

## Reasons Jesus Rejoices, Part 1

Luke 10:21

September 8, 2019

Turn in your Bibles, please, to Luke chapter 10. We are, I hope, as you can see from the music that Dr. Merry chose, and what we've been singing, and the scriptures that have been chosen this morning, hope you can see that we are preparing your minds and hearts to wade into some deep, deep waters this morning, in Luke chapter 10. It has been a joy for me to anticipate this section of Scripture, and now that it's arrived, I have to admit that the task before us is intimidating, and yet it is so very compelling.

You all know, if you've been with us in our study of Luke's Gospel over the past few weeks, that we've been studying the mission of the seventy-two in Luke chapter 10. Start back in verse 1, the Lord appointed, and then instructed, and sent out seventy-two of his disciples to herald the arrival of God's kingdom.

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And he had them accompanied with power. Sovereign power of God that validated the truth of the message with miraculous healing power for people. When these seventy-two missionaries returned, they came back rejoicing. It wasn't rejoicing in the great numbers that responded, but it was rejoicing in mission fulfillment.

It was rejoicing in what happened as they trusted in Christ and pursued obedience to him. They rejoiced in an unexpected, unanticipated authority over the entire demonic realm. They watched demons flee. Then Jesus helped them, though, to see even greater reasons for rejoicing.

Take a look at that section again, starting in Luke 10:17, "The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!' And he said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do

not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'"

They returned with joy, and Jesus, as we can see there, he entered into their joy. He rejoiced with them, and then he took them further. He took them deeper. He informed and then instructed their joy, that he might direct it, that he might deepen it.

Whatever temporal joy that they had found in the subjection of demons to Christ's authority, that they wielded when they were out heralding the kingdom, that joy, Jesus wants them to know: That joy is eclipsed by a far greater joy, namely, that their names have been inscribed, engraved, registered in the citizenry of heaven itself. They are bona fide citizens of the kingdom of God, of which they've been the recent heralds.

In all that we learned over the past few weeks, all that we discovered together, those 30 reasons to rejoice, culminating in the privilege of our own heavenly citizenship, all those reasons

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to rejoice, we need to see, are merely a threshold into the heavenly treasure room.

This is just the doorway we pass through, and as we walk through the door, we find here the greatest, deepest, most sublime joy of all and it's Christ Jesus himself. The king of God's kingdom, who leads us into the room, as it were, and helps us to discover and appreciate the beauty of the treasure within. He is our, you might say, tour guide into the treasures of heaven itself.

Look at verse 21. "In that same hour he," that is Jesus, "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for this such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

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"Then turning to the disciples he said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.'"

I think you can sense, just in the reading of that, how special this section is. We have a sense, even if we don't know all there is to it here, we have a sense of how profound these words are. And so, we're gonna anchor here for the next few weeks, and as we get started. I want to give you an introduction to our Lord's words before we dive in deep, and just give you a few quick observations.

First of all, you need to realize that this is a special text, because this is the only occasion recorded in the Gospels, of Jesus rejoicing. It may seem surprising, right? Three times we read about Jesus weeping. This is the only time we read about him rejoicing.

It's not that Jesus was a sour and dour man, but he is called, the man of sorrows, who's acquainted with grief. This mission

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that he's on is going to end in his death. So, there's sorrow in what he sees. Sorrow in the sinful condition of mankind. And the older I get, the more I understand that. The more I see and sorrow in myself and long for heaven.

One commentator said, "This is the most exultant description of Jesus in all Scripture." It is that. A very high and holy place to see Jesus exult before us. The word here is *agalliao*, to be very happy, to be exceedingly joyful. It's a, it's a, deep feeling with emotional expression, here, from Jesus. But it's not unbridled emotion; it's, it's, emotion that is informed by the knowledge of a supreme joy. So, he's thoughtful, and that thought drives his emotion.

We know from Hebrews 12:2, "It was for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross," and Jesus knew, Hebrews 2:10, that "in bringing many sons to glory, God would make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." And indeed, he did. But the joy that drove Jesus Christ throughout his entire ministry, it was laden on the top of it, overburdened

with a load of griefs and sorrows. As Luke 9:22 says, "The Son of Man must suffer much."

So, what we're reading today is pretty special. It's the only recorded instance, here in the Gospels, of the joy that drove him. We get to read the narrator's explanation of this. Notice how closely, too, his joy is associated with the salvation of souls. Do you see that? His joy is there, imbedded in a context of the salvation of sinners. Think about that. Reflect on that.

Second thing to point out. Luke tells us, here, that Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. What's that? This is spirit inspired rejoicing. We see in Genesis 1, "The Spirit of God hovering over the waters, over the surface of the deep," and then God said, "Let there be" and there was, it's all by the power of the spirit. Here Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. Spirit inspired rejoicing is what we're seeing here.

Elizabeth, earlier on in Luke's Gospel, she was filled with the Holy Spirit, when she pronounced a blessing over Mary, and Mary then, that led to her song. There's, the Holy Spirit is involved

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in those women bringing praise and honor and glory to God.

