Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Joys of a True Disciple
Scripture: Luke 10:17-20
Code: 42-137

Let's open our Bibles to the tenth chapter of Luke's gospel as we continue to move through this great section in which we learn the elements of true discipleship. The next paragraph in our exposition of this text is chapter 10 verses 17 through 20...chapter 10 verses 17 through 20 of Luke's gospel. I'm going to read this text because I want you to have some familiarity with it as we unfold its wonderful richness.

Beginning in Luke 10:17, "And the seventy returned with joy saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." A wonderful little passage filled with profound truth and you will, I think, see some things that perhaps that you've never seen before by the time we're done this morning.

I do believe that this is a refreshment for us in the flow of the teaching in Luke's gospel. We've been facing some very hard words from Jesus. The high point of the disclosure of Jesus to His disciples and Apostles comes in the ninth chapter. As you remember, back in chapter 9 verse 18 the disciples gathered around Jesus and He questioned them saying, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" Been here long enough, been healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, showing power over nature, teaching, preaching the Kingdom, what's the conclusion? Who do the multitudes say that I am? "And they answered and said, 'John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, but others that one of the prophets of old has risen again.' And He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' And Peter indicates that the lesson has been complete, that they have learned the truth. "On behalf of all of them he answered and said, 'The Christ of God.'" In Matthew's words, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, You are the Messiah, You are God the Son." This is the high point of His revelation. They get it. They know who He is. He is the promised King, bringing the Kingdom of salvation. He is the one who would come and be the ultimate sacrifice for sin. He is the promised Redeemer, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And now that they know who He is, it's time for Him to call them to discipleship in the purest and fullest sense. And so in verse 23 He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me..."

Now that you know who I am, which is the first step in any process of evangelism, if you're going to call people to Christ, they didn't know who He is. "Now that you know who I am, if you want to come after Me, here's what is required. Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." And there is the hard call to discipleship because it's against the grain of self-love, it's against the grain of personal ambition and personal desire and self-will. It is a call to self-denial. It is a call to death, if necessary, taking up the cross. It is a call to submission, following obediently all that the Lord asks. In a sense, it's what verse 24 calls, "losing your life." If you want to follow Me, it will cost you everything. Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. He is calling on those people then, as He does now, to give up their lives, to say I abandon myself, I answer the call. Whatever it is that You want, I give. I will serve You in self-denying obedience, even if it costs me my life. That's how precious salvation is to me.

Not in every case, by any means, does the Lord ask us to die. All of us here are living testimony to that. But the reality is that coming to Christ is an abandonment to that if indeed He does ask. It is essentially saying I want what you have, the forgiveness of sin, the hope of eternal life and I value that forgiveness and I value that eternal life far more than this physical life. And if you ask me, I'll give up everything I have, everything I am, everything I hope to be, including my own life to gain that eternal gift of salvation. This is the hard call because it's against the grain of one's own self-preservation, self-exaltation, and self-fulfillment.

Not only does He ask us to give up ourselves but later in the ninth chapter it's a matter of forsaking everything else in our world. In verse 57 of Luke 9, at the end of the chapter, they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "Okay, I'll follow You. I'll do that. I'll be self-denying. I'll be cross bearing. I'll be obedient. I'll follow You wherever You go, whatever it means I'm going to follow You." And Jesus said to him, "Well here's what it means, the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. I promise no creature comforts. It means that you're willing to say, I abandon all my hope for creature comforts."

He said to another in verse 59, "Follow Me. He said, Permit me first to go and bury my father." As I told you when we went through that, his father wasn't dead but he wanted to go home to receive his inheritance. If Jesus didn't have any place to stay, he obviously didn't have any money. If he was going to follow Jesus he was going to have to be self-reliant so he needed to go home until his father died, cash in on his inheritance and then be able to fund the rest of his life following Jesus. Jesus said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the Kingdom of God." You don't understand, the time is now, the need is urgent, there's no time for you to go home and get money. You've got to abandon all of that and give your life to the preaching of the Kingdom of God and let me supply what it is that needs to be supplied.

