

Luke 10:1-24

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- [0 : 0 0] All right, so if you were with us last week, you know that we started a new series here in the evening service on discipleship. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?
- Here we are sort of after Easter. We celebrated in the course of the church year the sort of great events of our faith, the incarnation at Christmas, the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter.
- And now we're thinking, what does it look like? What does it mean to live in light of all that Jesus has done? And what does it mean to be his follower? Last week, we looked at the end of chapter 9 and we thought about priority in discipleship.
- And what we saw there was that Jesus challenges and almost demands of us that we put him first above all else. That's what it means to be a disciple, to be working in all of life to put him first.
- This week, we're going to see in the Gospel of Luke chapter 10 that being a disciple means having a mission. So, if you would open up your Bibles or the Pew Bible there to Luke chapter 10.
- [1 : 0 3] What page is that in the Pew Bible? Does anyone have it? Want to shout it out? 868? 868. Okay. So, you can turn there to 868 in the Pew Bible or you can turn there in your own Bible or on your tablet or whatever you're using to Luke chapter 10.
- And we are going to look at the first half of chapter 10 this week and then we're going to look at the second half of chapter 10 next week. And I think what you'll see over the course of these next two weeks is this whole chapter really is about our sort of mission as disciples.
- But this first half, we're going to look at sort of our word mission. So, let me read Luke 10, 1 through 24 for us. After this, the Lord, that is the Lord Jesus, appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of him two by two into every town and place where he himself was about to go.
- And he said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way.
- Behold, I'm sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, peace be to this house.
- [2 : 1 7] And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.
- Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you.
- Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida.

For if the mighty works done in you have been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. The one who hears you hears me. The one who rejects you rejects me.

[3 : 18] And the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me. The 72 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've 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.

In that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such 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.

[4 : 35] Okay, we'll stop there for tonight. So remember the context of where we're at in Luke's gospel. Back in chapter 9, verse 51, Jesus finally has set his faith to go to Jerusalem.

Here he is, he's heading up to Jerusalem for the last time in his earthly ministry to accomplish what he said at the transfiguration, to accomplish his exodus, his departure, his going forth.

And I think it's very fitting that Luke uses the term exodus to describe what Jesus is going to accomplish in Jerusalem, because it's going to be a new liberation for the people of God, their new moment of redemption, just like the exodus was in the Old Testament for the people of Israel.

So this is where we're at, and Jesus is on his way, and his disciples are going with him, they're following on the road. You remember last week, the reason why we're studying this middle section of Luke is because as we think about discipleship, here we have, in a gospel, the disciples literally following Jesus on the road, and Jesus along the way teaching them all about what it means to be his follower.

And here, in our text in chapter 9, Jesus sends them. He sends them out. And that's what our word mission actually means. It's a Latin word that just means, you're sent.

[5 : 48] And I think in this section of chapter 10, we see two big ideas when it comes to our mission as disciples. First, in the first half of the chapter, we're going to take a look at some of the things that have to deal with the practice of gospel mission, how we do it, what's the nature of it, the practice of it.

And then secondly, in the second half of the chapter, we're going to look at the heart of mission, the heart of our gospel mission as disciples. So, practice, that's verses 1 through 18, heart, verses 17 through 24.

So, let's look first then at the practice of gospel mission. Now, one thing we have to understand looking at this kind of text, this isn't one of those texts we can just say, okay, here we go. Jesus tells the disciples to do this, so we should do this.

Whenever I'm going to evangelize to my friends, I need to carry no money, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. That's how you do contact work. No, okay, obviously, this is, John's thinking, yeah, I could do that.

No sandals, you've got it. No, of course, this is, so this is a unique event in redemptive history. Jesus, for the last time in his earth, is going to Jerusalem. He wants to tell the towns that are on the way that he's coming.

[6 : 56] He wants them to receive him and to acknowledge him as king before he goes and accomplishes his work on the cross and his resurrection. So, this is a unique sort of moment. And yet, even though it's a unique moment and not everything sort of maps on one-to-one to what we need to be called to do today, there's still a lot of principles that we can learn.

