

Reasons Jesus Rejoices, Part 1

Luke 10:21

Turn in your Bibles, please, to Luke chapter 10. It has been a joy for me to anticipate this section of Scripture, and now that it's arrived, I have to admit that the task before us is intimidating, and yet it is so very compelling. We've been studying the mission of the seventy-two in Luke chapter 10. Start back in verse one, the Lord appointed, and then instructed, and sent out seventy-two of his disciples to herald the arrival of God's kingdom.

And he had them accompanied with power. Sovereign power of God that validated the truth of the message with miraculous healing power for people. When these seventy-two missionaries returned, they came back rejoicing. It wasn't rejoicing in the great numbers that responded, but it was rejoicing in mission fulfillment.

It was rejoicing in what happened as they trusted in Christ and pursued obedience to him. They rejoiced in an

unexpected, unanticipated authority over the entire demonic realm. They watched demons flee. Then Jesus helped them, though, to see even greater reasons for rejoicing.

Take a look at that section again, starting in Luke 10:17, "The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!' And he said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 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. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'"

They returned with joy, and Jesus, as we can see there, he entered into their joy. He rejoiced with them, and then he took them further. He took them deeper. He informed and then instructed their joy, that he might direct it, that he might deepen it.

Whatever temporal joy that they had found in the subjection of demons to Christ's authority, that they wielded

when they were out heralding the kingdom, that joy, Jesus wants them to know: That joy is eclipsed by a far greater joy, namely, that their names have been inscribed, engraved, registered in the citizenry of heaven itself. They are bona fide citizens of the kingdom of God, of which they've been the recent heralds.

Look at verse 21. "In that same hour he," that is Jesus, "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 this was your gracious will. 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.'

"Then turning to the disciples he said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! 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.'"

I think you can sense, just in the reading of that, how special this section is. We have a sense, even if we don't know

all there is to it here, we have a sense of how profound these words are. You need to realize that this is a special text, because this is the only occasion recorded in the Gospels, of Jesus rejoicing. It may seem surprising, right? Three times we read about Jesus weeping. This is the only time we read about him rejoicing.

It's not that Jesus was a sour and dour man, but he is called, the man of sorrows, who's acquainted with grief. This mission that he's on is going to end in his death. So, there's sorrow in what he sees. Sorrow in the sinful condition of mankind. And the older I get, the more I understand that. The more I see and sorrow, in myself and long for heaven.

One commentator said, "This is the most exultant description of Jesus in all Scripture." It is that. A very high and holy place to see Jesus exult before us. The word here is *agalliao*, to be very happy, to be exceedingly joyful. It's a, it's a, deep feeling with emotional expression, here, from Jesus. But it's not unbridled emotion; it's, it's, emotion that is informed by the knowledge of a supreme joy. So, he's thoughtful, and that thought drives his emotion.

We know from Hebrews 12:2, "It was for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross," and Jesus knew, Hebrews 2:10, that "in bringing many sons to glory, God would make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." And indeed, he did. But the joy that drove Jesus Christ throughout his entire ministry, it was laden on the top of it, overburdened with a load of griefs and sorrows. As Luke 9:22 says, "The Son of Man must suffer much."

So, what we're reading today is pretty special. It's the only recorded instance, here in the Gospels, of the joy that drove him. We get to read the narrator's explanation of this. Notice how closely, too, his joy is associated with the salvation of souls. Do you see that? His joy is there, imbedded in a context of the salvation of sinners. Think about that. Reflect on that.

We need to see here, it's not just the fact of Jesus' rejoicing. It's what he rejoices over that is going to occupy our attention. It's the content of his praise. It's what he says and what he reveals here, all of it flows forth from the Holy

Spirit, this union he has with the Holy Spirit. So, his expression is Holy Spirit inspired. It's an outpouring of joy and praise and adoration and theology. Theology.

I want to see us deepen our own joy in the God that we've been saved to worship. I want to see us grow and deepen and broaden and anchor in deeply, to the God whom we've been saved to worship, because he's our reward. That is what heaven is. Heaven is not pearly gates and gold streets and all the rest. That's just a picture of the glory. Images that we can understand of the glory of heaven.

