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

What Makes Jesus Rejoice, Part 3
Scripture: Luke 10:23-24
Code: 42-140

Let's open our Bibles to Luke chapter 10, verses 21 to 24 is our text this morning. Again we come back to a wonderful, wonderful portion of Scripture and a unique one that introduces us to the joy of Jesus, the joy of Jesus. Let me read the text for you again, Luke 10 starting at verse 21. "At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father and no one knows who the Son is except the Father and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.' And turning to the disciples He said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see for I say to you that many prophets and kings wish to see the things which you see and did not see them and hear the things which you hear and did not hear them.'"

In this passage we are introduced to the joy of Jesus. This is the only time, you'll remember, in all the New Testament that it says Jesus rejoiced. But God is joyful. He is always joyful at all times. Joy is an attribute of God. It is an unchanging attribute, part of His immutable, unchanging nature. And here the joy of Jesus bursts forth and we find here three reasons for His joy which we'll return to in a minute.

All of us as Christians, by way of introduction, are commanded to be joyful. Rejoice always and again I say rejoice...commands the Holy Spirit in Philippians chapter 4. We are commanded to be joyful, to be incessantly joyful, constantly joyful to maintain a deep-down abiding joy in spite of all that is wrong in the world and all that troubles us in our own personal lives. And the key, of course, is to get beyond your circumstances and to rejoice in the Lord, to rejoice in the Lord who never changes, whose promises never fail, who is always faithful and completes what He begins and bring to pass what He designs. Paul said, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly," and at the time he wrote that he was in the worst possible human situation. He was a prisoner of the Romans. He was suffering at the hands of his enemies. He was also suffering at the hands of the friends of the gospel. And yet he rejoiced greatly. In Philippians chapter 4 he tells us why. He says in verse 11, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." His joy was constant and incessant because it was not related to the up and down of circumstances. "I know how to get along with humble means," he says, verse 12 Philippians 4, "I also know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have

learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need and I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." His joy was imperturbed, it was untouchable, unassailable, circumstances had no affect upon it. He goes on to say he is confident my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus, therefore he could always say in every circumstance, "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen." Here was a man untouched in some ways by his circumstances, a man who sought to live above the ebb and flow, the coming and going, the ups and downs, the ins and outs of life.

And the principle for us to understand is that circumstances should not determine our joy. Joy is to be found in the Lord, the unchanging reality of His faithfulness, His character, His promises to us. One of the reasons, of course, to study the Bible, one of the reasons to go from Genesis to Revelation, one of the reasons to plumb the depths of holy Scripture is to know God. And the more you know Him, the better you know Him, the more confident you become, the more secure your joy is. That's why John said in his first epistle, chapter 1 verse 4, "These things I write unto you that your joy may be full." Joy is related to your knowledge of God...little knowledge, little joy...much knowledge, much joy. The more you know of God's glorious truth, of God's great covenants and promises of God's plans, of God's faithfulness, of God's power, the more joy you experience in life. And that's just basic to our Christian experience. It was even an element in the saints of the past, I'm thinking of 2 Chronicles chapter 7 verse 10, where we read at the feast of dedication at the completion of the temple, "On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people to their tents rejoicing and happy of heart because of the goodness that the Lord had shown to David, to Solomon and to His people Israel." Our joy is connected to the goodness of the Lord. And the more you understand His grace and mercy and goodness, the more stable your joy becomes, no matter what circumstances may come. It was Hannah who said, "My heart rejoices in the Lord." Not because all circumstances were the way they should be, but "Because I rejoice in Thy salvation." Overriding all earthly concerns is the reality of salvation and once we become the possessor of that eternal salvation, there is the fountain of our joy. In Psalm 13:5 the psalmist says, "Because I have trusted in Thy lovingkindness, my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation." Psalm 21:1, David says, "O Lord, in Thy strength the king will be glad and in Thy salvation how greatly he will rejoice." Psalm 40 verse 16, "Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee, let those who love Thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified," which is an expression of joy. The prophet Habakkuk says, "I will rejoice in the God of my salvation."

And so, in the Old Testament, the source of joy was the saving work of God in the heart, the hope of all that God had prepared for them that love Him, the hope of eternal life. Joy for the believer then is not connected to earthly matters, to earthly issues. There is no promise that becoming a Christian is going to provide for good circumstances in life. It doesn't mean that coming to Christ is going to be the end of your trouble, the end of your struggles, the end of your sorrows in this human world, that is not the case. What it does mean is that your eternity is settled, that a faithful God is preparing more than you could ever comprehend for you and you need to live in the light of what God has prepared

for you.

