

Sovereign Revealing

Luke 10:21-24 (09-29-19)

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The Bible records Jesus weeping three times, and only once rejoicing. But when Luke describes Jesus' rejoicing in Luke 10:21, it isn't just a bland, vanilla rejoicing. No, Jesus rejoiced greatly. It was a whole-hearted joy and rejoicing. It was a great joy that led to praising God. In a world of sorrow and sin and all kinds of misery, what exactly did Jesus rejoice greatly about?

What brings you great joy? May 8, 1945, was a day of great rejoicing in our nation. Germany surrendered, the Allied forces triumphed in Europe, and the nation danced with joy. God designed us to rejoice. We rejoice at weddings, at the birth of a child, when we land that great job, a clean bill of health, a bull market on Wall Street, and many more human events.

The Bible is full of joy in the Lord. David prayed in Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of my salvation." Psalm 16:11 says there is fullness of joy at God's right hand. Psalms 32:11, "Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart." Jonathan Edwards wrote, "How good is God, that He has created man for this very end, to make him happy in the enjoyment of Himself, the Almighty."

The New Testament sings with the same joy. John the Baptist leaped for joy in his mother's womb. The angels brought the shepherds good news of great joy for all the people at the birth of Christ. In Acts the early church is constantly going on their way rejoicing, even when persecuted. The Philippian jailor came to Christ and rejoiced greatly in Acts 16:34. 1 Peter 1:8 says we greatly rejoice in Christ with joy unspeakable and full of glory! And Paul wrote an entire letter exhorting the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord always, and again, he said, rejoice. You hear the same note of joy throughout church history even as God's people are marched to the flames and thrown to the lions. Isaac Watts wrote, "Come we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known."

All around us people are whining, miserable, grumbling (WMG). They're negative, grouchy, critical, griping, hateful, complaining, sour and dour. Though we have more stuff than ever, people are full of anxiety, discouraged, depressed, gloomy, and blue. But the mark of a healthy believer is a hearty joyfulness in the sovereign goodness and grace of God in your life. A whiny, miserable, grumbling Christian is a sinning Christian. Your life may be hard. You may be living with heartache, pain, and suffering. The whole world may be against you. But God calls you to rejoice in the Lord. Joy needs to fill your heart and spill from your life as you focus on pleasing God and becoming like Christ. There are times for weeping and tears and sorrow. But even in our distresses and losses, joy should buoy us up and keep us focused on Christ.

And that brings us to our text. Jesus is facing the agony of the cross, but He is rejoicing greatly, a happy, full-throated rejoicing. But why? In a word, He rejoiced greatly and praised His Father because He knew God's great and sovereign plan of salvation for poor lost sinners coming to pass. Let's learn to rejoice greatly from our good and loving Shepherd.

First, rejoice greatly because your name is written in heaven by God's sovereign grace.

Luke 10:20, "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Your name was written there from all eternity. Unmerited, undeserved, purely by God's good pleasure. There's an old gospel song that says "There's a new name written down in glory, and it's mine." The idea is that when you come to Christ, God writes your name down in heaven. There are some good truths in that song, but the time of when your name is written down isn't one of them. The truth is that your name was written down in heaven long before you came to Christ. This is the great doctrine of sovereign

election. God chose you to be in His Son before He even spoke that first word of creation in Genesis 1:1. Ephesians 1:3 says we are to bless God who “chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.”

So Jesus greatly rejoices that His sheep are secure in the sovereign, electing grace of God. And you should rejoice too that your name is securely written down in the Lamb’s book of life. It will never change, so your reason for rejoicing greatly and praising your Father will never change.

Second, rejoice greatly with your Savior because your heavenly Father has sovereignly revealed the great truths of salvation to your heart.

Luke 10:21, At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

Jesus praises His Father, who designed the Bible’s wonderful plan of salvation in His love for His Son. God is our Father, too. And Jesus praises His Father as Lord of heaven and earth, which means His Father is the sovereign God of the universe and sovereign over everything that happens on earth. All things are working according to His decree – Ephesians 1:11. He is also sovereign over the souls of people. He has hidden the saving news from some and revealed it to others.

Jesus says He hides His gospel from the wise and intelligent, the clever of this world (1 Cor. 1:19). These are the proud and arrogant minds who are self-sufficient, self-ruling, who despise the very idea of trusting in a personal God. Many of this world’s philosophers, great thinkers, scientists, cutting edge technologists have no need of God: “We’re getting along great without God, thank you. There’s no stopping us.” We’re now working on quantum computers that are millions times faster than your old clunky laptop. We are so full of the tower of Babel we think we can control the world’s climate.



We’ve been studying Genesis in our small group which led us to the question of origins and evolution. Why is there a theory of evolution? Because the only alternative is God, and we can’t endure that notion. Yet, God’s glory blazes out of creation all around us with exquisite design, even in the eye of the fly with its 4000 lenses. Richard Dawkins, the infamous atheist, writes, “Biology is the study of complicated things that have the appearance of having been designed with a purpose.” But we’re considered foolish if we think a God designed the eye of the fly. Someone told me yesterday a snail has up to 25,000 teeth and eats rocks. Now that’s a dazzling display of divine design! But the world says we must not think of a personal Creator. This is why 1 Corinthians 1 says the message of the cross is foolishness to the wise and clever of this age, the humanistic, secular, materialistic, man-exalting elitists of any age. So God hides His truth from them.

