

## Luke 10B

- Last week Jesus sent out seventy messengers to declare the kingdom in advance of his arrival
  - And as we open in Luke today we see the joy of these men as they return from this mission
  - And Jesus feeds their excitement, giving them encouragement to rejoice in their work

[Luke 10:17](#) ¶ The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

[Luke 10:18](#) And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

[Luke 10:19](#) “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

[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.”

[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.

[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*.”

[Luke 10:23](#) ¶ Turning to the disciples, He said privately, “Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see,

[Luke 10:24](#) 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*.”

- If you look back a few verse in the text, you will remember Jesus’ instructions to these men
  - In verses 8-10, Jesus gives instructions on how they should respond to rejection
    - As we read those verses last week, they certainly left us with the impression that the messengers were not likely to find much success

- And it's a safe assumption that they often encountered an unreceptive audience
- But looking at the responsive of the messengers in these verses, it seems like they also met with a measure of success
- We're told they returned with joy
  - And they exclaimed that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus name
    - What they mean of course is that they were given the power by the Holy Spirit to cast out demons, and they were amazed at that experience
    - By the sound of their statement, I would assume that they found themselves empowered to do a variety of things...even casting out demons
  - The sense from the text here is like that of a child with a new toy – there's obvious joy in the opportunity to join the Lord in His work of building the kingdom
    - But let's keep this in perspective
    - They must have had plenty of failures as well
    - Oh sure, they would have found at least a few who accepted them and embraced their message
    - But knowing what we know about how the nation of Israel largely rejected their Messiah, we can only assume that they were kicked out of towns, ignored, spat upon, etc.
    - Yet they come back to Jesus excited and joyful over their successes
- Whatever other successes they experienced, they are most excited over who they were defeating
  - In their service to the Lord, they instantly became soldiers in the battle against the enemy
  - When we serve the Lord, we ultimately join in battle against the enemy

- But these messengers mentioned an important detail that explains their success, of course
- They said they found the enemy subject to them as they ministered in the name of the Lord
- As you've probably heard me teach before, the idea of speaking in the name of another person had a very specific meaning in that day
  - It didn't mean simple using the name of the person like an incantation – like you were casting a spell
  - It had a legal connotation
  - It was something akin to a Power of Attorney
  - It meant the messenger was acting with the authority of the one who sent him and could speak and act on his behalf
- So when someone spoke in the name of another, it meant they had been granted permission to act in the place of the other person, as their legal representative
  - Therefore, these messengers had success against the enemy because they were acting in Jesus name, under His orders and according to His commissioning – as if Jesus was standing there with them
  - And after all, He was – in the form of the Holy Spirit giving them the power that God had told them to use
- Likewise for us today, when we act in ministry according to our Lord's direction, then we can expect to see whatever success He has determined for us
  - We are acting in His name – and not merely because we insert His name in a prayer or declare it publicly
  - Rather, we act in His name when we act according to His will and by the power of the Holy Spirit
  - And in acting in Jesus name, even the enemy will be subjected to us according to God's will
- How can we know the difference?
  - Well, first look at the messengers' reaction
  - The joy is clearly visible

- They have seen the power of God acting through them
- They have seen the enemy retreat
- On the other hand, if they had been acting presumptuously, what would have happened?
- When we act presumptuously, we will find out power lacking

[Acts 19:13](#) But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.”

[Acts 19:14](#) Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

[Acts 19:15](#) And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

[Acts 19:16](#) And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

- So there is joy to be found in serving the Lord according to His direction and in His power, and that joy will be found regardless of the degree of success we find – whether great or small
- In the next verse Jesus responds with an intriguing comment
  - He says was there in the beginning to watch the enemy fall from heaven
  - There are at least a couple of ways to understand Jesus’ statement here
    - First, He could simply be sharing in the messengers’ celebration by relating His own experience of watching the enemy cast down from heaven when He fell
    - The idea here is simple...Jesus is reaffirming the messengers’ experience with the encouraging reminder that the enemy is subject to God just like the rest of His creation
    - As a side note, this is one of many places where Jesus clearly describes Himself to be God – here it is by virtue of having been present at the beginning of creation
  - But a second way to see this comment is as a mean of tempering their excitement a little
    - Look at Jesus’ words in the next verses