Joy is God's gift to us in anticipation of heavenly glory. And we can enjoy it now if we come to fully understand and trust in the promises of God for that eternal glory. Jesus is our great example in this. Jesus gives us an example of joy in the midst of the profoundest kind of human disappointment. Verse 21 says, "At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit." If we broaden the scope a little bit of the very moment in which Luke writes that, the moment to which he refers in writing that, we would have to conclude that things were not going well in the mission of Jesus. He was basically rejected in Galilee, though He was there over a year, though He preached and crisscrossing the area of Galilee and towns and villages and cities and though He did miracles everywhere, demonstrating power over disease and death and demons and Satan and even nature, and though He proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom and the message of forgiveness and salvation, though He demonstrated compassion and mercy and kindness and care as well as confronting sin and calling for repentance. He had sent out the Twelve to do the same covering in one last sort of sweep through Galilee to proclaim the glories of His person and His gospel and yet Galilee, for the most part, rejected Jesus and later on in His life, after the resurrection, when He went back to Galilee and believers gathered around Him, there were only 500 there...only 500. A meager response to such a monumental ministry by the God/Man in their midst. And now He was moving throughout other parts of Israel, villages and towns here and there and months before He would go to Jerusalem to die, and even now there is rejection, there was already a record here in Luke of a town that wouldn't let Him in, wouldn't show Him even the commonest hospitality. He was being rejected here and there. There were moments of success. The seventy come back that He sent out, we've been studying about them in the chapter in verse 17 and they said, "Even the demons are subject to us in Your name." So there must have been some success to the power of Christ delegated to them, was breaking into the kingdom of darkness and setting souls free and there were people responding to the message, as well as demons, no doubt, being cast out of sinners. And there were some victories here and there. And yet there was growing hostility. There was growing hatred. The Jews already in their leadership were plotting to kill Jesus and it comes to fruition in just a matter of months. And when all the believers that are in the southern part in Judea, in Jerusalem area, came to gather to meet together in that upper room after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, you remember there were only 120. The ministry of Jesus in Galilee, the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem, the largest crowd in Galilee is 500 that came together in His name. And the largest one that came together in His name in the south is 120. It's virtually unimaginable that the Son of God could come and say what He said and do what He did and demonstrate the kind of character that He did and have 620 people in His two-fold congregation. Staggering...staggering.

Disappointment would be a small word for that. "He came to His own, His own received Him not." "In the world, the world made by Him, the world received Him not." They refused to believe in Him. They refused to embrace Him. And the mounting hostility and anger and jealousy and resentment would

lead to His death.

But apart from those circumstances, the man of sorrows who wept over those situations, who wept over sin and wept over rejection and wept in great agonizing strong crying of tears in the Garden over the whole prospect of bearing sin and separation from God on the cross, the weeping man of sorrows acquainted with grief was also at the same time the God of joy. And while there was sadness over the earthly condition, there was literally untouchable joy in His heart. He was the man of sorrows, but He was, at the same time, the God of joy. And here His joy burst to the surface and what prompts that joy is the seventy coming back and they're rejoicing. They're rejoicing because it had evangelistic success. They've had success in their mission. And Jesus in verse 20 though gives them a mild sort of corrective and says, "Do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you." Don't limit your joy to that. Don't even attach your joy, this is very insightful, to ministerial success because that comes and goes, that ebbs and flows. Don't attach your joy even to the fact that you saw evidence of response to the gospel. Don't tie your joy to that. "But rather that your names are recorded in heaven." If you attach your joy to the ebb and flow of ministry, to the successes and failures of ministry, you're going to have difficulty.

Paul even fell into the throes of that, didn't he?, with the trouble that was going on in the Corinthian church. And actually became so sorrowful that he was depressed and couldn't minister. That was a sinful kind of sorrow in his life that had to be relieved before he could move on in joyful service to the Lord. You can't even attach your joy to the successes of ministry because the failures from the human viewpoint are so much more the norm. I've lived long enough to know that, and I've had enough blessing in my life to know that God's hand is on the ministry, His hand is on the Word and the preaching and teaching of that Word, His hand is upon this church. We've seen blessing upon blessing. We've seen people liberated from the kingdom of darkness. We've seen the power of Satan broken through the strength of the gospel and the work of the Spirit in their hearts. But at the same time we've seen disappointment upon disappointment, rejection upon rejection. And here we are thirty-four years of doing this and this is all that we have in this church in a city of multiple millions of people. I can't attach my joy to what appears on the surface meager success because the failure is so much larger, the disappointment is so much larger. I rather have to be like Jesus and attach my joy to the fact that there are names written in heaven by the Father and I rejoice that the truth of the matter is that all whose names are written there are going to get there through His unfolding purpose. So my joy has to be attached to the eternal redemptive purpose of a sovereign God, not to the successes in the ebb and flow even of a biblical ministry. And that's what He's saying to them, rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. Don't start attaching your joy to earthly success even in ministry or you're going to wind up disappointed.

