



Over the past few months, we have been steadily progressing through the ninth and tenth chapters of the Book of Luke, and in them we have heard our Lord calling us to an exceedingly serious, extremely difficult, completely committed, and truly radical brand of discipleship. In these two chapters of Luke, Jesus paints a picture of authentic Christian living, and, surely, we must confess that it has very little resemblance to the watered-down, quasi-committed, self-seeking, self-promoting, self-guided, “entertain me please,” culture that seems to characterize so much of popular Christianity.

- Ever since Peter’s initial confession of Jesus as the Christ in v. 20, Jesus has carefully, consistently, and emphatically laid out the arduous, self-denying, self-sacrificing, sold-out nature of true Christian discipleship.
- True discipleship requires us to deny selfish desires.
  - Luke 9:23-24 – *“Then he said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.’”*
  - Authentic Christian living involves complete self-sacrifice, self-surrender, and submission.
- True discipleship requires us to deny worldly desires.
  - v. 9:57-62
  - Authentic Christian living involves a readiness to give up the amusements and comforts of this world to follow Christ.

- True discipleship requires us to follow hard after Christ.
- v. 10:1-16
- Authentic Christian living operates according to the mission mentality of Christ and preaches the unpopular, often unwelcome message of the Gospel (“like lambs among wolves”).
- Authentic Christian living humbly but boldly confronts sinners and warns them about the utter peril of rejecting Jesus Christ.
- Authentic Christian living obediently pursues only Jesus Christ and His will, not selfish desires or worldly ambition.
- John MacArthur – “The whole picture of discipleship is a pretty daunting picture. It’s a far cry from the typical kind of invitations to Christ that we hear of today. It isn’t even remotely close. It isn’t just daunting; it is some ways even frightening to accept this invitation to discipleship. It is a sacrifice so great and so constant and so consuming and so demanding that it is too much for some—to give up your life, to give up your comforts, to give up your relationships, to give up the world, to give up popularity, and to choose self-sacrifice, self-denial, hostility, confrontation, rejection, but this is what discipleship is about.”
- About the challenge of being a disciple, John 6:66 says, “*From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.*”
- And, upon hearing that description of true discipleship, one might be tempted to join these deserters.
- However, as daunting as the call may be, the joys of true discipleship are infinitely greater.

**-- Big Idea: Rejoice in what Christ has done, not in what you can do.**

-- Read Luke 10:17-20

-- Pray

-- v. 17 – “*The seventy-two returned with joy.*”

So here are these 72 true disciples who were sent out on this daunting mission by our Lord. Knowing that forgiveness of sin, the grace of God, and eternal salvation were worth any cost—even death—these disciples took up their crosses and obeyed the call of Christ. They denied themselves. They forsook the world. They followed hard after Christ. And what they received in return was joy.

As this evangelistic mission commenced, who would have guessed that it would end in such jubilation. Surely these disciples encountered severe opposition. Surely they were rebuked, reviled, and rejected. Yet, they returned with joy. Surely the road was long, the days were difficult, and many people were rude and unwelcoming. Yet they returned with joy. They gave up their privileges, their popularity, and their position in society... and yet they returned with joy. They took no purse, no bag, no sandals—they took no conveniences of any kind... yet what they found was joy. They embraced the difficult, unpopular mission of Christ and boldly testified to the Good News. They preached reconciliation with God through Christ, and they sternly warned those who rejected the message. They trusted Christ and pursued this sacrificial path of authentic discipleship. And what they received in return was joy... real joy... the joy of heaven... the joy of Christ Jesus.

What kind of joy could this be? From where does it come? In our text this morning, Jesus reveals at least three sources of the infinitely great joy He offers all who trust in Him, the first of which is this...

### **1.) Rejoice in the power of Christ in you.** (v. 17-18)

-- v. 17 – *“The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’*

-- What they are rejoicing in here is the power of Christ at work in them.

-- Key phrase: *“in your name”*

-- These disciples seem to be intentionally avoiding the mistake that the Twelve made after their first missionary journey.

-- (Explain context of Luke 9:1-9.)

-- Luke 9:10 – *“When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done.”*

-- This time, the 72 seem to understand and are testifying to the fact that all meaningful power comes not from us, but from God alone.

-- No power other than the power of Christ will suffice in spiritual warfare against Satan and his demons.

