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Luke

Chapter 10 - An Unexpected Evaluation

Countering Joyful Misperceptions (vs. 17-20)

**Luke 10:17-20:** 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 on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

As we come to this passage in Luke, it comes within the context of the whole book. The whole book, really, as you go back to Luke 1, in particular in verse 3, makes reference to who Luke's audience is. It's one of the few books that we see an individual that is actually addressed.

And though he may stand for many people, that is to say, those who love God, “Theophilus” actually means “lovers of God,” we believe that there is a focal point. And the focal point seems to be that he is most honorable. He actually says, “I write to you these things, most honorable Theophilus.” Why would he write to him these things? Why would he put these things in order? And the answer seems to be that he's writing to people that are perhaps good people, honorable people, noble individuals. And these are the ones that find it hard to believe that they actually need a Savior. So, what he's going to be doing throughout the Gospel of Luke is he's going to be showing that maybe you're not as righteous as you think you are. And he begins to deflate, if I could put it this way, those that would perceive themselves as honorable. The Gospel of Luke is a great book for that. And of course, unless we humble ourselves as children, we're not going to see the kingdom of heaven. So, there has to be a sense of humility in all of our lives to come before Him. Then it's no mistake that he opens up the book in the sense of dealing with Zacharias, who is the priest at that particular point, and goes in to offer sacrifices. We see him, that is

to say Zacharias, being corrected by the angel of the Lord, which is telling us specifically that he's not thinking right. Now, the bottom line is, we know that the wicked don't think like God.

In fact, an interesting passage in Proverbs 2:14 reads, the wicked delight and even rejoice in doing what is evil. I mean, that's kind of obvious and undeniable. But we know as well that God doesn't take any delight in those things.

The psalmist actually writes in Psalm 5:4,

“For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.”

That means that nothing hurtful or desire to be calamitous or injurious towards people. Yet what Luke is wanting to convey to us is, though that may be obvious that the wicked really don't think anywhere near what God thinks, Scripture would say none of you do.

And so, by the time you come into Isaiah 55 in particular, which is one of our favorite passages that deal with nobody really thinks like God as “high as the heavens are

above the earth.” So, I think fundamentally what he's saying is that God's way of thinking is light years beyond ours. It would be impossible for us to think the way that He thinks. And though the good man may be perceiving himself to be aligned with God, God's saying, “You're nowhere close.” Luke specifically would say, “To the person who thinks himself to be noble, thinks himself to be righteous; you need to repent.” And once again, the word “repent” means you need to think differently, because though we perceive ourselves to be good, we're nowhere close.

So, he opens up the book with Zacharias, who is a priest, and you would think that he knows what the right thing to do is. He's going in and he's offering sacrifices. He's going to be the father of John the Baptist. However, this man just can't seem to believe. And we know, according to Hebrews, without faith, without believing, it's impossible to please God. So, here you have a priest, and he's not even believing in God. And you say, “Well, but he's a good guy.” And God says, “You're not anywhere close.” So, all the way through, when you go through the Gospel of

Luke, you're going to see this, even when Jesus stands in His synagogue, in His own hometown. And there He is standing up in the middle of the synagogue. And as He begins to criticize, specifically, I would say religious people, because they're in a synagogue. I mean, if they're not religious, they wouldn't be in the synagogue, right? So, you have these religious people and they're in the synagogue. By the time He finishes pointing out their sin, they want to kill Him. So, once again, what Luke is showing is that you have these people that perceive themselves to be honorable, and yet they're not. And all the way through, we see righteous people, if I could put it this way, questioning what God is doing. And it shows that it's a horrific thing. I mean, when we were looking at the text in which Christ does this comparison between Sodom and Gomorrah and uses the city of Tyre and Sidon, and says, "Those are horrible places. Horrible sins are committed in those places. But I tell you, it's worse for you if you're in this city and I'm giving you the message and you're not believing, you are worse." And that comparison and contrast in particular is hard for us to fathom; that God would declare it to be a worse sin

because we're not really sinners, are we? And He says, "You don't think anywhere like how I think." And so, by the time you come to Luke 5:33, we actually wonder why God isn't as religious as we are. And so, they began to actually question His religiosity.

There's an interesting passage in Isaiah 65, just take a moment to turn there with me. I've oftentimes thought about this passage because it really kind of in a way is a summary of people that perceive themselves to be extremely righteous.

