead has access to that book. It's the Lamb's book.
- ✓ Jesus is reminding them that their great satisfaction is to be in the security of their salvation. “A Judas might cast out demons” [Plummer] but of course His name is not written in Heaven! His earthly power will do him no eternal good. But the 72, whether or not they cast out demons, are secure in their position in Christ. That is to be their great joy.
- ✓ Do we meditate on the glory and grace of what we have in our salvation?
- ✓ Do we take more delight in our relationship with Christ than the things we do (or don't do)?
- ✓ The greatest grace we have is in whose we are. Jn. 17:22-26. That should be our greatest joy.
- ✓ At the beginning of the message, I asked, “what makes you happy?” Does your salvation make you happy? Are you humbled by His grace? Are you thankful for His love? Do you delight in His fellowship?
- ✓ He will use you to serve Him. And He may use you significantly. But your greatest joy is you are His.
- ✓ “I am His. He is mine.” — a pair of plaques made by a mentor to remind me of this truth.

## 2. Rejoice in Christ's JOYS (vv. 21-24)

- In vv. 21-22, Jesus is still speaking, but He is not speaking directly to the 72 — He is speaking to Father. He broke out in spontaneous and joyful prayer. Given the proximity to 11:1, it seems to me that this may be one of the prayers of Christ that stimulated the disciples to ask Him to **teach them to pray**. We want to also listen to this prayer as a stimulant for how to pray. Jesus is talking to the Father. What does He say and what do we learn from Him?

### • Rejoice in Christ's Joy in the FATHER (v. 21a)

- ✓ If anyone might have reason to rejoice in His work, it was Christ. Everything He did was perfect. He never sinned; He completely obeyed God's demands and He served the Father perfectly. He never sinned in the motives for what He did. But that was not the great source of His joy.
- ✓ We do well to pay particular attention to this section — the NT tells us in three places that Christ wept; this is the only place where the NT explicitly tells us He rejoiced. What was His joy?
- ✓ His joy was empowered by the **Holy Spirit** and it was focused on the Father and the Father's work — ***I praise You, Father...***
  - For Him to address God as Father is to claim the unique relationship with Him — it is to claim His essence and that He is part of the Trinity.
  - He addresses Him as Father twice in this verse — He is delighting in the intimacy of fellowship. [And He will invite us to appeal to God in this same intimacy when He teaches us to pray, **11:2.**]
- ✓ Jesus not only addresses Him as Father, but also as **Lord of Heaven and earth**. The Son delights in the Father's mastery over the world. This phrase refers to the total sovereignty of God over all things. While the phrase is somewhat unique in Scripture, the concept permeates the Bible, beginning with Gen. 1:1 and moving through Rev. 22. Cf. **Is. 66:1-2a; Acts 17:24.**
- ✓ To say that God is "Lord of Heaven and earth" is to say that He is Lord over all the people in Heaven and earth — that He is sovereign over all the ministry that is done on earth (a great comfort).
- ✓ Joy in God is where Jesus begins His teaching on prayer — notice the parallels —
  - "I praise you, O Father" = "Father" (11:2)
  - "Lord of Heaven and earth" = "Hallowed be your name" (11:2)
  - "All things have been handed over..." (v. 22) = "Your Kingdom come..."
  - We will emulate Christ in prayer and learn to pray when we delight in adoration of the Father.
  - What are your disappointments and difficulties? You are invited to take them to God in prayer; but as you take them to Him, start with a recitation of His nature and character; feed your heart on the love of God and His fatherly care of you before you seek His particular gifts.
  - The more we rejoice in God for His nature, the more we emulate Christ and His joy.

- Rejoice in Christ's Joy in the Father's REVELATION (v. 21b)

- ✓ In this phrase, Jesus particularly praises God for His salvation and His revelation of salvation.
- ✓ The Father has *hidden these things from the wise*... You might put "wise" in quotation marks. They are not really wise — they think themselves wise; they believe they have their own means of salvation and access to God. They won't see the reality of God's provision of salvation.
- ✓ But God *has* revealed the truth of salvation *to infants* — those who recognize they are dependent and needy; they have nothing to offer God but come to Him in dependence (cf. 6:20-21).
- ✓ The section parallels 1 Cor. 1:18ff. God is honored when we come to Him humbly and dependently.
- ✓ This revelation of salvation (and saving humble people) is *well-pleasing* to God. His perfect will in salvation gives pleasure to Him. He is pleased to reveal salvation to the weak; at the same time that revelation confounds Satan and rebellious, self-righteous men.
  - Jesus was largely rejected in Galilee (vv. 13, 15); He was rejected in the first Samaritan town (9:53); and the 72 faced opposition in their ministry (10:3).
  - Yet there was no sense in which Christ was a failure. He accomplished exactly what God planned. Those who were chosen for salvation were being saved. And that gave joy to Christ.
  - And it should bring joy to us. We will serve. And we will speak the gospel. And we will disciple. And sometimes God will be pleased to save and transform, and sometimes people will reject.
  - But at all times God's plans are being fulfilled and we can be joyful.
  - Don't despair over perceived failure; and don't be overly joyful at perceived success. Be joyful that God is sovereign and God is revealing His salvation just as He wills and He is using you as part of that process (2 Cor. 4:7-12).