- He seems to be reminding these men that though they experienced success over the enemy in this moment, the battle began long before they joined the fight
- And it will continue long after they are gone
- But Jesus has been fighting it from the beginning
- And it will be His power that will ultimately defeat the enemy in the end, as He returns to crush him
- In verse 19 He tells them that He granted them power over the enemy and even to tread on serpents and scorpions
  - In other words, Jesus had ensured they would succeed in this mission, not only in how they contended with the enemy but also in their ability to withstand earthly threats
  - Jesus had protected them from all harm as a means of ensuring their success
  - There are other examples in the early church of where God granted such supernatural immunity, like at the end of Mark's gospel:

[Mark 16:17](#) "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

[Mark 16:18](#) they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly *poison*, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

- Just as in this example, Jesus was granting specific powers to specific individuals as part of the ministry of the early church
- The temporary nature of these protections are easy to confirm
  - Consider that the disciples were the ones who received these powers in the beginning
  - Yet virtually all of them were eventually destroyed in one way or another
- Furthermore, there is no implication here that these powers would extend to all Christians, though some misguided men and women have tried to hold to that claim
- But in the next verse, verse 20, Jesus steps back and tells the messengers not to rejoice simply over their temporary powers, but rather over their salvation

- Jesus was cautioning these men not to take their eyes off what was truly important
  - Don't get excited because God granted them temporary power to contend with the enemy or to heal sickness
  - Doing that misses the real point, it confuses the means with the ends
- God had granted them these powers so that others would see the truth of the gospel message, and thereby glorify God
  - They had just returned excited over their successes and were rejoicing in their miraculous abilities
  - And Jesus reminds them not to focus on the wrong thing
    - We don't rejoice because He grants us victories over the enemy, or because we experience supernatural healing, or any of these temporary, earthly things
    - We rejoice over our salvation, the free gift He gives that makes all the rest even possible
  - So Jesus says rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven, as should we all
- Then Jesus speaks a spontaneous prayer to the Father recorded in verses 21&22
  - With this prayer Jesus alludes to a difference, a distinction among men
  - He says that the Father is to be praised for revealing the gospel message to the least of the world rather than to those who profess to be wise
    - He is referring to the Pharisees, the spiritual leaders of Jesus day who claimed to know God and how to please God
    - Yet they were anything but pleasing to God, and they led others astray by their deceptions
  - Meanwhile, God was content to reveal the truth to those who weren't looking for Him and who never saw themselves as righteous, but rather as sinners
    - And Jesus adds that the knowledge of the gospel is something reserved for those the Son wills to reveal to it to

- A profound statement that causes those who understand it to rejoice even more, in thanks to God for having been one to whom God revealed His Son
- And this difference is the issue at the heart of the remainder of this chapter and even the rest of the Gospel as it comes up time and time again
  - Jesus ends this passage by turning to the disciples and reminding them how special their situation truly is
    - Throughout the history of the nation of Israel, holy men throughout the generations had understood the prophecies of the coming Messiah and longed to see that day
      - These men longed, Jesus said, to be able to see what the disciples saw and to hear what they heard
      - But they weren't appointed to that privilege
      - Instead these 12 ordinary men received that honor
- Do you see now what Jesus was saying about the humble chosen over the wise?
  - Here are these few, unremarkable men who were selected by God to receive the attention of the Messiah of the world – of all time
    - They do anything to deserve that honor
    - They didn't ask for it
    - They didn't pray for it
    - They certainly the most holy, the most pious
  - In fact, they didn't even fully know who Jesus was until after the resurrection
    - And Jesus is praising the Father for delighting to reveal Himself to ordinary people, even those who aren't looking for Him
    - That's the praise we should bring to our prayer and worship life
      - Don't forget that we aren't the wise, the privileged, the holy of this world
      - Yet the Father saw fit to bring the gospel to our hearts and allow us to serve Him

- If the thought of that doesn't sink into your heart and cause you to well up with emotion, and gratitude and wonder and awe, then I'm not sure you really understand it
- The God of the universe reaching out to a creation that has turned its back on Him,
  - And While He leaves many in their pride and defiance,
  - He softened our hearts and granted us the repentance that leads to eternal life

[Luke 10:25](#) ¶ And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

[Luke 10:26](#) And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

[Luke 10:27](#) And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

[Luke 10:28](#) And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."

