

What Caused Jesus to Rejoice?

Luke 10:1–24 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION: Often, I will stress the importance of a text I am preaching by mentioning the fact that it is in three of the four gospels, or at times all four. That is not the case today - this particular story is only mentioned in Luke's account. That fact has baffled theologians for centuries.

I'm thankful that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to record this account because this is the only opportunity we have to see a unique aspect of Jesus' heart...His rejoicing. What made Jesus rejoice?

You see, through His incarnation, Jesus was familiar with the gamut of human emotions.

Isaiah 53 tells us he was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He understood being hated and rejected; he knew the pain of betrayal. Depictions of Jesus in art tend to emphasize his emotional pain and grief.

But the writer to the **Hebrews** tells us there was another aspect of Jesus's emotion - we are told that He was anointed with the oil of joy.

That should be expected - **Isaiah 62:5** tells us that God the Father rejoices over Jerusalem as a groom rejoices over a bride.

David tells us in **Psalms 16:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ ...in your presence, there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

So it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus experienced great joy. But what may surprise you is the source of that joy. **What moved Jesus to rejoice? Today's text answers that question.**

CONTEXT: The advance of the ministry of Christ is not entirely unlike what we are witnessing among the various presidential candidates.

- It began as a very "**grass roots**" effort - in the rural towns and villages of Galilee. That work has been powerful and meaningful, but in some ways off the grid, under the radar. Remember, often he charged people not to let others know who He was or what He came to do.
- At first, He focused on building His **leadership team** - the 12 who became apostles.
- He gave them **special access** and allowed them to see things that others weren't privileged to see.
- We saw last week that he now set His **face like flint** toward Jerusalem.
- So we have Jesus, the 12, and hundreds or thousands of others following in His wake.

- As this caravan journeys toward Jerusalem, it becomes necessary for Him to send an advance team ahead of him to announce what is happening - this would be the seventy-two we see in our text today.

TEXT: Luke 10:1–24 (ESV)

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

The phrase, “sent on ahead of him” is the exact same construction as **Luke 7:27 in reference to John the Baptist (ESV)** ²⁷... “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.”

These sent ones would be like seventy-two John the Baptists preparing the way for Jesus. What was coming would require:

- **Logistical Preparation** - As the crowds continued to grow, arrangements had to be made for venues that could hold such a crowd. Food and drink had to be available. There were legal considerations; as we saw last week, they had to notify and get the approval of various authorities.
- **Practical Preparation** - This would include things like getting the word out and building anticipation, visiting the synagogues and teaching what Jesus was all about.
- **Spiritual Preparation** - These people were about to hear from the very lips of God in the flesh. They had to be ready for that.

If the 72 did their work well, souls would be changed for eternity. If they did it poorly, people would suffer.

Notice first...

1. The Release of the Seventy Two

We are not given their names. Some of your translations will indicate there were 70, others will indicate that there were 72 that were sent. The discrepancy is due to the fact that about half of the ancient manuscripts say 70, and the other half say 72. It doesn't make a significant difference doctrinally.

It seems they were sent out representatively of what would happen after the resurrection as the church is sent out into the world.

In Genesis 10, we are given the nations that were descended from Noah. Seventy were given, then the Philistines and Edom were mentioned, making it 72.

- So the 72 were sent to the NATIONS, the WORLD.
- The 12 were sent to Israel. Remember when he sent them out a few weeks ago? He said to go only to the tribes of Israel.

So this sending out was much like the mission given to us as the church to go into all the world. What were they to do? Well, first...

a. They Were to Pray

² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore **pray earnestly** to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Before they went, they were to pray. Just as Jesus told the 120 before He ascended into Heaven, wait in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.

Jesus will teach us a great deal about prayer in the coming chapters, but here, He says we are to pray for help in the harvest.

Notice, He doesn't say pray that people will get their act together and help us out - but rather, pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send them. Perhaps some people don't go, don't witness, don't serve, because God hasn't done a work in them yet. Pray for that to happen...

They were to pray...

b. They Were to Go Urgently

³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

This is similar to what Elijah told his servant in II Kings 4, don't make small talk-go. It underscores the urgency of the mission.

One of the key differences between churches that win souls and those that don't is a sense of urgency. It must happen - it must happen soon.

ILLUSTRATION: War is erupting throughout the Middle East. Just this week the Italian Defense Minister suggested that the EU form an Army to help protect their common interest. He went a step further to recommend that they appoint an official president of the EU to set at the head of what would basically function as a new state, very similar to the revived Roman Empire predicted throughout the Bible.

What is my point? We don't have long. We must be about the mission.

They were to pray... They were to go urgently...

c. They Were to Discern

⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.

The idea is that they would have to use a measure of discernment. The mission didn't come with much of a manual. You must walk with the Holy Spirit and let Him guide you. Look for people who have a spirit that bears witness with yours.

So much of life is like that -

- There is clear-cut truth - don't bear false witness, don't murder.
- There are wisdom issues - buy this car or that car.
- There are issues that require spiritual discernment. There is no other way to get that besides being in tune with the Holy Spirit.

They were to pray...They were to go urgently...They were to discern..

d. They Were to Trust

⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

So they were to be dependent on the people to provide for them. They weren't to be too picky about it. Some of these villages would have a Gentile as the person of peace, they were not to demand that everything is kosher, they were to eat what they were given.

They were to pray...They were to go urgently...They were to discern..They were to trust...

e. They Were to Proclaim

Their proclamation would have both positive aspects as well as negative aspects. Just as Paul told Timothy - they were to reprove and exhort.

• Positive Exhortation

⁹Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

• Negative Rebuke

¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say. ¹¹'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. ¹³'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. ¹⁶'The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.'

The seventy-two are released into the mission....then we see...

2. The Return of the Seventy Two

This is the part I really wanted to get to. It is here that we see what caused the rejoicing of Jesus Christ. Luke gives us three things that Jesus celebrated and He wanted us to celebrate.

By the way - it has been said, "What gets celebrated gets repeated".

Perhaps there is no greater secret to leadership than knowing how and when to celebrate. Jesus understood that. Notice first of all we are to...

A. Celebrate Your Position Over Your Power

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸ And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

B. Celebrate When Ordinary People are Used in an Extraordinary Way

²¹ In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²² All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

C. Celebrate When Saved People See People Saved

²³ Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! ²⁴ For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: