

Title: Satan's fall
Text: Luke 10.17-20
Theme: Union with Christ is more important than anything
Series: Luke
Prop Stmt: Union with Christ (salvation) is more important than anything including power over evil spirits.

There was a lot of buzz this week as the inauguration event attracted a number of high-profile executives, politicians and business leaders including the CEO's of Apple, Tesla, Google, Meta, TikTok and the founder of Amazon. They donated millions of dollars in order to be there. All of the living former presidents were there as well as the Supreme Court Justices and many other current and former significant lawmakers. A few hours later the eyes of the college football world were focused on Atlanta where a new team would be crowned champion. The astronomical prices for these events reflected just how coveted they were. I am grateful when players and others use high profile events to give attention to Christ, but these kinds of things are not where true glory is found.

Jesus is the king. He is the king of the kingdom of God. But he is not like the kings and power brokers of this world and his kingdom makes no sense to this world. Jesus is the king of the upside-down kingdom. In his kingdom, true glory and power are not found in the Rotundas or executive offices of this world. True glory and even cosmic power are found in the faith-driven obedience of common men and women serving Jesus without recognition. The words of Jesus in this text are a portal to the unseen world that rightfully understood is nothing short of stunning. In other words, Jesus helps us realize again the eternal significance of our lives of faith and beloved, it is way beyond what you imagine.

Read Text:

1. **There is more going on than you can realize.** (17-18)

A. **What you know brings joy.**

The seventy-two returned with joy...

These guys were excited and rightfully so. None of the gospel writers included specific stories of their preaching missions, so we don't have those details. However, it does not take a great deal of imagination to see what happened. At the beginning of this chapter, Jesus sends out 36 teams of two on a short-term preaching mission to towns and villages that Jesus plans to visit on his way to Jerusalem where he will die. These men have to go now. They are told not to take anything with them, like money, travel bag or even an extra pair of sandals. There is no time to gather those things. After Jesus instructs them and prepares them for some of the opposition that they will face he sends them off like, as he says, "lambs in the midst of wolves."

If this was you, you would be more than slightly concerned with how this was going to go. This doesn't sound too good. Jesus was instructing them to trust him. Trust him that you will have everything that you need for this mission. Jesus told them all that they needed to know for this mission. He did not tell them everything there was to know. Jesus knew that there would be surprises for them along the way. But what they knew and what they acted upon in faith brought some good results. They accomplished the mission.

What did they know to do? Go to every town and place where Jesus was going to go. On the face of it, their mission did not appear to be too exciting. But in their obedience, they experienced God's provision for them. This is what life as a believer is like. Every day we chose to do the next right thing. Most of our lives are simply doing what God calls us to do as dads, moms, spouses, workers, neighbors, kids, students, employers, even as "missionaries." We love our missionaries and are grateful for the one here today. But when you listen to his and the other reports, "changing the world for Jesus" is a lot of getting up, praying, reading your Bible, making your bed, taking care of your kids, working on language studies, going to the market, preparing food, getting government documents, establishing relationships, earning trust, paying your bills, having conversations, and at the end of the day wondering how this is going to make a difference. That is our lives. In this case, (and it was a unique setting), these guys, doing the ordinary experienced some extraordinary and now they are returning and Luke says that they are all full of joy, they not only survived, but there was more.

In doing what they knew to do, which admittedly was not too much, they discovered something.

B. God uses you to do amazing things. (17)

In the case of these men, they came back surprised in a good way because they discovered that demons were subject to them when they commanded them in the name of Jesus. When Jesus gave them their mission instructions, he said nothing about what to do when they encountered demonic powers. This would be an unpleasant challenge for these men. They would be faced with an enemy that they could not defeat on their own. What would they do? It sounds like they did exactly what they should do. They invoked the name of Jesus and they discovered that Christ exercised his authority over these demons, through the faith of these men.

For a mere mortal to be able to exercise authority over a supernatural being is stunning. It is terrifying in the sense of the raw power of a demon, but humbling and emboldening to realize that you don't have to be afraid. V.17 makes it sound as if this was the experience of many of them if not all of them. They were sharing in the joy of each other who witnessed the power of God in their lives. But there is more. Think about the lives these men were able to affect. They were the means that God used to bring deliverance to families and villages that had lived in terror and fear. They were able to be part of a rescue operation that in turn gave them credibility to tell these people that the One with the authority, this Jesus, whose name they invoked was planning to come and visit this very village. We know Jesus. We represent Jesus. You can meet Jesus too. He is a king unlike any king.

The stories in the Bible are full of accounts of God sending people to accomplish a mission but not telling them ahead of time all that is going to happen so that they will experience, in a sense, a crisis that forces them to look in their hearts and ask, what is it that I really believe? Am I willing to stake my life on this? When you risk it all for Christ and realize that all that you have is Christ, then you will learn that all that you need is Christ.

We do not know the names of all of these men. I would guess that their combined wealth was unimpressive and that few of them had impressive resumes of their day. Compare that to the combined wealth of the CEO's at the inauguration. We are tempted to think that these are they guys that influence our world, but who would you rather go up against a demon with? Jesus is saying that these obscure men who went on this preaching assignment in some way contributed to the dismantling of Satan's power.

