

Joy Rooted In Heaven, Not Success

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Good evening everyone. Welcome to our Wednesday Bible study. As always, let's go before the Lord for his help for this understanding this passage that we're going to go over. Father, we thank you for this wonderful opportunity to come before you to sit under your word. I pray father that you would help me to expound your words in a way that would be understandable. I pray for your holy spirit to reveal these truths to make it personal to each one here this evening. I pray father that ultimately lord that Christ will be exalted from my mouth and in each and one of our hearts so that you will be pleased with tonight's worship. Bless to this end in Jesus name. Amen.

So if you will go ahead and turn with me to Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10, continuing our study on discipleship. And we'll be in verse 17 and ending in verse 20 tonight. Luke chapter 10 beginning with verse 17.

Last week we looked at the weight of gospel responsibility where Jesus issued a piercing woe to three specific towns. We looked at Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. These towns sat where most of the miracles the Lord Jesus Christ performed and they witnessed Jesus work miraculously and yet they remained unmoved by his miracles. The Lord Jesus established the teaching that the greater the spiritual light received the greater the accountability for how we respond to it. And he warned that the pride of Capernaum assuming that there was safety because of the proximity of the Messiah being in their town would ultimately lead to their own downfall that it was a false assumption to hold on to that false truth and it led to their downfall.

And against this backdrop of the heavy responsibility we see the divine chain of authority. I spoke on this last Wednesday where hearing the messengers hearing Christ himself and that we see the 72 disciples that returned from their mission trip. That's what we're going to see tonight from going from town to town speaking about the kingdom of God near at hand. And so they're now returned from that trip from all that visitation. And remember they were sent out as lamb among wolves. So Lord Jesus Christ warned him of that and that also not everyone's going to hear and respond with joy and receiving it with likeness, but rather they would reject the good news which was the kingdom of God and in their time that they refused. And so they're returning to report their findings.

What would you think if you know before we go into this passage, what would you think that they as disciples would return back in their journey in their mission? Would you think that most of their reports was all good or do you think it was all bad or do you think they were discouraged or do you think that they were encouraged? Right. There's so many ways that we could interpret if we didn't have the word of God. And so, but it's a good way to kind of test where you're at in your heart before you look into scripture when it comes to situations like this that I'm sharing with you. What would you come up with if you are sent out on this mission trip that Jesus Christ

sent you out to? Of course we have the answer in the text, but it's a good way to pause to meditate and then see where the gap lies with where your heart is and where ultimately the word of God falls with the right understanding.

And so, we're going to return with our study and we're going to see that right away we're going to see in this portion of scripture that these disciples are like super happy. Okay. So if you thought that, then good. You kind of were in that their frame of mind. But let me just kind of nuance that. It wasn't actually there being super happy was a good thing because they were super happy for the wrong reasons and the Lord Jesus Christ is going to expose their heart with this excitement.

So they of course went out preaching and they did spectacular things. Even in Luke chapter 17 if you look down there they said Lord even the devil subject unto us do thy name. So the disciples were likely surprised because unlike the 12 which they were told specifically by the Lord Jesus Christ that you have power over the demons that you'll be to cast out the devils. The Lord Jesus Christ didn't mention that these 72 would have that kind of power. So think about it. If you were in that position and you saw these demons being subject to the name of Jesus Christ you would be happy right at the surface level. And so they showed what was at the superficial level at the surface level this excitement and they witnessed that the kingdom advancing through their own hands. They were riding on this spiritual success as it were like you know the 12 had it now we have it that we have this power just like the 12 to their eyes they thought they were the super apostles possibly right that now they have that same ability so they were riding on the ways of the 12 disciples as it were and the Lord Jesus Christ needed to correct all of that nonsense and so we're going to take a moment and see how the Lord Jesus Christ corrects his disciples and what he does is he grounds their excitement. He says, "It's good you have that excitement, but I don't want you to put it on temporal things. I want that excitement to be on eternal things, namely on heaven." And we're going to see that more nuanced in these passages.

