

Luke 10:17-24 – The return of the 72 / rejoicing in the kingdom

Jesus is the king, and was going to Jerusalem to die and rise. From there he would send out his servants to preach his kingdom – the forgiveness of sins for everyone who repents and believes. He had sent 72 disciples before him to prepare the way. He had given them power to do signs in his name. Now they returned, rejoicing. But why did they rejoice? What are the *real* reasons for followers of Jesus to rejoice?

1. The return of the seventy-two: rejoicing in Jesus' power (v17-19)

The disciples came back rejoicing. They had seen great power as they had preached and performed signs. People had believed; and even demons had fled before the name of Jesus! Jesus rejoiced too. He told them that he had seen them go – and seen Satan's kingdom falling. As Jesus now was going to the cross, Satan's power was being destroyed. Sinners could be forgiven and come back into God's family through his blood. Christians have nothing to fear – nothing can happen to us unless God has a good reason for it. We should trust God only. Do you rejoice in this? Or are you still blind? Do you still think that Satan is ruling the world?

2. True rejoicing: rejoicing in the gift of salvation (v20)

But Jesus added – do not rejoice to see shows of power. There are much higher things for a true Christian to rejoice in. Signs of power are not the heart of the kingdom. The best thing is to know that we are beloved by God; to know that our names are written in heaven. It is better to know that God himself has chosen us and promised us a part in the new world that will come down from heaven. In this world we are only strangers and travellers, so we should not hold on to it too much. We should be looking higher. We should rejoice in the gift of salvation in Christ – do you?

3. True rejoicing: rejoicing in God's particular mercy (v21-22)

Jesus rejoiced in something more. He rejoiced that he was known completely by the Father, and he knew the Father completely. The Father is Lord of all, and has given all things into the hands of his Son. He will fulfil all God's purposes. In his own wisdom, he has chosen to not show himself to the world's high and mighty men. He has passed by the proud. He has shown himself to little children – those who are humbled to come to him as guilty sinners and empty beggars. God hates pride, but lifts up the lowly. God shows his salvation only to those he chooses, for his own purposes. Then he alone deserves praise and glory. We cannot get to God by our own efforts, strength or wisdom, but must bow before Jesus Christ alone. Then we can rejoice in him; do you?

4. True rejoicing: rejoicing in the days we live in (v23-24)

Would you like to have lived in the days of Elijah and David – to have seen miracles, and God's enemies defeated in battle? Jesus says it is better to live today. They never saw the mysteries of the kingdom as we see them now. We now see Jesus as come in human nature, crucified and risen and reigning. We see the gospel preached to the nations. We now know that people receive new life and forgiveness from the Holy Spirit by believing in his name. We wait only for his final return in glory. Those men believed God's word, but had much less light than us. True Christians do not rejoice in outward victories and wealth, but in these glorious truths. What makes you rejoice? Are your eyes open to see the glory of Jesus and the cross? That is where to find true glory.