C. **God uses you to dismantle the powers of this world.** (18)

At this point when these men expressed the happy amazement that even the demons were subject to them in the name of Christ, Jesus said, *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."* Does this mean that Satan has already been thrown out or is this a vision that Jesus has of the future where Satan will be cast down? By describing it like lightning, the demise of Satan is fast and perhaps spectacular. This sounds like Isaiah 14.12, where the sudden fall of the king of Babylon appears to be a historical reality that reflects the demise of Satan from his position of influence. Satan's fall is the result of God casting him out from heaven. Since heaven occupies the greatest position, to be thrown out is to be thrown down. Something happens that triggers this event. Something happens that decisively breaks Satan's power so that he experiences a humiliating loss of power. Later in John 12.31 Jesus says, *"Now is the judgment of this world: now will the ruler of this world be cast out."* This statement by Christ was made in view of his death on the cross that was about to happen. Later in Colossians 2.13-15 Paul describes our salvation in terms of our regeneration and justification that was secured in the death of Christ when he says, *"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."*

Read Revelation 12.7-12.

Later in Revelation 20.1-3 Satan is bound for 1,000 years and thrown into the bottomless pit. 20.7-10 speaks of his final defeat and banishment to the Lake of Fire where he along with the beast and false prophet will be tormented day and night forever and ever. His defeat is certain. His demise is sealed. It is over in the sense that there is no avoiding this outcome. But not yet is Satan in the Lake of Fire. He knows that his time is short, so he is raging in anger and waging war in an effort to destroy everything he can while he can.

This is what I find so fascinating. These men just came back from this preaching mission. They are amazed that demons are subject to them. Jesus links what they just experienced in these towns and villages to the spectacular cosmic event of Satan's fall. I am not saying that these men caused Satan to fall. No, I think based on the John 12 passage and Colossians 2 passage that the life (Christ's victory over Satan's temptation) and death (Christ victory of sin) broke Satan's power. The victory of Christ was the decisive event that broke Satan's power, but because of that reality, these men experienced a preview of the authority that the followers of Christ share in. Demons run and tremble at the sound of his name because they are doomed. The fall of Satan from heaven is part of the series of events whereby he continuously loses influence and where his wings are clipped until the day when he is thrown into the lake of fire. What is it that contributes to the dismantling of the power of Satan? It is the faithful witness of the followers of Jesus who take his gospel to people.

Jesus is the decisive reason why Satan is cast down, but the faithful ministry of his followers who minister in his name continues Satan's defeat. Every person who comes to faith in Christ forces Satan to withdraw his armies that much more. His armies cannot stand before even one believer armed with the gospel and the Word of God.

Moms and Dad, teaching your children about Jesus and praying for them and with them contributes to the toppling of Satan's reign. Teachers, deacons, deaconesses, elders, small group leaders, faithful church members, our ministry of the gospel is way more influential in the history that counts, that what takes place in Lansing or D.C. There are no insignificant soldiers in the army of Jesus. Every person who trusts in Christ as Lord is taking back influence from the Evil One, until one day, he will be gone, once and forever. Why doesn't God just do it now? His plan is to engage us in this mission. It cannot be stopped and will not fail.

So, how do we advance this cause? The testimony of our lives (what we live for – values, and how we live for it – purity) serves as the platform for the testimony of our words (telling others about the salvation Christ offers). The right truth of the gospel is to be shared through the faithful lives of his followers. Every decision to do the right thing and to prioritize the kingdom of Christ, contributes to the demise of Satan in real time. Your life has more influence on what really matters. Beloved, we do not live for fame. We do not live for glory. We live for honor. We live for the honor of Christ by honoring him with our lives that are not marked by lust, greed, selfishness, anger, pride, jealousy, strife, rivalries, dissension, envy, or drunkenness. But are marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Your growth in the gospel and your helping others grow in the gospel contributes to the cosmic battle that dismantles the realm of Satan. There is more going on than you realize and your faithfulness matters more than you can understand.

2. **But here is what really matters.** (19-20)

Jesus then says, *"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you."* (v.19) I think he is affirming to them the fact that as representatives of Christ, that they are equipped with the power of God to

accomplish the plan of God. And yes, this is amazing but that is not what you should focus on or get excited about. Here is what really matters. *“but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

We often see books or hear talks about how to get power in your life. Much of western Christianity is obsessed with this and is looking for secret formulas, prayers to pray, verses to chant, diets to follow, disciplines to follow in order to break strong holds, etc. Jesus says, I have given you authority to do what you need to do, but don't focus on that. Your joy is not found in the influence that you may have even over darkness. Your joy is found in your salvation. Your joy is found in the fact that your name is written in heaven. This is a reference to the book of life that Revelation 13.8 and 17.8 refer to. This is the book where from the foundation of the earth, all those who would be followers of Christ have their names written in it. Those whose names are written in the book of life, which is also the book of the Lamb, are those whose names are written in heaven. This is the ultimate joy.

How do I know if my name is written in heaven? By trusting Christ as your King and Savior. God made this world as a place where his Son would live with and rule over a people who would love him and enjoy him and follow him because he is truly glorious. But we rebelled and chose to try to be our king and make our kingdoms which have betrayed us and the result has been war, chaos, destruction for thousands of years. Disease, violence and death is the story of our world. But God's plan to have a kingdom for his Son would not be stopped. He sent Christ, our rightful King to come to us as one of us, in fact he looked like the lowliest of us. By coming to be part of his own creation, Jesus lived the perfect life that Adam was supposed to do. Jesus lived the perfect life that we could not do and he did it in our place. He did it for us. His perfect life qualified him as the perfect sacrifice that he offered up by his death on the cross as a once and for all payment for every single sin of every single person who would ever turn from their sin and trust in him. When you by faith alone, in Christ alone trust in him (that is in what he has done for you) and not in anything that you can do to save yourself, then your sins are forgiven. You are declared righteous in the eyes of God. You are adopted into the family of God. You are made a part of his body. You are united to Christ and to his people forever and ever and ever. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, forever. This is your life. This is your standing. This is your inheritance. This is your significance. This is your meaning. This is your everything. This is your joy. Rejoice in this!