A lot of the principles remain the same, and that's what we're going to try to look at. And what we see, really, is that one of the things we glean from a passage like this at the high level is that every Christian is a gospel ambassador, and every church, every local church, is sort of like a gospel embassy.

That this is a place that exists to sort of spread the message of what Jesus has done. So, what do we learn, then, about our gospel mission today from this text?

We're just going to kind of walk through and look at some of the things we learn. What do we learn from verse 1? Jesus appoints the 72. Now, you remember earlier in the gospel stories, Jesus chose 12 disciples, or 12 apostles, and he sent them out on mission.

Now, here, he's doing something similar, but a little different, right? This isn't the 12. This is 72 others that he's sending out in this way. Now, almost every commentator on this passage says that that number is significant.

[8 : 13] That 72 is a representative number of all the nations of the world. Where do they get that from? Well, back in Genesis chapter 10, there's a genealogy there where it's describing the sort of spread of humanity across the earth, and there are 72 names and tribes that are listed there.

So, that became sort of a representative symbolic number of all nations. So, I think what we have Jesus doing here as he's sending out the 72 in a very symbolic way, just like the 12 apostles represented the 12 tribes of Israel, and Jesus was saying, I'm renewing the people of God.

Here, he's sending out 72 and saying, we're going out to the nations. Thus, what we'll see in the second part of Luke's two-part work, Luke-Acts, in Acts, we see the Gentile mission going full force, right?

And here, in Luke chapter 10, it's kind of prefigured. Jesus is sort of telling them in a symbolic way, it's going to happen. You're going to go to the nations. So, what we're learning here is that the good news of Jesus is good news for the whole world.

Now, this isn't just something for a few select people in one little nation in one little time. No, this is for everyone. This is what God is doing for the whole world. And that means that our mission as the church, our mission as disciples, is to go out to everyone to tell them about Jesus and to urge them to believe in him.

[9 : 45] That's our mission. To go out to everyone, to tell them about Jesus, and to urge them to believe in him. Now, to go out to everyone, right? Not just, you know, the people that we like to hang out with.

Not just the people that, you know, are of a certain socioeconomic class. Not just the people who are, you know, this, that, or the other thing. Not just the people that are convenient to hang out with. Everyone.

Not just the good people. Even the people who seem like on the surface, they need a lot of help. And not just the people who seem like they're not help. The people who seem to have it all together.

We need to go out to everyone. And we need to tell them about Christ. What was the message that he told them to say when they go? Well, peace on the one hand. We'll talk about that in a few minutes. But the kingdom of God has come near.

Whether they receive him or whether they reject them, the kingdom of God has come near. In other words, the disciples were to go out and say, the king is coming. Did you notice that he sent them out into every town and place where he himself was about to go?

[10 : 49] So he's saying, okay, look, in a couple days, I'm going to end up in Brantford. So you guys go to Brantford and tell them that I'm coming. Tell them the kingdom of God is coming near and then I'm going to come. So he's saying, I'm coming.

And the message was about him and his kingdom. And that's true for us today. We're supposed to be telling people about Jesus. The message of the church isn't merely and really isn't even at all sort of a moral program.

That's not what we're telling people. We're not telling people, here's how you clean up your act. Here are 10 steps to financial freedom or whatever. No, we're telling people that there's a God and a king who loves them and who died for them and wants to reconcile you and heal you in every possible way.

We're telling them about Jesus and then we're urging them to believe in him. Now that's going to look different in different contexts, you know, but we're not just sort of saying, hey, this is good for me and if you want to take it, great.

If not, no big deal. No, there is a sense in which we're calling people to believe it. There was an urgency to what the disciples were doing here in chapter 10. So this is our mission.

[11 : 59] Now what else do we learn from this section in chapter 10? How does Jesus instruct them in verses 2 through 12? Let's just sort of go through there. Look at verse 2.

He tells them to pray. The harvest is plentiful but the labors are few. Therefore, pray. And then he says, go your way. I'm sending you out like lambs.

What do we make of that? Well, I've never met a lamb who could actually sort of coerce or force someone to do anything. Right? I think Jesus is saying here, look, you're not going with a sword.