[Luke 10:29](#) But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

[Luke 10:30](#) Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

[Luke 10:31](#) "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

[Luke 10:32](#) "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

[Luke 10:33](#) "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,

[Luke 10:34](#) and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

[Luke 10:35](#) "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

[Luke 10:36](#) "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' *hands*?"

[Luke 10:37](#) And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

- Immediately after Jesus' statement to the disciples, we get an illustration of what He was teaching



- A lawyer, apparently part of the crowd following Jesus, stands up to confront Jesus
  - Luke tells us that the lawyer's sole purpose in addressing Jesus was to put Him to the test
  - In other words, the lawyer isn't coming to Jesus with honest intentions or a true desire to be taught by God
  - Rather, the lawyer thinks he already knows everything, and his question is designed to trap Jesus into making a false statement
- Lawyers (nomikos) were men who were learned in the law
  - When we're talking about the laws here, we mean the Law of Moses
  - Remember, the Jewish nation was ruled by a government within a government
    - You had the Roman rulers with their laws
    - But if you were Jew, you also had the added burden of the laws of Moses, which were enforced by a separate bureaucracy of lawyers and Pharisees
    - These lawyers were men who had studied the Law of Moses and could answer any question of how to apply the law, no matter how obscure or remote
- So this lawyer would easily be considered one of the wise of Jesus day
  - He's a living example of exactly the kind of person Jesus said that the Father was not inclined to reveal Himself to
    - And His attempt to tear down Jesus is further evidence of the man's hard, unbelieving heart
      - We might ask why God is unwilling to reveal Himself to a man like this
        - After all, isn't his zealousness a sign of his desire to know God, to be godly himself?
        - Should this kind of zealous pursuit of righteousness be exactly the kind of thing God should want to reward?

- Apostle Paul discusses this very question in one of his letters, the letter to the Romans

[om. 10:1](#) ¶ Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.

[Rom. 10:2](#) For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

[Rom. 10:3](#) For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

[Rom. 10:4](#) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- Paul sympathizes with us when we wonder why a man like this would not receive God's grace
  - Paul says that he too desires that the zealous Jews, men like this lawyer, would be saved
    - But Paul goes on to say that these men do in fact have a religious zeal about them
      - But their zeal is not in accordance with knowledge
      - With truth, in other words
      - They are zealous for the wrong thing
    - Not understanding God's righteousness – true righteousness, in other words
      - They seek to establish their own righteousness,
      - To work their own salvation by a system of rules that they have established and enforced
      - And having created their own system, a system that served their selfish interests, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God
      - They weren't interested in Jesus' way of righteousness, the true way
    - And then in verse 4, we hear the real reason for their discontent
      - For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness

- The righteousness that Christ brings, by faith, means the end of the law for all who believe
- A lawyer who has invested all his time and effort in justifying himself through a knowledge of the law isn't much interested in a means of righteousness that spells the end of the law
- And God is not satisfied to bring glory to those who think they have earned it in their own power, for as scripture tells us

[Is. 2:9](#) So the *common* man has been humbled  
And the man *of importance* has been abased,  
But do not forgive them.

[Is. 2:10](#) Enter the rock and hide in the dust  
From the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty.

[Is. 2:11](#) The proud look of man will be abased  
And the loftiness of man will be humbled,  
And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

[Is. 2:12](#) ¶ For the LORD of hosts will have a day *of reckoning*  
Against everyone who is proud and lofty  
And against everyone who is lifted up,  
That he may be abased.

- Next week we will examine the lawyer's question and Jesus' answer
  - This exchange sets the tone for the next couple of important chapters, as Jesus confronts the nation of Israel and confirms their rejection of His ministry
  - For the battle Jesus waged for the hearts of men is the same one we wage in his place today
    - We confront men like this lawyer, men who have ideas for how to please God
    - Each have devised a way to establish their own righteousness
    - And by doing so, they have become proud in their own hearts
    - And they will be brought low should they not understand the truth before the opportunity fades
- Remember that we were not rich and mighty

- We were not wise and honorable
- We were certainly not holy and righteous
- We still aren't, though God has determined by His grace to credit us with that righteousness –
- Glory be to God!