

Luke 10:21-42

“Jesus Turns The Tables”

We’re stepping into the scene whereby Jesus gives us reason to rejoice. Perhaps if you were with us last week you remember what that reason is? I’ll tell ya what it’s *not*... it’s not due to all the great things that we’ve done for *God*. (Going on mission’s trips, sharing our faith, praying for people and seeing them set free from addiction or some sort of sin; as great as those things are, what we do for God shouldn’t be the key reason we find ourselves rejoicing.) But rather we’re to rejoice over what God has done for us in the person of Jesus Christ He has saved you, He has cleansed you, He has called you His own, made you His child and He has inscribed your name in the Lambs book of life.

The Lord sent 70 out on a short term mission’s trip. They came back topped out and on fire and understandably so. They were preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out demons and representing Jesus to the people. When they came back to report these things to Jesus He said, “Hey, that’s great guys. God’s giving you ground and simultaneously Satan is losing ground. Understand that I’m giving you authority over the enemy; over powers and principalities and that’s all exciting stuff. Nevertheless don’t rejoice in this (that the spirits are subject to you) but rather rejoice (Vs20) because your names are written in heaven.”

Vs 21-24

So they come before the Lord; share what God has done in their lives *with* the Lord and in brings this incredible joy *to* the Lord. We read in Vs 21 that Jesus *rejoiced* in the Spirit, it’s a word that means to be “overjoyed” or to “jump for joy” we would say that Jesus was stoked!

Now real quick here I just want to point out the tri-unity of the Godhead on display here because we’re seeing God the Son rejoice in God the Spirit as He calls out to God the Father. What is it that’s got Him so excited? It’s the fact that God hasn’t chosen to use an elite group of people to do His bidding, but rather God has chosen to take everyday people like you and me and use them in radical ways for His glory. He says, “It doesn’t really make sense to the ways of this world the way You use people and I love it!” In this world to be used in great ways man you’ve got to be a somebody; have a great intellect, a master’s degree, have lots of money or notoriety. But as it pertains to eternity you don’t have to be a “somebody” you can be an “anybody” and Jesus is diggin on that fact.

As a matter of fact (we touched on this last week) the more unlikely we are to be qualified in the eyes of the world the more glory God gets when He uses us. Let's look at it together, leave Luke Ch 10 and make your way quickly to 1 Co 1:26-31

That's the general gist of what Jesus is saying in Vs 21 of Luke Ch 10

Vs 22

Here Jesus touches on the mystery of the unity that He shares with the Father; how they are one with each other and are tandem (so to speak) in revealing each other to mankind. Only God can reveal God to you, I can only know God because God has chosen to reveal Himself to me. The Father draws us to the Son and the Son reveals to us the Father; God has revealed Himself to us exclusively in the person of Jesus Christ

Now Jesus says that the only way we'll know the Father is if He "wills" to reveal Him to us. Whom does Jesus choose to reveal the Father to? Who does He want to see and know God? Listen, it's His heart, His desire to reveal God to everyone; the bible is clear that God isn't willing that *any* should perish (2 Pe 3:9). That He so loved the *world*, (all of humanity in totality) that He gave His only begotten Son. Trust me when I tell you that Jesus wants to reveal to you exactly who God is; but you'll never know apart from Him, from coming *to* Him and laying down your life surrendering completely *before* Him. Jesus is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person, in Him dwells *all the fullness* of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9) you cannot know God apart from Christ.

Vs23-24

I would never seek to in anyway belittle the words of our Lord but it seems to me that Vs 23 is one of the great understatement of the bible. "Blessed" just seems hardly adequate to describe the personal position of His disciples. (Though the truth of the matter is that there not a word that would do any better, there's no word to articulate how honored one would be to see Jesus minister physically to hear Him speaking the word of God audibly).