You're not going as sort of representatives of some political kingdom. No, you're going like lambs in the midst of wolves. The nature of gospel ministry is that we're preaching good news, inviting hearers to respond willingly.

We're not sort of forcing them or compelling them. But at the same time, it's urgent, right? Carry no money bag. What's that all about? No money bag, no knapsack, no sandals, greet no one on the road.

[12 : 57] Well, I think given the context, Jesus was saying, look, this, we're on our way. We're not turning back. We're going and we're going and we're going. There's an urgency to this. We're on the move.

And even though today we might, you know, some of you might be in New Haven long term. Some of you might be thinking about missions work long term in other places of the world. But there is still an undercurrent of urgency to our mission.

This is something that must happen now. Now's the time for us to do it. We don't want to have anything hold us back. There's going to be no extra baggage on the way.

We're going to try to limit our concerns so that we can focus around this mission. Then look at five and six. Whenever you enter a house, say peace to this house.

Peace. Peace is the message that they bring. It's interesting. J.C. Ryle, who was an English bishop in the 19th century, sort of was reading this passage and he said, you know, isn't it interesting that this is the message that Jesus tells them to bring?

[13 : 59] Now on one hand, in the Jewish world in the first century, peace was just like a way of saying, hey, what's up? Like, peace. How's it going? It was a greeting, right? And yet, isn't it resonant that what the gospel message is is a message of peace?

And Ryle makes the observation that this shows us what he calls the simplicity of the gospel message. It's a straightforward thing.

That peace with God is what we're talking about. Verse seven, accountability and provision. Jesus says, remain in the same house eating and drinking what they provide for the laborer deserves his wages.

So he says, on the one hand, it's okay to receive provision. That's good. But then he says, don't go around from house to house because in the ancient world, what traveling sort of teachers would do is they would sort of like peddle from house to house as a way to just sort of get lots of money, you know?

So, okay, well, I like Shanghai'd these people out of their money and then I'll go to the next one and then I'll go to the next one and then I'll go to the next one. He just says, no, go, find one place, stay, be accountable, be transparent, receive the wages that they give you, receive the food that they give you.

[15 : 07] Don't look like all these other sort of shady teachers who are traveling around. Interesting, if you're here in the morning service, this verse, the laborer deserves his wages.

Paul actually picks up this idea a couple times in his writings when he's sort of talking about the way in which those who give themselves a full-time gospel ministry ought to be supported, supported financially and given provision for their work.

And he says, this is where the Lord sort of gave us a precedent for that. And in fact, in 1 Timothy 5 actually, if you look at 1 Timothy 5, Paul actually quotes this saying of Jesus along with a verse from Deuteronomy.

And he says, here's what the scripture says, this verse from Deuteronomy. Don't muzzle the oxen as it treads out the grain. And here's what the scripture says. The laborer deserves his wages, a quote from Jesus. Now here's what's really fascinating.

The only recorded place where we know that that saying of Jesus is, is right here in Luke chapter 10, verse 7. The laborer deserves his wages. And Luke says, or excuse me, Paul says in 1 Timothy 5, this is what the scripture says, the laborer deserves his wages.

[16 : 17] This is what's been written about the Lord's commandment. Very fascinating that Paul is saying there's a scripture that has that writing of Jesus and we all ought to obey it. So, sort of makes your historical imagination start running.

Did Paul actually know about Luke's gospel? Was he referring to Luke's gospel when he said, this is what the scripture says? And, was he referring to Luke's gospel as scripture for the first century church?

Very interesting. We don't know for sure, but, I think it's not implausible. Well, that's a bit of a sidebar. Anyway, let's look at the response.

The response in verses 8 and 9 and 10 and 11. On the one hand, if they receive you, bless them, say the kingdom of God has come near. But, if they reject you, shake the dust and move on and say the kingdom of God has come near.

What is, wow, what is Jesus saying here? And, how does this sort of apply to us? I think one of the things that we see here is that ultimately there's no neutral response to the message of Jesus and his kingdom.

[17 : 23] Either at the end, now some people are in process, right? Some people are in process of figuring things out and they're on the road. But, you know, at the end of the day, you can't just be sort of neutral or ho-hum about Jesus and the claims about Jesus.

