

## Joy of the Kingdom of God (Luke 10:1-42)

We are studying the Gospel of Luke together. Today, we will study cp 10. The theme is "Joy of the Kingdom of God."

### 1. What we should rejoice over

#### 1-3

<sup>1</sup> After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. <sup>2</sup> He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup> Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

From the latter half of cp 9, we studied about some of the characteristics of Jesus' disciples. Jesus disciples will listen to the Lord's voice, do what is entrusted, look at the right direction, and they will be covered in Jesus' prayer. Here cp 10, 72 disciples were sent out. We can also see the same characteristics of disciples.

#### 1) Listen to the Lord's voice

Jesus said to the 72 disciples, "Go!" (v3)

They must have heard the report from the twelve who had been sent before. They knew that the twelve "set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere." (Luke 9:6) The twelve had also driven out demons from people.

When the seventy-two were sent out, they were also given the "authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy." (v.19) And Jesus said, "the harvest is plentiful." (v2) They must have been really excited, expecting the Lord would also do the great works through them, like He did through the previous twelve.

But Jesus continued, "I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." (v.3) If it was, "I am sending you out like wolves among lambs" then, they can take and eat as much as they want, surely "the harvest is plentiful." But what Jesus said is the opposite. Knowing this, what did they do? They listened to Jesus voice "Go!" and they carried it out.

What shall we do, if we realize things won't turn out the way we expect? What shall we do, if we realize we will have to pay the cost to follow Jesus? Even then, Jesus disciples will still follow his voice.

## 2) Do what is entrusted

Jesus sent them "to every town and place where he was about to go"(v.1). He sent them as messengers of kingdom of God. They proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God in every town and places they went. They used the authority given to them to heal the sick and drive out demons. By doing these, they showed the reality of the kingdom of God. They also prayed for "peace" to houses. And they prayed and asked the Lord of harvest himself to send out workers into his harvest field.

What was entrusted to them was to let people know that the kingdom of God is near. How people respond to the message is up to the people. They were entrusted to pray for peace to the houses. Whether people in those houses receive peace or not is up to those people. They were entrusted to use the authority given to them, and the healing of the sick and demons' driven out are done by the power and authority of His name.

They did what were entrusted to them, and showed the reality of the kingdom of God there.

## 3) Look at the right direction

They were sent out as messengers of the kingdom of God. Their message was "the kingdom of God is near you." The direction they should look at is "God's coming kingdom." What they should remember always is "the kingdom of God is near."

This brings them a sense of urgency. The time is limited. "The kingdom of God is near." This also makes their priority clear in the places where they were sent to. What they were entrusted to do was to invite people into the kingdom of God. There is nothing they should give priority before this.

"The kingdom of God is near." This also makes them realize the importance of their mission. They are working for the kingdom of God, and their work is directly related to people's eternity.

There are people who hear their messaged but reject it. They may be discouraged. "How can they reject such a wonderful, valuable, precious message?!" They may feel upset. They may feel angry at those who reject them.

Or they may wonder, "Am I wrong? "

But then, the direction they should look at is the reality that "the kingdom of God is near."

#### 4) They are covered in Jesus' prayer

The disciples were chosen and sent by Jesus. They were given the authority of Jesus' name. They have experienced that when they use the name of Jesus, even the demons submit to them. Their work was accomplished by the power and authority of Jesus. And they have experienced that the rule of the kingdom of God was brought as a reality to the places where they were sent. And, what is most wonderful above all is that their own names were written in the kingdom of God. That is what they should rejoice over.

Jesus knows the hardships, battles and temptations they would face through his own experience. How much was he praying for them! Jesus said to them, "Just rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (v.20) They are still on the earth, but surely they are already people of God's kingdom. They are kept in the authority of Jesus.

The fact that their names are written in heaven, that is their greatest joy! This fact will never change, even though people may reject them and their message. The joy they have will not change because of the circumstances.

## 2. The expansion of Joy

### 21-24

<sup>21</sup> At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. <sup>22</sup> "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." <sup>23</sup> Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

When the seventy-two returned Jesus talked about the joy their names

are written in heaven. Then, Jesus himself became full of joy through the Holy Spirit as the Father revealed himself to the disciples thought Jesus.

Let's make quick review what disciples have learned through Jesus so far.

### 1) They see the reality of the kingdom of God

For example, in Luke cp 8, there is an account like this. Jesus went to the region of the Gerasenes. There, he drove out demons from a man who had been possessed by many demons. However, the people who heard how the demon-possessed man had been cured (Luke8:36) asked Jesus to leave them. But in contrast, the disciples receive the authority of the name of Jesus, and proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near. Jesus says in the following chapter, cp 11 that His driving out demons shows that kingdom of God is coming there (v.20). That is, his disciples are seeing (or witnessing) the reality of the coming of God's kingdom with their own eyes.

### 2) They are in the authority of Jesus

The disciples saw that the reality of the kingdom of God had been shown through Jesus. They themselves were given the authority of His name, so they could drive out demons and heal the sick. Not only that, but also they themselves were guarded and protected by the authority of Jesus.

For example, in Luke 8, when they were crossing the sea of Galilee by boat, the disciples fell into great danger because of strong wind and great waves. Then Jesus "rebuked the wind and the raging waters, and the storm subsided and all was calm." (24)

They are protected in the authority of Jesus.

### 3) Their names are written in heaven

And in cp 10, Jesus said to his disciples, "Your names are written in heaven." They have already become the people of God's kingdom in Jesus.

These things have become reality for the disciples through Jesus. Now they understand who the Son is, that is they understand who the Father is (Jn 14:9).