That causes Jesus then to rejoice. He rejoices in response to the thought of the eternal plan. He rejoices in response to the reality of names written in God's book before the foundation of the world. He...He responds in joy to the fact that the Father's plan is working out in spite of His circumstances. He wept over the circumstances. He wept over the city of Jerusalem because they wouldn't repent. He wept at the grave of Lazarus because He saw what sin was going to do to the whole of the human race as it had done to Lazarus, bring about death and sorrow. Those things made Him weep. But rising above those things that make you weep is the joy that is untouchable because it is attached to an eternal plan which God is working, that is to say having chosen and written down the names of those He is pleased to save, He will bring all of them to glory. No one will be lost, no one will be missed.

And so, as we come to verse 21 we begin to see more deeply into the joy of Jesus. What motivated His joy number one? The sovereign pleasure of the Father...the sovereign pleasure of the Father. "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," the sovereign, the one almighty one. "That You did hide these things from the wise and intelligent and did reveal them to babes." And why did God do that? Why? Because, He says, "Yes, Father, thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight." That's the answer. He did it because He wanted to do it that way. It was God's sovereign purpose to reveal the things of the gospel, not to the intellectual, not to the worldly wise, but to the humble and the meek and the lowly. All that was revealed by God is known only to those whom God chose to reveal it to. And the Son, of course, affirmed and acted in that revelation. And so Jesus is rejoicing in spite of circumstances because the Father's pleasure is being done. We got into that a little bit the...two weeks ago and we reiterated it last week, I really can't leave that without just maybe a couple of other comments.

It is clear in the Bible that God predetermined before the foundation of the world who would be saved, because it pleased Him to do that. And He predetermined that that salvation would come to those who were humble and there would be not many noble, not many mighty, they would be the lowly. And that God would reveal Himself to those whom He had chosen and grant to them eternal salvation. That is an inescapable truth in the Bible...inescapable. It is clear in the Bible that salvation comes to those who humble themselves like infants and they do so because the Father has chosen them and written down their names in His book before the world began. You cannot escape this truth. This isn't new truth. I didn't invent this. We had a pastors seminar this week and Expositors Institute, we had 18 pastors from around the country, and we taught them all day for five days. It was a finishing school on exposition. We had a great time, just an absolutely great rich, rich time teaching them. And I had the opportunity to get together with them for some personal time, all of them, and I showed them a Bible that I possess. I was given a Bible a number of years ago that is the first Bible ever printed in Scotland, 1576. I've mentioned it to you before. That's very old. It's the only one in existence in the world and from 1576 you know that's a long time ago. That sixteenth century was the

period of the Scottish Reformation. John Knox, the great Scottish Reformer died in 1572 and four years later this Bible was finally brought to print. But he brought it back to Scotland in English language and it was basically done, the work was done with John Calvin and those who were in Geneva. So it reflects the thinking of the great Reformers. And I was showing the pastors this Bible and I just decided to turn over to Luke chapter 10 because it's a study Bible and there are notes in the columns and across the bottom so that people would be able to understand the meaning. And I opened to Luke 10 and I read verse 21, "And yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Your sight," and I looked to the margin and there was a little comment in the margin that said, "Those who are being saved are being saved because they are the elect of the Father." This is 1576, so in case you think I introduced this thought, think again. This is the way the Bible has been understood because this is the clear statement of the Scripture. They understood that. And they gave God therefore all the glory and all the honor for salvation.