Zechariah, as well. He's the father of John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Spirit, and it broke his judicial silence, and he prophesied. Spirit inspired rejoicing. Prophetic revelation.

Luke has really prepared us for this. He's set a precedent for understanding what we're reading here.

We know in Luke 3:22, that "the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism in bodily form as a dove." Like a dove, so that everyone could see that Jesus entered his ministry on earth with the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit.

It's not that the Holy Spirit first came upon him, he was filled with the Holy Spirit from the very womb, from conception. But there at his baptism everybody could see visually: Picture, and hear the affirmation of God the Father from above, "This is my beloved son; with him I am well pleased." "Being full of the Holy Spirit," Luke 4:1, "Jesus was driven into the wilderness for forty days to be tempted by the devil." And we know what happened there: Holiness drove the tempter away. The devil exhausted his greatest temptations and could not cause Jesus to fall.

And from there Jesus entered into Nazareth to proclaim the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy again, which was a prophecy about the fulfillment of the Spirit anointing the Messiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," he reads this from Isaiah 61, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

That is exactly what Jesus began to do at that moment; proclaiming the kingdom of God and healing. That's what he sent the seventy-two out to do. Go ahead of him, proclaim the kingdom of God, and heal. And that is what prompts this spirit inspired outpouring of joy.

We need to see here, it's not just the fact of Jesus' rejoicing. It's what he rejoices over that is going to occupy our attention. It's the content of his praise. It's what he says and what he reveals here, all of it flows forth from the Holy

Spirit, this union he has with the Holy Spirit. So, his expression is Holy Spirit inspired. It's an outpouring of joy and praise and adoration and theology. Theology.

Third observation here. Notice how Jesus uses the term, father, in reference to God, and he used the term, father, five times in this passage. And actually, if you read it, it's just in two verses. Five times in just two verses, verses 21 to 22, he calls God, Father. If we include other titles and pronouns, Jesus refers to God, in some way, at least eleven times in these verses. This is a theocentric passage. This is God centered, God glorifying.

The emphasis on God, as the father of Jesus. That means, fourthly, with correspondence there, that Jesus then is the what? Son of God. Many times, Jesus called himself the son of man, in the synoptic Gospels. This is the only time in Luke's Gospel he's called the son of God. Where he refers to himself this way. Very common in John's Gospel as we know. Not as common, though, in the synoptic Gospels; Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But here it is here. Jesus is the son of God.

And this father and son relationship makes this, fifthly, we need to understand, this is a trinitarian passage. Spirit, Jesus is rejoicing in the Holy Spirit. There's Son, there's Spirit, and who's he singing praise to? Who's he rendering praise and honor to? The Father. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's not a trinitarian formula, like the baptism formula in Matthew 28.

It's not a definition of the trinity, giving us precise, philosophical language for us to process this. This is not an Athanasian Creed. In fact, it's, maybe, even in a greater witness to the truth of the trinity, in the fact that this is a trinitarian assumption on Jesus' part. He just speaks as if it's true.

He just speaks of the triune nature of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For Jesus this just a matter of fact. This is just the normal course of how he thinks. That's how we hear him speaking. He's assuming here a basic, a fundamental, an essence of divine nature, here. Deity in trinitarian theology.

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That sets the God that he proclaims, prays to, praises, expounds upon in this text, that sets this God apart from every single religion in the entire world, across the whole history of mankind. From the very beginning, until now and all the way into the future, there will be no other God proclaimed other than this God, to be the true God.

And that's why we can really whittle down our own age's sin, as the sin of idolatry. Having a false conception of God. That's the issue. When we don't worship the true and living God, we think thoughts that are not worthy of him and we pursue those. We make a god in our own image. Back in Jesus' day and before Jesus' day, men constructed idols, little, little figurines that they would bow down to and worship.

Today we don't do that. It's a little harder to isolate with a, with an idolic representation. Instead, what we do is we keep it right here, and it's an ever-changing idolatry. Isn't it? When we bump into something we don't like, something that bothers our conscience, what do we do? We shift our theology a little bit. We reconstruct the idol. We do it on the fly. That's the sin of

our age. That's the sin of our time. That's the sin of every age.

So, what's proclaimed here is really our salvation. And with that bit of introduction and a little bit of observation to warm you up, let's set some context, here. Okay? Where is Jesus when he says this? Where is he? We really don't know, exactly, precisely his location.

We do know the timing and the occasion. Luke tells us in there, in verse 21, he says, "In that same hour, he rejoiced." Which means that this is to be closely connected with the successful completion of the mission of the seventy-two. This puts Jesus and the Apostles plus the seventy-two, they were somewhere, probably in the territory of Judea, Perea. We don't know where precisely, exactly. But the occasion, here, is their return after completing their mission.

We also know from verse 23 and verse 25, that in addition to Jesus, his Apostles, the seventy-two, some other disciples, there were also crowds of people around them, at this time, and

at least some of them, probably many of them, were unbelieving. Verse 23, "Jesus turned," says there in verse 23, "he turned from the crowds, and he spoke to his disciples privately."