You can't just say, he's a good guy and that's great for you. This mission that we have is serious business. People are rejecting or receiving the king of life.

And we see the seriousness of that in the next paragraph in verses 13, 14, and 15, right? There's going to be accountability in the coming judgment. On the one hand, to whom much is shown, much is required.

There are some towns in that day where Jesus spent a lot of time and they didn't repent and Jesus says, it's going to be harsh for you in the judgment. But, interestingly, these two cities that Jesus points out, Tyre and Sidon, they were Gentile cities.

So, there's a sense in which Jesus is saying that on the one hand, to whom much is shown, much is required. But on the other hand, the gospel is the great leveler. That these Gentile cities, which weren't even a part of the covenant community, Jesus says, look, your status when God comes and renews all things and sets up his kingdom, your status is not going to be determined by your family or your formal religious heritage, no matter how devout you were.

[18 : 53] You know, these cities, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, these are good Jewish cities. And Jesus is saying, that's not what's going to count at the end of the day.

It's going to be better for the Gentile cities than for you because if they had heard it, they would have repented. I think there's actually a warning for us there.

Friends, I wonder, have you been under the word? Have you been around Christian things? Have you heard the gospel? Have you encountered Jesus before in the life of the church?

Maybe you grew up in church. Maybe you've been around Christian things for a long time. How are you responding to that? Do you continue to push it off and push it off and push it off?

Jesus is saying that can be a very dangerous place to be. Now's the time when you need to receive it and trust in him.

[19 : 56] Well, one last thing about the practice of ministry here, about the practice of mission. Look at verse 16.

The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me. That is a fascinating verse. Do you see the tight bond there that Jesus is drawing between his messengers and himself and the Father?

The Father sends the Son. The Son sends the church. Almost in an unbroken chain. And the point that Jesus is making here, to reject the church, is ultimately to reject God itself.

If that church is preaching the apostolic gospel that the Bible gives us. So we see here that Jesus himself is affirming that disciples are ambassadors of his in the world, that they're taking his words to the world.

And I think ultimately that should give us confidence in our mission. You know, that the things that we're bringing to people aren't just sort of things that we've kind of made up. But that these, this is the very message of God given through his Son, entrusted to the church, that will bring joy and hope to all nations.

[21 : 16] But I think this verse also speaks to a big issue that we all face. In mission and in evangelism, which I know for me, this is like sort of number one problem. There's a fear of rejection, right? Why are we hesitant to share our faith?

Why are we hesitant to do, to take part in this mission? Because we're afraid that people will reject us and won't like us. We'd like to be liked. But what's interesting here, do you notice what Jesus says?

The one who rejects you rejects me. You know, ultimately, if we're sharing the message about Christ prayerfully and winsomely, it's not ultimately us that's being rejected.

In some sense, it is. But ultimately, it's Christ. And that ought to take some of the focus off of ourselves, I think, when we're engaged in just sharing Jesus with our friends and taking part in this great mission.

that really Jesus is at the center. It should put our focus back on Christ and put our focus back on those whom we're loving and those whom we're serving and those whom we're trying to share because the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

[22 : 30] It's interesting, we get so focused about this third thing in the line. Me, oh, rejecting me. But we don't see that they're rejecting actually Christ. They're actually rejecting the one who sent Christ, the Father, the God of all creation.

I think that will de-center us a little bit and help us to see that there are bigger things at stake here than my own ego. So stepping back then, there's the first half of our section about the practice of gospel mission, of discipleship mission.

I think it's easy to, as we think about our mission as disciples, as we think about our mission as a church, it's really easy to feel like we're falling short, right? I mean, if we were to sort of go around the sanctuary and say like, hey, how'd you do in evangelism this week?

Or let's talk about spiritual disciplines. How'd you do in Bible reading? Great. How'd you do in prayer? Eh, pretty good. How'd you do in fasting? What's that? How'd you do in evangelism? Oh, then we all sort of get embarrassed and quiet. And I'm the same way, right?

