

Luke 10:17-24; Rom. 12:9-21; Joy in the Kingdom I. Rejoicing in Election II. Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit III. Rejoicing in the Son

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, is there link between success and joy? Do our expectations for success impact our delight? Well- today we are going to see that these 72 men have returned from a very successful missionary journey. They were filled with joy at the prospect of great blessings on their work. However, Jesus warns them and us on the dangers of linking our worldly success to our joy. Whenever I hear of a pastor or author that has a following, I get very nervous. I follow Paul- or I follow Apollos was the cry of the Corinthian church. Worldly success has a strange way of turning godly men into monsters that need to keep up the stats of church growth. Basis our standards for success on numbers- or how people respond to us- will put us on ride that goes from highs to lows. Rather, as Jesus is teaching here- the reason you should rejoice is because of the relationship you have received. Your joy should be found in your identity- not in your following. Success as a Christian is not based on human standards. As humans, we tend to define success in terms of reaching our goals- or in terms of power and prestige. But what makes a successful Christian- how do we keep a joyful approach to our calling as we participate in the harvest? Is a growing congregation the only way to measure success? Can I be a faithful pastor even if our church shrinks in size- can you be faithful even if you never see fruit from your outreach? Can we have a joyful spirit even if we never see the promised harvest of the nations in our lifetime? Well- today we see that Jesus Christ teaches us how to have joyful success in this world.

### **I. Rejoicing in the Father's Election**

Our text starts in v. 17 with the 72 returning from their initial apostolic journey. And they are excited- they are filled with joy. They are glad- and they delighted in that their work has been successful! Many have listed and believed- they have even cast out demons and healed the sick. Now this is what most people expect from success- there is visible and rapid fruit- as their following increases! We can understand this- who wouldn't be excited to see so many respond to the gospel and the power made evident in these

miracles. Jesus even speaks to this point in v. 18- because of Jesus' work the kingdom of darkness has been overcome- the enemy has been cast down- and these men have received power and authority. Jesus has promised them success- there will be fruit! The reaper has overtaken the sower- there is immediate gain and growth! This was as Jesus has promised. However, it will not always be like this! Sometimes there is no visible fruit- sometimes years of sowing and watering produce little if any visible change. What then? Well- in order to temper this excitement based on visible results- Jesus reveals the greater source of joy. As v. 20 says- rejoice rather that your name is written in heaven. This rejoicing- *Chairo*- means to be glad- to thrive in this truth. Jesus warns them to be careful not to put too much stock in what you do or see. Yes- it is true that the church will be triumphant in Christ- that the great harvest will be gathered- that the innumerable host will surround the throne one day. But we don't always see this right away! So rejoice rather in what God has done for you! We tend to judge success on present appearance- but the work of the Kingdom is also inside of us! There is a joy in His salvation as Psalm 51 say. Now we should rejoice when we see churches grow and people coming to a saving faith. Yes- rejoice in that! But rejoice more in the fact that you are numbered among the saints! In other words- rejoice in your election! Election is gracious- is need not be earned by us! And election is permanent- it cannot be lost! This truth is liberating! Your election is not based on the earthly success of your ministry! Our joy must be on what is lasting and sure- because we will not always see fruit! How can we rejoice in the Lord- always as Phil. 4 says- if our joy is tied to what we see around us? Rather our joy is to be found in the salvation purchased by our Savior! Rejoice that you are chosen- that your name has been written in the Lamb's book of life! We can rejoice in hope as Rom. 12 said. If our salvation is the foundation of our joy- we can rejoice in Christ when people listen to us and when they don't! Being chosen by God moves us towards a lasting joy! Election is a reason to rejoice- to praise God- not to question His goodness but to delight in His grace! So our worldly success must not be the basis for our identity- our identity is found in who we are in Christ- and we are chosen! God has compassion on the one whom He desires to have compassion on- Rom. 9 says. So those who are

chosen by the Father will rejoice in this being chosen! One of the deepest motivation for faith is this- God's love for us! Knowing that we are wanted and embraced moves us to lasting joy!