So he wanted us to through this study the Lord Jesus Christ not only for the 12 not only for the 72 but us as Christians today to see our success on the permanent things not on the temporal or the things that we cannot see with our eyes rather than things that we can see on this world.

Again the contraposition of temporal and permanent. You see all of us are in different seasons in ministry. Some of us have been doing ministry for decades. Some just have started in their ministry. But you'll know that wherever you are in your season of ministry, there are ups and downs. Even at the beginning, I remember the ups and downs. They were a lot more volatile than it is now. God has tempered my spirit. And I think that's just with maturity and time that you don't get too excited or you get too bummed out, right? But that you trust in God, right? At the end of the day, he is the one that takes care of the results. And so we're going to see all that in this passage.

So, why don't you go ahead and stand out of respect out of God's word. And I'll go ahead and just read verses 17 to 20 and then we'll continue our study beginning in verse 17. And the 70 returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather

rejoice because your names are written in heaven. And all God's people said, "Amen." May be seated.

Looking at verse 17, we're going to see the nature of delegated authority. The nature of delegated authority. See, the disciples correctly identify the source of their power. Namely when they all in all agreement said that we did this through thy name. The devils are subject through thy name. They were correct in identifying the source of their power. You see in their culture this is more prominent than I think it is today that using the name of somebody was extremely important. They were used to that in their culture. It's not so much today that we do this kind of reference but it's good to know history. It's good to know what was prominent, what was relevant. And so whenever they said name it meant that they acted upon a person's reputation, authority and power. So reputation, authority and power. And so when the disciples said in the name or through thy name, it meant his reputation, his authority, and his power. Okay? And when they said that on behalf of that person, they meant full authority. And so it had this all-encompassing gravity, this weight of when you whenever somebody would reference someone's name and they would say that that's the full authority is this person.

For example today just trying to draw from an analogy that people have authority is police officers right so police officers have some authority and have you ever heard this expression stop in the name of the law stop in the name of the law it's an old expression not many officers say this but there was a day when this is what they would say it would not in my name but it will be in the authority of the law right so you can say it in the person's one singular name or in the group in this context that I just shared is the law enforcements right so it would evoke what authority and the authority was the law in this case so that's verse 17 that we see this important context and how relevant it was back then and it's still relevant somewhat today.

And in verse 18, what we see is just going back to verse 18, we say that we saw that Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ said be that I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Now this is very interesting is that the disciples had subject over the devils and the Lord Jesus Christ reveals something beyond just what they visibly saw but he takes them to the cosmos to the reality of what's going on in the spiritual realm. So he takes them off of the physical the casting of demons. They saw all this stuff and he said, "But I beheld," speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." So, he's saying, "Wow, you guys think, you know, having joy and having these demons being cast out in my name in the Lord Jesus Christ." But what is more amazing? What more joy than seeing the Lord Jesus Christ say that like, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

You see the people of towns like Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum witness God's power. This is a theme that we see in the scriptures in this study. And then with this power they reject this and I think it has a lot to do with demonic oppression and blindness that a lot with the demonic influence is that Satan wants to remove and not reveal God's power. Do you notice that like they belittle God's power like it's oh that's nothing. And whenever you hear someone say that, it's because of a demonic blindness. Because Jesus spoke many times about his power, his authority, right? His reputation over the demons. And yet Satan loves to just blind people from that kind of authority and power and a reputation of having victory over demons, right? And so Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum they fell into demonic deception. They were just

concerned about the physical instead of the awesome spiritual power of God and Christ. And so that's why they were judged more severely. They trusted Satan more than God ultimately. And Satan will by the way not you think Chorazin and but Satan and Capernaum are going to be judged severely. Well, Satan will face even greater judgment. Going back to that concept of graded responsibility, Satan heard everything. He was actually in heaven. So talk about being near to God and so he will receive even the most and the most severe and the greatest judgment. Always remember that. It's very important to know that yes he will be severely judged beyond even these towns since he was again he saw firsthand God's majesty as an angel then fallen angel right so the Lord Jesus speaks here in this passage in verse 18 as an eternal witness and he is obviously the second person of the trinity and he is the one witnessing and sharing this with the disciples.