Another came along, another would-be follower, and said, "I'll follow You, Lord, first permit me to say goodbye to those at home." Let me go in and make sure in my house and in my family that everything is the way it should be and make sure that I take care of all those relationships and maybe even get some money from various relatives to support me. Jesus said to him, "No one after putting his hand to the plow looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." In other words, the bottom line is, forget the family, forget the money, forget the creature comforts and get on about the business of the Kingdom. Does it matter enough for you to say, "I would give up everything?" This is the parable of the pearl of great price, the treasure hidden in the field of Matthew 13 where when the treasure was found and the pearl was found, the man sold everything for the pearl and the treasure. In other words, the value of Christ is so supreme, no price is too high to pay. That's the call to discipleship. It's a call to self-denial. It's a call to sacrifice. It's a call to death. It's a call to obedience without regard for comfort, money, or family. It isn't that the Lord will divest you of all of those things necessarily, it is that you show the cry of your heart at its deepest point in the fact that salvation is so precious to you and a place in the eternal Kingdom of God, and the forgiveness of sin is so valuable to you that you would hold nothing back were He to ask for it.

And really, not everybody was willing to do that. John 6 verse 66 says, "Many of His disciples walked no more with Him." That's too much, the say, too demanding, and they turned around and walked away. And that still keeps people from embracing Jesus Christ, but that's exactly what the call involves.

There were, on the other hand, some who were willing to follow on those terms. We meet 70 of them in chapter 10. And as we come in to chapter 10 verse 1, the Lord appointed 70 others. Some old manuscripts say 72, it's either 70 or 72, it's hard to choose between the two, 70 works as a round number, nonetheless. The Lord appointed 70 others and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. There were a number of people who were willing to come to Jesus on His terms, and here the Lord out of the group that were genuine disciples chose 70, split them in to two by two and sent them to every town and village where He was going to come to get the town ready, to be a forerunner, like John the Baptist was, and declare that the Messiah, the Savior was coming and give them the gospel of the Kingdom in anticipation of Jesus. It was hard to come to the place where you were willing to be a disciple because it meant self-denial, self-sacrifice and submission. It went against the grain of everything that's sort of normal. That was hard. But it was also hard once you were a disciple to do what Jesus asked you to do. He sent them out, He says in verse 3, it's not going to be easy, you're going to be exposed to danger. You're going to be like lambs in the middle of wolves. And then in verse 4 He says you're going to have to forfeit all self-reliance, carry no purse, no bag, no shoes. That is to say I want you to learn to depend on Me for everything. You're also going to have to be single minded with regard to the gospel and not be concerned about establishing relationships with people who can aid you or help you, greet no one on the way. Don't stop to cultivate a relationship and have a meal, which is what "greet" involved. Stick with the task.

You're going to have accept all situations, whatever house you enter you go there, you stay there. You don't look for better accommodations. Take what comes. It's going to be a hard life because you're going to be called to confront sinners. And down in verse 11, when they don't respond, when they don't receive you, as verse 10 says, shake the dust off your feet in protest, public protest against them. And then you're going to pronounce judgment on them, verses 11 through 16 indicates. You're going to tell them it's going to be better in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, Canaanite Gentile idolatrous cities, than it's going to be for you who heard the gospel of Christ and rejected it. Not easy being a disciple. The cost is everything to become a disciple and you sacrifice your life at that point and then you live out that living sacrifice by putting your life on the line to go out and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, exposing yourself to danger, forfeiting self-reliance with a single-minded focus, accepting any and every condition the Lord might bring along, confronting sinners which is very hard, and being rejected. And then having to pronounce judgment on them makes matters worse.

By the time you get down here to verse 16 and you've gone through all of that in chapters 9 and 10, the whole picture of discipleship is a pretty daunting picture. It's a far cry from the typical kind of invitations to Christ that we hear of today. It isn't even remotely close. It isn't just daunting, it is some ways even frightening to accept this invitation to discipleship. It is a sacrifice so great and so constant and so consuming and so demanding that it is too much for some. To give up your life, to give up your comforts, to give up your relationships, to give up the world, to give up popularity, and to choose self-sacrifice, self-denial, hostility, confrontation, rejection, but this is what discipleship is about.

