

Reasons Jesus Rejoices, Part 2

Luke 10:21

Turn in your Bibles, please, to Luke chapter 10. 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.'"

Jesus rejoices in what God has done. In what God has done. Look again at verse 21, gets us into the content of Jesus' praise and thanksgiving. Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such, thus, was your good pleasure."

Again, the seventy-two, they'd just returned, and amid any of the joy that they were expressing, there was also on their part, it's not recorded here, but it was on their part an amazement at how many rejected the message. Some perhaps, most of the places that they visited, responded to the message with rejection, with indifference, maybe even some with scorn.

Jesus had prepared them for that outcome even before sending them out. We've studied all that in verses 10 to 16. So, this prayer of praise and rejoicing in God's sovereign decision to hide salvation truth from the wise and the understanding. This reflects back on those towns that Jesus pronounced "woes" upon, like Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

Also, there were others standing right there with them along with the seventy-two, who were not a part of the same believing spirit. We're about to meet such a one, Luke 10:25. A lawyer who stood up to put Jesus to the test. What is he, if he is not among the wise and the understanding?

He's the contrast to this text right here, to these babes. Contrasting thoughts here, and they reveal the good pleasure of God, who subverts the expectations of sinners, and you can see the contrast in the two verbs that are there. You've got, hidden, and you've got, revealed. Two separate verbs. God conceals, and God reveals. God closes, and he discloses. He veils, and he unveils. He shuts, and he opens. That has been God's sovereign prerogative from ancient times, and the Bible attests to it.

In fact, go back to Job, chapter 12, in your Bibles. If you've been following along the daily reading, in the daily Bible, you passed through this territory. This will be familiar to you. This is so helpful, though, to see, because Job lived during the time of the patriarchs and may have been a contemporary of Abraham himself.

But in Job 12, starting in verse 13, "With God are wisdom and might. He has counsel and understanding." And then listen to this, "If he tears down, none can rebuild; if he shuts a man in, none can open. If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land. With him are strength and sound wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are his. He leads counselors away stripped, and judges he makes fools.

"He looses the bonds of kings and binds a waistcloth on their hips. He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty. He deprives of speech those who are trusted and takes away the discernment of the elders. He pours contempt on princes and loosens the belt of the strong. He uncovers the deeps out of darkness and brings deep darkness into light.

"He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away. He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth and makes them wander in a pathless waste. They grope in the dark without light, and he makes them stagger like a drunken man."

Listen, that is the sovereignty of God, folks. Right there, from an ancient voice of Job. Go back to Luke 10:21 again, and notice this is exactly what Jesus praises God for. He praises him for his sovereign choice. God has "hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and he has revealed them to little children." God is sovereign over what he hides and what he reveals, and no one can accuse him of wrong doing.

On what basis would you accuse God of wrong doing? On the basis of what standard? Of what law? God is the law giver. Are you going to use his own law to condemn him? "Good luck," as Calvin would say. God is God, though, and he does whatever he wants.

Notice also the contrast in the objects of the two verbs. With the wise and understanding, on the one hand, and then the little children, on the other. Or more literally, the *nepios*, the little babes. We're talking about babes in swaddling diapers. That's what we're talking about here. What is this about? We just heard Job acknowledge it, but again Luke has prepared us for what he has recorded already in his Gospel.

Mary said this from the start. Luke 1:51 to 53, "God has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty."

Why this reversal of fortune, here? Is this evidence that God actually has Marxist sympathies? Evening the playing field? Is the God the prototype of the social justice warrior, forcing an equality of outcome and opportunity, overthrowing power structures to right historic wrongs, championing the oppressed? Is that what Mary is rejoicing in? No. Before Mary said that, verse 50, she said this, verse 50, "His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation."

Those who fear him can be rich like Abraham or they can be poor like Lazarus. They can be of any station in life, with any amount in the bank account, any car that they drive, any job that they have, any status they have in society. Those who fear him, that's who his mercy's for.

Those who do not fear God, like the proud who use their God given strength to abuse the weak, and they claw their way up to the top of earthly thrones, who use their God, given intellect to enrich themselves by making merchandise of the poor. God scatters them. He throws them down. He sends them away empty.

But even for those who are weak and ungifted, who are poor and lack opportunity, if they do not fear God, if they do not reverence him and put their trust and hope in God, then they're judged along with all other unbelievers.