And so this statement that Jesus gives here confirms his divine nature as the pre-existent one as it were. He was there to see the initial defeat of Satan, right? He saw Satan fall down from heaven. He was there right with God. And so he's sharing here what he saw. And by the way this expression lightning you ever see lightning it is quick and sudden right so he's saying suddenly Satan fell suddenly he came to this realization that his judgment was going to be quick God wasn't going to be slack in his judgment so he's saying it was like lightning it was swift and it was irreversible, right? So, his judgment irreversible.

I remember one time I was doing street preaching in at Glendale and one person I was preaching on judgment and he walked up to me and he's like do you think God will forgive Satan? And I never heard that before. So, I was a little bit taken aback and I was just talking I was praying as I was talking to him and then God showed me Revelation 3:20 and the idea is that you know his judgment is sure he's going to go into the lake of fire and I said that he can't reverse that. Well, this is another passage that you can as to, you know, provide a response and confirming that Satan is forever judged and it's quick. It's already been predetermined.

And so the Lord Jesus Christ wants to rest assure the disciples there at that time and also for us. And so it's important because the Lord Jesus is telling his followers that whatever success or victory that they have over demons, well, in reality, those are just pointing towards the final and total defeat of Satan. And that's namely the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. On the cross. So every time the gospel is proclaimed, we're saying it part of that gospel is it is finished. It is finished. Christ defeated Satan there on the cross. And you know, and it's evidence that Satan's power is broken under Christ lordship, right? He is lord of all lords and king of all kings. And that means everyone is submitting under him, right? So it's a good reminder to ourselves that Satan has partial power if that Christ has ultimate power, ultimate authority, right? And he will put Satan under his feet one day as a footstool, right? We see that in the book of Psalm.

Well, let's go on to verse 19. Verse 19, if you'll look down with me there, it says, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." So, right away, we see this word behold. Anytime you see this word behold, it means it's really important to pay attention here. And so he's saying at this instance, pause and take in this lifechanging work is that where's the power come from? Not from you autonomous you, me, but ultimately says I am the one that gives unto you the power. You see that he says, "So pay attention whenever you have some sort of blessing in your gospel

proclamation and someone listens to you and repents and turns to the Lord Jesus Christ." That was because he gave you the power to do that. God was working through you. It was not from you. And so it's important to take notice of that, right?

And so we can see here that it is a gift. He says, "I give." Right? That's an expression of giving a gift. I give you this gift. And the gift is the power that's given from Christ. He is the one with the full authority. He is the one that gives us this gift. It's not based on our achievements, right? It doesn't originate with us. And so the Lord Jesus Christ reminds them and us that the authority is a gift. It is delegated with the expression I give unto you. Right? And it flows from a relationship of abiding in Christ. These were Christ disciples and we are in turn Christ disciples and anything that is done is because we are in Christ and he is the one that gives us this gift of his power. And it is an incredible power and we should always acknowledge him when God does anything wonderful in through our lives or even when not does not something doesn't happen as well right through us ultimately he has full authority he has full control over every situation and so that helps us to not hold on to human effort as it were or even our church or their church it's Christ church. It's Christ earth. He's the one that possesses all power all on all beings.

