

Reasons We Rejoice, Part 4

Luke 10:19-20

So the joy of authority, that's how Jesus provides us with physical and spiritual protection. Literal, physical harm, yes, that's great, but spiritual protection, not having to sin. Oh, that protects the heart and the conscience and the joy and the peace and the contentment of the believer.

And that leads to this all-encompassing promise at the end of verse 19. Number 23: the joy of total invincibility. The joy of total invincibility. Number 23. End of verse 19, there's an emphatic promise from Jesus of universal protection: "And nothing shall hurt you." "You tread on serpents and scorpions all day long, you have protection over all the power of the enemy, and nothing whatsoever shall hurt you." That's how our ESV translates it, "nothing shall hurt you." I think that's just a little bit weak, and I'd like to strengthen that for you. This is in the Greek language the strongest, most emphatic negation possible in the Greek. It's *ou me*, taking two negatives and combining them together, *ou me*. So it's "nothing shall by any means at all ever hurt you." What a promise!

Not only that, but the, the mood of the verb, here, removes even the potentiality of such a thing. So what Jesus says here, if we expand it a little bit, is that whether a person or a thing, that is "not, no one, not any thing, not one thing, by any remote potential or possibility, will be able by any means possible, to cause you any spiritual injury, damage, or harm. You're safe."

That's what Paul wrote, as we read earlier, Romans 8:38-39, "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers," all-encompassing, "nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation." Does that include myself? Yes, it includes myself. I'm a created thing; I can't even walk away. "Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Not even possible. That's what Jesus is saying here.

One more reason for rejoicing under this heading. Number 24: the joy of restoration. The joy of restoration. What the disciples are rejoicing in, though they may not have known it

here at this moment but would be revealed to them in time to come as Jesus died, rose from the dead, was ascended into heaven, as the Apostles went out to teach and they wrote letters of Scripture, they would come to see what's manifest to us clearly by the rest of the New Testament. In granting this gift of authority, Jesus has restored the order that God, from the beginning, ordained.

Okay, let's get into verse 20, verse 20, and look at an even deeper set of reasons for rejoicing. This is letter D in your outline: joy in divine salvation. This is where the whole thing is heading: joy in divine salvation. Our protection, spoken of in verse 19, it is grounded in and predicated upon our salvation. In order to benefit from this authority and this protection that Jesus provides, we need to be saved. We need to belong to him, to be found in him.

If we don't belong to him, if we're not found in him, you know what? We're outside the umbrella of his protection. We're on our own. But in him, saved by him, by his grace, we're protected, we're safe. And so this is what Jesus wants us to focus on, here. Verse 20: "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this,

that the spirits are subject to you." Notice he doesn't take that away; he doesn't say, "That's gone, that was only for a moment." He acknowledges it: "The spirits are subject to you." But don't rejoice in this, but "rejoice that your names are written in heaven." "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Number 25: We'll call this the joy of deeper joy. The joy of deeper joy. After Jesus enters into their joy, after he elaborates on the realities of divine protection from demonic power in verse 19, he comes to his main point with this word: "Nevertheless." That word provides a contrast to the previous joy, directing us to an even deeper joy, a far greater joy, a superlative reason to rejoice.

I love this because Jesus here is not content to leave them even rejoicing in a lesser joy. He wants to lead them to a superior joy. It reveals his heart of kindness toward us, doesn't it? His preoccupation, his love toward us for his people, is to deepen our joy so that it's the most deeply anchored possible. "These things I've spoken to you," John 15:11,

“that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be,” what, “full,” completed, filled up to the measure.

In his high priestly prayer that same night, he said the same thing, John 17:13, “These things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” So the joy of deeper joy. Our Lord wants us to rejoice; he wants us to have the full measure of joy; he wants us to have his joy in ourselves filled up to the measure, filled up to the brink, and he’s pointing us to what? Salvation. Salvation.

You know how many of your temporal, earthly, day-to-day problems just dissipate, are eclipsed completely if you rejoice in your salvation? Remember that song: “Count your blessings, name them one by one”? Do that. Give thanks to God. Rejoice in him, and all of a sudden, all your problems, they’re still there, there’s a mortgage to be paid, there are doctors to visit, there are pains in your body. They’re still there. All of a sudden, they are put into perspective. “Wait a minute. I’ve got to pinch myself. I’m going eternally to heaven!”

Another one, number 26: the joy of eternal priority. The joy of eternal priority. This is where our joy needs to be directed to a deeper joy, so that we rejoice in an eternal priority. Jesus has contrasted, Jesus has, he's contrasted what's happening now on earth, that is, "The spirits are subject to you." What does that mean? It points to conflict, points to a fallen world, points to what we routinely face. It points to the headlines that we see every single day, the things that discourage us, the things that make us weep.