Dedrich Bonhoffer was a Lutheran pastor in Nazi Germany. He was part of the Protestant Resistance to the Nazis. He was imprisoned for his resistance and his devotion to the gospel. And finally on April 9th, 1945, he was hanged as a criminal by the Nazis. Many years ago when I was just a young Christian, I read his book called The Cost of Discipleship. It was a very important book in my life and had a profound effect upon me. I mean, I basically lived in an insulated world. I didn't know too many people who were hanged for their faith in Christ, none in our church, none in my life. And I began to read about a kind of discipleship that was different than what I saw. Bonhoffer said, "When Christ calls a man, He bids him, 'Come and die.'" It was Bonhoffer who coined the phrase, "Cheap grace." And he called the church to true discipleship that transforms people into followers of Christ who are self-denying and will pay whatever the cost Christ asks. Bonhoffer also wrote in that book, "The only man who has a right to say he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ." He understood that. He didn't understand it just experientially, he understood it biblically and then he lived it experientially.

Well the 70 were like Bonhoffer. They understood that. And they said, "Okay, we'll make the sacrifice. If He chooses for us to live, we live. If he chooses for us to die, we die." We don't know what happened to the 70. We know they all returned at the end of their first forays, so nobody got killed in the first effort. We don't know what happened to them. It's a fair assumption that some of them may have been martyred along the way. But the point is, they were willing to make the sacrifice. The Apostles, almost all of them became martyrs. John, the exception, became an exile. The early Christians were imprisoned and killed, as you know, many believers through the history of the church have given their lives and death for Christ and they're still doing so today. But Paul summed all that up, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain," and if you have a heavenly perspective, this life is negotiable, or expendable anyway. He said, "Everything I...chapter 3 verses 7 and 8 of Philippians...everything I garnered, everything I gained, everything I achieved, everything I sought in this life and attained to, I count it as loss for the sake of Christ." And then he went on to say in verse 8, "I count all things but loss for the sake of gaining the Lord Jesus Christ."

And that's the perspective. And the 70 were like that. They said, "Okay. Salvation is so important to us, eternal life is so important to us, forgiveness and heaven is so important to us that whatever the price you ask of us, we gladly pay." And this is unnatural, unconventional...denying our normal lusts, desires, longings, hopes, dreams, severing the normal relationships of life. And you can ask the question at this point, "Well, is that all there is? What's the end result of this?" And you're going to find yourself, I think, blessed this morning if you remember what we just read in this context. Go to verse 17.

"And the seventy returned with joy," let me stop you right there. They returned with what? Joy is the operative word. We're going to talk about joy here. The seventy returned with joy. Nobody died in this effort. They were willing. They came back and after going out in all these towns and being rejected in many places, being certainly put out of town, run off, having to give warnings, shake dust off their garments, pronounce judgment. They also had spiritual success. There also, as always, was a remnant out there that responded positively. They gave up their lives. They gave up their comfort, their money, their popularity. And what they got in return for that was joy. They returned after their first effort into these various towns and villages all over the place where Jesus was going to eventually come. And they were full of joy. And we ask the question immediately, "Where did the joy come from?" In the light of such a demanding call to discipleship, where did the joy come from? And the answer is, there were three reasons for their joy...three reasons for their joy and that's going to unfold the text for us. This is just so rich.

Reason number one, divine power over Satan's kingdom...divine power over Satan's kingdom. Verse 17, "And the seventy returned with joy saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your

name.'"