-- Acts 19:13-16 – *“Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, ‘In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.’ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest,*

*were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, 'Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.*

- Amazingly, the power of Christ at work in these disciples gave them victory over spiritual forces of evil.
- Do not underestimate how great this power truly is.
- Here are some truths that we know about Satan:
  - Satan was created holy by God along with the other angels.
  - Satan was named Lucifer, called “son of the morning” and “the anointed cherub,” and described as “a shining star.”
  - Corrupted by pride, and wanting to be equal with God, he led a rebellion (Revelation 12).
  - He is the enemy of God, the enemy of the church, and, ultimately, the enemy of all people.
  - He is called “the prince of darkness”... “the ruler of the kingdom of the air”... “the god of this world”... “the destroyer”... “the deceiver”... “the father of lies”... “the ultimate murderer”... “the slanderer”... and the evil one.”
  - Satan is not alone in his wicked activity. He has multitudes of demons in his employ.
- Here are some truths that we know about Satan’s demons:
  - They were all created as angels—holy and gathered around the throne of God to worship and to glorify Him.
  - Rev. 12 – One-third of the angels fell during Satan’s rebellion, were thrown out of heaven, and became demons.
  - They are unredeemable and cursed to eternal damnation.
  - They are as old as Creation, working to thwart God’s purposes ever since their fall.
  - They are intelligent, resourceful, deceptive, wicked, and they possess extremely destructive supernatural strength.
  - 1 John 5:19 – “*We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*”

- An eternal Lake of Fire has been prepared in which they will all burn forever, along with everyone who has not been rescued from their grip by the gift of faith in Christ.
- In spite of their absolutely terrible supernatural power, the disciples report in v. 17, *'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.'*
  - Are you beginning to sense the infinitely great joy that exists in the power of Christ in you.
  - Notice the context: This power of Christ given to these ordinary disciples was made complete in them as they proclaimed the mission message of Christ.
  - Remember 1 John 5:19 – *"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one."*
  - The main point: The world without Christ is under the control of Satan and his demons. As we proclaim the Gospel and as people respond in saving faith, Satan's grip over sinful lives is utterly shattered.
  - There is no greater joy on earth than being used of God to eternally liberate sinners from death.
  - With that in mind, look with me at verse 18...
- v. 18 – *"He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.'*
  - This is our Lord's response to the joy His disciples discovered
  - This verse is the subject of much debate.
  - Some say that Jesus is referring back to the original fall of Satan.
  - Isaiah 14:12-15 – *"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!" ...You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God... I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit."*

The idea with this interpretation is that Jesus is warning the disciples against taking personal pride in their spiritual accomplishments. While that is certainly a good word and one that Jesus has stressed (especially in the events of feeding the 5000 in chapter 9), it seems rather clear this is not the point He is making here. On the contrary, as we have noted, the disciples in this case seem to understand and acknowledge that the great spiritual power they experienced was from God, and not themselves, saying, *"Lord, even the demons submit to us **in your name.**"*

Another interpretation of verse 19 says that Jesus was thinking back to the events of Luke chapter 4—when He overcame the temptations of Satan in the wilderness. The idea of this interpretation is that, much like the 72 had been exercising power over the demons, Jesus is recalling how He defeated Satan during His time of temptation in the wilderness. Still others say, “No, what Jesus is talking about here is the cross. He is announcing that He will very soon crush Satan by way of His atoning sacrifice and resurrection.” Another interpretation says, “No, Jesus here is looking ahead to His return. That is, He is talking about Revelation 20, where we read about the absolute defeat of Satan, when God will bind Satan for a thousand years, and, after that, throw him into the Lake of Fire forever. Some say Jesus is referring to that event when He says *‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’*”

In response, all these interpretations describe truths about our Lord. Jesus certainly does warn us against spiritual pride... and He did defeat Satan’s and his schemes in the wilderness... and He has crushed the Satan’s grip over sinners through His sacrificial death and resurrection... and Jesus certainly knew of the utter subjection of Satan upon His return. Indeed, our Lord knows everything about Satan, from his very inception to his impending demise. However, I do not believe any of those interpretations are right.

Rather, I think the best clue as to Christ’s true meaning here comes in understanding the verb He uses in verse 18. The verb here translated as “*I saw*” is a continuous imperfect verb, which simply means that its literal translation is, “*I was watching*.” In other words, verse 18 literally means, “*I was watching Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*” Thus, Jesus is not referring to a one-time event such as Satan’s original fall, but to what was happening to Satan as the 72 went forth with the mission mentality of Christ to proclaim the Gospel. As they were testifying and teaching and traveling, Jesus *was watching* Satan falling like lightning.

--Imagine the spectacle of a lightning storm.

-- Utter darkness periodically obliterated by brilliant flashes and deafening crashes of thunder.

-- With every sinner saved, the utter darkness of Satan's control over sinners was obliterated by the brilliant light of Christ and the powerful sound of the Gospel being proclaimed.

-- Remember: It was not the twelve Apostles alone to whom Christ gave this power. Rather it was 72 ordinary disciples like you and me.

-- By the Spirit of God at work within us, we possess this same power over spiritual forces of evil.

-- In speaking the truth of Christ in love, God empowers us to break Satan's power over sinners, one soul at a time.

