

Scripture Reading:

Luke 10:17 “17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." 21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 22 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." 23 Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; 24 for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."”

"The Return of the Children"

As I mentioned, I wanted to cover everything in these first 24 verses of the 11th chapter in one week, but that would have been just a bit much! I do want us to see some interesting contrasts that Luke has presented here in his orderly account:

The sending of the 70 is unique to Luke’s Gospel which is almost as unusual as having something found in all four Gospels before the final week of our Savior’s life.

We saw how by sending out the 70 into the cities of Samaria after the 12 Disciples had been sent to the cities of Galilee, that Jesus was foreshadowing the Great Commission, presenting the BIG picture of how His Kingdom would fill the whole earth. Jesus got them excited about taking over the world, and then pronounced a series a very severe warnings against unbelief!

This week as the 70, or as Jesus calls them, the babes or children, return with great joy, Jesus reminds them of the great spiritual battle they are engaged in and then speaks of the Great Blessings that they have as God’s chosen people.

There is also an interesting contrast where last week Jesus spoke of them avoiding some very common things like money, clothing and even hospitality for the work of the Kingdom. Now this week we will see Him talking about His followers stepping on very dangerous things like snakes!

- And finally we are going to once again be reminded that our salvation is wholly of Grace!

The miracles done by these men could only have been done by the power and command of Jesus: They will also learn that their names are written in the Book of Life only by the power and command of Jesus!

With that let us dig into the text before us this morning from Luke 11

17 “Then the 70 returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

Please notice that the seventy returned with JOY... This could be the entire sermon!

- If we are doing the work of the Kingdom we are going to be filled with joy.

We should look forward to hearing what the servant heard in the parable of the talents: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”

The joy of the Lord is NOT the feel-good peace or happiness that the world might offer... Notice what Paul says as he gives thanks to the Saints at Thessalonica:

I Thessalonians 1:5 “6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.”

- Jesus will help His followers to better focus and understand their joy, but first, as He did last week with the Great Commission, He wants them to see the BIG picture:

Luke 10:18 “And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

What is Jesus referring to here?

- Satan’s fall from grace?
- Satan’s defeat in the garden when God declared that the seed of the woman would crush his head?
- Is it a reference to Jesus defeating Satan in the wilderness by saying over and over again
“It is written?”
- Satan’s defeat at the cross?
- Satan’s being cast out of heaven in the Book of Revelation?
- Satan being cast into the lake of fire at the end of history?

You will find good commentators to argue for each position, and others!

- However, I do not think we want to put Jesus or the Holy Spirit in such a narrow box!

ALL of these accounts of Satan's defeats take place in history and I believe that Jesus had ALL of them in mind as He reflected on His disciples engaging in this battle which Jesus sees from the eternal perspective

Like an author who writes a great mystery chooses to reveal things to the readers along the way, we must remember that the author knows the beginning and the end of the story! Jesus takes in the complete battle knowing that Satan was defeated from the beginning and will be defeated in the end as He sees His returning children celebrate what they have accomplished.

Then He turns to them and says:

Luke 10:19 "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

He reminds them that He is the one who gives them the authority to do what they have done AND all they will do as they work to establish Christ's Kingdom...

- **The same is true for us today – we must do the Lord's work in the Lord's way!**

I want to pause for just a moment and have us consider what Jesus means when he says, "nothing shall by any means hurt you."

- **I could certainly 'hurt' someone this morning with a good pinch**
- **Jesus is again looking at the BIG picture [*mention the history tapes*]**

Pastor Wilkins discusses many of the martyrs, but there was a frail slave girl that may have gotten special comfort from these words of Jesus:

Blandina died in the year 177 in the French city of Lyons: We have many of the details from a letter written by the survivors which Eusebius recorded in his history.

Her companions greatly feared that on account of her frailty she might not remain steadfast under torture. But although the commander caused her to be tortured in a horrible manner, so that even the executioners became exhausted "as they did not know what more they could do to her", still she remained faithful and repeated to every question "I am a Christian, and we commit no wrongdoing."

Blandina was taken to the amphitheater and "fastened to a stake amidst wild beasts where; she prayed aloud, giving much courage to the others, ...