But its central figure is God himself. So if you don't long for God, you don't want heaven: Because heaven is all about God. So we need to learn and grow in our joy, deepen our joy in the God we've been saved to worship. I also want to see that we grow in amazement, that our names have been registered in the citizenry of heaven. That we have a place there.

I want us to grow in our appreciation of that amazement. I want us to grow in our worship and adoration of the glory of Jesus Christ. I want us to see our hearts bow down in worship

before this God, in the name of Christ, so that we see this trinitarian power, reality, come to fruition and practical reality in our own lives, in our own hearts. So our hearts are enraptured in worship of the supreme joy of God himself.

Okay, so with all that, just warming up to an outline. Here's a first main point for you: Jesus rejoices in who God is. Number one: Jesus rejoices in who God is. Notice how Jesus addresses God in verse 21, because the manner in which Jesus speaks to God has a lot to teach us about how we need to speak to God.

Notice how he addresses God. "In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.'" And then skip to the end of the verse. "Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." Okay, we're going to make four points out of that section right there. Four points. Do this in four sub-points: A, B, C, and D.

Sub-point A, okay: Jesus addresses God righteously. As Jesus opens his mouth, here, the very first thing to come forth from his lips is what? "I thank you." This is an intensified

form. The verb there is an intensified form of *homologeō*, which means to confess. It's *exhomologeō*, which can mean, to openly confess, to fully acknowledge, to admit something completely. But when addressing God, when God is the object, when we're addressing God in this way, as Jesus is doing here, it refers to a grateful acknowledgment. It refers to extolling, praising, or as the ESV translates it here, to give thanks.

And the term really is broad enough to include all those nuances. And one commentator actually tries to do that in expanding the sense here: "I acknowledge openly to thine honor; I give thee praise." It's a mouthful, but that is actually trying to get the sense of what Jesus opens with when he speaks. Even before he addresses God directly by title, even before any content comes forth out of his prayer, Jesus, really in the spirit of the Psalmist, begins with praise to the one he speaks. Psalm 118:19 and 20: "Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord," to Yahweh. "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it."

Psalm 100:4: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name." Jesus is really modeling the spirit of the psalmist, there. How to enter God's presence righteously, with thanksgiving, with praise.

Sub-point B, in your little outline there, Jesus addresses God meaningfully. Jesus addresses God meaningfully. That is, there is meaning in what he says. He begins by calling God, father, twice in verse 21, but also that title, "Lord of heaven and earth."

Let's start with the second set of terms, first. "Lord of heaven and earth." This is what illustrates Jesus' address as a meaningful address. He calls God, lord. It's the word *kyrios*. It's a term that acknowledges God's absolute sovereignty, his supreme lordship and transcendent rule above all.

And then Jesus speaks about the universality of his sovereignty, calling God, the lord of heaven and earth. Anything left out? No. Heaven and earth, that's everything. So absolute sovereignty, supreme rule, and it's expansive, it's utterly comprehensive.

It comprehends everything that is created. It's Genesis 1:1, right? That's what Jesus is calling attention to here. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And so, since God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, he's the, he is the what? He is the lord of the heavens and the earth, as well. He's recognizing God as creator, and it encompasses God's role also in sustaining what he created.

So if God is the creator and sustainer, we know that he is also the law giver. He graciously legislated laws, both for the earth, material laws in the material world, physical laws for the physical world. But he also legislated laws for the heavens, for the immaterial world. He legislated, get this, he legislated morality. It's his right, as the creator of all things, as the lord of heaven and earth. It's right for him to legislate morality. We all have a sense in our own hearts of what's true.

Why does Jesus begin by acknowledging God in this way: Lord of heaven and earth? Is he merely parroting, here, what he's heard from famous rabbis? Is he mimicking their stilted religious language when speaking of God, Oh, God, Lord of heaven

and earth, and he's trying to impress his disciples? Of course not. What's this about, though?