-- 2 Corinthians 5:20 – *“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”*

-- Romans 1:16 – *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”*

Still today, we are empowered by God to break Satan's grip over sinners by preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ. And as the lost turn away from their sin and turn toward Christ, Satan's fall continues like dramatic bursts of lightning. As the brilliant light of Christ shines through us and as the thunder of the Gospel is proclaimed, heaven continues to rejoice in the harvest of salvation that God is collecting through us.

Look ahead with me to verse 21. There we read, *“At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said...”* Thus, in this instance, we see not only great rejoicing in the hearts of the disciples, but in the heart of Christ as well. Why all this jubilation and joy? Because of the power of Christ over all supernatural powers. Why so much rejoicing? Because of the power of Christ in you.

That is just the first source of the infinitely great joy of true discipleship. The second is this...

## **2.) Rejoice in the protection of Christ over you. (v. 19)**

-- Anyone who shines the light of Christ and proclaims the message of the Gospel is an enemy of Satan infiltrating Satan's territory.

-- Satan and his minions do not like us invading their dark kingdom and snatching souls out of it.

- They hate devoted disciples and will certainly do anything they can to stop us from honoring Christ.
- In this verse, Jesus reassures them, and us, that we have nothing to fear.
- v. 19 – *“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”*
- Illustration
  - Donnie attempting to scare me with the rubber snake and my revenge.
  - However, Jesus is not talking about pest control here.
- Snakes and scorpions were both well-known symbols for evil.
  - The snake is a well-known symbol for Satan.
    - Genesis 3 – The serpent in the Garden of Eden
    - Revelation 12:9 – *“The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*
  - The scorpion is a well-known symbol for evil in general and demons in particular.
    - Revelation 9 – Demons are described with tails like scorpions and a scorpion king over them.
    - Revelation 16 – Demons are described to be like slimy frogs.
    - In Scripture, deadly kinds of creatures, such as serpents and scorpions, are used as symbols of sneaky, slimy, and deadly nature of demons.
  - Thus, this *“authority to trample on snakes and scorpions”* is a metaphorical way to restate what follows: *“I have given you authority... to overcome all the power of the enemy.”*
- Notice: Jesus’ response here seems to indicate that His disciples were giving Satan too much credit when they said, *“Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”*
  - Notice what is really exciting them here—the power that Christ has given them over demons.
  - Yet, in verse 20, Jesus stresses to them that there is something much better.
  - v. 20 – *“Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*
- The point: If Christ lives in you, you have nothing to fear from Satan or demons.
  - v. 19 – *“Nothing will harm you.”*
    - In the Greek, this is οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ. – (οὐ μὴ + the subjunctive is the strongest possible form of negation.)

- As emphatically as possible, Jesus is assuring these disciples and us that no forces of spiritual evil can harm His true disciples.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:3 – *“But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”*
- Remember that, just as we should, Jesus always sees everything from an eternal perspective.
  - There are examples in which God allowed demons to refine His people, such as with Job and Paul’s “thorn in the flesh.”
  - However, never does he allow them to do any ultimate harm.
- If we the Holy Spirit lives in us through faith in Christ, it is impossible for Satan or His demons to overtake us
- 1 John 4:3-4 – *“This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”*
- Romans 16:20 – *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”*
  
- In Christ, you and I have been given the infinitely great joy of freedom from all fear.

### **3.) Rejoice in the promise of Christ for you. (v. 20)**

- No joy of any kind can even remotely compare to the eternal glory promised to all who trust in Christ alone.
  - 1 Corinthians 2:9 – *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”*
  - Revelation 21:3-5 – *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”*
- The power of Christ in us and the protection of Christ over us are just a small glimpse of the promise of Christ for us.
  - Power to overcome demons and protection from them is temporary. It will not be necessary in heaven.
- In addition, even in this life, the power and protection of Christ are completely dependent upon the promise of Christ.

You see, the simple truth is that we have Christ's power in us and protection over us for one reason only: because we have been made God's children forever through faith in His Son. What is more, this saving faith is only made possible by the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, only through the promise of forgiveness in Christ that we can receive the Spirit of God, and it is only through the shed blood of Christ that we are ultimately kept safe from all evil and harm.

Thus, Jesus says in verse 20, "*Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*" As always, everything that matters all comes back to the Gospel, and it all comes down to Jesus Christ. It is true with hope. It is true with life. It is true with love. It is true with faith. And it is certainly true with joy.

Our joy, you see is never in anything that we can do, but in what Christ has already done. Thus, we rejoice in the fact that Christ's power is at work in us and that His protection presides over us because these joys are a small picture of the unmitigated, everlasting joy that God has promised us forever in His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The self-denying, self-sacrificial, wholly devoted call of true discipleship is daunting and difficult, no doubt. But it is worth infinitely more than anything we could ever give, because the greatest of all possible joys is to hear God say this: Your name is written in heaven, and you will enjoy the presence and blessings of God forever.