Now I understand what you're thinking, but what about...how can you...how can you say that? What about human responsibility? I don't understand how all that harmonizes but I will not give up the great doctrine of sovereign election. Now just to make sure you understand ths, I want to show you how consistent this is in Scripture. Go back in the Old Testament to Isaiah chapter 43, Isaiah chapter 43, this is a great section of Isaiah from 42 on. You should familiarize yourself with it. But in Isaiah 43 you see this manifest character of God as the electing one, as the sovereign one who chooses. Verse 10, "Here is the Word of the Lord, the creator who formed you, verse 1, O Israel, who redeemed you, who called you by name, you are Mine," and this strictly by choice of God, "I am the Lord your God, the holy One of Israel, your Savior." Then he comes down to verse 10, "You are My witnesses, declares the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen in order that you may know and believe Me." You can't know Him or believe in Him if He doesn't choose you. That's clear in Scripture. "You're My servant whom I've chosen in order that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He." You cannot know God, you cannot understand God by human intelligence or wisdom. It is by God's own choice and revelation. "And there will be none after Me, I, even I am the Lord, there is no Savior besides Me." Nobody is going to be saved except by Him and He will save those whom He chooses to save. "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed and there was no strange God among you so you are My witnesses, declares the Lord, and I am God, even from eternity I am He and there is none who can deliver out of My hand, I act and who can reverse it, thus says the Lord your Redeemer." God is the Redeemer. God chooses. God reveals. And God redeems. That is not something new even to the period of the Reformation. That is what the Scriptures teach even in the Old Testament.

Go over a couple of chapters to Isaiah 46 verse 8, 46:8, "Remember this and be assured, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things long passed for I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning." At the beginning, God

could tell you the end. From ancient times, declaring things which have not been done, saying, "My purpose will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure." And then the second half of verse 11, "I have spoken. I will bring it to pass. I have planned it. I will do it." This is nothing but absolute sovereignty. No other God, just one and He alone decrees who believes, who is redeemed.

Daniel 4:35, "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, What have You done?" God does what He wants to do because He finds pleasure in doing it that way.

In John 14 and verse 6, familiar words, "Jesus says I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me...through Me." God chooses and God opens the heart and we come to Him in salvation through Christ...through Christ. But going back to John 6 we fill in even some more understanding of this great truth, John chapter 6 verse 44, "No one can come to Me." You can only come to the Father through Christ but no one can come to Christ unless the Father who sent Me draws him. The Father chooses, the Father draws, the sinner comes. Verse 45, this is consistent with the Old Testament, "It is written in the prophets and they shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." Nobody comes to Christ unless chosen by God and taught by God, drawn by God, received then by Christ, kept by Christ, raised by Christ to eternal glory. This is inescapable truth.

Turn to Romans chapter 9...Romans chapter 9 and verse 14, and this speaks to the issue of your reaction to that doctrine. This fallen human sense of justice that says, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, that's not fair," here's an answer to that, verse 14 of Romans 9, "What shall we say then? What shall we say?" It's as if Paul says, "I know exactly what you're thinking." "There's no injustice with God, is there?" Or to put it another way, "Does this mean that God is unjust?" And what's his answer? "May it never be," *me genita(?)*, no, no, no, not by any means. God is not unjust. And then he quotes the Old Testament, verse 15 from Exodus 33, "For God said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I'll have mercy. I'll have compassion on whom I have compassion."

You say, "Wait a minute, that doesn't seem to help. All it does is state that God will do whatever He wants." And if God says that's not unjust, then that's the definition of what is just. Don't impose on God your sense of what is fair. Fair sends the whole human race to hell. You don't want fair. God is God and He's the sovereign of the universe and He doesn't abandon His sovereignty at any point, particularly in the realm of redemption. I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

So then, writes Paul, "It doesn't depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy." Salvation does not appear...does not depend upon the man, it depends upon God. It's not about how much you will to be saved or how hard you run to be saved, it's upon God's purpose and plan and mercy that salvation comes. Verse 18 then adds, "So then He has mercy on whom He desires and He hardens whom He desires." Well, verse 19 Paul writes, "You'll say to me then, well why does He still find fault? Well then you can't blame me, right? I mean, you can't blame me for not accepting the gospel if it's only for those whom He chooses. For who resists His will? I mean, if it's His will to save only those and I'm not there and my name's not there, then how can you blame me? I can't resist His will."

And the response is amazing, verse 20, "On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God?" You don't have any right to even raise the question. Let me put it to you in a practical sense. Any book written against the doctrine of election is an attack on the nature of God. Who in the world are you to tell God He's not sovereign? What kind of an affront is that? Now if you have a problem matching up that sovereignty of God with human responsibility, admit that you don't know everything and the problem is solved. Because I also know that the gospel extends to the end of the earth and Jesus was the one who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest." We understand the gospel invitation. We understand the call. We understand the tears of Jesus over those who wouldn't come. We understand the responsibility of the sinner who rejects the gospel and perishes and he is being punished for his own choice. We understand that. How that harmonizes with this doctrine, I do not understand. I may never understand it even in eternity because I will never be God. But I will let God be God and I will not redefine God on my terms.