They may lack the position of the wise and the powerful, but they don't lack the ambition of the wise and the powerful. Their hearts are driven by the same greed, and that, by the way, is exactly what is driving so much of the social justice movement today. Lust for power, driven by greed.

So those who are the wise and understanding, Jesus is referring to here, they are those who do not fear God. They are those who long for the things of this world. They want to empower themselves, enrich themselves. They care nothing for

God's justice, but only to satisfy their own self-centered demands.

They've elevated themselves as judges, made themselves the arbiter of what's right and wrong, true and false, good and bad. They're indifferent to God's judgments. They're indifferent to God's righteousness. They're the ones that God, here, passes over. They're the ones he conceals his saving truth from. He lets them continue in the course of their folly and pride, and that is judicial.

Same thing Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6:20 to 26. Remember when we studied that? He pronounced blessing upon the poor, hungry, weeping. Those who were hated, reviled, and spurned, not just for the sake of being poor, but on account of the son of man.

He also pronounced woes upon the rich. Those who are full and satisfied, those who laugh now, those who curry favor with others, who are respecters of persons, who try to get approval of others on this earth in this life. "Woe to them, for they

loved the glory that comes from man", John 12:43, "more than the glory that comes from God."

I'll give you another illustration of this. Turn over to 1 Corinthians 1. Paul elaborates this very point. He says, "The word of the cross," verse 18, "is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written," here it is again, "'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

"Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through its own wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

"Jews demand signs, Greeks seek wisdom, we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

What is that about? God subverts the expectation of the proud. He conceals saving truth from those who suppress his truth in unrighteousness. And yet the truth is hidden, as it were, in plain sight through the simple, yet scorned message of the cross of Christ. The proud hate that message even though they hear it loud and clear. Greeks think it's intellectually beneath them. Jews think it's religiously beneath them. Neither will bow the knee to a crucified king.

Ah, but what about the children, these little babes? What's to become of those who, through, though weak and utterly dependent, yet through faith, fear the Lord. Look at verse 26, 1 Corinthians one, "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many of you were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

"But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because

of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"

That's the point, right? That's why God conceals and reveals. So that no human being might boast in the presence of God, but that anyone who boasts, they must make their boast in the Lord and in the Lord alone.

So that's the content of Jesus' praise and thanksgiving. That's the reason he rejoices in the Holy Spirit. He rejoices in what God has done, subverting the selfish ambition of the unbelieving proud, and then rewarding the humble expectation of believing babes.

The sovereign lord of the universe, Lord of Heaven and earth. He has the right, and he has the only right. Sovereign prerogative both to conceal and to reveal. The right to do whatever he wants.

Which leads us into a final thought, here. Number three: Jesus rejoices in why God has done it. He rejoices in what God has done, and he rejoices in why God has done it. Joy over who God is, what he's done, and why he's done it. End of verse 21, Jesus says, "Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

What Jesus identifies as, your gracious will, he identifies notice two parts of God's will. The first is about the reprobation of the unbelieving, handing them over to the consequence of their pride. So, the translation, your gracious will, maybe not the best way, in my opinion.

To render this sentence is, maybe, more literally translated, "Yes, Father for thus or in this way," and then this, "good pleasure was before you." The word is *eudokia*, that which pleases, that which brings pleasure. It comes from *eudokeo*, a verb, which, which means, to take pleasure in, delight in, be glad in, and it includes an added nuance of, the delight of deciding. It's the pleasure of sovereignty. The sovereignty to select and to choose and to make decisions.

Why has God chosen to conceal and reveal, according to what Jesus says here? Put simply, he wants to. He wants to. It gives him pleasure to do all things in accordance with his sovereign decree. He delights in doing his good and perfect will. He delights in executing the plan of perfect wisdom from the perfect mind. Why not? "He is the blessed God", 1 Timothy 1:11. "He is the blessed and only sovereign," 1 Timothy 6:15.

So that's what Jesus rejoices in, here. The why of God concealing and revealing. The why of God pursuing his own will. Executing his determined, degree, decree. That's what the word *eudokia* refers to. It's what Jesus rejoices in. His, this, this way of doing things is pleasing before God. One writer put it this way. "The prayer of Jesus describes as the sovereign, divine decree, the fact that God has hidden the knowledge of the Son from the wise and revealed it to babes. Jesus rests in this basic will of the Father. This is the conclusion of his thinking as it passes into adoration."