Right? So the Lord Jesus describes this authority as a power to specifically tread on snakes and scorpions. We see this in verse 19. Now these creatures represent threats that strike suddenly. If you know snakes, they don't just, you know, wiggle their way through and it's a slow reaction, right? They go after you, right? To your leg if or whatnot. It's they strike without warning. That's their way of by nature. Same with scorpions. They react the same way just like snakes. They will attack you with swiftness if you get close and bother them. And so this symbolizes not only suddenness but also their ability to poison, right? Snakes we're talking about here venomous snakes. We're talking about scorpions that have venom. And so their the enemy does his method is to strike suddenly and then also to poison you, right? And how does he poison you? Primarily with lies, right? So, we got to be very careful with how Satan strikes us. And doesn't that happen, right? So, suddenly you just be like walking and you're in a good spirit and then he just suddenly poison you with lies, right? He wants to make you feel defeated and guilty. And of course, I'm talking about believers, right? He wants you to feel defeated and oh, it's because of what you did and or the way you acted. And he wants it put on you. That's the greatest lie. That many people stumble is one of the greatest lie not the greatest lie but one of the greatest lies that he likes to do is oh it's because of what you did or you know how you are and he wants the buck to stop with you and he doesn't want you to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the final authority in your life and so it's just a good reminder of how Satan is depicted according to the Lord Jesus Christ right it's always good to hear from the Lord Jesus Christ how the enemy is described, right? That's how we know the truth about Satan and that's how we can always remind ourselves how to defeat him. Okay, we need truth, right? Who's authority? It's the Lord Jesus Christ, not me, right? It's not because of what I did or what I didn't do. But it's because of who I trust in. And it didn't work out maybe this way because it was in His control. I don't have control of the situation. Why do you make it sound like I have control over the situation? Right? So, there's just many ways that Satan likes to point fingers at us and it's not about us. It's about Christ and what he is doing through us and ultimately his finger goes through us to him. And you know what happens when he points his finger at Christ? Who's going to win? Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

So we just got to know that. Don't always be the stumbling block in that path. So, other things that we're going to see here is look, they're again the context is they're full of joy. They're super happy about what they were able to do with the demons. And so, he's going to continue to speak on this issue, but he just wanted to show like, hey, you think your thing is great, but look, look at I ultimately have victory over Satan. So you know just understand that truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is trying to speak to the disciples on. Another thing is that it's a great passage that I often go to for truth and when I'm feeling defeated is 1 John 4:4. It's a great passage. It says, 'You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Okay, so that's speaking of the one in the world is Satan and the one that was in us is the Holy Spirit. So, again, it's not an attack on you, it is attack on the Holy Spirit. Right? So, understand that. And so, we have great assurance as believers. Amen. That we have a greater power than Satan. That's the truth right there. So, just a good reminder.

Now, verse 20, we're going to close at verse 20. He says, "Notwithstanding or nevertheless, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." So despite the reality of this authority that they had over the demons, the Lord Jesus issues a startling nevertheless he commands them, rejoice not in what you are rejoicing in that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather divert that joy rejoicing because your names are written in heaven. Because your names are written in heaven. You see the danger of the gift which is Christ's power flowing through us is the fatal tendency to rejoice in the wrong things and such as spiritual success or personal abilities through what gifts God has given to you. It's so easy to again just focus on yourself and your abilities and your successes as it were. But if joy is based on performance because that's what it is essentially it will fluctuate right it will fluctuate based on the successes and the failures and so the Lord Jesus Christ is saying I don't want you to fall into that trap he's saying this will lead to pride because your focus is always on you instead of focusing on him and so he's saying don't base your joy on your successes and your failures as it were. Because those highs and lows will hurt you at the end. And he's saying essentially don't focus on those things. Divert it to rejoicing that your names are written in heaven. Your names are written in heaven. Okay? That is so important because our security is not on our successes or our failures. Amen.

Unfortunately many people in the world do and that's the greatest shortcoming of man is we base our security on things that don't last. But we have something that lasts. That word written in heaven is a big deal. It's referring to the book of life we see in Revelation. It's essentially a heavenly registry, right? We know when we go to weddings, we write our names. We're here marking this special occasion. But you see, it's not your writing. It's Jesus writing your name and that name is permanent. This is a wedding that we're going to be part of that is eternal. Amen. We get small glimpses of that when we go to weddings, we sign our names on the register, but this is eternal wedding and feast. We just get a taste of that here on earth.