Why is it meaningful here for Jesus to address God this way, at this time, on this occasion? Back to verses 17 and 20, right? Context. If you ever have any questions. Ask questions of the context. Look at it. Interpret it for yourself and subj, subjugation of the spirits, to the authority that he gave to the seventy-two. The sudden fall "like lightning from heaven" of Satan. The banishment of his demons. The authority that he'd given to men to tread over the serpents and scorpion, these demons unharmed, without any injury.

Listen, God is the sovereign over all these immaterial, spiritual, creatures that inhabit the heavenlies. They are all subject to God. He rejoices in that. It's a meaningful address. So the point is that when Jesus enters into a prayer with praise and thanksgiving, he addresses God in a meaningful way, using a title that means something. It's not just throw away. No throw away titles, here. No stilted language for the sake of a religious show. He's not flattering. He's thoughtful, here. He's intentional. He's addressing God for who he actually is.

And what is God? Who is he? What's he like? God is absolutely sovereign. He rules over all things in the heavens and on the earth. Whether it's the immaterial subjects of the heavens, like verses 17 to 20 talk about, or whether it's the earthly subjects of this current context, verses 21 to 24, both the wise of the earth and the babes of the earth. God is sovereign over all. And as the sovereign, he has the, he has every right, and he has the only right, to do whatever he wants to do.

That, my friends, is something that our country and the people of our country simply will not abide. A God over them, who can do whatever he wants to do. Who is subject only to his own nature and glory. Who confines himself to the infinitude of his being, and declares, "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." That, Americans will simply not abide. Why? It intrudes upon my liberty. It intrudes upon my desire for self-expression, to fulfill my potential, to actualize, to potentialize, to be what I think I am to be. God says, No, no, no. You're not sovereign. I'm sovereign.

Let's come back to that familiar address. Jesus calls God, "Father." He addresses God, as we said, righteously, meaningfully, and now subpoint C: Jesus addresses God intimately. He addresses God intimately. I praise you; I thank you, Father. Father. Lord of heaven and earth. In fact, even before he says, "Lord of heaven and earth," he says, "Father."

"Yes, Father," at the end of the verse, "for such was your gracious will." And then he expands the thought, in verse 22, "All things handed over to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son."

We're gonna have more to say about that holy relationship next week, but for now, notice the familiarity, the intimacy, here, that language. Jesus knows this supreme sovereign of all creation. He knows this transcendent, absolute source of all being. He knows this law giver, judge, creator, sustainer, redeemer. He knows this one not from a distance, but the, from the vantage point of intimacy, familiarity. He knows him as family.

When Jesus calls God his Father, we're getting such a special, privileged glimpse, here, of the relational warmth, the joy of union and intimacy that Jesus has with his Father, as only Father and son know, in this two members, here, of a holy trinity, eternal trinity, that has no blemish, no sin, no fault, nothing but, pure, transparent joy, in relationship.

We know Jesus is the god man. When Jesus calls God his Father, we're seeing this god man, and we're seeing, the Godness, of that God-man come out, aren't we? And in this text, we see the veil of Jesus' humanity. Features, by the way, that humanity features, so prominently in Luke, doesn't it? I, we love that about, about, Luke's Gospel.

How prominent it is that Jesus is one like us, with flesh and blood, with weakness, and pain, and sorrow, and suffering. It's a precious view of him. But we see the veil pulled back, here. We see Jesus, as it were, as God. Just as we saw in a previous chapter on the Mount of Transfiguration, when we saw Jesus in dazzling white glory. Here we see his divine nature. We see it with the mind revealed to us in profound words, that we are able to ponder here, marvel at it's a truth, that the

religious leaders of Jesus' day just couldn't tolerate. They could not stomach. They could not handle Jesus' claiming God as his Father. And Jesus continued to press his point. He never backed off. John wrote, John 5:18, "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was even calling God his own Father." What did that do? "making himself equal with God."

They got the point. They were theological scholars, and they said, you, by calling yourself God: Father, son, father, you are making yourself equal with God. There is parity between your person and his person, and that cannot be. We're going to kill you for it.