This was new. Demons, subject to them? This is an overwhelming reality. Now any student of Scripture knows about Satan. You know that Satan was created by God along with the other angels. That all the angels were originally created holy. They were gathered around the throne of God to worship and to glorify Him. And Satan was named Lucifer and he was son of the morning and he was a shining star. He may have been well the worship leader of heaven, the anointed cherub, he is called. But he fell. Corrupted by pride, wanting to no longer to submit to God but to be equal with God, he led a rebellion and Revelation 12 says one third of all the angels fell with him and they became the demon host. They were created by God to glorify and serve God, one third of them were thrown out of heaven and cursed to eternal damnation in a Lake of Fire forever for that rebellion. They are not redeemable. They constitute the demons. They are old. They were created around the time of the creation of everything else so they have been operating to thwart the purposes of God since the time of their fall around the time of creation itself. Any student of Scripture knows that Lucifer's the enemy of God, the enemy of Christ, the enemy of the Holy Spirit, the enemy of Holy Scripture, that he is the enemy of Israel, that he is the enemy of the church, that frankly, he is the enemy of all the souls of all men and that he is immensely powerful, so much so that even Michael, the archangel, didn't bring a railing accusation against him but called on God to deal with Satan. He is called the ruler of the darkness of this world. He is called the prince of the power of the air. He's called the god of this world. He's called the destroyer, the father of lies, the ultimate murderer. He has the power of death. He is called the deceiver, the slanderer and the evil one. And as I said, he's not alone in his wicked enterprise, he has ten thousands and ten thousands of demons operating with him. They are old, they are as old as creation. They are intelligent. They are wicked. They are deceptive. And they are supernaturally powerful. And they literally dominate the world, the whole unconverted world, 1 John 5:19, lies in the lap of the evil one. It's as if they're being suckled by Satan himself. And an eternal Lake of Fire has been prepared in which they will all burn without being consumed forever and ever and ever, along with the people who are a part of their domain.

Evangelism then is the task of rescuing souls from their grip. Evangelism is the task of rescuing people out of the clutches of Satan, ripping them, as it were, from the lap of the evil one. It is breaking in to the domain of darkness, it is a rescue operation. And in order to achieve that, the powers of hell must be overthrown. The power of demons must be conquered. Evangelism is not just convincing people by a good argument of the truth of the gospel and thus they believe. It is not just a human operation. It is not just an argument about who's right. It is not just a rational debate. It is a rescue operation into the supernatural realm of darkness where all the souls of the unbelievers are under the control of demons and they are in a condition of being spiritually dead and spiritually blind. So you're dealing with people who don't have the apparatus to respond and in order to reach them, they have to be awakened from the dead, they have to be given sight, that's a supernatural

operation. And then the very world of Satan has to be overpowered so they can be rescued. This is not a simple operation. It is an assault on the forces of hell and they are powerful, powerful forces.

Now the Jews believed in Satan, we've said that many times in the study of Luke. And they knew that Satan had a kingdom. And they knew that if Messiah was coming, He was going to overpower the kingdom of Satan and establish His Kingdom in the world, therefore Messiah had to prove His power over Satan. And that is why Jesus in His own temptation demonstrated His power over Satan in rebuking and defeating Satan there on the mount where he tempted Him. That is why Jesus repeatedly cast demons out of people. We've seen illustrations of that, the man in the synagogue, the maniac with the legion of demons living in him that Jesus delivered, and many other demon-possessed people that Jesus rescued from that power. The Jews knew that the Messiah had to have power over the devil, power over Satan. He had to be able to crush the serpent's head because Genesis 3:15 said when Messiah comes, Satan will bruise His heel but He will crush his head. So our Lord had to put on a display of power over the kingdom of darkness and He did. He just banished demons everywhere He went and displayed His power over them. Even in the lives of people who didn't repent and believe He still showed His power to throw the demons out of them. He delegated that power to the Apostles, chapter 9 tells us in verse 1 He gave them power and authority over all the demons. He spread that power, it was His power delegated to them, again to expand the evidence that He had the power to conquer the kingdom of darkness. And here as the seventy, the first batch of missionaries, they aren't the Apostles, they're seventy disciples, the first group of missionaries, as they went out and they preached, the same power was manifest through them. Lord, they said, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.

The key phrase, "in Your name." That is by Your power. There was no other power that could command demons. You remember the exorcist in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, they were trying to cast out demons and the demons said, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you? You have no authority over us." It may...it may not have been that they even particularly went to cast out demons, it doesn't say when it tells about the power they had back earlier in chapter 10. It says in verse 9, "They had power to heal the sick." It doesn't say specifically that they were given power to cast out demons, they may have been. But it may well have been that when they were preaching the gospel, the power of the gospel was delivering people who responded and believed and therefore the demons were thus overpowered and perhaps manifestly so. They saw the power of Christ flowing through them, conquering the power of Satan. While we do not have the apostolic power that the Twelve had, we do not have the delegated power that the seventy had, if in fact they were given power to cast out demons, we still...this is marvelous to think about...we today, believers now and through all of the church's history, we still are the instruments of the Lord by which the grip of Satan is broken on souls. We are the force, we are the soldiers that invade the kingdom of darkness and are triumphant in the rescue of souls that are held captive by Satan and his demons. The power of

darkness is crushed by the gospel.