I don't know if you feel this way, but don't you just sometimes get tired of sin, whether it's your own sin or somebody else's sin? Do you just get tired of seeing sin, the effects of sin, the ruination of sin?

Jesus points us beyond "The spirits are subject to you," which is talking about right now. He points us to an eternal priority, the reality of what's going on in heaven. "Get your head out of the earth and into heaven." "Set your mind on heavenly things, things above." He's helping them see the greater priority of what's eternal over what's temporal.

And again, don't make the mistake of seeing verse 20 as a, as like a rebuke here. It's not. It's a mild correction. It's corrective instruction. But not a rebuke. Jesus has truly rejoiced with his disciples over the fact that the demonic spirits are subject to them. He helps them, he even goes further to help them see the full significance of that as we just discussed. So he's not denying that joy at all. That's a mere temporal joy. That's a passing joy. That's one that's going to come to an end.

Once the devil and his angels are cast into the lake of fire, to suffer their eternal fate, it's a fate that's eternal, along with all unbelievers, all of them together submerged into the eternity of the wrath of God. That's divine justice, by the way. You know why some people say, "Why is hell eternal? Why is, why is the crime for sinning against God have an infinite sentence?"

Because God is an infinite being. You sin against me, I'm just a creature like you, temporal, finite, not much to me. You sin against an infinite being, the source of all being, the only just sentence for that crime against God is an eternal, infinite

suffering. Don't let unbelievers ever back you off of that point. Hell is eternal, and people will suffer for eternity. And that's why this Gospel is so important. That's why this Gospel is so precious; it's why it's Gospel. Don't back off, folks.

Still, all of that, the fact that the demons are submitted to us, all of that, the demons suffering, and all of that, that whole affair is going to become a footnote in the annals of eternity. Day one in Heaven is going to open to us everlasting vistas of divine glory and wisdom and power. We're not looking back. What's in heaven, that is the issue for us. What's in heaven, that is the priority.

So beloved believer, get your priorities straight. Rejoice in that. The clarity that comes from the perspective of greater priority, heavenly over earthly, eternal over temporal, listen, that enables us to see through the veil of physical reality into the Holy of Holies of spiritual reality.

And obviously, this starts with what, what's most immediately pertinent to us, namely, and this is number 27 for your notes, number 27: the joy of individual salvation. The joy

of individual salvation. Where do we see that? Jesus said to them, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." He's talking about salvation, right? "Names." Listen, there are many ways you can speak of salvation. I like this. But many ways to speak of it. We refer to a person as being "born again," as being "saved," as being "rescued," as being "converted," "delivered." Sometimes we say of that person, "She has repented," or "He has believed," or "She has put her trust in Jesus Christ."

We've studied Luke's Gospel, and as we have, we've heard Jesus put this salvation in several ways on several different occasions. He told the paralytic in Luke 5:20, and before healing his physical condition, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." What more needs to be said? Oh, just, let's just throw in there, "Pick up your bed and go home." He said to a notoriously sinful woman, Luke 7:48, known around the entire town as a sinner, he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." What a relief to her conscience! Verse 50, again: "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." To the woman who suffered a twelve-year hemorrhage, Jesus said, Luke 8:48, "Daughter." "Daughter." I love that: "You're part of the family; you're part of our family." "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

But here, though, Jesus said to the seventy-two, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." The way he put that gives us three reasons to rejoice, which are going to be our, our next three points, but this first one is this matter of individual salvation. Someone's name is their individual identity; it's their distinct personhood. Someone's name is the verbal symbol of their distinct identity; it's the way we, we ourselves distinguish one person from another.

So doesn't it encourage you that your name, your name, your individual, what you sign, your individual identity, a verbal, written symbol that identifies you as you, does it encourage you to know that that name, your name, is written in heaven?

Notice Jesus is not speaking here, though, in the singular. He speaks in the plural. He says not just your "name," but your "names," which gives us another joy in salvation. Number 28 is the joy of corporate salvation. So you've got joy of individual salvation; this is the joy of corporate salvation. In other words, you're not going to be alone in heaven. You're not going to be a single beneficiary of a king's ransom, kind of like the

only child of a billionaire who's surrounded by toys but has no one to play with.

No, our salvation is shared. It's shared by brothers and sisters who know our joy because God has chosen to save not a person, but a "people for his own possession," a people in Christ, plural. Titus 2:14: "Christ gave himself for us," plural, "to redeem us," plural, "from all lawlessness, and to purify for himself a people," plural, "for his own possession who are zealous for good works." 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." All those are plural terms, collective terms. "A people for his own possession chosen, so that you," plural, "may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you," plural, "out of darkness and into his marvelous light."

Number 29, number 29: the joy of kingdom citizenship. The joy of kingdom citizenship. Jesus said, "Rejoice that your names," it says there, "are written in heaven." "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Remember the grammar lesson in verse 19 on the perfect tense? Jesus said there, "I have given you authority," which points backwards to what has already been

accomplished in the past; it's been completed in the past, and the results continue in the present time.