I wish I was much more bold and much more winsome and much more engaged in sharing my faith than I am right now. I think we all feel like, gosh, I have so much to grow in this area. So what are some things we can glean in for our own hearts as we sort of come to this text with that kind of realization?

[23 : 43] Well, I think some very straightforward things. Jesus begins his instruction to his disciples by saying, pray. I mean, he encourages them that the harvest is plentiful, but the labors are few.

Pray earnestly. Pray. Pray. That should really be the first step for all of us. We think about the neighbors that we wish we could have spiritual conversations with, or we think about our roommate who just seems so far from the Lord.

Pray. And second, Jesus says, go. Go your way. And then he says, go where there's opportunity, right?

If there's a son of peace there, that's as if someone receives your message, you know, it will rest. I may have not returned to you. Remain in the same house. You know, so if there's an opportunity there, go. Step out in faith.

See what happens. Go where there's opportunity. And as you go, keep the main thing, the main thing. Verse five, peace be to this house. You don't have to answer every single apologetic question that's ever been devised by every sort of thinking, skeptical mind in the world, right?

[24 : 56] I think oftentimes when I think about evangelism, I think, if I have a spiritual conversation with this person, they're going to ask me all the questions I don't know how to answer, right? They're going to be like the most like hardcore, doubtful, skeptical person on the planet.

Friends, most people are not that way. And at the end of the day, the message of peace is the one that all our hearts want. It's the one that we're all longing for.

And I think lastly, just listen. Just listen to people. Pray and go and keep the main thing the main thing and listen to what they're saying. Listen to their questions. Attend to them. If you want some good books to read that will help you sort of think through communicating the faith, I think Tim Keller's Reason for God is good.

I think C.S. Lewis' Mere Christianity is still pretty good. Those are two that I think get your juices flowing. They're really written well to explain Christianity to those who are outside of the faith. That will help you.

If you're looking for a really simple gospel outline that you can sort of digest if you're thinking about, man, I don't even know what I would say. Two Ways to Live is a good gospel outline. It's kind of long. It's sort of detailed, but that's okay.

[26 : 07] I think we've got some on the back back there. Two Ways to Live is a good sort of simple gospel outline that you can read and pray over and think about sharing with someone. So there's some resources to think about.

So that's what we see about the practice of mission. Let's keep going and let's look at the heart of mission. This is probably one of my favorite parts in this passage. Look back at verse 17. The 72 return with joy saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

So the disciples come back and they have like had a lot of ministry success. Like they've gone out. Who knows what they were thinking when they went out. Maybe this is going to work. Maybe this isn't going to work.

They show up in the towns and suddenly God shows up and he starts doing stuff. And they're sort of seeing the exercise of spiritual authority. Even demons are subject to his name. You know?

They're coming back like kids from the candy store. Can you believe it? And Jesus celebrates with them. I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. High fives.

[27 : 09] Okay? I've given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions over forces of evil. Jesus being metaphorically there. And over all the power of the enemy.

Nothing shall hurt you. He's saying, yes, when you're with me, that is the kind of confidence you should have. Nevertheless, Jesus says, nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

There's an incredible principle in this paragraph. Jesus tells us emphatically not to rejoice in our ministry success, but to rejoice that our names are written in heaven.

To find our joy, our delight, not in our performance, not in how well things have gone for us in ministry or in mission, not to make that our heart's delight, but to make the fact that our names are written in heaven our hearts delight.

What does that mean that our names are written in heaven? Well, it means that God knows us and God's justified us and accepted us and made us a part of his family forever.

[28 : 30] And how does that happen? How do our names get written in heaven? Is it sort of like an all-star list? Okay, Laura Takasugi, 10 converts, she gets on the list. No, right?

How do our names get written in heaven? Not by our works, but by his grace, through faith as a gift.

When my children were born, we had to fill out this paperwork for each one to make sure they'd like get a birth certificate and get a social security card and have a name and all this sort of stuff.

So I'm assuming that through all that, their names are written down, somewhere, at City Hall and their names are written down somewhere at the social security office. And what they have written down there is that Jack and Claire and Owen are the children of Nick and Beth Lauer, born in New Haven, Connecticut, et cetera, et cetera.