In verse 21 he gives a simple analogy. "Does the...does not the potter...or verse 20, first of all...who are you, O man, who answers back to God. The thing molded will not say to the molder, why did you make me like this, will it? Does not the potter have a right over the clay and make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?" The potter can make out of the clay anything he wants. He's the potter. And God can do what He wants. That's what it says, He can do anything He wants, He's God. So what if God willing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? What if God allowed pots for destruction? And what if God also prepared, verse 23, vessels of mercy prepared beforehand for glory? If God chose to do it, He has every right to do it. You have no right to question this.

First Corinthians chapter 3, the practical outworking of this. Paul in his ministry writes, "I planted," in other words, I gave the gospel, I planted, "Apollos watered. Apollos came along and watered with more of the Word of God to make the gospel more understandable. But God was causing the life, or the growth." It's always that way. He who plants, and he who waters, they're nothing. Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything. We're zero. No matter how well I preach, no

matter how accurate the sermon, I have no power to convert the soul. And the dead blind soul has no power to convert itself. It's not by will. It's not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, right? It's not the will or the eagerness or the desire of the one who runs, but it's God. And so we...we just plant and we just water but God gives the life.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4 says that the God of this world who is Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, god has blinded the minds of the unbelieving...the god of this world, small "g", Satan. And because of this double-blinding...they're blinded by their fallenness, they're blinded also by Satan so they're double blind, so they can't see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. There's no capacity in a fallen sinful human being who is blind and dead to see the light of the gospel. They can't see it. But we come preaching Christ, verse 5, we come preaching Christ. Well why do we do that? I mean, why bother? Verse 6, "For God who said light shall sine out of darkness, looking at creation, the same God who brought light into the darkness of the original creation is the one who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." The only way you're ever going to know that the glory of God is manifest in Jesus Christ, that is the gospel, that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, the only way you're ever going to know the gospel is if God shines the light in your heart. It's God who gives the growth. It's God who turns on the light. It's God who gives the life. That's in Ephesians 1 again, verse 16, here's Paul praying, "I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." If He doesn't give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, you'll never know Him. "I even pray...verse 18...that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what it is the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, so you may know what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." I mean, you're not going to know anything, you're not going to know anything in salvation or sanctification if God doesn't reveal it, if He doesn't shine it into your heart. And here again it puts the sovereignty where it belongs, with God. Philippians 2:13, "It is God who is at work in you to will and to work for His good pleasure. God was pleased to choose and He was pleased to choose the lowly and the humble and there are not many mighty and not many noble and not many highbrows and not many rulers of this world and philosophers and elite that He chose. He chose the meek and the lowly and the humble. And to them He reveals Himself. He turns on the light. He awakens the dead and He does His pleasure in those He was pleased to choose."

And so here is the Son looking at what's going on all around Him, looking at the meager harvest of true disciples, looking down into the faces of twelve plus seventy, that's eighty two and who knows how many other disciples that were following Him at that time were the real thing. A small group for such a monumental, massive demonstration of divine power. And what it shows in the end, the Son says, is this is all the Father pleased to save on the one hand. Now I understand that that is a

gripping truth. It's clear in Scripture. I also understand that you're going to run and say, "Well wait a minute then, why does God hold these other people responsible? Why didn't He will to save the whole human race?" The answer is I do not know why He did not will to save the whole human race, my good educated guess is that God has every right to demonstrate His glory in its fullness and that means wrath and condemnation as a demonstration of His holy justice and so He endures vessels fitted for destruction, as Romans 9 puts it. I also understand at the same time that God holds every sinner responsible for their own rejection and gives them the opportunity to receive Him. And it makes perfect sense to Him though it's apparently paradoxical to me. But I will not err on the severe side of diminishing the sovereignty of God by eliminating this glorious truth.

So Jesus' joy was connected to the sovereign pleasure of the Father. Second point, it was connected to the supreme power of the Son, He Himself rejoiced because of His part in spite of the way things are going. If you look at verse 22 you will see this, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father and who the Father is except the Son." The only way you're ever going to know God is to be the recipient of divine revelation. The only one who knows the Father is the Son, the only one who knows the Son is the Father. And you'll never know either unless it's revealed to you and that's the end of verse 22, "And anyone who whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

Whatever was going on even though it was only a small group, not many noble, not many mighty, it was the Father's pleasure to do that and the Son could reveal Himself to anyone He wished to reveal Himself to. No one could know who He was if He didn't reveal Himself to them...not just on the outside, but on the inside. And so in the end, Jesus rejoiced in the fact that this was the expression of the Father's pleasure and the Son's power. He had the power to reveal Himself to any He so chose.