In verse 25, we meet a certain lawyer who stood up to test Jesus. To put him to the test. Not a believer. So, there were others around here. They're pictured here as on the outside of Jesus' disciples. They're on the outside of faith, outside of belief. The, the, real action in this text is among Jesus and his believing followers.

Again, it makes this a pretty special passage for all of us. Because it's as if we, the readers of Luke's Gospel, we're being called into this inner circle, here, by virtue of the salvation that we share. By virtue of the same spirit who is at work in us to open our eyes, to illumine the truth to us. By virtue of our union with this Christ. By virtue of our worship of his God, we share in the joy of the seventy-two.

We also share in the privilege that they had of learning what makes Jesus rejoice, as he speaks openly about it. Part of our

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joy is gazing upon this. What really is an incomprehensible glory. And for us to stand in wonder and to bow in amazement before the glory of God, who is our very salvation.

So for the next couple of weeks, we're gonna see five reasons, here, that Jesus rejoices. We're not going to cover all five today, but we're going to see three of them in verse 21. What I want to see happen among us, as we kind of unpack this section, I want to see us deepen our own joy in the God that we've been saved to worship.

I want to see us grow and deepen and broaden and anchor in deeply, to the God whom we've been saved to worship, because he's our reward. That is what heaven is. Heaven is not, pearly grate, pearly gates and gold streets and all the rest. That's heaven for a greedy person. That's just a picture of the glory. Images that we can understand of the glory of heaven.

But its central figure is God himself. So if you don't long for God, you don't want heaven: Because heaven is all about God. So we need to learn and grow in our joy, deepen our joy in the God

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we've been saved to worship. I also want to see that we grow in amazement, that our names have been registered in the citizenry of heaven. That we have a place there.

I want us to grow in our appreciation of that amazement. I want us to grow in our worship and adoration of the glory of Jesus Christ. I want us to see our hearts bow down in worship before this God, in the name of Christ, so that we see this trinitarian power, reality, come to fruition and practical reality in our own lives, in our own hearts. So our hearts are enraptured in worship of the supreme joy of God himself.

Okay, so with all that, just warming up to an outline. Here's a first main point for you: Jesus rejoices in who God is. Number one: Jesus rejoices in who God is. Notice how Jesus addresses God in verse 21, because the manner in which Jesus speaks to God has a lot to teach us about how we need to speak to God. Notice how he addresses God. "In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.'" And then skip to the end of the verse. "Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." Okay, we're going to make four

points out of that section right there. Four points. Do this in four sub-points: A, B, C, and D.

Sub-point A, okay: Jesus addresses God. And just write in, that's gonna be the sub-point. Is Jesus addresses God, sub-point A, righteously. Jesus addresses God righteously. As Jesus opens his mouth, here, the very first thing to come forth from his lips is what? "I thank you."

This is an intensified form. The verb there is an intensified form of *homologeō*, which means to confess. It's *exhomologeō*, which can mean, to openly confess, to fully acknowledge, to admit something completely. But when addressing God, when God is the object, when we're addressing God in this way, as Jesus is doing here, it refers to a grateful acknowledgment. It refers to extolling, praising, or as the ESV translates it here, to give thanks.

And the term really is broad enough to include all those nuances. And one commentator actually tries to do that in expanding the sense here: "I acknowledge openly to thine honor;

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I give thee praise." It's a mouthful, but that is actually trying to get the sense of what Jesus opens with when he speaks.

Listen, that is the right way of addressing God. To begin the address with thanksgiving and praise. Giving thanks to God is what is right. It is what is righteous. What does it say in Romans 1? How does it boil down? How does Paul boil down the chief fault, and sin, and explanation, of the sin of our time and our age, "They refused to honor God as God or give thanks."

Boy, that is us, isn't it? We don't honor God as God. We make an idol, something we're a little more comfortable with for ourselves, so we can walk around and feel comfortable with the God that we say we worship. And what do we do? We don't thank him for anything. We thank ourselves. We give praise and honor and glory to ourselves for what we accomplish, for what we do. That's the sin of our generation, isn't it? It's no different back in Paul's day. It's no different back in the very beginning of time.

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So, when we enter into an address to God, this is what's right. It's what's righteous is to give thanks to him. Even before he addresses God directly by title, even before any content comes forth out of his prayer, Jesus, really in the spirit of the Psalmist, begins with praise to the one he speaks. Psalm 118:19 and 20, "Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord," to Yahweh. "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it." Psalm 100 verse 4, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name." Jesus is really modeling the spirit of the psalmist, there. How to enter God's presence righteously, with thanksgiving, with praise.

Sub-point B, in your little outline there, Jesus addresses God meaningfully. Jesus addresses God meaningfully. That is, there is meaning in what he says. He begins by calling God, father, twice in verse 21, but also that title, "Lord of heaven and earth." Let's start with the second set of terms, first. "Lord of heaven and earth." This is what illustrates Jesus' address as a meaningful address. He calls God, lord. It's the word *kyrios*.

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It's a term that acknowledges God's absolute sovereignty, his supreme lordship and transcendent rule above all.