And their names were written down before we really knew anything about them. You know, we didn't even know what color their eyes were going to be. Before they'd done anything good, their names were written down as our children.

- [29 : 34] And friend, it's the same thing spiritually with us. when God redeems us in Christ, before we had done anything good, he writes our names down permanently in heaven.
- you belong to my family now. And Jesus says, rejoice in that. Make that your joy.
- In other words, rejoice more for what God has done for me rather than what God might do through me. Make my joy more that I'm loved by God in Christ more than that I'm used by God in Christ.
- And what's the danger if we get that mixed up? Why is Jesus so adamant? I mean, he's kind of, he's sort of raining on their parade right here. Great! But, right?
- What's the danger? Well, there's a massive danger if we place our worth as disciples in our success in mission.
- [30 : 47] Because isn't that just another form of self-salvation and self-justification? That my sort of present, subjective joy and peace in the Lord is based on something that I do, how well things are going in mission.
- And if that's the sort of thing we're trying to base our joy on, our stability on, then we're just going to ride a rollercoaster of up and down when things are going great in mission and we had a really good conversation with our neighbor.
- We're going to feel awesome and we're going to feel like we're doing it and we're even going to start to feel proud because I did it. But then when things are going really bad, maybe when we kind of messed it up with our co-worker at the water cooler or whatever, said something kind of awkward, you know, then we get out despairing.
- Ah, I blew it. They're never going to come. Ah, I'm such a failure. Beat ourselves up. Jesus says, I don't want you to ride that rollercoaster. I want you to rejoice that your names are written in heaven.
- Put your joy there. Because the reality is if we don't put our joy there and we put it in our ministry success, then what's going to happen is that our mission, our ministry is actually going to be motivated more by fear than by love.
- [32 : 11] This is the other danger. We're going to be motivated by fear that we're falling short. And I better get out there and do it. Motivated by fear that we're not measuring up.
- Oh, I'm not as good as Christian as this person. I better get out there. Motivated by fear that we might be losing God's favor. And friends, a mission motivated by fear is not going to be a fruitful mission.
- It's not going to be winsome. It's not going to be glad. It's not going to be attractive. But if we place our joy, if we place our self-worth in the fact that our names are written in heaven, then, then, our mission is going to be motivated by love.
- Because we know that God loves us. Regardless of what we do. Even if we stink at evangelism, God still loves us. And then we can go out just because we love the other person.
- Because we love God. God. And Jesus ends his teaching in this chapter on mission, anyway, reinforcing kind of this joyful confidence in two ways in these last two paragraphs of our text.
- [33 : 30] Starting in verse 21 and in the second paragraph starting in verse 23. In verse 21, it's very interesting. In that same hour, Luke says, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.
- It's one of the few times where we're told that Jesus rejoices in the Bible. Here is a window into the joy of our Savior.
- And what is it? What gives Christ joy? That the Father has revealed these gospel truths to his disciples. And then in 22, he kind of unpacks that a little more.

And in 22, we have this incredible, mind-blowing statement. All things have been handed over to me and 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.

That is a wild statement. The problem is that we're used to reading the Bible. So when we read a verse like that, it seems kind of familiar. But when we look at a verse like that with fresh eyes, you have to realize that that is an insane thing to say.

[34 : 38] If I were to say that Matt knows me really well, okay, that's fine. We spend a lot of time together. But if I were to say that the only one who can really know me because I'm so great and so profound and so awesome is the Father, what in the world would I be saying?

these are the kind of verses that you expect to find in the Gospel of John, right? In the Gospel of John, Jesus is always saying stuff like this.

I've come from the Father. I'm one with the Father. Don't you get it? And then sometimes critical scholars will say, oh, Jesus never says anything like that in the synoptics. And then we've got verses like this that just blast right out of the page.

As stark and as clear of a statement of Jesus' high identity with God as we find anywhere in the Gospel of John. Jesus himself saying, no one knows who the Son is except the Father or who the Father is except the Son.

Now why does that bring Jesus joy in anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him? I think in the context of thinking about mission and our joy, and mission, the heart of mission, what Jesus is saying here is that look, I'm the one who's at the center.