## II. Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's Revelation

But as our passage continues- we see Jesus rejoicing in v. 21. What causes Jesus to be filled with this joy? Well- the word here is Agallio- which is a strong word- exceedingly glad- or greatly rejoiced! Jesus bursts forth in gladness in the Spirit. His joy was in the Holy Spirit- and the reason for this Spirit filled rejoicings is because of the Father's work in revealing His salvation. So His joy is linked to the Holy Spirit- by the Spirit He experiences this great thanksgiving! Indeed- the fruit of the Spirit is love and joy! Heb. 1 says that Christians are anointed with the oil of gladness. When you look at the moments in the NT when the HS fills a person, there is often a thanksgiving that accompanies this. As Acts 13 says- these disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. Or as Rom. 14 says- the kingdom of God is of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of power and comfort is also the Spirit of joy and thanksgiving. Those who have the Spirit have the person of exceeding joy dwelling within them! But not only joy- the Spirit also brings great clarity and truth! Jesus is delighting in the fact that the Father has made known- made clear in His time- the truth concerning this great salvation! The truth has been revealed to these little ones- to His disciples. Now they can know God by way of His Son- through the working of His Spirit. His plan to save- and the revelation of this plan- moves Jesus to praise His Father. To properly know God- this is the truth that moves Jesus and should move us to exceedingly great joy! And we know that it is by way of the Spirit's presence and work that we can understand this amazing work. The Spirit gives us eyes to see and ears to hear. So Jesus is filled with exceedingly great joy- because of our salvation which has been revealed! And the way in which we understand and appreciate this salvation- is through the same Spirit that filled Jesus in this prayer of thanksgiving! We also know that the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption- He is the seal of our election as we saw in our first point. The Spirit also unites us to Christ- as we will see in the next point- and the Spirit is the seal of the Father- His name placed upon us. There is a spiritual rejoicing that is greater

than all earthly joys! This joy is found in understanding and appreciating our union with our God! To know the Father- as v. 22 says- to know the Son! That the Son would reveal the Father to us by His Spirit- so that we can partake of His blessings. As II Peter 1:4 says- through these promises we might become partakers of this divine nature. He in us and we in Him! The greater a Christian understands what it means to be found in Christ- to have a unity with God and be filled with His Spirit- the greater our rejoicing in Him will be! As Luke 1:47 says- my spirit rejoiced greatly in God my Savior! So to summarize- Jesus rejoices greatly in the mysterious union attained by the Holy Spirit between God and His bride! This is how Jesus and His people will rejoice in the Spirit! Joy based on our identity- not on what we accomplish. His Spirit makes us joyful!

### **III. Rejoicing in the Son's Fulfillment**

But there is one more place in these verses where we find joy and happiness. In v. 23 Jesus turns to His disciples and says, blessed are you- happy are your eyes for what they have seen. Here Jesus uses the word- Makarios- which is the same word used in the Beatitudes in Mt. 5- blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God! Now what did these disciples see? Well- they saw Jesus- and to see Jesus was to see fulfillment! As v. 24 continues- many have desired to see this day- but the disciples have the privilege of witnessing with their eyes-they were living during the time of the fulfillment. The OT prophets and kings may have longed for His arrival- but now they saw Him! The hope of the nations had come! What made these men blessed- what filled them with happiness and delight- is to see Jesus! It is better to have the Son than to have anything else! It was a privileged position. He who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than even John the Baptist- as Mt. 11 says. Or as I Peter 1:12 says- It was revealed to these prophets that they were not serving themselves- but you. Even angels long to look into these things. To say this another way- you stand on the shoulders of OT giants! Your ability to see clearly is a gift of grace- as you understand the Son and His Work in a way they could only long for! There was great clarity during the time of the apostles- and during our time. That we might know the Son and His work- these things are revealed to us! These OT saints longed to see Jesus- longed to see the sway of darkness and ignorance defeated!

We live in the time of the King- of the coming of God's Kingdom! When struck by your own weakness- or when confronted by what appears to failures in your ministry- call to mind your privileged position- that you can know and proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified- a name that the OT saints could not as clearly proclaim! Remember how blessed you are- that you can know and see Jesus! Those who are joined to the Son and filled by the Spirit are supremely blessed- their joy knows no end- and their mission as they participate in the work of Christ- will not fail! The Son will have His bride- the Harvest will be gathered! Christ will be victorious- so His people can rejoice as they participate in this triumphant work!

To conclude, to be a successful Christian is to obey and delight in your God! Faithfulness and Spirit-filled joy in your salvation! Marveling at your relationship with God equals Christian joy! When we properly understand our purpose in this world- we are freed from the ups and downs of ministry success!

Remember Saul who envied David- and set his heart on destroying the Lord's anointed! How much better it would have been to echo the words of John- He must increase, I must decrease! My calling is not to make much of me- but to make much of Him because He is all together lovely in my eyes! We are blessed because of our election- blessed because of the Spirit given unity with God- and blessed because of the clarity revealed in the Son. When we remember this, our happiness and delight will endure no matter what response we receive in this world!