And then Jesus speaks about the universality of his sovereignty, calling God, the lord of heaven and earth. Anything left out? No. Heaven and earth, that's everything. So absolute sovereignty, supreme rule, and it's expansive, it's utterly comprehensive. It comprehends everything that is created. It's Genesis 1:1, right? That's what Jesus is calling attention to here. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And so, since God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, he's the, he is the what? He is the lord of the heavens and the earth, as well.

He's recognizing God as creator, and it encompasses God's role also in sustaining what he created. So if God is the creator and sustainer, we know that he is also the law giver. He graciously legislated laws, both for the earth, material laws in the material world, physical laws for the physical world. But he also legislated laws for the heavens, for the immaterial world. He legislated, get this, he legislated morality. It's his right,

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as the creator of all things, as the lord of heaven and earth. It's right for him to legislate morality. We all have a sense in our own hearts of what's true.

I tell people all the time, when I talk to them about the Gospel, and they have this, they like to play this little mental, philosophical trick about, you know, the relative state. Relative nature of morals and ethics, and how, things you know, from place-to-place change, and how, you know, we can craft our own ethics according to our own culture, and it's really all different all through time, and it's all evolved and changed, and we just need to kind of go with the flow.

And I say, you know, I've been in some different places around the world, and I don't think there's one place in the world that I've gone where I can reach into a man's pocket, pull out his wallet, and put it in my own pocket and walk away, and the man doesn't say, Foul! Not one place. Not one place where pre-meditated murder is, just okay. Not one place where taking another man's spouse, a women's spouse is just not thought anything of.

Why is that? It's because God has taken his commandments, his Ten Commandments and he's stamped them on our hearts. The law of God is inscribed, written on all of our hearts, and we have a conscience that bears witness, and tells us what we should do and what we should not do. It's the, ought, and the ought not, and we all have a sense when we're violating it. Even if our standard is warped through repeated battering against our consciences and our standards are warped.

We still have a sense of what ought not, not to be done. Ask anybody who supports or hates Trump. Any question about the president, you know what you're going to get? Their sense of morality. You're going to get their sense of morality.

Why does Jesus begin by acknowledging God in this way: Lord of heaven and earth? Is he merely parroting, here, what he's heard from famous rabbis? Is he mimicking their stilted religious language when speaking of God, Oh, God, Lord of heaven and earth, and he's trying to impress his disciples? Of course not. What's this about, though?

Why is it meaningful here for Jesus to address God this way, at this time, on this occasion? Back to verses 17 to 20, right? Context. If you ever have any questions. Ask questions of the context. Look at it. Interpret it for yourself and subj, subjugation of the spirits, to the authority that he gave to the seventy-two. The sudden fall "like lightning from heaven" of Satan. The banishment of his demons. The authority that he'd given to men to tread over the serpents and scorpion, these demons unharmed, without any injury. Listen, God is the sovereign over all these immaterial, spiritual, creatures that inhabit the heavenlies. They are all subject to God. He rejoices in that. It's a meaningful address.

So the point is that when Jesus enters into a prayer with praise and thanksgiving, he addresses God in a meaningful way, using a title that means something. It's not just throw away. No throw away titles, here. No stilted language for the sake of a religious show. He's not flattering. He's thoughtful, here. He's intentional. He's addressing God for who he actually is.

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And what is God? Who is he? What's he like? God is absolutely sovereign. He rules over all things in the heavens and on the earth. Whether it's the immaterial subjects of the heavens, like verses 17 to 20 talk about, or whether it's the earthly subjects of this current context, verses 21 to 24, both the wise of the earth and the babes of the earth. God is sovereign over all. And as the sovereign, he has the, he has every right, and he has the only right, to do whatever he wants to do.

That, my friends, is something that our country and the people of our country simply will not abide. A God over them, who can do whatever he wants to do. Who is subject only to his own nature and glory. Who confines himself to the infinitude of his being, and declares, "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." That, Americans will simply not abide. Why? It intrudes upon my liberty. It intrudes upon my desire for self-expression, to fulfill my potential, to actualize, to potentialize, to be what I think I am to be. God says, No, no, no. You're not sovereign. I'm sovereign.

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Let's come back to that familiar address. Jesus calls God, "Father." He addresses God, as we said, righteously, meaningfully, and now subpoint C: Jesus addresses God intimately. He addresses God intimately. I praise you; I thank you, Father. Father, Lord of heaven and earth. In fact, even before he says, "Lord of heaven and earth," he says, "Father." "Yes, Father," at the end of the verse, "for such was your gracious will." And then he expands the thought, in verse 22, "All things handed over to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son."

We're gonna have more to say about that holy relationship next week, but for now, notice the familiarity, the intimacy, here, that language. Jesus knows this supreme sovereign of all creation. He knows this transcendent, absolute source of all being. He knows this law giver, judge, creator, sustainer, redeemer. He knows this one not from a distance, but the, from the vantage point of intimacy, familiarity. He knows him as family.

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When Jesus calls God his father, we're getting such a special, privileged glimpse, here, of the relational warmth, the joy of union and intimacy that Jesus has with his father, as only father and son know, in this two members, here, of a holy trinity, eternal trinity, that has no blemish, no sin, no fault, nothing but, pure, transparent joy in relationship.