However, God does reveal His good news of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to babes. He shines the light of the gospel into the dark and dead hearts of people who are like babes, like the Philippian jailor, who cried out, “What must I do to be saved?” Salvation isn’t reserved for the brilliant and educated of this world or most of us could not be saved. No, God hides His truth from those who reject Him, but sovereignly reveals His gospel to people willing to receive it. We must understand here, though, that even the babes would not come to Christ if God didn’t shine His light into their hearts. None of us deserve His mercy and grace and forgiveness and none of us reasoned our way to salvation. Listen to this amazing truth in 2 Corinthians 4.

*2 Corinthians 4:3-6, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 **For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

Christ rejoiced greatly in this and praised His Father. So should you. If your heart has been humbled, if you see yourself in the beatitudes, poor in spirit, mourning over sin, hungering for righteousness, meek and humble, rejoicing when the world mocks and scorns you, then you are a babe and God has

sovereignly revealed His beautiful grace into your heart. You sing with great joy, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine!" You walk through your days with the truth of Psalms 71:8 flowing from your heart, "My mouth is filled with Your praise And with Your glory all day long." Instead of focusing on all your problems and issues and all those people who seem to have it in for you, you remember that by God's pure grace alone you know and love Christ because God not only wrote your name in His book in eternity past, but He also shined His gospel light right into your heart and gave you a new life, with new hope, and new purpose, to please Him.

Third, rejoice greatly with your Savior because Christ has revealed the Father to you.

Luke 10:22, All things have been handed over 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 anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

This is simply an amazing verse and gives us a window into the triune God. (For more on the doctrine of the trinity, see Michael Reeves book [Delighting in the Trinity](#)). In the entirety of God's plan of creation and redemption, there was loving cooperation within the triune God. The Father designed all of life and the universe for the glory of His Son. He loves His Son and has given His Son authority and possession of everything. We see this in Colossians 1.

Colossians 1:15-17, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

The Father knows the Son, the Son knows the Father, and the only human beings who truly know the Father are those to whom Jesus has sovereignly revealed Him. You would never figure out God in your own reason. Your philosophy or physics or sciences or technologies spun out of your own head would never have revealed the true God as Father, as the loving Father, as the Father of Jesus and Father of all those Jesus came to save. We only know the Father through the Son! Listen to John 1:18.

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. ESV "He has made Him known."

Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." He also said, "I am the one and only way, the one and only truth, and the one and only life. No one comes to the Father except by Me" (John 14:6). Any religion or church that denies the trinity is a false religion.

I visited Washington DC with my granddaughter on her eighth grade trip a few years ago. We had a tour of the National Cathedral, an exquisite edifice outside and inside. Indiana limestone was used in the construction. George Washington laid plans for the church in 1790, intended for national purposes like public prayer, thanksgiving, and funerals. Construction was slow. In 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt laid the cornerstone with this verse, "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). What a testimony to the truth of the incarnation and triune God right there in our nation's capital. Strangely though, on November 14, 2014, prayer rugs were laid on the floor of this cross-shaped edifice and Muslim men and women prostrated themselves toward Mecca declaring "Allahu Akbar." But Allah isn't the Father and Islam denies the incarnation of Jesus. Regardless, that cornerstone tells the truth about Christ's deity and incarnation. Jesus sovereignly reveals His Father to His sheep. And this is cause to rejoice greatly. You are sons and daughters of the heavenly Father who loves you and gave you to His Son. John 10:29, "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

Fourth, rejoice greatly with your Savior because God has sovereignly determined the time of your salvation.

Luke 10:23-24, Turning to the disciples, He said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, 24 for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.'

We can almost visualize Jesus turning to His men in a personal, private conversation. He wants them to appreciate what they have seen and heard in Him. Throughout the Old Testament, God's people have looked forward to the coming Messiah. While you may want to go back and watch Moses march through the Red Sea, or join Joshua marching around the city of Jericho, or see David nailing the giant with one stone, or look into the lions' den and see Daniel cuddled up to those big cats down there, these kings and prophets longed to see the Messiah they had talked about, written about, and prophecies about.

And now here He is, in the fullness of time. God sovereignly determined for that generation to see and hear Him, and even touch Him. Jesus assures them that they are blessed. But if they were blessed, then we are super-blessed. Here we are 2000 years later with the completed Bible in our hands, with more knowledge of Christ than even the disciples at that time had. And we might add, how blessed our eyes and ears are for God to sovereignly determine our time and place in history, born in this wonderful country with all of our freedoms to worship our Lord, read our Bibles, and go to church without harassment. Blessed are your eyes and ears that hear and see what you see.

The only thing better will be when Jesus returns the second time and we shall see Him face to face and be transformed completely into His image. And I can assure you that our experience then will be filled with even greater rejoicing and praising the Father for His sovereign revealing all this to our hearts by His Spirit!

Until then, remember this. The mark of a healthy believer is a hearty joyfulness in the sovereign, saving grace of God through Christ in your life. A whiny, miserable, grumbling Christian is a sinning Christian. Imagine how full-throttled rejoicing and praising God every day would change your attitude about everything.