

Text: Luke 10:17-24

Title: The Blessed Disciples

Truth: Jesus contrasts the judgment of impenitence with the joy of salvation and knowledge of God.

Date/Location: Sunday May 26, 2024 at FBC

I. The Blessing and Joy of Salvation, v. 17-20

- A. It appears that on balance, the mission of the 70 (72 in some manuscripts) was successful and even enjoyable for them because Luke reports that they “returned with joy.”

In terms of application for us, joy should be the usual reaction for a disciple of Jesus when ministering for His name’s sake. If it is a drudgery to serve the Lord, you need to check your attitude and see if you are serving the Lord for the right reasons and with the right motivations. If it is not joyful, change those reasons and motivations, but do *not* quit serving Christ. It is a sinful attitude and displeasing to the Lord to say, “Well, since I cannot do it with a right motivation, I am not going to do it.” Change! How? Drink deeply from the well of God’s word and ponder the wonderful things He has done for you (1 Sam. 12:24). It seems most certainly that if you are not liking serving the Lord, you are thinking all about yourself instead of about the Lord and others.

- B. One of the reasons the disciples were happy is that the *demons* were subject to them—they departed when the disciples told them to leave. Note that this was “in Your name.” Demons are not subject to people apart from the name of Christ. It was *God* who was at work in these disciples, and thus their success. The sin of Satan was pride, and the Lord warns the disciples against having that same proud attitude. Whatever we have the Lord has given to us. If you think more of yourself than you think of the Lord, something must change! (More...highly?...often?)

- C. The Lord tempers their enthusiasm about the demons with the reality that the prince of the demons, Satan, fell from heaven. His fall was spectacular (like *lightning*). It happened ages before, but the Son of God Himself saw it, and remembered it as if it were yesterday. At the time, Satan desired to usurp the place of God (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:1-10, 1 Tim. 3:6). Since he has been demoted so severely, it is no surprise that the lesser demons would be subject to the power of God as well. On top of that, Jesus had overcome Satan’s temptations in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). And soon, Jesus would rise from the dead! The fact of the matter is that today, Satan is a defeated foe. Nevertheless, he is powerful (1 Peter 5:8), but not so powerful as to be irresistible (James 4:7).

Was Satan cast out ages ago? I do not believe Rev. 12:9 “looks back” to the time when Satan fell. Satan fell back then; he will be cast out totally in the future, no more to have access to the heavenly realm as he had before. Somehow even in his sinful state, God permits Satan to come before Him (see Job 1-2).

- D. Jesus adds a bit more encouragement to the disciples by saying that He is giving them authority “to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the powers of the enemy.” Some people unwisely have chosen to understand this literally *and* without a time bound, as if Christ’s disciples will be protected from these and similar animals for all future time. That is clearly not the case.
1. There is no warrant here for “snake handling” or an expectation that a Christian in 2024 would be protected from a snake bite or scorpion venom. That is a miraculous thing manifested in the apostolic age (see Acts 28:3-6).
 2. For one thing, the “trampling authority” means more than just “you will be protected from.” It is more like “you have power over” those creatures.
 3. I take the Lord’s words to be applicable to these particular disciples (the 70/72), not to disciples of all time.
 4. Furthermore, I am not convinced that His words have to do with animals like snakes and scorpions because the context is about power over demons and spirits being subject to the disciples, not earthly creatures. They had authority over “all the power of the enemy” which seems to refer to Satan himself. The Devil presented himself as a snake, so it is not a stretch to think that the Lord is using this here as a figure of speech to refer to demonic powers under the picture of nasty beasts on earth.
 5. Whichever variation you hold here, just know that *you* are not these disciples, and that animals *can* hurt you today. But Christians do enjoy a certain protection from Satan and the demons today and will by far overcome them in their kingdom reign and then eternal bliss.
- E. I do not believe the Lord is telling them to be *sour* about demons being subject to them. He is saying that joy is far outweighed by something else. The other side of the Lord tempering their enthusiasm about the power over demons is that He wants them to focus on something far more worthy of rejoicing in the long-run, and that is that they are saved people. That their names are “written in heaven” means that their

names are in the Lamb's book of life. They were appointed to eternal life. They are going to spend eternity with Christ in Heaven, free from sin and all effects of it, and free from the Devil. Forget the charismatic gifts like snake-handling, or that demons leave when you tell them to. That is nothing compared to eternal salvation!

II. The Blessing and Joy of Revelation, v. 21-22

- A. Seeing the disciples rejoice about what God had done through them was a cause for Jesus to have joy. Even more, the disciples being saved was cause for rejoicing. His rejoicing was not exactly for the same reasons that the disciples were happy. In His joy He thanked God for two related reasons:
1. Because God hid the truth of the gospel of the kingdom from "the wise and prudent." This is an ironic identification of the Jewish leaders who were *supposed* to be wise and prudent but instead rejected the One in Whom is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). They claimed to know much but in fact truly knew little, certainly of the Lord and His ways.
 2. Because God revealed the truth of the kingdom to "babes." That is, those considered by the elite to be unwise, incapable of knowledge, unimportant, etc. They received Him with humility, not pride, and were thus blessed beyond measure. The contrast here is not between educated and uneducated. There are educated people who are proud, and uneducated people who are proud. The contrast is between the haughty and the humble, between the proud and those with child-like faith.
- B. "It seemed good in Your sight." It is entirely in God's power to do this. He can open the eyes of the blind or close the eyes of those who are religious. He can reveal and conceal as He pleases. This is His world, and He can run it how He sees fit. It behooves us to gratefully accept His administration of things and fit ourselves into it (see Daniel 4:35).
- C. Jesus takes it even further, however, by saying that God the Father has handed over all things to the Son. That total power that the Father has is also at the disposal of the Son. This points to the fact that Jesus is co-equal with God the father. No mere man could say this truthfully. Only the God-man could say so.
- D. Jesus adds this interesting note at the end of verse 22 about the mutual knowledge that God the Father and God the Son have of one another. Only they share this knowledge—intuitively, immediately, completely,

exhaustively. But the Son can extend knowledge of the Father to certain individuals. How I pray that the Son has opened your eyes to who God truly is so that you too have the blessing of the revelation of the knowledge of God.

E. Why does Jesus say this? He is happy that the goodness and greatness of God Father has been revealed these disciples, lowly though they were in society's view. Making God known makes Jesus glad.

III. The Blessing and Joy of Seeing and Hearing Jesus, v. 23-24

A. Next is a powerful reminder to those disciples that they were in a place of high privilege. What their eyes saw was unprecedented. They were blessed to see the person of Jesus, and the miracles, and the crowds being healed, and the teaching, and the age-shifting information that He brought from Heaven.

B. What they saw was the stuff of lore. Theirs was a time long sought after by those of old, prophets and kings. Even angels desired to investigate these things (1 Peter 1:10-12). To see these events, and this Person, and to hear the gracious words that the Lord taught...the world had never seen anything like it and will not again do so until the Lord Jesus returns.

Conclusion

We who are Christians have the blessing and joy of salvation in Christ, and of the revealed knowledge of God and His coming kingdom, as well as all that we read about Jesus Christ in the Bible—even *more* than the disciples had! This brings a huge responsibility to us.

The world has enjoyed a great era since Christ came—an age in which his teachings have been proclaimed throughout the world and spread to the unknown world through the efforts of Christians and churches. We today are blessed with revealed truth from heaven like no time in history. We must not take that privilege for granted, but rather make the most of it. We most certainly must not reject it, lest we fall into the same judgment as the cities rejected of Jesus.

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