The seventy came back and they were literally overwhelmed by this great reality. It was like Paul in 2 Corinthians 2 and 3 who said, "Who is adequate for these things? Who could ever triumph in Christ in the way that we do? Who humanly could ever matter so much?"

And when you think about what matters in the world, you could say, "Well there are ways to make an impact and an effect in the world, you can...you can help people along physically, you can better the conditions of their life. You can make educational contributions or you can make moral contributions, or you can make cultural contributions to the world. Or you can relieve burdens or issues," and that kind of thing. Nothing matters as much as freeing souls from the domain of Satan. And here were the seventy realizing that they were experiencing the power of Christ delegated to them and through them and this was actually happening. They had a foretaste, a preview of the power that came on all believers at Pentecost and since with the Holy Spirit.

To give you perspective on this, turn to Ephesians 1:20. When Jesus was raised from the dead, Ephesians 1:20, God raised Him from the dead, He was seated at the right hand of God in heavenly places. Then in verse 21, it tells us this, "Christ having died and risen again, exalted to the right hand of the Father," verse 21, "far above," now He is in the supreme place as Lord, the supreme throne, the supreme rule, "far above all other rule and authority and power and dominion." And that, my friends, refers to demonic powers. Oh it certainly refers to human powers, but that's not the intent of it. It is through the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ that He triumphed over all the powers of hell in this age and the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church...now follow this...which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Listen to the flow here. Christ dies, rises, goes to heaven, is exalted over all the demonic powers of the universe, becomes the head of the body and through the body flows that very same power so that we literally bear the power of Christ over the forces of hell through the proclamation of the gospel.. This is an immense truth that makes the potential of our value staggering. It says in 1 Peter 3:22 that through the resurrection Jesus is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. That's what happened at the cross and the resurrection. He gave the final death blow to Satan and all the fallen angels. And so Christ then became Lord over all of them for certain, forever. And that's delegated to us.

Let me show you that in Acts 26, this is really a powerful text of Scripture. Paul giving his testimony here to King Agrippa, referring back to the Damascus Road experience. Acts 26:15, Jesus speaks to him, "I am Jesus who you are persecuting," He says to Paul. And he's remembering his Damascus Road experience, having fallen to the ground. "Arise," Jesus says, "stand on your feet, for this

purpose I have appeared to you to appoint you as a minister and a witness, not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things which I will appear to you, delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles to whom I'm sending you." I'm going to protect you from those that want to destroy you, persecute you, kill you. And here's what you're going to do. "I'm sending you," verse 18, "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." What an unbelievable promise. I'm making you a minister and a witness and I'm going to use you by sending you to people, Jews and Gentiles, and through your preaching of the gospel their eyes will be opened, they will turn from darkness to light, they will be rescued from the dominion of Satan, placed into God's Kingdom where they will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal inheritance that belongs to all of those who have been set apart by faith to Me.

In other words, you're going to invade the kingdom of darkness and rescue the souls of men and women. Paul says that was my commission and I was obedient to it. Well who wouldn't be? What a calling. And it's true for us. I mean, think of how your life really should matter. When you go out and faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, you literally invade the kingdom of darkness to rescue the souls there. Through your faithfulness to the proclamation of the message, the power of God flows to awaken the dead, give sight to the blind, and rescue the perishing as the old hymn put it, out of the kingdom of darkness, literally...Colossians 1:13...transferring them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. This is what we do. Is that cause for joy? To have your life matter like that? What else matters?