To show you this in what is really a compelling text is to look at Revelation 3:7...Revelation 3:7. This is the letter from Jesus to the church at Philadelphia. There were seven churches in Asia Minor, they each get a letter in Revelation 2 and 3. And the two of them were good churches, two of them were pure churches, were truly converted churches. Two of them have no indictment, two of the letters, Smyrna and Philadelphia. And so He writes to the angel or the messenger, or perhaps even the elder or pastor of the church in Philadelphia and He says this, and He identifies Himself, this is Jesus speaking, "He who is holy," that's Himself, "who is true," and then this, "who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut and who shuts and no one opens." He identifies Himself as the one who has the keys to the Kingdom, the Kingdom originally promised to David, the Kingdom of God on earth, the Kingdom of salvation, if you will. Now David was the great king in Israel and David...any king sort of carries the key, that is that's the symbol of authority. He alone can access the royal treasury. The king has the key to the royal treasury and no one gets in unless he lets them in. And

God promised to David, 2 Samuel 7:3, David a glorious kingdom and the key, as it were, the authority for that kingdom was passed down the messianic line to Jesus Christ who is the greater son of David, the promised Messiah, the one who possesses the kingdom. He is the royal anointed Messiah. He has that authority and He alone can turn the key to let you in the kingdom, or shut the door and keep you out. He opens and no man shuts, He shuts and no man opens. This is Jesus speaking of His absolute authority at the door of the kingdom of salvation. It's an amazing statement. He has absolute sovereign authority over who enters His kingdom. To whom the Son wills to reveal Himself, He reveals Himself.

David was a supreme sovereign in Israel, had the key to the treasury. Jesus is the supreme sovereign of the Kingdom of salvation, He has the key to the door and the treasury of all that salvation brings. And so Jesus opens and shuts. And I love verse 8, He says to this little...little church in Philadelphia, "I know your deeds, I've seen you, I know you, and behold, I've put before you an open door which no man can shut." You're the real thing and the door to the Kingdom is wide open to you, you have the run of all the treasure. This is a marvelous clear understanding of what He just said about having that authority..."To you I have thrown the door wide open." Why? "Because you have a little power." That is such a fascinating statement. What does it mean? "Because you're nobodies, you have very meager influence, you fit the profile of the not many noble, the not many mighty, the base and the common, the nobodies and the no names and the nothings." You fit the Father's profile that He's pleased to save. You're the meager. Little power means meager influence, the nobodies, and you've kept My Word. Election is never apart from faith and obedience. "And you've not denied My name." Isn't that wonderful? There's always that human element of it. There's always that personal responsibility. You've obeyed the Word of the gospel and you've never denied My name. You're the real thing and the door is wide open, go into the Kingdom and take all the treasure. Jesus' joy then came when He got the heavenly perspective and He saw the Father's pleasure was being fulfilled and His own supreme power was being fulfilled for He was revealing Himself to whomever He chose.

Thirdly, and we will take the third point and finish it. The third thing that brought Him joy, first the sovereign pleasure of the Father, secondly, the supreme power of the Son. Thirdly, the surpassing privilege of the saints. Or you might even say the surpassing purpose of the Spirit because this third point moves to the Holy Spirit's work. He's not mentioned here but He's behind the scenes. Jesus is joyful because of the Father, because of Himself and because of the work of the Spirit. He doesn't mention the Spirit specifically, but He's the power behind the truth in verses 23 and 24. These verses are pretty direct and we'll look at them and they'll unfold rapidly to us.

Verse 23, "Turning to the disciples..." He had been talking to the Father, looking up, no doubt, and now He looks back down, turns to the disciples. "He said privately," privately because He's only