God says in Isaiah 65,

(Isaiah 65:1) "I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me;

I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me.

I said, 'Here am I, here am I,'

To a nation which did not call on My name.

(Isaiah 65:2) I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people,

Who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts."

Of course, once again, they think that they're righteous.

(Isaiah 65:3 “A people who continually provoke Me to My face...”)

He goes on and says in verses 3 and 4, “But they worship false things.” And I know the thought is, it's because if somebody wears a righteous-looking robe and they walk in righteous-looking ways, then they must be righteous people. But God is pretty clear that all have sinned and fall short.

But it goes on and says in verse 5,

(Isaiah 65:5) “Who say...”

And actually, the reference is, “Who say to Me.” So, God is saying, “They say this to Me.”

“... ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!’...”

Holier than God, really? I don't know how that works.

“... These are smoke in My nostrils...”

And so, it shows the arrogance, I would say, of religion. And really, throughout the Gospel of Luke, He's going to be dealing with those. Even John the Baptist will question

the validity of Christ because he doesn't feel like He's bringing things into justice the way he thinks He should. I mean, we all have an idea of the way things should be done. And so, John begins to question, "You need to go ask Him if He's the guy, because He sure doesn't meet my criteria."

And in an interesting way, in Luke 7:32, we see Jesus saying, "You know what the problem is? You want Me to jump through your hoops. You say if we sing a praise, then we ought to be jumping and singing a praise, and if we sing a dirge, I ought to be sorrowful." And He says, "I don't jump through your hoops." And this is the thing that you need to realize when you go into Scripture, that it's not about us reading into what God is telling us. It's about what does it say to us? What is God telling us? And we need to find out, rightly dividing it, what He's saying and what He means, not what I want it to say or what I want it to mean. It was bizarre, all the way through the gospel, as Jesus begins to be corrected by the fact that He's eating with sinners. In Chapter 8, I was thinking about the disciples. Here they are on the boat and the waters are

stirring up and Jesus is sleeping. And they're wondering why Jesus isn't concerned about the weather. "Why aren't you concerned about the weather?" I mean, you think about a lot of people; they spend a lot of time talking about the weather. We think, "A hurricane's coming, why isn't God concerned about the weather?" But the fact of the matter is that we're trying to get Him to think like we are.

As you come to Luke 9 in particular, and you realize Jesus is talking to His disciples; that He's dealing with those that are still having trouble believing, and believing is the big issue. It's not about your righteousness, it's about you trusting in His.

So, as you look in Luke 9:41, it reads,

(Luke 9:41) "And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you..."

We know that in Luke 8:25, He even calls out to His disciples, "Where's your faith? What happened to your faith?" So, we're actually weak on faith, but strangely

enough, His disciples are not only weak in faith, but they're strong on self-promotion. Read a little bit further.

(Luke 9:45) “But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it...”

(Luke 9:46) “An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.”

“What Jesus says, we don't understand that, but I do know this, I'm better than that person.” And we realize that even His disciples are weak in faith, strong on self-promotion. If you drop on down, they're quick to condemn and they're slow to forgive, which is the very opposite of what Jesus says. I mean, the Samaritans won't let Jesus walk through their particular region. They go, “Let's kill them.” And Jesus goes, “I don't think you're thinking like Me.” And even towards the end of Chapter 9 in particular, Jesus begins to tell them, “Okay, I understand you're quick to commit, but the problem is that it seems to be hard for you to follow through on your commitment.” And there were those that were volunteering, “We'll follow You wherever You go.” He

goes, "I don't think you understand. Foxes have holes, birds have nests; the Son of Man doesn't have a place to lay His head." So, all the way through, what we're seeing is the misperceptions of not only the wicked, but the misperceptions of those that would be perceived to be as good people. And the ultimate problem isn't that this person is more of a sinner than this person; the ultimate problem is that they're not believing. And it's about faith in His goodness, not their own. This is the message that Christ has then called in Chapter 10 His 70 to proclaim, the peace of God. "You proclaim this, the peace of God. This is what you need to proclaim." And anybody that rejects the peace of God, here again, it's our human perception that the greatest, the most horrific, the most unforgettable and unforgivable sin is that which is done against humanity, i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah. He goes, "No, the worst sin is your sin against God." And that is that you don't receive His grace, that you won't receive His mercy, that you won't receive His forgiveness. This is the greatest sin. And this is the sin that will hang you. So, ultimately, He begins to display the fact that these that are in this particular region have been rejecting, and He

begins to give the judgment of that particular sin. Rejecting and refusing to receive the gift of God is probably the worst of sins.