I remember when I came to the end of my college football career and I was being offered an opportunity to play professional football, and for a kid, you know, that's a pretty exciting thing. And you get enough accolades and enough ego-gratification and have enough success to figure that might be a great way to go. And I remember it was just right at that time in my life when I was having to decide whether I was going to allow the teams to draft me and go through the whole thing or not, and I was sent to the hospital by somebody who heard me give a testimony at a some kind of club thing here in Los Angeles where I had been invited as a player and they gave me some award and whatever. And this guy said, "You could help me by visiting this girl." I went to the hospital to talk to this girl, she was a quadriplegic, her boyfriend had shot her through the neck and severed her spinal cord. She was head cheerleader at Thousand Oaks High School...way, way back when I was just 21. And I went to the hospital and I didn't know what to say, I'm a kid, what do I know? I haven't experienced what this kind of person in that kind of devastating injury, all I knew to do was to give her the gospel of Jesus Christ, which I did. Her name was Polly. And after presenting the gospel....she had said to me, "If I could kill myself I would, but I can't move anything." And I said, "You know, it's not important what happens to your body, it's what's important what happens to your eternal soul." And I gave her the gospel and she responded to Christ in the most incredible way, it stunned me...it

stunned me. And I went back the next day and she actually said to me, and I've never forgotten these words, she said, "You know, in some ways, John, I'm glad this happened because I never would have met Christ if it hadn't happened." How could you be glad to be a 17-year-old quadriplegic, unless you were overwhelmed with some greater reality? And God was gracious to her and she grew in Christ and a man came along who loved her and married her and cared for her.

That was a turning point in my life. What does it matter running around on a field with a piece of pig under your arm to the ya-hoos of people, the ya-hoos of people who can't wait for the next hot dog? That doesn't have any value. What has value is charging into the kingdom of darkness and rescuing somebody, isn't it? That's what has value. What are you going to do with your life? No wonder they rejoiced. I mean, what greater joy could you have than this?

And Jesus' response to their joy is thrilling as well. Back in Luke chapter 10, He joined in. He joined into their joy, verse 18, "And He said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.'" This is a great statement.

You say, "What in the world does that mean? What does it mean He was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning?" Well some say it refers to the fact that He saw Satan fall in his original fall way back at the time of creation as recorded in Isaiah 14:12 where Scripture says, "How have you fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn?" He saw that. Well that has nothing to do with this. Why would He all of a sudden say, "I saw Satan fall a long time ago," it doesn't have nothing to do with this, plus He didn't say I saw, He said, "I was watching," imperfect, continuous.

Some people say, "Well no, it refers to His temptation. He's thinking back. Just as they had power over the demons, He had power over Satan at His temptation and vanquished him at His temptation. He's thinking back to that which was recorded in the fourth chapter of Luke." Others say, "No, He's just looking back and saying, 'Yeah, they were subject to you and Satan's been subject to Me through My ministry as I have been casting out demons also." And others say, "No, no, what He's talking about is the cross, like in John 12:31 and 32 where He's going to crush Satan on the cross by Himself being lifted up, He's looking at the cross." And others say, "No, He's looking at the future. He's looking at the final subjugation of Satan in the twentieth chapter of Revelation when at that particular time Satan is going to be bound for a thousand years, thrown into a pit at the end of which he comes out of the pit and is thrown forever into the Lake of Fire, and He's looking ahead seeing that."

Well I'll tell you this. He did see everything like that. He saw it all. He saw everything from the fall to the final incarceration of Satan at the time of the millennial Kingdom and his ultimate doom in the eternal Lake of Fire. And He sees everything about Satan all along the way. That is definitely true. But I think there's some keys here that help us understand something quite remarkable here. "I was

watching," He says. "I was watching. You guys were out there, you were preaching, people were hearing, they were being delivered. I was watching. I was watching," *tereo*in the imperfect tense, I was a spectator continuously. It's not talking about a one-time event, the fall. Not talking about a one-time event, the temptation. Not talking about a one-time event, the future, although I think He saw the future fall of Satan in that. I think that was in certainly in His mind and in His view. But for this moment He was saying, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning." Have you ever been in a lightning storm? Sha-koom, and then it's black. Sha-koom and then it's black. Pa-chung and then it's black and fisst...it's black. And I was watching you. Satan in a final flash and then the soul was rescued and he was gone. And then I saw it again. And then I saw it again. Then I saw it again. Then I saw it again.