Jesus says to His disciples, “Kings have longed for what you see, the great prophets of old [Isaiah, Daniel etc] could only dream of being in the position that you stand it today.” How many times have you perhaps thought how great it would be to be around to see the Red Sea part, or to hang out with David, or just be witness to some of the wonders we read of in the OT? Jesus says that they’d have traded places with you in a second because they could only guess at the meaning of the things they were writing and the ways they were many times ministering but you and me, we see the full revelation through Christ. They saw only foreshadows, we’ve seen the substance.

Do you realize that as a NT believer you have more revelation, understand more of the eternal plan of God than did any of the OT saints? You have greater understand of God’s plan concerning salvation by grace through faith than did Samuel, or Moses, or David or any of them. You understand the death and resurrection of Christ, the necessity *of* it and the wisdom of God *in* it more so than Adam ever could’ve, than Isaiah ever dreamed of. Of course with the greater light comes a greater responsibility...

You know everywhere Jesus went there never seemed to be a lack for someone to test Him.

There was never a lack of someone trying to trip Him up or get Him tangled up in His words, but Jesus was a master at turning the tables. How could He not be, how are you going to outsmart God? How could you hope to be more clever than Christ? Yet people always tried. In the remainder of this Ch Jesus will deal with a lawyer and a lady. Both of which see a problem *around* them, both of which will be forced to realize the problem lies *with in* them.

It’s a common problem we have as people, always wanting to justify ourselves, always wanting to find the problem in the other person. However the truth of the matter is that we generally point out problems in others to get the attention off the fact that the real issue isn’t outward circumstantially, but it’s with in me personally.

Vs 25-29

Now the question comes up regarding the motive of this particular lawyer (BTW lawyer not as in criminal justice but as in studier of the Mosaic law) because the word “tested” in Vs 25 can be used in a genuine sense of inquiry or a negative sense of trying to entrap someone or tempt them in a hurtful/harmful way. I lean toward the latter just because of the way it all unfolds; but his motive is a 2^{ndary} issue; what we need to learn from it is the primary issue.

This guy stands up and He engages Christ in a debate over the single most critical question that needs to be considered by every person on this planet. “What do I need to do to inherit eternal life?” “What do I need to do, to be seen as right in the sight of God, to be accepted as righteous in His sight?” So many people consider questions like, “What do I need to do to make more money, to get more business, to have more fun, to take life easier?” They mind themselves with the things of this world never stopping to consider their souls, things that pertain to eternity; at least this guy was asking the right question, he was looking for the quality of life that could come only from God.

Being a lawyer, Jesus takes him to the law: “How do you understand the law? What’s you’re reading of what’s written?” He says, “Love the Lord your God with everything you are perfectly, with the totality of your being and love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus says, “You nailed it; you do that and you’ll enter in to life as only God can give it through the law.”

Now Vs 29 is what blows us away. Because he completely avoids the vertical aspect of the commandments (to love God) and focuses in on the horizontal aspect of the commandments (loving others). It’s as if he goes, “Love God...check, love my neighbor...define your terms, who exactly qualifies as my neighbor.”

Think this through you guys; there are over 600 laws in the OT (613 I believe). Yet Jesus says that they’re all fulfilled in observing these 2. Now I don’t think anyone would argue with the fact that it’s tough to continually keep over 600 ordinances...

Yet when it's narrowed down to a couple we say, "That's doable". The problem that we don't seem to understand is that if we could do these 2 adequately, that would equate or be tantamount to fulfilling all 613 which we say can't be done... If you could do these 2, you'd be fulfilling all of it; that tells me that I can't even do these 2, not really, not completely nor consistently. Jesus is saying, "If you keep the law of God perfectly, perpetually, God will accept you on your own."

Furthermore if you're able to love God with all that you are, the issue of who your neighbor is becomes a non issue. Because if you're right with God, you'll do right by people. So this guy rather than trying to define the term "neighbor" should've realized, "There's no way I can love God perpetually with every fiber of my being completely." Who among us in never distracted from placing God as the premier priority of our heart, or of our mind, or our soul and our strength? We fail instantly/immediately. Even at church we get distracted, how much more everyday out there in the world?

