

## Message #48

## Luke 10:17-24

Back in the 1500's, during the time that Martin Luther was headlong into the Reformation, there was a faithful Biblical preacher named Robert Barnes. He became known for his Biblical study and expositions that were faithful to the Word of God. Because of his intense dedication to the Scriptures, he, too, found himself at odds with the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was dominating England at this time. Barnes was greatly used by God, and many people turned to Jesus Christ and away from the Catholic Church, and, as a result, Barnes found himself in great opposition.

King Henry the 8<sup>th</sup> strictly adhered to the Catholic tradition, so Barnes was not only in opposition to the religious power, but also the political power. They labeled Barnes as a heretic and finally he was arrested and sentenced to be executed, and in 1540 he was burned at the stake in Smithfield, England. Shortly before the flames killed him, he said these words in the presence of those who witnessed his death: "I trust in no good works that I did, but only in the death of Christ."

Robert Barnes had been involved in ministry for nearly 20 years. He had faithfully expounded the Word of God. Many people came to faith in Christ as a result of his teaching ministry. He had personally met Martin Luther in Wittenberg. He taught Bible studies, he preached in churches, he was a mighty preacher, and yet, when he was about to die, he said, "I trust in no good works that I did, but only in the death of Christ."

Shortly before the Apostle Paul was executed, he wrote these simple words: "The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed..." (II Tim. 4:18). What those words mean is that Paul was not relying on his works as a minister and apostle to save him, but was totally relying on the work of Jesus Christ. Paul had done amazing things for God, but when it got right down to it, he trusted in the Lord to deliver him from every and any evil thing.

It is an exciting thing to minister for God. It is an exciting thing to be used by God to influence others. It is an exciting thing to see God do powerful things with you and for you. But when all is said and done, when it comes our turn to go into eternity, the reality that will be most significant and will bring us the greatest comfort will be the realization that the work of Jesus Christ on that cross is what gives us an eternal relationship with God.

As we come to this passage, we come to an exciting time for these 70 disciples. They had been sent out by Jesus Christ and they had the opportunity to minister and see God do some amazing things. Christ Himself had authorized their ministry (10:1). What apparently started to happen was these disciples lost sight of the fact that they, too, were sinners who needed to be saved from their sins. Had not Christ chose them, they couldn't have done or accomplished anything. So when they got back, Jesus had a message for them:

**A DISCIPLE'S GREATEST JOY DOES NOT COME FROM ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN MINISTRY, BUT BY THE REALIZATION THAT WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD AND HAVE AN ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.**

It is a great privilege to minister for God. We should remain steadfast and always abound in the work of the Lord. But we must never forget we are all sinners. None of us deserve ministry, none of us deserve a relationship with God. The greatest joy for each of us is that we have been chosen by God to experience His grace.

Now when the disciples completed their short-term assignments, they reported back to Jesus Christ. G. Campbell Morgan said he wished more missionaries would follow this example. He said he wished more would actually report to Jesus Christ what they were doing, rather than going to churches and showing slides to try to convince churches they are really getting the job done. God knows what any minister is doing and He knows what they are not doing.

There are four observations we want to make from this text:

**OBSERVATION #1** – The disciples were finding their greatest joy in their work for God.  
**10:17**

The seventy came back excited. They had gone out and attempted to minister for God and had been successful. They had seen God do powerful things and realized that even the demonic world was subordinate to them in power. Things had happened that were beyond what they expected.

It is certainly true that when one has the power of Christ in his life, Satan and his forces have no power at all over that believer (I John 5:18).