We know Jesus is the God-Man. When Jesus calls God his Father, we're, we're seeing this God-Man, and we're seeing, the Godness, of that God-Man come out, aren't we? And in this text, we see the veil of Jesus' humanity. Features, by the way, that humanity features, so prominently in Luke, doesn't it? I, we love that about, about, Luke's Gospel.

How prominent it is that Jesus is one like us, with flesh and blood, with weakness, and pain, and sorrow, and suffering. It's a precious view of him. But we see the veil pulled back, here. We see Jesus, as it were, as God. Just as we saw in a previous chapter on the Mount of Transfiguration, when we saw Jesus in dazzling white glory. Here we see his divine nature. We see it with the mind revealed to us in profound words that we are able

to ponder here, marvel at, especially in verse 22, when we get to that next week.

It's a truth that the religious leaders of Jesus' day just couldn't tolerate. They could not stomach. They could not handle Jesus' claiming God as his Father. And Jesus continued to press his point. He never backed off. John wrote, John 5:18, "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was even calling God his own Father." What did that do? "making himself equal with God."

They got the point. They were theological scholars, and they said, you, by calling yourself God: Father, son, father, you are making yourself equal with God. There is parity between your person and his person, and that cannot be. We're going to kill you for it.

It's the right judgment of their concern, but wrong when it comes to Jesus Christ, because he truly is the Son of God. So, they understood the implications of the claim. They understood the exclusivity belonging to a father son relationship in the

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Godhead. As much as it offended the religious establishment, Jesus could not and he would not deny it. John 8:55, "If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him."

Listen, it's a good point for us, instructive. Just because we don't understand something like this, like the trinity, like the hypostatic union, you know, divine nature, human nature, one person, Christ. Just because we don't understand something, doesn't mean it's fundamentally wrong. It, it does mean it's incomprehensible. We can't fully get our arms, but we can apprehend the truth of it.

We just can't fully get our entire mind around it. Why? Because it's an infinite truth which has infinite breadth, and we have finite little brains. We're just not going to get it all. And that is no cause for rejecting, redefining, or reinterpreting, as so many do.

When we come across truths like this in Scripture, when we see a God that is high and holy and fundamentally, incomprehensible

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to us, we need to press in. But press in with deference, with creaturely humility. To realize that we're finite. We're not going to get all of this, God. But, oh, are we filled with joy to be drawn near, to gaze upon him.

We need to respond as John the Baptist. Jesus said to John the Baptist, "Blessed is the one who is not offended by me." Oh, beloved, don't be offended by Jesus. Don't be offended by God. Again, we'll expand on that when we come back next week. Just be patient.

One more subpoint to mention, here. Jesus addresses God righteously, meaningfully, intimately. But notice, even in his intimacy, five times calling God, "Father," he maintains a great respect for his God, as father.

Subpoint D: Jesus addresses God appropriately. Jesus addresses God appropriately. This one's a little bit harder to see in the English text, partly because of the way we translate the verse into English, but mostly because we really don't live under a monarchy. We don't live under a monarchy and so that creates

certain liabilities for us as readers. If we lived under a monarchy, we'd understand this king subject relationship a bit better.

Let me just show you briefly, the expression in the final line of verse 21 there, "Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will." It's kind of hard to see in the ESV, but the King James Version translates that a little bit more accurately, here, I believe. Those who lived under the lordship, actually, of King James, the one who commissioned this translation bearing his name, the sense would be plain to him, because they lived under King James. They were used to a monarchy. Here's how the King James Version puts it. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Or more literally, "for thus it was pleasing before you".

You may say, what's the difference? Well, translating the term, this term *emprothsen*; as before you or in your presence or in your sight, that translation actually preserves the picture that was very common to those who lived under a monarchy. Someone, subject of the kingdom, who was privileged to enter into an

audience with the king and come into his throne room and come before his presence; they came in with eyes averted, looking downward, bowing, often even prostrating themselves before the king, flat-out.

The king was positioned spatially high above him, ascended on a throne, high, lifted up. So, this throne room is meant to magnify and exaggerate the social distance, using a spatial distance. It was a reminder to this petitioning subject, whatever he said was to be laid out, as it were, in the presence of, in the sight of, a sovereign king. And the petitioner just left the request before the king, and the king then maintained a judicial distance between himself and the request that say, that lay before him, but also, himself and the petitioner.

He was to consider it from his lofty throne. He was to consider the petitioner and his petition from the vantage point of sovereignty. That's the picture we're supposed to see, here. That's the picture that's assumed, and in that final sentence in verse 21, that's how Jesus' grammar here portrays God. God is the one who has power and authority to execute his will, to do

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all of his good pleasure. Avert your eyes, bow before him. He's the high and holy one, lifted up. Divine perspective to see and judge all things with perfect righteousness. Even though God is his father, Jesus recognizes God as the absolute, resplendent, transcendent sovereign king over all.