But taking for granted that he loved God appropriately he moved on to who qualifies as his neighbor specifically. "Who is it that I owe my love to? How do I determine who to love even as I love myself?" Generally the thought culturally was other Israelites, not Gentiles and not Samaritans. He's looking for a loophole to justify himself, and this is so often the way it goes. I can't tell you how many times people have come to me not because they want to learn (not truly) but because they want to justify themselves and so as we begin to talk they place different case scenarios in front of me so as to justify themselves. Unfortunately it's simply a human tendency but it's not (in reality) a sign of repentance and wanting to be right with God.

Vs30-35

I don't think I have to spend a lot of time explaining to you how culturally shocking this story would've been. Jews hated Samaritans and the feeling was mutual (we just read of Jesus being rejected in Samaria and James and John wanting to set the city a blaze with fire from heaven). There was no loss of love between these ethnic groups; but Jesus was always seeking to tear those walls down. Healing a Samaritan leper, ministering to the Samaritan woman at the well, preaching to the Samaritans she returned with, telling His disciples to go into Samaria when the Holy Spirit came. There's just no room for personal prejudice in the body of Christ. The bible is clear, "...*there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*" Col 3:11

We might have expected the Samaritan to be the one who was beat up and needing help in the story and which Jew would be pious enough to help him but instead the Jew is beat up and the Samaritan becomes the hero.

Jericho was only a couple miles from Jerusalem but an extremely dangerous road to travel because of the robbers that would hide out in the Mts and prey upon people as they traveled through the valleys. But Jericho was a city that housed literally thousands of priests and temple workers and since they'd serve a couple weeks at a time it was constantly traveled on back and forth to/from Jerusalem.

Now there's always a good reason not to interfere in the matters of another man's life isn't there? Here this guy is beat up/bloodied and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest comes by, but he can't contaminate himself/defile himself by being involved in a bloody mess, maybe touching a dead man; it would make him ceremonially unclean. So in his pursuit of piety he completely misses the mark concerning the compassion in the heart of God toward the needs of man.

Why did the Levite do the same thing? We don't know, maybe he was following the example of the priest, maybe he'd have been late for church. The point is that neither one of these guys (who were religious leaders) would show any concern or have any compassion on the needs of another. Now John said, *"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."* 1 John 3:16-18 These guys were in a hurry to serve God, they couldn't stop and help people... listen, that's what ministry is all about...people.

The Samaritan came where he was, saw him and (Vs 33) had *compassion*. Vs 34 He went *to* him and took care *of* him; that is he loved *on* him with sacrificial love (out of his own resources). He saw the need and was compelled to take action freely giving of his time and his personal resources.

He took him to an inn, paid the guy enough to keep him for awhile and said if he needs more I'll make it right when I come back (offered credit to him) and never asked for anything in return. He (unlike the man's fellow countrymen the priest and Levite) identified with the needs of a stranger, showed compassion *upon* him and ministered *to* him and met his needs.

Vs36-37

You see this guy can't even bring himself to say, "The Samaritan". He says, "The one who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus sets the hook, "Now you do the same." What's that? Jesus is saying, "When you see a legitimate need, whether you know them or don't know them, whether they're of your ethnicity or not; you take the time to minister to and meet that need you've found your neighbor." Jesus turns the tables; it's not so much "Who's my neighbor?" as it is "Who can I be a neighbor to?" There's no way this guy (nor any of us) could pretend to live on this level of constant love. We need a Savior, we can't live up to the demands of the law. This lawyer wanted to make it a complex/philosophical issue; Jesus made it real simple.

He took it from the arena of learning into loving, from debating into doing.

Now I won't spend much time here but think it through; a Samaritan (an outcast) came to the one who was beat up, bloodied and left for dead; religion wouldn't help him, ritualism and ceremonialism (the priest) couldn't help him. Legalism (the Levite) couldn't help him; but a certain Samaritan, an outcast came by willing to seek out and save this man who would otherwise have been lost. Like I said I don't want to major on it, but there's definitely overtones of the gospel in this story that Jesus shared on that day.