The real problem here is not the joy found in ministry, because a believer's greatest joy will always be found in ministering for God and serving God. **The real problem here was that these disciples were more joyful in their ministerial accomplishments than they were in their relationship with Jesus Christ, who was there with them in Person.**

Instead of them finding their great joy in the fact that they are actually spending time with God, in Person, they are happy they have power over the demonic world. They obviously did not fully grasp who they are actually traveling with, specifically the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying ministry. In fact, our greatest joys in life will be found in ministering to others and serving the Lord. But it is our personal relationship with Jesus Christ that must not ever be put on the back burner. We should always marvel at the fact that God chose us and that we have a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

**OBSERVATION #2** – The disciples should have found their greatest joy in God's work for them. **10:18-20**

These disciples came back ecstatic over the fact that they had some victory over demons. Nothing wrong with that, but apparently they were losing sight of the fact that they were traveling with the God/Savior/Messiah/King who was giving them that victory. **No matter what the real success, it is God's work, not our work. He did it, we didn't.**

So Jesus decided to put this in proper perspective and point out three realities that would get them to think right:

**Reality #1** - Jesus Christ, the One they were with, actually saw Satan fall. **10:18**

These disciples were all excited about some victory over demons, so Christ puts this in perspective for them. The point is you guys are more excited about power over demons rather than the fact that you are actually traveling with the One who saw Satan fall.

We may draw three conclusions from this:

**(Conclusion #1)** - Christ saw the original fall of Satan when he was expelled from heaven.  
Is. 14:12; Rev. 12:4

Satan was expelled from heaven with 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the angels and Jesus saw that happen.

**(Conclusion #2)** - Christ saw the temporal Satanic world fall to His disciples.

Jesus saw every episode in which the disciples had victory. In fact, He is the One who gave them the victory.

**(Conclusion #3)** - Christ saw the final fall of Satan and his forces. Rev. 12:7-9; Rev. 20:7-10

What Jesus is saying is you are excited about victory over a few demons and you don't realize that I am the One who has seen everything in regard to the entire Satanic world. Jesus was the One who gave them the power over the Satanic world.

**Reality #2** - Jesus Christ is the One who gave them the power over the Satanic world. **10:19**

There are those deranged, religious nut jobs in the south who think this verse is a verse giving them the right to handle deadly snakes and scorpions without fear of any harm or injury. But frankly, they don't know a thing about proper Bible interpretation. The Bible often refers to Satan as a serpent (Gen. 3:1-14; Num. 21:6-9) and a scorpion (I Kings 12:11, 14; Rev. 9:3). Furthermore, the context reveals that the disciples were happy about victory over demons.

The disciples were happy with their victory over demons and Jesus says, I am the one who gave you the power to have the victory. They should have been thrilled about their relationship with Him.

Their power to do anything, or to survive Satanic attack, or to have victory was not due to them, but to Jesus Christ. They were giddy over some ministry victory and Jesus said, “Excuse me boys, don’t forget who it is that gave you the victory.”

We never want to lose sight of this. Jesus Christ called us. Jesus Christ saved us. Jesus Christ gifted us. Jesus Christ enabled us. Jesus Christ protected us and Jesus Christ used us. The moment we begin to think that successful ministry is due to our power, we are as distorted as these disciples.

In eternity we will probably learn that Jesus Christ protected us from Satanic destruction multiple times. There is great security in this verse. Satan and his forces cannot touch us apart from the sovereign permission of God.

**Reality #3** - Jesus Christ wanted disciples to rejoice in their eternal salvation. **10:20**

Jesus says, the thing that should bring you the greatest joy is not that you cast out demons, but that “your names are recorded in heaven.” In other words, you should be rejoicing over the fact that you have been eternally chosen and forever saved.

The verb “are recorded” is critical. It is a perfect tense, passive voice, indicative mood verb indicating three very important theological facts:

**(Fact #1)** - Their names had been written in heaven in the past time and continued to be there at the present time and would be there in a future time (**Perfect Tense**).

This is a great reason for any believer to rejoice. Their names have been written in heaven since before time and through all of time. This is security.

Names have been written in heaven from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

**(Fact #2)** - Their names had been written and they had nothing to do with the action. They were the recipients of the action (**Passive Voice**).

In other words, God is the One who Sovereignly did this and they were the recipients of His saving grace.