It is interesting, if you look with me in Luke 10:2,

(Luke 10:2) “And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...”

I just want to emphasize this,

“... therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send...”

Now, I want to make this a big point. He is not using the word “*apostolos*,” which is where we get the word “apostle,” which means “to send out”; to send out as representatives, to send out as messengers. He's not using that word. He uses a word which is very strong in the Greek, “*ekballō*”. That compound word means to literally push out or thrust out, sometimes throw out, sometimes even regurgitate out, but it's a forceful word. What the text is saying is you need to pray to God to push people out in uncomfortable zones, because it's not their nature to proclaim this message, especially to sinners. It's not the nature to go into particular realms in which you

feel like you're better than them and they should not be even saved. As the disciples so clearly put it, "These Samaritans shouldn't even be saved. We should just do away with them." And so, what you have to pray for is that God would push people out, thrust them out into a region, into an area, into doing a work that goes against our nature.

If you look at the end of Chapter 9, He's talking about those that go, "I want to follow You, but I first want to bury my father. I want to get my inheritance." "I want to follow you, but I'm looking for more comfort." And He says, "It's going to take a power of God to move people away from that which is comfortable and that which is easy for them and the concerns that they have in their regular life to actually go and proclaim this message. And so, God does. He sends out these 70. He literally thrust them out into this work.

And as we now come to the passage, they finally come back and they see such great things happening.

It says in verse 17,

(Luke 10:17) "The seventy returned..."

And wow, it's a celebration. The way they're described within the passages is that they are the joyful ones. It actually is a noun there. So, the joyful ones are dancing in the streets and great things are happening.

“The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.””

The “even,” of course, is obviously emphasizing a cumulative effect within the passage, which is really conveying the fact that “Of all the things that are being done in Your name, wow, this is the greatest, because, I mean, the greatest of powers are subject to us.”

You see the warnings of going against the demons in passages like Jude, in passages like 2 Peter 2, where he warns, “You don't want to revile against demons. They're a lot stronger than you are.” You have an interesting picture in Isaiah and Kings as well as Chronicles of 1 angel wiping out 185,000 instantly. So, it's pretty obvious that you don't want to pick a fight with these angelic beings. Scripture actually refers to the fact that reviling angelic majesties is something not to do. However, what they're saying is that “We're winning a battle even against the

most powerful forces that we could ever be up against. And it's Your name that we're using." Just imagine how wonderful this is! So, they begin to celebrate winning strategic battles. They begin to celebrate the fact that they're pushing back the enemy, subjugating these malevolent forces. They're now under their feet, and people are being healed, obviously exercising authority which deems them literally invincible.

Jesus will say this, and He'll even agree with them in verse 18,

(Luke 10:18) "And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."

The phrase "fall" is not as much that Satan was being pushed out, but that he was actually falling to his knees, or falling down in reverence, in subjugation, which is an interesting picture.

All the way through, this has been prophesied. In Genesis, at the beginning in Chapter 3, God literally prophesied this to Eve. And as you go through the Scriptures, you see passages like, well, Isaiah 14 talks about the fact that Satan's going to fall. It's good to know, isn't it? Read with

me just some of these passages. Just good to know. It's like God reminds us all the way through history. He's going down. And it gives us these pictures.

The picture is given in Chapter 14 of like the king of Babylon, then it goes, of course, into the one who is Satan himself. And it says, "The day is coming when Sheol beneath is going to be excited over you dying."

It reads this way in verse 9,

(Isaiah 14:9) "Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come;

It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth;

It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones.

(Isaiah 14:10) They will all respond and say to you,

'Even you have been made weak as we,

You have become like us.

(Isaiah 14:11) Your pomp and the music of your harps

Have been brought down to Sheol;

Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you

And worms are your covering.'

(Isaiah 14:12) How you have fallen from heaven,  
O star of the morning, son of the dawn! ...”

