

Rejoicing like Jesus
August 13, 2017
Brian R. Wipf

Do you remember that powerful passage from Philippians 3 where Paul says, "I count all things as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord?" He goes on to say even more that he's lost everything to know Christ, to know his power, even to know his sufferings. It's a very inspiring passage and it highlights what we are all about here at FBC: that God is our greatest treasure. If Paul would say under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he's happy to lose all things for the sake of knowing Christ, then it is apparent that nothing compares to God. That he is a treasure to be known and celebrated. When we love God, we will want to know him more.

Today in our passage we learn a remarkable thing. We learn what Jesus rejoiced in. We learn what he celebrated. That's a gift. I know I live with a church family that wants to know Jesus more because you love him since he first loved you; you want to know the power of his resurrection, even sharing in his sufferings so that somehow you might attain the resurrection of the dead just like him so you can be with him forever. Today, you're going to hear what made him happy. So, let's eagerly read our passage this morning; we are going to learn what our master rejoiced in. My hope is God's word will transform us so we rejoice in the same thing, too, and will further contribute to our relationship of faith in Jesus (READ Luke 10:21-24).

When it says in vs. 21 "In that same hour," Luke is trying to connect the return and work of the 72 with what he's about to tell us about Jesus' joy. Keep that in mind. Some welcomed the 72 and the message of Jesus they preached and others didn't. So maybe I'd put it this way: the truth that Jesus rejoices in in our passage today he saw displayed through the work of the 72.

One more introductory phrase from vs. 21; it says, "he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." What does that mean? It means that his joy was supernaturally empowered by the Holy Spirit and aligned with the Father's will (REPEAT). Let me state something obvious that we probably don't think about enough: we oftentimes rejoice in the wrong thing; do you know what I mean? We, sadly, too often take joy in the wrong things. A liar rejoices in getting away with something. An adulterer rejoices in his mistress. A thief rejoices in his stolen goods. A narcissist rejoices in the attention she gets. That's not a good. This can happen to us even when we are born again; I catch myself at times being glad in ungodliness; I need so much grace. But when Luke says Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit he's signaling to us that his joy is pure and divine. There's not a hint of error, miscalculation, or impurity in Jesus' joy. It's Spirit empowered joy and that means it's in perfect alignment with the Father's good pleasure (that's how Jesus says it in the Matthew version of this story).

So, what is this joy? What is Jesus so glad about? Let's read it for ourselves; Jesus said (vs. 21), "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth [so there's his expression of joy] *that* [do

you see the purpose? Look for those keywords, FBC. Just look how these sentences are structured] you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.” So, it’s pretty clear that Jesus’ joy is about two things. Let’s just put numbers to them. 1) Jesus rejoices that God hid these things from the wise and understanding and 2) that he revealed them to little children.

It’s pretty important we know what *these things* are. That’s what’s being hidden and being revealed. The answer to this, I believe, is the very message of Jesus that leads to knowledge of the Father. And that’s what eternal life is, right (John 17:3)? Knowing God is eternal life. This about salvation, isn’t it? Look at vs. 22 (READ). No one knows the Son except the Father; no one knows God the Father except the Son *and* (don’t miss the *and*) anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

So, according to Jesus, the saving truth about himself and the Father is hidden from the wise and understanding and revealed to children; so who are these two groups of people? We have more defining to do; can you keep up with all of this (you may need to be taking notes)? First, Jesus says he hides the message of salvation from the wise and the understanding. Who are these people? You know, when you look at those two words, you’d think those are good things. I want to be wise and understanding (certainly, those are meant to be understood in parallel, meaning, they are meant to be understood the same way). We have books of the Bible dedicated to helping us be wise.

But here the context seems clear that Jesus is not meaning wise and understanding in a commendable way. It’s the same way Paul talks about the wise in this present age in 1 Corinthians 1. The wise, the understanding, like the powerful, rich, and well-fed are the one’s who rely upon their advantages now in the present age. These advantages make them resistant and hard to the message of kingdom, which humbles all people before God as sinners needing a savior. The wise and understanding are those who are too proud to humble themselves; why would I need to do that? I know better! I’m wise and understanding! I’m doing just fine. How can you receive the gift of salvation for your sins if you don’t think you need it? So, that’s who the message is being hidden from.

God revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children. Now, that sounds just like what Jesus said in the previous chapter. Do you remember how he brought a child near him in the midst of the disciples and said, “He’s the great one in the kingdom. The kingdom is for the little, the small, the disadvantaged, and the weak in the world.” So, don’t merely think *children*; think those who receive the kingdom like a child. Apparently, the disciples fit that description; look at vs. 23, “Then turning to the disciples he said privately, ‘Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!’” It was revealed to the disciples; they weren’t children, but they were humble like children. That’s who the Father reveals the message of Jesus to.