So, in the ancient world, by the way, they would register your name like that you were born here. And this meant that when you were a citizen, for example, like in Rome, that you had rights that were permanent. It's not something like you can just go somewhere else and just get another citizenship somewhere else. It was like you're here, you're permanent. This is from where you're from. And so just using that expression that they were familiar with during this time he uses this perfect tense to the original language that this phrase implies a completed action with continuing

results. So it's implied a completed action with continuing results. It is a present reality. That's the idea. And it's continual. Right? Our names are recorded in the safest place imaginable. Amen. Where moth or rust does not get to but in heaven beyond earthly loss or corruption.

So the Lord Jesus shifts their focus and ultimately our focus as well from doing to being from doing to being. You know that's the miracle of our salvation. If you remember, you were just doing doing doing trying to please God in some ways, right? Or your actions, but suddenly that changed when it took your eyes off your actions, what you were doing to what Christ did for you on the cross, right? And it that perspective was shifted by God's grace, by God's mercy, that he didn't allow you to continue on this destructive path that will lead to ultimately hell and judgment, but that you were in a sense looking at the Lord Jesus Christ and you're seeing his finished work and you saw your sins placed on the cross as if it was your sin there placed and he brought you to that place of I just need to be in the Lord Jesus Christ. Just like back in Noah's time, I just Noah just needed to be in the ark. That's all he needed to do. There was nothing that he had to do. Just be in the ark. Just be in Christ. That's all important.

And so the greatest miracle isn't that a demon leaves you or anybody for that matter but it's that a person is reconciled to the creator God and adopted as a child of God. Amen. And this is a great assurance that we all have as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one can remove us from that relationship once that reconciliation is done. Jesus said, "I'll never leave you nor forsake you." It's like a marriage vow to us. We say it in our traditional vows, don't we? But this is the Lord Jesus Christ saying it to us. And that's the greatest promise. Amen. That one can ever give to us. And thank God for that reconciliation that we have in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator.

So as we live out our mission, I want to conclude here. It's important to anchor our hearts in the right place because we will see victories, but we'll also face trials. And if your joy is anchored in your ministry results, it will be as transient as the morning mist that you see. But if your joy is anchored in your salvation, it becomes unshakable. Amen. We can move forward in mission with confidence knowing that no ultimate harm can touch our eternal destiny. I love Romans 8:38-39. Paul says, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen.

So we rejoice not because we are powerful but because we are known and loved by God with a home that is eternally secure. And so one takeaway I want us to leave as a reminder with all that I said if you can soak all that in and then just take away this. True and lasting joy does not come from the power God exercises through you, but from the permanent grace he has extended to you by writing your name in heaven. With that, I close. May God bless tonight's study to your hearts and may we just continue to exalt Christ and our names written in heaven.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for just all these words, Lord, from the Lord Jesus Christ, anchoring our hearts to what's ultimately important is what he says, not what we say or what Satan with his lies say, but what you say. And so, God, I pray that we glory in your truth. We thank you for your truth. It keeps us, Lord, from being persuaded to the left or to the right. But I pray as just as Paul said that I am persuaded of this thing that we are in Christ Jesus our Lord and that nothing can pull us as he described it. So father I pray that all of us that have this destination that are written

our name in heaven. Lord we trust that you will direct us as we continue to walk in step with your purposes. Help us and remind us of our final destination is secure. But I do ask and pray that you would help those here as well that don't have this assurance that their names are written in heaven. That they don't know that their destination is secure. Show them, Father. Show them, Lord, if it is in your will that they're to be saved. Show them tonight. Father, I pray that you will part your grace and your mercy. If it is to be revealed to them tonight. If not, Lord, we will continue to trust in you and continue to be faithful because you are faithful. And we pray that you will continue to sustain us because you're the only one ultimately, God, because you have all authority, all power. This we ask in Jesus name. Amen.