And so, Jesus, here, he has spoken to this God, his father. He has spoken righteously, meaningfully, intimately, and in the end, he has spoken most appropriately. How can we apply this? What do we do with this? First, find your joy in God like Jesus does. And if you find your joy in God, then second, pray that way. How many times do you hear people praying to God, and it's the same pattern of address every time? I do this. You do this. We do this. It's heavenly Father or gracious Father, or sometimes it's like we're writing a formal letter to him: Dear God. Right?

We fall into those habits, don't we? Kind of lazy, thoughtless, whatever, when we address the sovereign king, Lord of heaven and earth. I'm reminded in Ecclesiastes 5:1, "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God." Verse 2, "Be not rash with your

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mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.”

We might add, let your words be righteous, and meaningful, and intimate, and appropriate. If we’re thoughtful about the one to whom we speak, then our address to him actually becomes part of our prayer. When we identify God in some way, we’re not saying his name to get his attention, as if we need to wake him up. God, and he all of a sudden turns his head and says, What? We’re not trying to wake him up, here, so we can get on with the real reason we’re bothering him in the first place. whatever request is about to follow. Praying, praying like that may reveal that we’re more interested in what God can do for us than in who God is.

Listen, that is why we must begin with rejoicing in God. He’s our, return, eternal reward. We’re not going to find heaven on earth. We’re not going to find it. There are many joys in this life; ice cream, marriage, Doritos, whatever.

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As wonderful as this church is, which is wonderful. Its warmth of love. This church's refuge of believing fellowship. This church's service to Christ. This edifying speech among one another. Listen, all of this, any of this, is so very imperfect, isn't it? We know that even this one day, will be eclipsed in the bright sun of Heaven's glory. In the holy presence of our God and we rejoice!

That's what Jesus understood. You can hear it in the way he prays. "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." The one that he loves and worships is worthy of all praise, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And Jesus rejoices to give it, to extol his God as he enters into prayer.

So, beloved, ask yourself as you think about your prayers, does your heart burn with joy in God? Does it burn with joy in the triune God? The one who saved you from sin and darkness and cleansed your conscience of all vile works. Who transferred you into his marvelous light. For from him and through him and to him are all things, including you. He is what you are saved for. You've been created and redeemed to worship him. So, rejoice in

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your God. Let your prayers, and your speech, and your singing, and your conversation, and your thoughts, and your imaginations, reflect all of that. Listen, if there's dullness and lethargy in your prayers, your speech, and your singing, there's good reason to check your spiritual pulse.

Well, Jesus rejoices in God, but point two: Jesus rejoices in what God has done. In what God has done. Look again at verse 21, gets us into the content of Jesus' praise and thanksgiving.

Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such, thus, was your good pleasure."

Again, the seventy-two, they'd just returned, and amid any of the joy that they were expressing, there was also on their part, it's not recorded here, but it was on their part an amazement at how many rejected the message. Some perhaps, most of the places that they visited, responded to the message with rejection, with indifference, maybe even some with scorn.

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Jesus had prepared them for that outcome even before sending them out. We've studied all that in verses 10 to 16. So, this prayer of praise and rejoicing in God's sovereign decision to hide salvation truth from the wise and the understanding. This reflects back on those towns that Jesus pronounced, woes upon, like Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

Also, there were others standing right there with them along with the seventy-two, who were not a part of the same believing spirit. We're about to meet such a one, Luke 10:25. A lawyer who stood up to put Jesus to the test. What is he, if he is not among the wise and the understanding? He's the contrast to this text right here, to these babes. Contrasting thoughts here, and they reveal the good pleasure of God, who subverts the expectations of sinners, and you can see the contrast in the two verbs that are there. You've got, hidden, and you've got, revealed. Two separate verbs. God conceals, and God reveals. God closes, and he discloses. He veils, and he unveils. He shuts, and he opens. That has been God's sovereign prerogative from ancient times, and the Bible attests to it.

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In fact, go back to Job, chapter 12, in your Bibles. If you've been following along the daily reading, in the daily Bible, you passed through this territory. This will be familiar to you. This is so helpful, though, to see, because Job lived during the time of the patriarchs and may have been a contemporary of Abraham himself. But in Job 12, starting in verse 13, "With God are wisdom and might. He has counsel and understanding." And then listen to this, "If he tears down, none can rebuild; if he shuts a man in, none can open. If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land. With him are strength and sound wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are his. He leads counselors away stripped, and judges he makes fools.

"He looses the bonds of kings and binds a waistcloth on their hips. He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty. He deprives of speech those who are trusted and takes away the discernment of the elders. He pours contempt on princes and loosens the belt of the strong. He uncovers the deeps out of darkness and brings deep darkness into light. He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away. He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people

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of the earth and makes them wander in a pathless waste. They grope in the dark without light, and he makes them stagger like a drunken man." Or stagger like, a lot in our own government, aren't we?

We're seeing this right before our eyes. Listen, that is the sovereignty of God, folks. Right there, from an ancient voice of Job. It's what we read earlier in the service, Psalm 135, verse 6, Whatever the lord does, er, "Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth." It's the same concept . Go back to Luke 10:21 again, and notice this is exactly what Jesus praises God for. He praises him for his sovereign choice. God has "hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and he has revealed them to little children." God is sovereign over what he hides and what he reveals, and no one can accuse him of wrong doing.