It's the right judgment of their concern, but wrong when it comes to Jesus Christ, because he truly is the Son of God. So, they understood the implications of the claim. They understood the exclusivity belonging to a father son relationship in the Godhead. As much as it offended the religious establishment, Jesus could not and he would not deny it. John 8:55, "If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him."

One more subpoint to mention, here. Jesus addresses God righteously, meaningfully, intimately. But notice, even in his intimacy, five times calling God, "Father," he maintains a great respect for his God, as father.

Subpoint D: Jesus addresses God appropriately. Jesus addresses God appropriately. This one's a little bit harder to see in the English text, partly because of the way we translate the verse into English, but mostly because we really don't live under a monarchy. We don't live under a monarchy and so that creates certain liabilities for us as readers. If we lived under a monarchy, we'd understand this king subject relationship a bit better.

Let me just show you briefly, the expression in the final line of verse 21 there, "Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." It's kind of hard to see in the ESV, but the King James Version translates that a little bit more accurately, here, I believe.

Those who lived under the lordship, actually, of King James, the one who commissioned this translation bearing his name, the sense would be plain to him, because they lived under King James. They were used to a monarchy. Here's how the King James Version puts it. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Or more literally, "for thus it was pleasing before you".

You may say, what's the difference? Well, translating the term, this term *emprothsen*; as before you or in your presence or in your sight, that translation actually preserves the picture that was very common to those who lived under a monarchy.

Someone, subject of the kingdom, who was privileged to enter into an audience with the king and come into his throne room and come before his presence; they came in with eyes averted, looking downward, bowing, often even prostrating themselves before the king, flat-out.

The king was positioned spatially high above him, ascended on a throne, high, lifted up. So, this throne room is meant to magnify and exaggerate the social distance, using a spatial

distance. It was a reminder to this petitioning subject, whatever he said was to be laid out, as it were, in the presence of, in the sight of, a sovereign king. And the petitioner just left the request before the king, and the king then maintained a judicial distance between himself and the request that say, lay before him, but also, himself and the petitioner.

He was to consider it from his lofty throne. He was to consider the petitioner and his petition from the vantage point of sovereignty. That's the picture we're supposed to see, here. That's the picture that's assumed, and in that final sentence in verse 21, that's how Jesus' grammar here portrays God.

God is the one who has power and authority to execute his will, to do all of his good pleasure. Avert your eyes, bow before him. He's the high and holy one, lifted up. Divine perspective to see him judge all things with perfect righteousness. Even though God is his Father, Jesus recognizes God as the absolute, resplendent, transcendent sovereign king over all.

And so, Jesus, here, he has spoken to this God, his Father. He has spoken righteously, meaningfully, intimately, and in the end, he has spoken most appropriately. How can we apply this? What do we do with this?

First, find your joy in God like Jesus does. And if you find your joy in God, then second, pray that way. We're reminded in Ecclesiastes 5:1, "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God." Verse two, "Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few."

We might add, let your words be righteous, and meaningful, and intimate, and appropriate. If we're thoughtful about the one to whom we speak, then our address to him actually becomes part of our prayer.

Listen, that is why we must begin with rejoicing in God. We're not going to find heaven on earth. We're not going to find it. There are many joys in this life. As wonderful as this church is, which is wonderful. Its warmth of love. This church's refuge of believing fellowship. This church's service to Christ.

This edifying speech among one another. Listen, all of this, any of this, is so very imperfect, isn't it? We know that even this one day, will be eclipsed in the bright sun of Heaven's glory. In the holy presence of our God and we rejoice!

That's what Jesus understood. You can hear it in the way he prays. "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." The one that he loves and worships is worthy of all praise, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And Jesus rejoices to give it, to extol his God as he enters into prayer.

So, beloved, ask yourself as you think about your prayers, does your heart burn with joy in God? Does it burn with joy in the triune God? The one who saved you from sin and darkness and cleansed your conscience of all vile works. Who transferred you into his marvelous light. For from him and through him and to him are all things, including you. He is what you are saved for.

You've been created and redeemed to worship him. So, rejoice in your God. Let your prayers, and your speech, and your singing, and your conversation, and your thoughts, and your imaginations, reflect all of that.