speaking to His own, because what He's going to say only applies to them. This will be the seventy, the Twelve and whoever else was there, true believers who had sustained following Him, those whose names were recorded in heaven. And He says, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see." He experienced extreme joy over the blessing that had come to them. He rejoiced in them being blessed. Isn't it wonderful to think about the fact that the Lord rejoices in blessing us? He finds joy in our joy. He entered in to the joy of the seventy who were rejoicing and now were taught to rejoice because their names were recorded in heaven. And He says with His own joy, "O how blessed you are...how blessed you are." This, of course, when He says this, "You are blessed," Matthew adds, "Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear." He's referring to the work of the Holy Spirit because it is the Holy Spirit, isn't it? Isn't the Holy Spirit the agent that awakens the dead? Isn't He the one who brings regeneration? Aren't we not born of the Spirit? And He's rejoicing in the Father's pleasure and the Son's will being worked by the Spirit. And you see and you understand and you hear and you get it. And Luke even goes beyond just those that were there because he says, "Blessed are THE eyes which see the things you see." And that goes beyond them to embrace us because all of us see the things they saw. We don't see them physically, we see them in the record of the New Testament. My faith, I think, is the strength of those who saw Jesus when He was on the earth and believed in Him. I didn't see Him but I believe in Him, whom having not seen I love. And the record of His life is to me as vivid as if I were there. All of those who got the message, all of those by the Father's pleasure and the Son's will who understood by the agency of the Holy Spirit by His work in us to regenerate us and make us alive and give us the truth, all of us are blessed because we understand the Messiah has come at last, the salvation of God is revealed, the work of redemption is accomplished, the promised Kingdom is offered, all prophecy, all promise and covenants are fulfilled in Him...the final offering for sin is going to be made, Satan has met his conqueror, demons have been completely dominated, disease is vanquished, death is defeated, nature is submissive, forgiveness and eternal life is offered to all who believe. They got it.

And how blessed they were to get it. They saw it all and they understood it. Not because they will to understand it but because the Spirit of God fulfilled the will of the Son and the pleasure of the Father in granting them that understanding. They were given the Spirit of wisdom in revelation in the knowledge of Him. They were the humble, the babes, the meek, the broken, the contrite, the lowly, the self-deniers, the cross bearers, the obedient, drawn as the Father's chosen and the ones to whom the Son willed to reveal Himself by the Holy Spirit. Still Jesus calls to all of you, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden." You don't know who the elect are and so the invitation goes to all to come. If you're weary and heavy laden, weary of your sin, weary of your ignorance, weary of being alienated from God and headed for judgment, come to Him and He will give you rest. Don't let the doctrine of election get in the way. We don't know who they are. Somebody said to Spurgeon, "You can't preach that doctrine, you can't preach that doctrine to everybody because they might not be elect." And he said, "Well if you'll go around and pull their shirt up so I can see if they have an 'E' stamped on their back, I'll preach only to them." I don't know who they are and so we go to the ends

of the earth because this is a secret decree known only after faith, not before. So I can with no hesitation cry out to all to come to Christ.

How privileged are they, how privileged are we to know what we know. In this world of elevated knowledge, we know what the rest of the world does not know. Verse 24 then, "I say to you," this is to emphasize what privilege this is, here's how great the privilege is, "I say to you that many prophets and kings," and Matthew in the comparative passage adds, "And righteous people wish to see the things which you see and didn't see them and to hear the things which you hear and didn't hear them." Here we are a bunch of nobodies and we know the things that the prophets of old never ever fully understood. We know the things that the kings of old with all their power and all their authority and all their elevation and all their earthly majesty and all their resources never knew. And we know what even the righteous in the past never knew. We know the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many prophets from Moses to Malachi, including all the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, all the minor prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi, they didn't know what we know. They didn't know what these humble people knew, these ordinary folks that followed Jesus. And all the kings in all of Israel's history didn't know. And isn't it a remarkable thing that Jesus came where there hadn't been a prophet for 400 years and He came when there was not a Jew on the throne of Israel? It was a...it was an Idumaean king in the Herod family. It as if He disdained even the elite. But we know as they knew, not because we deserved to know, it's because God in His grace determined that this was the right time and these were the humble and the meek who in their salvation would give Him all the glory and all the credit. They wished to see the things you see.

The prophets, 1 Peter 1:10 to 12 says, "The prophets wrote and then they looked at what they wrote to try to figure out what it meant." What time? Who's he writing about? They didn't even know. The kings didn't know. There were some righteous people, some of the great heroes of the faith listed there, as you know, in Hebrews 11. There are some great heroes of the faith there...Abel, by faith Abel, by faith Enoch, by faith Noah, by faith Abraham, by faith Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Rahab and Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets and on it goes, all these righteous people live by faith. They never saw what they believed in, they just lived by faith. And Hebrews 11:13 says, "All these died in faith without receiving the promise. They all died in faith without receiving the promise. And then over in verse 39, "All these having gained approval through their faith did not receive what was promised because God had provided something better for us." Wow. God gave us the best from the coming of Jesus Christ on it's the best. This is the complete and full revelation. They were saved by Christ on the cross. They were perfected by the work of Christ. Even though they never saw Christ and even though He hadn't died yet, the efficacy of His death swept clear backwards back to Adam and was the sacrifice for the sins of all who believed, clear back to Adam. But they didn't know that until they got to glory. But we know the full message of

the glorious gospel.. They gained their approval through faith. They didn't receive what was promised. God provided that for us.