On what basis would you accuse God of wrong doing? On the basis of what standard? Of what law? God is the law giver. Are you going to use his own law to condemn him? "Good luck," as Calvin would say. God is God, though, and he does whatever he wants.

Notice also the contrast in the objects of the two verbs. With the wise and understanding, on the one hand, and then the little children, on the other. Or more literally, the *nepios*, the little babes. We're talking about babes in swaddling diapers. That's what we're talking about here. What is this about? We just heard Job acknowledge it, but again Luke has prepared us for this in what he has recorded already in his Gospel.

Mary said this from the start. Luke 1:51 to 53, "God has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty."

Why this reversal of fortune, here? Is this evidence that God actually has Marxist sympathies? Evening the playing field? Is the God the prototype of the social justice warrior, forcing an equality of outcome and opportunity, overthrowing power structures to right historic wrongs, championing the oppressed? Is that what Mary is rejoicing in? No. Before Mary said that,

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verse 50, she said this, verse 50, "His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation."

Those who fear him can be rich like Abraham or they can be poor like Lazarus. They can be of any station in life, with any amount in the bank account, any car that they drive, any job that they have, any status they have in society. Those who fear him, that's who his mercy's for.

Those who do not fear God, like the proud who use their God given strength to abuse the weak, and they claw their way up to the top of earthly thrones, who use their God, given intellect to enrich themselves by making merchandise of the poor. God scatters them. He throws them down. He sends them away empty.

But even for those who are weak and ungifted, who are poor and lack opportunity, if they do not fear God, if they do not reverence him and put their trust and hope in God, then they're judged along with all other unbelievers. They may lack the position of the wise and the powerful, but they don't lack the ambition of the wise and the powerful. Their hearts are driven

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by the same greed, and that, by the way, is exactly what is driving so much of the social justice movement today. Lust for power, driven by greed.

So those who are the wise and understanding, Jesus is referring to here, they are those who do not fear God. They are those who long for the things of this world. They want to empower themselves, enrich themselves. They care nothing for God's justice, but only to satisfy their own self-centered demands.

They've elevated themselves as judges, made themselves the arbiter of what's right and wrong, true and false, good and bad. They're indifferent to God's judgments. They're indifferent to God's righteousness. They're the ones that God, here, passes over. They're the ones he conceals his saving truth from. He lets them continue in the course of their folly and pride, and that is judicial.

Same thing Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6:20 to 26. Remember when we studied that? He pronounced blessing upon the poor, hungry, weeping. Those who were hated, reviled, and

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spurned, not just for the sake of being poor, but on account of the Son of Man. He also pronounced woes upon the rich. Those who are full and satisfied, those who laugh now, those who curry favor with others, who are respecters of persons, who try to get approval of others on this earth in this life. "Woe to them, for they loved the glory that comes from man", John 12:43, "more than the glory that comes from God."

I'll give you another illustration of this. Turn over to 1 Corinthians 1. Paul elaborates this very point. He says, "The word of the cross," verse 18, "is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written," here it is again, "'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'" Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?

"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through its own wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. Jews demand signs, Greeks seek wisdom,

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we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

What is that about? God subverts the expectation of the proud. He conceals saving truth from those who suppress his truth in unrighteousness. And yet the truth is hidden, as it were, in plain sight through the simple, yet scorned message of the cross of Christ. The proud hate that message even though they hear it loud and clear. Greeks think it's intellectually beneath them. Jews think it's religiously beneath them. Neither will bow the knee to a crucified king.

Ah, but what about the children, these little babes? What's to become of those who, through, though weak and utterly dependent, yet through faith, fear the Lord. Look at verse 26, 1 Corinthians 1, “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many of you were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what

is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"

That's the point, right? That's why God conceals and reveals. So that no human being might boast in the presence of God, but that anyone who boasts, they must make their boast in the Lord and in the Lord alone. So that's the content of Jesus' praise and thanksgiving. That's the reason he rejoices in the Holy Spirit. He rejoices in what God has done, subverting the selfish ambition of the unbelieving proud, and then rewarding the humble expectation of believing babes.

The sovereign lord of the universe, Lord of Heaven and earth. He has the right, and he has the only right. Sovereign prerogative both to conceal and to reveal. The right to do

whatever he wants. Which leads us into a final thought, here. Number three: Jesus rejoices in why God has done it. He rejoices in what God has done, and he rejoices in why God has done it. Joy over who God is, what he's done, and why he's done it. End of verse 21, Jesus says, "Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

What Jesus identifies as, your gracious will, he identifies notice two parts of God's will. The first is about the reprobation of the unbelieving, handing them over to the consequence of their pride. So, the translation, your gracious will, maybe not the best way, in my opinion, to render. This sentence is, maybe, more literally translated, "Yes, Father for thus or in this way," and then this, "good pleasure was before you." The word is *eudokia*, that which pleases, that which brings pleasure. It comes from *eudokeo*, a verb, which, which means, to take pleasure in, delight in, be glad in, and it includes an added nuance of, the delight of deciding. It's the pleasure of sovereignty. The sovereignty to select and to choose and to make decisions.