Really dramatic, isn't it? When you go out and present the gospel of Jesus Christ, there might be a satanic flash as the sort of last furious protest of hell and it's over. It's over and that soul is rescued. And Jesus is saying to them, "I saw all of it, guys. Only what you saw and what I saw were a little different. I saw Satan's kingdom being destroyed as far as its grip, one soul at a time."

Verse 21 says, "At that time, that very time, He, Jesus, rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit." They were all rejoicing. Jesus was rejoicing. The seventy were rejoicing. Why were they rejoicing? Because of power over Satan's kingdom.

There's a second point here. Joy comes not only because of power over Satan's kingdom, there's...there's a cost to being a disciple but the joy far out strips it. Jesus went to the cross, the greatest price ever paid for the joy that was set before Him, Hebrews 12 says. And we have that same joy before us in our sacrifice.

Second, not only divine power over Satan's kingdom, divine protection from Satan's kingdom...divine protection from Satan's kingdom. Now obviously, if you're an invader into the kingdom of darkness, they're not going to like you. Demons are persons, do you understand that? They're persons. They know who we are. They know who we are. They know who you are, they know who I am. They know my name, they know me very well. They know what I do. They know what I preach. They hate me. And they hate you. All of us who are Christ's, all of us who are witnesses to the gospel are the enemies of hell and they do not like us invading their dark kingdom and rescuing souls. They do not like us being the instruments by which God does that work. They're offended by that. And they have evil intent against their enemies. And I think it's fair to say they would like to stop us from doing it. Is that fair to say? They want to stop the work of God, thwart the work of God, they don't like those who preach the truth. They don't like those who faithfully witness. They don't like those who are evangels. They don't like the troops that invade their kingdom. We are their enemies. And we could assume that they will do anything they can to undo us or to destroy us. That may have been in the

thought of the seventy. I know, you guys...Jesus says, "You were in My name an through My power invading the kingdom of darkness and Satan was coming down and coming down. Every time somebody was saved, there was a bolt of lightning, the last ditch effort of Satan and then that soul was delivered. The thought might be, "You know, we could get ourselves in trouble with the forces of hell and that might not be too good." So immediately in verse 19 Jesus says this, "Behold," a startling fact is coming, that's why He uses this term "behold." "Behold, I...love that...the divine sovereign Lord have given you...perfect tense in the past with continuing effect...I have permanently given you *exousia*dominance, right, authority, power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall injure you." Wow! They might not like you and they might want to stop you but they can't. "I, the sovereign divine Lord, have given you permanently as My own the power and dominance that gives you the right to tread upon serpents and scorpions." Sounds like the Marine image, doesn't it? Serpents and scorpions....He's not talking about the literal animals, bugs. That's metaphorical for demons. Satan is viewed as a serpent. In the book of Revelation chapter 9, demons have tails like scorpions and a scorpion king over them. The angel of the Abyss called Abaddon and Apollyon. In Revelation 16 demons are like slimy frogs. These deadly kinds of creatures, serpents and scorpions, are metaphors for the subtle, sneaky, deadly demons. Those are well-known symbols, by the way, of evil spirits.

And the context here is metaphoric anyway because He describes Satan as falling like lightning. And Satan himself, of course, Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 20 is called a snake or a serpent. But He says, "Don't worry about them. I've given you the power to tread on them. I've given you literally authority, dominance over all the power of the enemy." Wow!

I remember some time back when a group of people came here from a charismatic church and they came sort of in mass. And in a discussion I said, "Why did you come?" And they said, "It was one sermon, you came once and you preached on the sovereignty of God and we had lived our whole lives up to that point under the sovereignty of Satan. We had been taught that Satan is going to take your life, kill your children, infest your house with demons, make you sick and we were liberated when we found out that Satan wasn't sovereign, God was."