In Matthew 13 in the comparative passage, verse 11, Jesus said this, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted." May I say something to you? If you know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, if you understand the gospel, it's been granted to you to understand it. It is granted by God to you and to some it is not granted. It goes back to the same sovereign purpose of God. Jesus says to you it has been granted to know the mysteries. It's granted, not earned. It's granted, not achieved. And it's not granted to everyone.

Now what are the mysteries of the Kingdom? We think of mystery we think of Agatha Christie or John Crisham or something like that. It's not that kind of mystery. Mystery was a term used in old religions, ancient religions, Babylonian religions all throughout history. Still today being used. Mysteries are the secrets of a religion, the esoteric lofty elevated transcendental inner secrets that only the highest know, the elite, the intelligent, the very wise achieve. I was talking to somebody who is in this kind of stuff, he said, "There are ten layers in the particular Jewish Kabala that he's in and he's trying to achieve these layers to get to the tenth layer of superior esoteric knowledge which unlocks the final mystery of the universe." Well that's part of the old Babylonian religious system that pervades all false religious systems in the world. It's even in the Masons, you know, it's like a thirty-third degree kind of Mason and only for those who have achieved a certain level of elevation. Jesus comes along and says, "Contrary to all the religions of the world who keep the sacred secrets for only the elite who can attain to them, all the sacred secrets that God hid in the Old Testament that are now literally all revealed in the New Testament are available to you, the hoi-polloi, the common people, the ordinary, the not many noble, the not many mighty. The New Testament is the revelation of all the things kept secret in the Old Testament. They looked, they tried to understand, they couldn't understand the fullness, it is all revealed in the New Testament and it is revealed to us. We are the informed. We are those who know all God's sacred saving secrets in their fullness. When Jesus died on the cross He said, "It is finished." He rose from the dead. He went back to heaven. The work of redemption is done. We know the whole story, nothing left to tell, right? And we know how it will end according to the book of Revelation. We alone possess the true divine secrets of the universe. Wow....

And the Jews today, sad to say, are the most spiritually confused people in the world. God gave them covenants, promises, the Law, the Messiah and they've lost it all. They've lost their priests, they've lost their ceremonies, they've lost their sacrifices, they've lost their temple and they virtually lost the Law. Even the orthodox Jews believe only a poor representation cluttered with allegories so that the truth even of the Old Testament is lost in tradition and esoteric interpretation. They can't make sense out of the Old Testament, let alone the New Testament because Jesus went on to day in

that Matthew 13 passage, "You who have received the truth, more will be given to you who have not, even what you have will be taken away."

How privileged are we, more privileged than all the great lights of ancient Israel, kings and prophets and righteous people...we know what they never saw, the full truth of the gospel. We're like Simeon, he's a good illustration to close with. Luke chapter 2, remember Simeon in the temple? There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, this man was righteous, devout, just a common ordinary guy. But he was devout and righteous. He was looking for the Messiah. And this is the key, "The Holy Spirit was upon him...the Holy Spirit was upon him...verse 26, Luke 2...it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." The Holy Spirit had to reveal this to him so that he would know the Christ. He came in the Spirit into the temple. The parents brought in Jesus, you know, to carry out the custom for Him, to come to the temple for purification. Simeon saw the child, picks Him up, takes Him in his arms, blesses God and says, "Now, Lord, Thou dost let Thy bondservant depart in peace. I can die now, he says, because I've seen Your salvation which You've prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel." And he says, "I've seen it, I can go. All I've ever waited for is now real, I can go. I can go to heaven now." And that's the attitude we have to have. We've seen it all, folks, we understand it. God's revealed it to us. And we're just waiting to go to glory.

How blessed are we? And Jesus finds joy in our joy. So do this. Rejoice always and again I say rejoice. And rejoice in the Lord and let the Lord Himself find joy in your joy because you live above the ebb and flow of life's circumstances. Find your joy where He found His, in the pleasure of the Father, the power of the Son and in the marvelous privileges which the Spirit delivers to the saints.

Father, we come to You now at the close of the service asking special grace to be granted that we might understand and apply these great truths, first of all, in worshiping and glorifying You and then in serving You. We pray in Your Son's name. Amen.

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