- Rejoice in Christ's Joy in the Father's RELATIONSHIP (v. 22)

- ✓ It has been noted that verse 22 sounds Johannine — it stresses the authority of Christ that comes from the Father, which is a particular theme of John (cf. Jn. 5:19-23, 27; 10:18; 17:1-2).
- ✓ But even more, it seems to be another reference to Himself as the Son of Man — He has received the authority over all things from the One who is Lord over Heaven and earth — *handed over* (Dan. 7:14).
- ✓ This verse offers a glimpse into the uniqueness of the Triunity of God — though our finiteness limits our comprehension of the dynamics of the relationship.
  - The Son is uniquely *known by the Father* — the majority of our knowledge of the Son is of His humanity; we are severely limited in knowing of His eternal nature. But the Father knows all and has enjoyed loving fellowship and harmony with the Son for eternity.
  - And the Father is uniquely *known by the Son* — which gives the Son the right and ability to reveal the nature of the Father to us (Jn. 1:18). And anyone who knows the Father only knows Him because *the Son wills to reveal Him* to that person.
  - This also means that as the Son, He is not subordinate or secondary to the Father (not a lesser deity); they are co-regents of all things, working the plan of salvation together.

- ✓ In this two-verse prayer, Christ has used the title Father five times and referred to Himself as Son four times. He is giving us a glimpse into the nature of the Trinitarian godhead. But even more He is giving us a glimpse of the relationship between eternal Father and Son, which is a relationship of love. He loves and rejoices in the love of the Father — and wants us to rejoice in that love also.
- ✓ What does it benefit us that the Father and Son love one another? Michael Reeves answers —

...the Father sent his Son to make himself known—meaning not that he wanted simply to download some information about himself, but that the love the Father eternally had for the Son might be in those who believe in him, and that we might enjoy the Son as the Father always has....the Father so delights in his eternal love for the Son that he desires to share it with all who will believe. Ultimately, the Father sent the Son because the Father so loved the Son—and wanted to share that love and fellowship....

The Father, then, is not about sprinkling blessings from afar, and his salvation is not about being kept at a distance, merely pitied and forgiven by our Creator. Instead, he pours all his blessing out on his Son, and then sends him that we might share his glorious fullness. The Father so loves that he desires to catch us up into that loving fellowship he enjoys with the Son. And that means I can know God as he truly is: as Father. In fact, I can know the Father as my Father. [Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*, 69-71.]

- ✓ What is the benefit of Christ the Son's delight in the Father? The overflow of that love is that the Father and Son love us and invite us into their fellowship. So to rejoice in the love of the Father and the Son is also to rejoice in the love they share with us (and in which *we are secure*). *There is JOY.*

### 3. Rejoice in Christ's BLESSING (vv. 23-24)

- Jesus then **turned to His disciples** (the 72), excluding others who might have been present, and gave a summary encouragement to the report of their ministry (v. 17).
- They are particularly **blessed** because they have **seen** the works (and heard the words) of the Messiah.
- They were seeing the things **many prophets wished to see**, but could not. The OT was filled with people who longed to know of the Messiah (Heb. 11:13, 39-40; 1 Pt. 1:10-12).
- When God reveals Himself, as He did through Christ, it is a remarkable grace. We should be astounded and humbled that He has revealed to us what we had no right to expect. And it should stimulate joy.
- Friday morning, **my brother sent me a picture** and text — “I saw the Falcon 9 rocket this morning when I got to the gym.” He lives about 130 miles west of the launch pad — and he saw it! And we both “rejoiced” in the wonder and power of that rocket launch — and the unexpected pleasure of seeing it.
- How much more should we rejoice in Christ and the Father.
- When you think about church, service, and your spiritual gifts, **what makes you happy?** What should make you and I supremely happy is the privilege of serving (and our salvation), and of the revelation of the Father and the Son, and our fellowship with them.

**BENEDICTION:** New member introduction