The wild beasts would not touch Blandina, so they put her back in prison. On the last day, she and Ponticus--a 15 year old boy, were brought out (after having watched the others being tortured daily). Ponticus died first. Finally, as the last of the martyrs, Blandina was scourged, placed on a red-hot grate, enclosed in a net and thrown before a wild steer who tossed her into the air with his horns, & at last she was killed with a dagger."

- We are told that "the heathen themselves admitted that never yet had they known a woman suffer so much or so long,"

What we see in the account of frail Blandina is how the promise of Jesus is confirmed, as these many cruel Roman leaders and torturers found no way to hurt Blandina who is now with her Lord in paradise

- She may well have taken comfort in the words of the Psalm many of us read this morning: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?"
Psalm 56:3,4

- Jesus then reminds his Disciples to make sure that their focus is in the right place as well:

20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

- Just as demons would not respond to the disciples without the power & command of Jesus...
- So these Saints would NOT have their names written in the Book of Life were it not for the power and command of Jesus!

As I mentioned before, the joy that we have as God's children is not like anything the world has to offer: It is not based on our feelings, some type of physical pleasure, nor our many creature comforts. It is TRUE JOY that rests on the sure foundation of our names being written in the Lamb's Book of Life!

As Paul explains to the Philippians, we are COMMANDED to rejoice because of this:

Philippians 4:3 "And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

- And it is as He reflects on these great truths that we see the only time in His earthly ministry where Jesus is said to rejoice:

Luke 10:21 "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 22 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, & no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, & the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

- God's children have returned and Jesus rejoices over them

And we are commanded to rejoice because we are safe in the Savior's hands having been given to Him by His Father which has been revealed to us by the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit!

We as God's Saints might face all sorts of circumstances in the coming weeks and months:

- **We might celebrate the birth of a new child**
- **We might sorrow over the death of a loved one**
- ⇒ **We might be amazed by a raise at work or receiving an unexpected inheritance**
- ⇒ **We could face bankruptcy because of actions taken by a scandalous partner**
 - **We might enjoy the best family vacation we can remember this summer**
 - **We might see a loved one in our family crippled for life in a tragic car accident**
- ⇒ **We might lose 25 pounds and feel better than we have in years**
- ⇒ **We might have the doctor tells us we have cancer with six months to live**

So, in which of these circumstances should find ourselves rejoicing?

If we have the proper eternal perspective that Jesus is here showing His disciples, then it will be in all of them: Not because we enjoy death, suffering or going bankrupt, but rather because despite all of these circumstances, we know that our names are written in heaven!

- **In THAT we rejoice no matter what the world the flesh or the devil might throw at us!**

In fact as we reflect on these things it helps us to better understand that beloved promise Paul gives in Romans chapter eight, that... "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Those called according to His purpose are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life: Those who should rejoice in that fact!

Think again about the various circumstances I have put forward and ask this simple question:

- **Under which of these circumstances would I be more likely to rejoice in the fact that my name is written in heaven?**

IF we keep our eyes on Jesus, it will be during all of them... If we get caught up in all the good things that are happening to us, or get distracted by the world, then God may use some of the other circumstances to get our attention, working ALL things together for our good!

Over these two weeks I trust we have seen the importance of remembering the BIG picture and how blessed we are to be able to see it as clearly as we do:

- **This is what Jesus then points out to His followers...**

Luke 10:23 “Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; 24 for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."”

- **Think about this as you read any of the New Testament during your morning devotions...**
- **Do we appreciate how blessed we are?**
- **Do we hear Jesus say to US privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see?”**

We should rejoice that we see the BIG picture and not through the glass darkly as the Old Testament Kings and Prophets did. This was Paul’s prayer for the Saints at Colossi and it should be our prayer for each other:

Colossians 1:9 “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

- **As those who have been conveyed into the Kingdom of God’s Son, let us rejoice that our names are written in heaven as WE go forth to serve Jesus this week and for the rest of our lives!**

Communion Meditation:

John 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”

We gather to remember the Lord’s death...

The death that allows OUR names to be written in heaven!