Jesus Christ himself is the mystery of God. (Colossians 1:27) As it is the mystery, it is not disclosed to everyone. But our heavenly Father has revealed the mystery, through the life of Jesus and who he is, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples came to know Jesus as:

- 1) the gate and the way to God's kingdom (John 10:7,9, 14:6)
- 2) God's glory (Hebrew 1:3)
- 3) Eternal life (John 17:3)

#### Col.1:27-28

<sup>27</sup> To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

We can say that witnessing for Jesus is the call or vocation of those who were shown this mystery by God. In other words, if we don't know Jesus as the mystery of God, we cannot really witness for him, nor proclaim this message.

For the disciples to understand this mystery of God, that is the greatest joy for Jesus and for the Father and the Holy Spirit. And his joy is also the disciples' joy.

#### 1 John 1:1-4

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> We write this to make our joy complete.

John wrote about Jesus so that his joy will be complete. When you share this joy with others, your joy becomes bigger. God's joy and our joy will be expanded through the witness and ministry of us.

### 3. The joy of being found, helped

#### 25

<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" A very good question. But he didn't really want to know the answer. But he just wanted to test Jesus. Let's see how this account continues.

#### 26-29

<sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> He answered: " '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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " <sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

He asked, "Who is my neighbor?" And to answer this, Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan.

#### 30-37

<sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' <sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" <sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do

likewise.

Let me tell the conclusion first. Jesus knows that a man cannot achieve eternal life by good works. There is no one who can be like this good Samaritan by his/her own strength.

It was Jesus who had compassion on us, came to us, carried us and healed us, as he saw us dying. It was Jesus who came to us and became our true neighbor. Jesus is "the good Samaritan" who took care of us, and recovered our lives.

When people welcomed Jesus as their "neighbor", and were healed, encouraged and given eternal life, and be filled with the Holy Spirit, they will "go and do likewise". That is the expression of their new birth.

They will proclaim the good news of the coming of God's kingdom, because they themselves have encountered the good Samaritan, Jesus; Because they were made new by the gospel, Because they know they are accepted into the kingdom of God.

Let's imagine a scene like this. You are at the immigration counter at Heathrow airport. Somehow you are rejected to enter the country. The officer doesn't listen to you at all. You are in trouble.

Suddenly, one lady appears from behind you and asks you what's the problem. You say that you are a tourist and just want to see Buckingham Palace, but the officer doesn't allow you to get in for no clear reason. She talks to the officer something, and he let you come in.

She passed you an envelope and says "When you arrive at Buckingham Palace, pass this to a guard at the main gate. But don't open it." You gave big thanks to the lady.

You take a tube and arrive at Buckingham Palace, and go to the main gate, and pass the envelope to a guard. He opens the envelope and read it. Surprisingly he opens the gate let you come in and other guard escorts you into the palace.

When you enter the dining room, you see the lady over the dining table. She says "Welcome to my home. You are my special guest. Please make yourself at home." She is Queen Elizabeth. You enjoy chatting with her over the dinner. Before you leave, you take photos with her.

Then, what will you do? Surely, you will share your experience of Queen

Elizabeth with others. You will upload the photos on Face Book. Whomever you meet, you will show the photos and talk about Queen Elizabeth and the palace, even though they may not be interested in your story.

We will proclaim the good news of Jesus, because we ourselves have been helped by him, because we have encountered him, because we are accepted into His kingdom.

#### Wrong motives for ministry

In order to achieve eternal life, or salvation

In order to fulfill duty

In order to become great and be acknowledged by people

#### Right motives for ministry

Because "I am loved by Jesus"

Because I have experienced the reality of the kingdom of God

Because of love and mercy for people

Because I want to share my joy with others

In short, the joy that "my name is written in heaven" is the motive power of mission, witness for Jesus, and ministry.

#### 4. Sit and listen to Jesus

##### 38-42

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" <sup>41</sup> "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

This part and the parable of the good Samaritans are one set of answer

to the question: what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Martha was busy serving Jesus. And she asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her. But Jesus declined that. Martha's way of thinking was almost the same as Peter's suggestion to build a tent for Jesus when he saw Jesus' glory on the mountain. Peter liked to do his own idea for Jesus rather than to listen to him. Jesus said Mary was doing what was indispensable, something absolutely necessary. That was to "sit at the Lord's feet, and listen to what he said." That is "the only one thing needed" and "it shall not be taken away from her (NASB)", in that context.

"To sit at the Lord's feet and listen to what he says". That is not only to receive Jesus' love, but also to express our love for Jesus.

When Martha was busy serving Jesus, what was Jesus doing? Jesus was speaking. He was sharing the message of the kingdom of God.

"Attentiveness" is "Showing the worth of a person or task by giving my undivided concentration."<sup>1</sup> It is to show respect for the person. It is to show that what the person says is important. It is to show how much you love the person.

When the Lord speaks, we will listen to him with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength. Whatever we may be doing, we need to stop doing the thing, turn our face to Jesus, and concentrate on Jesus. There is no ministry that comes before that. Whatever we are doing, Jesus is the Lord.

There is something wrong if we are too busy to have fellowship with Jesus. If our heart is filled with ministry and our fellowship with Jesus is hindered, then we are putting the cart before the horses. All our activities must be directed, encouraged and supported by Jesus' love.

Today, we studied "Joy of the kingdom of God." Whatever we are doing, Jesus is our Lord as we are in His kingdom, we are His people, He is our King, our God. Jesus himself is the mystery of God. Knowing him and fellowshiping with him is our greatest joy. This joy has been expanding in his disciples, Jesus' followers, us, you and me. And the joy will be expanded to the ends of the earth through people of God, his church, us. The kingdom of God is near. Our names are written in heaven!

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<sup>1</sup> "Attentiveness", *Character First!*, Character Training Institute, 1997, p.2