[36 : 01] What matters in all of this is knowing me. Knowing the Father through the Son because the Son has chosen to reveal it to you. That's what it's all about.

Knowing God. Not performing. John 17, 3 says, Jesus says, this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

This knowledge, this fellowship that we have with God, with the Father, through the Son, that's what brings Christ joy. That that has sort of broken up.

That the vertical axis between us and God has been split open and there's fellowship now between us because the Son has chosen to make it happen.

second thing that Jesus points us to in verse 23 is that what the disciples are seeing and hearing is the climax of the Old Testament.

[37 : 00] That everything that God had been doing horizontally in history is coming to its point of climax right now. Interesting.

I tell you, many prophets and kings desire to see what you see. David wanted to see what we see. Solomon wanted to see what we see.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. Scott and I were talking about Ezekiel before the service. And the amazing thing, you remember what Ezekiel saw in Ezekiel chapter 1? He saw a representation of the glory of God itself.

And it kind of freaked him out. And yet, Jesus says, all of them were wanting to see what you see and hear what you hear.

The great fulfillment of all these promises. The glory of God revealed and his saving work done. So friends, this is the heart of our gospel mission.

[38 : 07] That our names are written in heaven. That the Son reveals the Father and we can know him. And that that long story of the Old Testament has come to its climax and we're living in the midst of it.

And to just end, I think if we take these things to heart, we'll at least have three results. I think if we really sort of push down on these things that Jesus points us to here, if we really take them to heart, I think that's going to give us first a lot of freedom in our mission.

when we know that our place in God's family isn't based on our ministry productivity, suddenly we're free. It frees us from the burden and the guilt.

Second, I think it gives us a lot of confidence. The Son has revealed the Father. Jesus is very clear there. I'm the one who reveals the Father to people. I'm the one who chooses to do it.

The Son has revealed the Father and the reason that gives us confidence in mission is because the Son continues to reveal the Father. It's not ultimately my words or your words that's going to change someone's heart.

[39 : 12] It's God's work. I'm just the messenger. And Jesus is faithful. He loves the lost and he's going to accomplish his work.

This is going to give us a lot of confidence in mission if we take these things to heart. And last, I think this gives us a lot of excitement in mission. To know that what's happening through Christ in the church, the kingdom advanced to all nations, that this is what history has been waiting for.

That this is what God's history has been leading to. And this is the trajectory into the new heavens and the new earth. That the rightful King and Savior is here.

That the one who can restore our hearts and reconcile us to God and to one another has come. And that should give us excitement. That we're not just trying to convince people to believe something that we believe.

We're beckoning them into life. We're beckoning them into the thing that God made them for. And that ought to be thrilling and that ought to be exciting. Because ultimately mission is just that.

[40 : 21] It's an overflow of joy. joy. You know, you see it here that Jesus sends out the church just like the Father sent him out.

The sending of the Son results in the sending of us as his disciples. And why did the Father send the Son? Why did Jesus go to the cross and endure all that shame? Hebrews says, for the joy set before him.

It was a mission of joy that sent the Son out. That's why he's rejoicing. Because the disciples are finally starting to see it. That their relationship with the Father has been healed through the Son.

And they can take part in sharing that news with everybody. Well, let's pray together. Father, we're so grateful that you not just call us to yourself.

But Lord, you give us a place in your kingdom and you give us a purpose and a mission. Lord, we confess the ways in which we've been scared or been fearful to share with others the news about you.

[41 : 25] Lord, we thank you for the confidence that we have that you're a good God who loves your children and you love the lost. And Lord, we need not fear rejection or alienation.

Lord, because ultimately, God, the joy of seeing others know you is greater than the potential loss of perhaps experiencing rejection or alienation or not being liked.

Lord, I pray that those things would well up in our hearts, that we would bring our neighbors and our coworkers and our friends before you in prayer and God, that you would draw them to yourself by your spirit. Help us, Lord, to be faithful in this mission, we pray.

Amen. Friends, we're going to sing one song in response to close. So let's stand and let's respond and let's sing together. Amen. Amen.