**(Fact #3)** - Their names have been written in heaven and it is a definite fact (**Indicative Mood**).

There are at least three books that record names in heaven:

- 1) The works books that record all sins ever committed by every individual. Rev. 20:12
- 2) The book of life that records all those who have believed on Jesus Christ and are saved. Rev. 3:5; 13:8; Ps. 69:28; Is. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23

3) The remembrance and rewards books that record the works of those who have believed on Christ. Mal. 3:16-18

What Christ is saying to these disciples is, **your greatest joy is not found in what you are accomplishing for God, it is always found in what God has done for you.**

**Do not miss this critical theological point: the reason why people will end up burning in hell is not because they are too bad a sinner; it is because their name is not written in the book of life. There is only one way to get into that book of life and that is to believe in Jesus Christ.**

**OBSERVATION #3** – Jesus Christ found His greatest joy in praising God’s sovereign selection of His people. **10:21-22**

Those who reject the doctrine of the sovereign election of God reject the teaching of Jesus Christ, because this doctrine brought Him great joy. Now notice how Jesus identifies His Father in **verse 21**- “Lord of heaven and earth.” God is in sovereign control of everything in heaven and on earth.

Here is a very rare look at one time in Jesus’ life when the “man of sorrows” had great joy. The thing that brought Him the joy was thinking about the sovereign work of God. There are four sovereign causes for Christ’s joy:

**Sovereign Cause of Joy #1** - God the Father hides His program from some. **10:21a**

Most don’t get this point. Jesus Christ found great joy in the fact that God specifically did not permit some people to understand His Word and His program. He specifically hid things from those who were considered to be “wise” and “intelligent.”

The word “wise” refers to those who were considered to be very skilled and clever in their minds (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 412). The word “intelligent” refers to one who seems to have great understanding (*Ibid.*, p. 428).

Jesus says I find great joy in the fact that those in this world who are proud and arrogant and wise and intelligent people, who think they are religious and brilliant, will never know my truth because My Father won’t let them know it.

**Sovereign Cause of Joy #2** - God the Father reveals His program to infants. **10:21b**

Christ says I find great joy in the fact that My Father reveals truth to babes that is to one who comes to me in a very simple, unskilled, infant, child-like faith. This is the key to having a real relationship with God. This is the way Jesus saw His disciples. They were not world scholars, political leaders or religious geniuses. They were simple, ordinary guys who believed on Christ.

**Sovereign Cause of Joy #3** - God the Father accomplishes what well-pleases Him. **10:21c**

Jesus said I find great joy in knowing that God does what is well-pleasing to Him at all times. God is totally sovereign over everything and everyone, and Christ found great joy in that. Most of the time we will not know exactly what God is doing, but we may be sure of this, He knows and we may find great joy in that fact.

God saves some and He does not save some. God has mercy on some, and on others He does not. Jesus is not criticizing His Father, He is rejoicing over this.

**Sovereign Cause of Joy #4** - God the Father committed His entire program to God the Son. **10:22**

Here is a great passage concerning the identity and the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Only the Father knew the real identity of the Son, and only the Son knew the real identity of the Father. What we have here is Deity. Jesus is God, and God the Father is God, and the only people on earth who get this are those to whom God reveals Himself. Now notice it is the Son who reveals truth about Himself as God and equal to the Father.

**OBSERVATION #4** – Christ’s disciples should find their greatest joy in their relationship with Jesus Christ. **10:23-24**

O.T. prophets and Kings dreamed and wrote about seeing the Messiah. These disciples had not only seen Jesus Christ, they had been specifically chosen by Him and empowered by Him. They were actually living on earth and spending time with the Son of God, and their greatest thrill seemed to be in casting out demons.

They were missing the whole point of this. The reason Christ gave them power and authority was because He wanted them to point people to Him.

Here is what Jesus sent these guys out to proclaim. No matter what your background or sin, if you will believe in Jesus Christ, if you will by faith come to Jesus Christ like a child and believe in Him, you will be saved. Call out to Him like a child would and invite Him to save you.

The reason people will go to hell will not be because they are too bad a sinner; it will be because their names are not written in the book of life and there is one way into that book—believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.