Let’s stop for a minute: let’s remember what we are discovering. This is what Jesus rejoices in. This is what he’s glad about. You’re learning what puts a smile on Jesus’ face. The

glorious message of salvation is hidden from those wise in their own eyes and those unwilling to stoop in humility and it's revealed, shown, and given to those who, like a child, are humble. What questions are popping into your heads right now? What are you wondering about? And does this make you happy like it makes Jesus?

If you're like me you might be wondering: why would God hide this wonderful message from anybody? Why does he only reveal it to some? Maybe there's an inner lawyer in you that says, "That doesn't seem fair!" Or maybe it makes you question God's love. Let me try and respond to some of that.

I'm guessing it's not hard for us to understand and even rejoice with Jesus that God reveals his saving message to the humble. Praise the Lord for his grace! But why conceal it from the proud? Aren't they the ones who need it? Doesn't Jesus want the proud to come in, too? I have two thoughts to answer this question. Firstly, the proud won't receive the message; that's how you know who God is hiding his message from - they don't receive it. When we hear about God choosing some and not others we sometimes will start thinking that God is being capricious like us. Like he's playing favorites. God doesn't play favorites; God doesn't show partiality; he's not a respecter of persons. There's only one thing that God favors and is partial to: humility. Repentance. That's why the message is hidden from the proud. The proud don't see the need. The proud thinks it's silly. The proud feel imposed upon. The proud accept part of the message, but not the entire message. There are all kinds of ways the proud refuse the message. So, in a sense, God hides the message from the proud by requiring humility. That's part of the very definition of pride: unwilling to be humble. By necessity, to reveal the message to the humble, it remains hidden from the proud.

Secondly, pride can't be rewarded; it must be broken. That's why God can not graciously reveal the message of the gospel to the wise and understanding; he can't reward people in their pride. Because what if he does? Parents, I'm guessing you get this. When you reward bad behavior, what can you expect more of? The same bad behavior, right? That's why you reward good behavior; you reward good behavior because you want more of it. So, to reveal and gift the hard-hearted and proud with the saving knowledge of God is to promote and encourage a prideful assault on God.

We have to get over, FBC, or we have to resist embracing the world's belief that love and accommodation go together. Do you know what I mean? Leave it to Satan to take the word and the idea of *love* and get it all bent out of shape in our culture today. 1 John 4 says *God is love*; of course, Satan wants to turn love inside-out and backwards because when we are confused about love we'll be confused about God. There are several big misunderstandings in our world today about love. The one I want to focus on today is that love always accommodates. Love always yields and gives in. If you love someone that means you accommodate all their desires and wants and pleasures. So anytime you suggest and try to persuade a person that what she wants to do, who she wants to be with, who he wants to marry, what a person might believe is actually harmful to them, the world labels you unloving. Certainly, there are unloving,

unkind ways of sharing such information and we can pridefully presume too much, but the prevailing mood in our culture goes beyond that; the failure to accommodate a person and his or her desires itself is unloving.

Jesus does not accommodate the proud. And do you know why? Because it's not very gracious. Look at the end of vs. 21, "yes, Father, for such was your *gracious will*." It's gracious to hide these things from the proud. Why? Because to reward the proud means you encourage their pride. And to encourage pride is to encourage a posture in life that keeps people from knowing God. Listen to some of these verses on how damaging, how dangerous pride is.

- Proverbs 15:25 - The LORD tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries.
- Isaiah 2:12 - For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;
- Psalm 10:4 - In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."
- Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- Isaiah 2:17 - And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

Friends, it's really bad for anyone to remain in their pride. God can not reward pride; it would be terribly unloving for him to do so.

I am a proud man. I hate that part of me. But let me tell you the good news: through God's sanctifying power, with God's Word and Spirit and sometimes through tests, that part of me is being put to death. Not as fast as I wished, but he is. God graciously empowers me to put to death the deeds of the body. He won't accommodate my pride; he kills my pride. And this is a gracious thing.

Wrapping your mind and heart around this message today doesn't happen naturally. It's a work of God's Spirit in our lives. It's part of our journey of faith, to rejoice in what Jesus rejoiced in. Accepting it is a matter of faith. Faith that God knows better than me. That God's love is pure and mine is not. That God's revelation of justice, truth, grace, and fairness is superior than mine and that I need to align myself with what he says and not arrogantly expect to align himself with me. Is God producing that faith in you this morning? Friends, rejoice, God reveals the glories of Jesus to the humble in heart. And he graciously refuses to accommodate pride so that we learn, that others learn, that there is no one like our great and gracious God.

Questions for the week

- What should we 1) know and 2) do because of what we heard today?
- What was the biggest surprise to you from the sermon or text?
- Name all the things Jesus seems happy about in this passage?