Here we are dead in trespasses and sins, the enemy has robbed us, sought to destroy us and left our lives a mangled mess. But Jesus (the outcast of Israel, the despised and rejected One) came to us (He met us where we were), saw us and had compassion upon us, ministered to us of His own resources and paid a price for us that we couldn't pay on our own. On our own we'd be left to perish, but through His compassion, through His grace and mercy we've been spared, we've been saved.

Vs38-40

Now we can understand Martha's concerns, wanting everything to be perfect; Jesus was in her house! In Vs 39 we learn of her sister Mary who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. The word "also" either means that Martha was sitting at Jesus' feet but kept being distracted by service, or that Mary was serving as well, but she sat that aside for the moment to sit and learn at Jesus' feet (perhaps both).

But here's the problem, here's the predicament; it wasn't that Mary sat, or that Martha served, it was that Martha was *distracted* with much serving. Distracted from what? Not what, who? She was distracted, that is her eyes weren't *on*, her focus was taken *from* Jesus. Here's what we need to understand; *anytime* I get my eyes off Jesus I can be easily overwhelmed, self centered and begin my woe is me party. I get frustrated with people who I don't think are doing as much as I am but the problem isn't with others it's in me. My eyes are no longer on Jesus; I'm distracted; and in so doing I wind up busy, but not blessed (like Martha).

I read somewhere, "Whenever we criticize others and pity ourselves because we feel overworked, we had better take time to examine our lives. Perhaps in all of our busyness, we have been ignoring the Lord. Martha's problem was not that she had too much work to do, but that she allowed her work to distract her and pull her apart. She was trying to serve two masters! If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our service!"

Here's where it takes us, 5 words found in Vs 40 that are invariably indicative that things are out of sync in our walk with the Lord. "Lord, do you not care..." Be careful when you're brought to the place of questioning the Lord's care or concern or compassion for you.

Vs41-42

"Listen Martha, your desire to serve is wonderful; but what you need to understand is that you need to be ministered to *by* Me, before you can effectively minister *for* Me or on behalf *of* Me." We're to serve out of the overflow of our love *for* Jesus and the love and ministry we're receiving *from* Jesus. This is one of the reasons we require children's ministry servants to sit in the study opposite their service; so that you're taking time to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His word...

“The problem isn’t with Mary, Martha; it’s with you.” Serving isn’t a problem, as a matter of fact it’s what we’re called to do (some people won’t even get that far, they’re too busy pursuing their own agenda to give time to God’s desire for their lives). But if we serve God (even diligently with the best intentions to please Him and bring Him glory) with out adding that *one thing*, (focus *on* Jesus and learning *of* Jesus) it results in incredible frustration, aggravation and irritation; it becomes a real problem. Focus *on* Him, learn *of* Him, receive *from* Him and out of *that* overflow...serve Him.

Prayer Points:

Lord help us to find the balance between serving You, and sitting at Your feet learning of You. Forgive us when we get distracted and actually have the audacity to question whether or not You care about what’s happening in our lives...Lord’s that the whole reason You came to this earth; because You care for us and You desire to tend to us and our needs. Thank You for Your willingness to use us and for blessing us so abundantly in You. Teach us both to love You, and to love others more; to be willing to meet needs and demonstrate Your love to the hurting around us who just need Your compassion and Your tender touch.

Maybe that’s you today, you feel beat up and bloodied on the side of the road; this world has chewed you up, spit you out and left you for dead. I want you to know that God loves you, that Jesus has compassion on you and wants to tend *to* you. He’s already paid the price, He’s shed His blood; He’s given His life that you might be forgiven of all your sin; cleansed of all your shame. Come *before* Him, surrender your life *to* Him and He’ll tend to your wounds and make you new.