

REJOICING IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY
(SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023)

SCRIPTURE READING: 10 COMMANDMENTS; LUKE 10:21-24

INTRODUCTION

Men and women in their rebellion often seek to shape God in their own image.

This is part the root of all idolatry - false gods or the twisting of the truth concerning the one true God.

Perhaps you have heard people say something like this:

I can't believe in a God that would do _____.

After my mother died, I was angry at God for not keeping her alive.

A God that would not save everyone is a God that I cannot believe in.

It is the supreme height of arrogance to think we set the boundaries for God. God must conform to my thoughts.

Our text from Luke 10:21-24 is very rich. It is focused so beautifully on the joy of the Trinity, the joy of the sovereignty of God.

We must bow in worship and incredible thankfulness.

We sang last Sunday, hymn 271, the line: Lord, why was I made a guest?

Why has God been so gracious to me in opening my eyes to the truth?

There is no getting around the truth. It must be confessed and adored. May God give us the grace to do so.

Confess and rejoice in the beautiful sovereignty of the Triune God.

We will look at our text in 2 parts.

1] THE VERY JOYFUL PRAYER OF JESUS, LUKE 10:21-22

The center of this chapter I mentioned last week is the theme of joy – the joy of the 70 as they returned from their mission and even more the exultant joy of Jesus.

The word **rejoice** in verse 21 might not be quite strong enough – **exceedingly joyful** would express the meaning of this word better.¹

It is not simply that Jesus had a smile on His face.

1Pet. 1:6 In this you **greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

Verse 21 speaks of the incredible joy of Jesus in the Spirit or the Holy Spirit.²

Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Luke 4:14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

¹ Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 205.

² The NA-27 has Holy Spirit. Interesting to see how the Majority Text does not have this. The point is the same.

Jesus is truly God and truly man.

In His human nature, He is filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the great plan of redemption.

In His divine nature, there is a perfect joy and love shared by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As we study this text, we are dealing here with three very deep doctrines – the doctrine of the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, and the doctrine of God’s sovereignty in salvation.

All these doctrines must be carefully studied, and in these verses we have a tremendous lesson that is given.

One point to not miss as we study this text is that the subject of God’s sovereignty is not a grim, lifeless doctrine.

Our Lord and Savior rejoiced in this doctrine – we also must do the same!

These verses in Luke are also extremely important in helping us understand the person and work of Christ.

One theologian has stated that they are the **high point of our Lord’s self-disclosure in the first three gospels.**³

We must keep in mind the context of this chapter.

Yes, all men and women are called to repent and turn unto Jesus Christ for salvation.

Luke 24:47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

But why do so many reject the message of the gospel and others believe?

³ This was stated by Vos as noted by Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*, 218. This was connected with Matthew 11, but it is equally true of Luke’s parallel account.

All men are responsible.

Above all things stands the sovereignty of the Triune God.

In these verses we have **four important parallels** between God the Father and God the Son.

First, Jesus praised or thanked His Father as Lord of Heaven and earth (v. 21).

At the end of Matthew Jesus also claimed to have all power in Heaven and in earth.

Luke, obviously, would be in full agreement with this truth.

All things have been delivered to Me by my Father (v. 22)

All the authority of the Father has been given to the Son.

John 17:6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

Second, we see both the Father and Son having absolute sovereignty.

Jesus praises His Father for hiding and revealing the things of salvation.

Jesus also states that only according to His choice can anyone come to know the Father.

Hidden these things from the wise and prudent:

These things – the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation and in deliverance from the power of demons.

Revealed them to babes:

Matt. 16:17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Revealed - used two times in this passage, verses 21 and 22.

1Cor. 2:10 But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Babes: contrast is with the wise and the prudent, those who think of themselves as wise in terms of **worldly wisdom**.

This is not about our greatness in anyway.

This is the great theme of the first part of 1 Corinthians.

1Cor. 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.

For so it seemed good in Your sight (21)

Seemed good - we say this when we talk about making the best choice. That is not the meaning here.

LSB: Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

NET: Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will.⁴

Third, we see the mutual knowledge and perfect relationship that the Father and the Son have of each other.

The Father completely knows the Son, and the Son completely knows the Father.

⁴ NET Note: "for (to do) thus was well pleasing before you," BDAG 325 s.v. ἐμπροσθεν 1.b.δ states: "as a reverential way of expressing oneself, when one is speaking of an eminent pers., and esp. of God, not to connect the subject directly w. what happens, but to say that it took place 'before someone.'"

How should we understand the idea of knowing as used in verse 22?

We recognize that through creation, all men have a general knowledge of God and His power.

The knowing here is a **saving knowledge** mediated through Jesus Christ.

We do not have any saving knowledge of the Father or the Son apart from God's work of salvation.

Fourth, we see the mutual necessity of the Father and the Son to reveal each other if men are ever to have saving knowledge of them.⁵

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*.

Robert L. Reymond has written of this passage, "A higher expression of parity [equality] between the Father and the Son with respect to the possession of the divine attributes of omniscience and sovereignty in the dispensing of saving revelation is inconceivable."⁶

2] THE BLESSING GIVEN TO THE DISCIPLES, VV. 23-24

The word **blessed** in verse 23 is the same word used in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5 and Luke 6.

It is a word that speaks of the special grace that God showed to the disciples.

Blessed – truly happy, the theme again of joy.

⁵ Robert L. Reymond, 218-220.

⁶ Ibid, 220.

The words of Jesus also are also a very important testimony to the unity of God's revelation and its great culmination in Jesus Christ.

What a special blessing we have been given in light of God's great plan of redemption.

There is a parallel to this text in Matthew 13.

I think it is very likely that Jesus said things like this on more than one occasion.

We know that the disciples were so slow in understanding important doctrines.

We also keep in mind how many times we have to hear something that is challenging in order to understand.

Consider the great kings like David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

Think of the great prophets like Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

They would have loved to have seen in their lives the person and work of Jesus Christ.

1Pet. 1:10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, **11** searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. **12** To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

CONCLUSION

Confess and rejoice in the beautiful sovereignty of the Triune God.

John Calvin wrote:

Many persons, as soon as they learn that none are heirs of eternal life but those whom God *chose before the foundation of the world*, (Ephesians 1:4,) begin to inquire anxiously how they may be assured of God's secret purpose, and thus plunge into a labyrinth, from which they will find no escape. **Christ enjoins them to come direct to himself, in order to obtain certainty of salvation.** The meaning therefore is, that life is exhibited to us in Christ himself, and that no man will partake of it who does not enter by the gate of faith. We now see that he connects faith with the eternal predestination of God,— two things which men foolishly and wickedly hold to be inconsistent with each other. Though our salvation was always hidden with God, yet Christ is the channel through which it flows to us, and we receive it by faith, that it may be secure and ratified in our hearts. We are not at liberty then to turn away from Christ, unless we choose to reject the salvation which he offers to us.

We must speak and think about these deep doctrines because Scripture clearly speaks on them.

Eph. 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, **4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, **5** having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, **6** to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Lord's Supper – the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ to give Himself for us.

We come recognizing His Lordship and rule over us.

1Cor. 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

Closing Hymn: 365

BENEDICTION – HEBREWS 12:1-3

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.