Folks, that's what it ought to do for us as well. As we settle our minds on the sovereignty of God. In the sovereign decree of God. God's will to conceal saving knowledge from the

unbelieving and to reveal it to his elect. God has the prerogative to do whatever he wants. To hide truth from the proud. To hide it in plain sight through the preaching of the Gospel. But to give the grace of his saving truth to the humble.

Folks, this is where we just need to back up. Put it in park and humble ourselves. Sit down, and let Jesus tell us how things really are. If we do, like Jesus, we can enter into the same rest in the will of the father. We can allow this settled conclusion to lead us into joyful adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.

Why is Jesus rejoicing this way in the Holy Spirit, who God is, what God has done, why God has done it? Again, back to the immediate context, it helps us understand why so many reject the Gospel. Why so many reject our beloved Christ. Why so many don't see our holy and great God with adoration and worship, like we do.

It helps us to understand why there are so many among us who are not wise, not noble, not mighty. For his own glory, God has done what he's done. He's chosen the foolish in the world to

shame the wise. He's chosen the weak in the world to shame the strong. Chose what's low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, that are nothing, that are set aside, marginalized, not cared for, to bring to nothing the things that are. So that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

God will strip away all human pride. He will humble us to the dust. Why? To make us grovel? No. But by stripping away all things, we'll look, look up and see the only thing that is precious: Who is God. We'll see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and nothing could be of greater, eternal, and temporal, by the way, temporal value. The implications of this truth about God are, are infinite, and they are eminently practical.

Often my mind returns to reflect on the wise and godly words of A. W. Tozer. He wrote in his introductory chapter of the book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, these words, "All the problems of Heaven and earth, though they were to confront us together and at once, would be nothing compared with the overwhelming problem of God. That is, that he is, what he is like, and what we as moral beings must do about him.

"The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long. But even if the multiple burdens of time may be lifted from him, the one mighty single burden of eternity begins to press down upon him with a weight more crushing than all the woes of the world piled one upon another.

"The mighty burden is his obligation to God. It includes an instant and lifelong duty to love God with every power of mind and soul, to obey him perfectly and to worship him acceptably. And when the man's laboring conscience tells him that he is done none of these things but, has from childhood been guilty of foul revolt against the majesty in the heavens, the inner pressure of self-accusation may become too heavy to bear.

"The Gospel can lift this destroying burden from the mind, give beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. But unless the weight of the burden is felt, the Gospel can mean nothing to the man until he sees a vision of God

high and lifted up. There will be no woe and no burden. Low views of God destroy the Gospel for all who hold them."

Friends, perhaps in comparing your view of God to Jesus' view of God, you may find yourself coming up short. A. W. Tozer also wrote, "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of him." It's true. And if the guilt of that sin weighs down upon your conscience. Well, give thanks to God for that because that's an evidence of his grace. That's a good thing. It means that salvation is near. It's at the door.

It's what the Gospel is for: Is to take all those sinful, idolatrous concepts of God, of who he is and what he's like, to take all those rebellious impulses against what God has done and why he has done it, takes all those things and nails it to the cross. He put the son of God to death that you and I might live if we'll put our faith and trust in him, we can be saved from our sins. There's salvation in no one else, "for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Father, we go directly to prayer to pray for any soul here who does not know you. Any soul here who has been following the idolatrous impulses of his or her own heart. For all of us here who are saved, who know your salvation, we've been illuminated to your truth. We realize it's by your grace, because we, too, at one time were ignorant and unbelieving. We rejected you as well.

We rebelled against your holiness. We hated your name. We blasphemed and slandered you. We doubted you. We didn't see you as good, but as evil. We saw our own impulses and desires and longings and yearnings: All chasing after fleshly impulses. We saw those as good. Oh, Father, deliver some here from idolatry. Deliver them to the amazing truth that Jesus is a good savior and you are a good God. And for those of us who do know you, let us rejoice and marvel yet again that we belong to you, that our names are registered in heaven, that our sins are forgiven, our consciences are clear. We love you. We give ourselves to you wholly, to praise your name. In the name of Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.