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Why has God chosen to conceal and reveal, according to what Jesus says here? Put simply, he wants to. He wants to. It gives him pleasure to do all things in accordance with his sovereign decree. He delights in doing his good and perfect will. He delights in executing the plan of perfect wisdom from the perfect mind. Why not? "He is the blessed God", 1 Timothy 1:11. "He is the blessed and only sovereign," 1 Timothy 6:15.

So that's what Jesus rejoices in, here. The why of God concealing and revealing. The why of God pursuing his own will. Executing his determined, degree, decree. That's what the word *eudokia* refers to. It's what Jesus rejoices in. His, this, this way of doing things is pleasing before God. One writer put it this way. "The prayer of Jesus describes as the sovereign, divine decree, the fact that God has hidden the knowledge of the Son from the wise and revealed it to babes. Jesus rests in this basic will of the Father. This is the conclusion of his thinking as it passes into adoration."

Folks, that's what it ought to do for us as well. As we settle our minds on the sovereignty of God. In the sovereign decree of

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God. God's will to conceal saving knowledge from the unbelieving and to reveal it to his elect. God has the prerogative to do whatever he wants. To hide truth from the proud. To hide it in plain sight through the preaching of the Gospel. But to give the grace of his saving truth to the humble.

Folks, this is where we just need to back up. Put it in park and humble ourselves. Sit down, and let Jesus tell us how things really are. If we do, like Jesus, we can enter into the same rest in the will of the father. We can allow this settled conclusion to lead us into joyful adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.

Why is Jesus rejoicing this way in the Holy Spirit, who God is, what God has done, why God has done it? Again, back to the immediate context, it helps us understand why so many reject the Gospel. Why so many reject our beloved Christ. Why so many don't see our holy and great God with adoration and worship, like we do.

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It helps us to understand why there are so many among us who are not wise, not noble, not mighty. For his own glory, God has done what he's done. He's chosen the foolish in the world to shame the wise. He's chosen the weak in the world to shame the strong. Chose what's low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, that are nothing, that are set aside, marginalized, not cared for, to bring to nothing the things that are. So that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

God will strip away all human pride. He will humble us to the dust. Why? To make us grovel? No. But by stripping away all things, we'll look, look up and see the only thing that is precious: Who is God. We'll see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and nothing could be of greater, eternal, and temporal, by the way, temporal value. The implications of this truth about God are, are infinite, and they are eminently practical.

Often my mind returns to reflect on the wise and godly words of A. W. Tozer. He wrote in his introductory chapter of the book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, these words, "All the problems of

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Heaven and earth, though they were to confront us together and at once, would be nothing compared with the overwhelming problem of God. That is, that he is, what he is like, and what we as moral beings must do about him.

"The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long. But even if the multiple burdens of time may be lifted from him, the one mighty single burden of eternity begins to press down upon him with a weight more crushing than all the woes of the world piled one upon another.

"The mighty burden is his obligation to God. It includes an instant and lifelong duty to love God with every power of mind and soul, to obey him perfectly and to worship him acceptably. And when the man's laboring conscience tells him that he is done none of these things but, has from childhood been guilty of foul revolt against the majesty in the heavens, the inner pressure of self-accusation may become too heavy to bear.

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"The Gospel can lift this destroying burden from the mind, give beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. But unless the weight of the burden is felt, the Gospel can mean nothing to the man until he sees a vision of God high and lifted up. There will be no woe and no burden. Low views of God destroy the Gospel for all who hold them."

Friends, perhaps in comparing your view of God to Jesus' view of God, you may find yourself coming up short. A. W. Tozer also wrote, "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of him." It's true. And if the guilt of that sin weighs down upon your conscience. Well, give thanks to God for that because that's an evidence of his grace. That's a good thing. It means that salvation is near. It's at the door.

It's what the Gospel is for: Is to take all those sinful, idolatrous concepts of God, of who he is and what he's like, to take all those rebellious impulses against what God has done and why he has done it, takes all those things and nails it to the cross. He put the son of God to death that you and I might live if we'll put our faith and trust in him, we can be saved from

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our sins. There's salvation in no one else, "for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Father, we go directly to prayer to pray for any soul here who does not know you. Any soul here who has been following the idolatrous impulses of his or her own heart. For all of us here who are saved, who know your salvation, who've been illuminated to your truth. We realize it's by your grace, because we, too, at one time were ignorant and unbelieving. We rejected you as well.

We rebelled against your holiness. We hated your name. We blasphemed and slandered you. We doubted you. We didn't see you as good, but as evil. We saw our own impulses and desires and longings and yearnings; all chasing after fleshly impulses. We saw those as good. Oh, Father, deliver some here from idolatry. Deliver them to the amazing truth that Jesus is a good savior and you are a good God. And for those of us who do know you, let us rejoice and marvel yet again that we belong to you, that our names are registered in heaven, that our sins are forgiven, our

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consciences are clear. We love you. We give ourselves to you wholly, to praise your name. In the name of Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.