It's the same thing here, same tense. "Your names have been written in heaven." Done deal. Written down, inscribed, engraved, as it were, in granite, not earthly granite, heavenly granite. It's a lot tougher. One translation puts it this way: "Rejoice that your names stand written in heaven." I like that. Another says, "Rejoice because your names are registered in heaven," which is similar, but it's presenting another idea that, that actually fills in the meaning here. The verb is *engrapho*. And it's not merely used as writing something down, inscribing something, even chiseling it into stone, but as one lexicographer puts it, it's of a "solemn entry in a document." The verb emphasizes, here, the element of documentation, so it's used in secular writing for an official entry. It's like inscribing something in an official list, an inventory or a public register. That's the word used here.

Gets even more specific. And here's what I think comes closest to the biblical image for us. Citing this verse, a lexicographer named Gottlob Schrenk, I think it's a German name

here, he says that in this word *engrapho*, quote, "we have a particular solemn image which carries with it the thought of the ancient custom of inscribing a list of citizens, but which is also linked with the idea of the Book of Life. The meaning is that by name, that is, persons of individual worth, those who belong to Jesus, they are God's inalienable possession, inalienable possession, citizens of the heavenly *politeia*." That's the Greek word for "state," for "commonwealth," "body politic." We are God's possessions, never to be separated from him, and we are inscribed in the state. We're citizens of that state, of that commonwealth; we're his.

Philip Ryken, he also explains the significance. He says, "This idea of the Book of Life was deeply rooted in the culture of the ancient Near East. Kings who ruled great empires loved to keep long lists of the names of their subjects. Typically, having one's name in the book served as proof of citizenship. Roman officials would keep detailed registers of the people who belonged to their city-state and who therefore had the full rights of membership in their community." End quote.

Listen, what a beautiful, what a glorious way that Jesus has spoken of our salvation, right? What a joy to know that our names are inscribed, enrolled, registered in heaven, never to be removed.

And that inscription can never be removed because it's been made by an authoritative, omnipotent hand, the hand of God. What he writes down, he does not erase. So the results of his eternal decree, the results of his fixed choice and decision, not only do they give us assurance for the present time, they give us an abiding, very certain hope for the future as well. Beloved, what a reason for rejoicing here. It puts everything in this present, earthly life into an eternal perspective, doesn't it?

But we have one more. Number 30. Final point, number 30: the joy of heavenly treasure. The joy of heavenly treasure. Connected to it, kingdom citizenship is the right of access. It's the right of full access to enter into the heavenly vault, to make use of all heavenly treasure. Ryken rightly says, "A person whose name was in the book is entitled to property and protection." We've already discussed the joy of protection, but as kingdom citizens, we also have the joy of heavenly treasure.

The kingdom of heaven, as I said, is the only kingdom that does not increase its wealth and increase its holdings by taxing its citizens. The, the heavenly storehouse is loaded with infinite, infinite, limitless bounty because it's infinitely supplied by an infinite God.

One glance into heaven's storehouse would cure us of all earthly greed, all covetousness, all desire and reliance upon something as simple and plain as money. Because, beloved, as kingdom citizens, knowing him, with God as our reward, heirs of God, we want for nothing. That's why Jesus wants to tell us in Luke 12:33, "Sell your possessions." Don't try to grasp onto all the stuff in this world. "Sell your possessions, and give it to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that don't grow old, with treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys." There's no corruption. There's no theft. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The most small-minded and small-hearted of all Christians is the one who still loves money, the one who still plays with that idolatry, the one who is still clinging to stuff. Give it

up, beloved, give it up. As I said, if we had one glimpse, one peek into that vault, it would cure us completely. We don't see right now, do we, with earthly eyes. We don't see with earthly eyes, physical perception, this treasure in the heavens that does not fail. Why not?

God wants us to take his word for it. He's binding us to his own heart through trust, through relationship. That's what he intends. He wants us to trust him. He wants us to read his Word and trust him evermore. He wants us to gaze intently upon the treasure that he has given us, which is immaterial, not unimportant, I mean immaterial in the non-material sense; it is the treasure he's given us in his Son, Jesus Christ. "In him," Colossians 2:3, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Wisdom, knowledge, not tangible things, but abstract things, aren't they? But very real. You put into practice his wisdom and his knowledge, and what happens? Tangible, practical things change and take place. Obedience has practical results, folks. So it's not "pie-in-the-sky-and-the-sweet-by-and-by." It really is gritty reality in the here and now. Because if Christ is our

treasure, then we truly are kingdom citizens. If we have the Spirit of Christ, then we are his. We belong to him. We have full access to heaven's infinite bounty. And the infinite bounty is God. God, our eternal reward.