I suppose I could assume that Satan's not happy with me, but I don't virtually pay any attention to him. I have two objectives toward Satan, pay no attention to him and flee from anything he's involved in. I don't say anything to him, I never have. I'm not interested in a conversation. I don't understand people who talk to him and tell him to go here and go there, as if he would. I have a promise of protection. I'm in Christ and my Christ crushed the serpent's head and I'm triumphant in Christ, that's 2 Corinthians 2. We always are cause to triumph in Christ. First John 4:4, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world," and Romans 16:20, Satan is literally crushed under our feet. This magnificent promise covers every fear that could ever come from the forces of hell. You have authority over all the power of the enemy, that's Satan. The serpents and scorpions are the demons and THE enemy is Satan, you have nothing to fear from any of them...any of them, nothing. Nothing

shall injure you, *adikeo*in the Greek, nothing shall harm you or hurt you. They can do nothing to hurt you, nothing to harm you...nothing. They can't come and live in you. They can't kill you.

You say, "Well aren't there times when the Lord allows demons to refine us, or even Satan to do some things that refine us?" Of course. Job, Peter, Paul, thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan, but that didn't harm any of them, did it? It refined them. So all they can do to us is that which God will use for our spiritual growth.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:3 it says, "The Lord is faithful and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one and we have confidence in the Lord." Nothing to fear...nothing to fear. Just resist him and he'll go away. And so, no wonder they rejoiced.

They rejoiced in power over the kingdom of Satan, protection from the kingdom of Satan, third thing, and this will be quick, they rejoiced not only divine power over Satan's kingdom, divine protection from Satan's kingdom, but divine preservation in God's kingdom. I love this, verse 20. "Nevertheless," as good as all this is, guys, as happy as you are, "nevertheless, do not rejoice in this." And what He means by that phrase is don't limit your joy to that, don't limit your joy to that, that the spirits are subject to you. Oh, that's reason for joy, and I rejoice with you, and I was thrilled to see Satan going down over and over like flashes of lightning. But don't limit your joy to that, that the spirits are subject to you, that's just temporal. That's only going to happen here in this life. Go beyond that and rejoice, verse 20, "That your names are recorded...where?...in heaven." Not only that you're going to enjoy the power of God in this life, but that you're going to enjoy the blessing of God forever.

Could you imagine how encouraging it would be if Jesus came to you personally and said, "By the way, John, your name is recorded in heaven, just in case you had any doubt,"? The seventy never had a doubt again. Jesus said, "I know you're happy about the power over and the protection from Satan, but let me tell you a cause for greater joy, your names are written in heaven, *egraphe*, recorded on record permanently in heaven. Jesus is saying you're the real deal. You're the true disciple. You're the genuinely converted. You came and you gave your life to embrace Me, and I'm telling you, your names are written in heaven. You rejoice in that. That's the greatest joy. Even the triumphs that we have over Satan are just for this life. That's not the supreme joy. That's not the most wondrous reality. The most wondrous reality is that our names are recorded in heaven. Whatever self-denial, whatever cross bearing, whatever submission was required, whatever turning away from the world and what it offers, the ultimate prize is ours, to be enrolled in the Book of Life. In Jewish thinking there was a book of life, Exodus 32:32 and 33 talks about it, Psalm 69:28 talks about it, Isaiah 4:3, Daniel 12:1, Revelation 3:5, Revelation 13:8. There was a Book of Life and God has written the names of His own in the book. That's the way they did it in ancient times. In towns they

had a book and all the citizens who were in good standing were in the book. God has a book and all the citizens of heaven have their name there. And He says your names are there because you're My true disciples. If you're going to rejoice supremely, rejoice in that.

Nothing Satan can do to overpower the gospel witness we give in the sovereign purpose and will of God, when He so chooses, the message that we preach, the gospel we proclaim shatters the grip of Satan, frees the prisoner from the kingdom of darkness and rescues him, delivering him into the Kingdom of God's Son. Even though they hate us for this that we engage in, they can do nothing to harm us. There's something far more wonderful than that, far more wonderful than this operation that we're used to do here and that is all that God has prepared for us in the glory of His eternal heaven. And that in the end is why any price is worth paying to be a follower of Jesus.

Lord, we do thank You for this joy that is ours, joy to be so useful, joy to be so protected, joy to be so preserved in Your eternal Kingdom. And may we live lives that manifest this joy which no man can take from us. May we never attach our joy to the petty things of life, the trivialities, the empty things. May our joy be connected to spiritual triumph, supernatural protection and eternal hope. To this end we pray that we might so live as to make Christ manifest in all His glory. We pray in His name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).