Even in Isaiah, it tells us.

And if you look in Ezekiel 28, you'll see fundamentally the same thing as Tyre and Sidon is made reference to within the passage and the king of that particular realm. And then it goes into the description of Satan himself.

Of course, it says in verse 12, “There was a time you were perfection of beauty, full of wisdom.”

“You were the cherub that covers,” it says in verse 14. So, obviously we know that we're no longer talking about man.

And then it says,

(Ezekiel 28:17) “Your heart was lifted up because of your  
beauty;

You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.

I cast you to the ground;

I put you before kings,

That they may see you.”

It's clear that the day is coming. But what's interesting is that Jesus is saying, "I see this as an event as if it is taking place now." Now, what we know is that it's been prophesied all the way through, and Scripture is actually saying it's a process in which it is being done. But of course, we know that the culmination was when Christ died on the cross. And it is His statement in John 12 that makes reference to this. And in 1 John, Jesus actually declares to the disciples, He says, "I just want to let you know that this is the reason why I came, to destroy the works of the devil."

Interesting picture that you see in Revelation 12, in particular, is you'll see Satan falling from heaven in that particular passage. The question is, what is Jesus making reference to in this passage? And what He's making reference to is that He saw Satan have to submit to the power in which He gave these individuals. Obviously, once again, the day is coming when he's going to be dealt with and thrown into the lake of fire, as Revelation will tell us. But what He's dealing with in this particular passage is that He saw him being subjected to their great power at

this time. Now, you would think that Him making mention of this would be that which would cause great celebration as well. It almost feels like Jesus is on the bandwagon.

They go, “Even the spirits are subject to us, these demons, these great forces of power.” “*Daimonion*” is the word that is used. These great forces of power are subject to us. So, this is something to celebrate. And He goes, “And I'm telling you guys, I saw the subjugation of Satan himself.” But He doesn't end it there.

Keep reading it,

(Luke 10:19) “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.”

Unseen, crawling, lurking things, things in the wall like scorpions, it doesn't matter if it's under your feet, it doesn't matter if it's eye level; nothing's going to hurt you. It doesn't matter what the power is. It doesn't matter how great the enemy is. If you think about it, no longer are they bridled or weighed down by concern for their safety or for their security. There's no longer anxiety over kind of that. I mean, that's something to celebrate if

you think about it. And there's certain destruction of the greatest enemy that ever existed. Wow. And yet Jesus goes, "Don't celebrate this." I mean, this is not a segue. This is an abrupt moment where He literally states and not only gives a counterpoint, but actually declares a contrary point, "You can't think this way. This is not what you celebrate." Now, what we have are righteous people, good people, people that He had sent, people that He had empowered to do great work. They're doing a great work. And great things are happening. But you cannot celebrate this. That is a very interesting statement.

In fact, if you look in verse 20,

(Luke 10:20) "Nevertheless do not..."

That's a "stop the celebration" moment here.

"... rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you..."

And what He's telling us is that we have a tendency to celebrate the wrong stuff. We think the wrong way, and here again, we think that we're pretty noble, pretty gracious, pretty wonderful people, especially if demons

are being cast out by the power that God has given us. We know what to celebrate.

I think of Ecclesiastes 7, if you've ever read that chapter, it's a great chapter that makes reference to difficult days and days of celebration. The initial thought is days of celebration are always better. And his statement is, "Nope, the difficult times are better. The times of death are better than the times of birth." Why would he say that? As he goes on, he says, "Because at the time of death, you think more deeply. At the time of celebration, there you are around the parties, you're celebrating. It's just like a bunch of crackling noise. It's like you throw something on the fire and it just crackles up and it's gone. After all the laughter, what do you have? Nothing. But during the difficult times, God is teaching you. Now, he says, "God has made the one as well as the other. Rejoice in both of them." But the fact of the matter is that God is using the one as well as the other. And the one we want to discard, those difficult times, those hardship times, those times of great trials within our lives; we want to

ditch those. And he goes, “No, don't think that way.” Scripture continues to tell us that we don't think right. I'll give you an example here in Luke 11, if you would turn there with me, verse 27. And really, Luke is kind of full of these particular points in which righteous people are making righteous statements thinking that it's a righteous thing.

And Luke 11:27 reads this way,

(Luke 11:27) “While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.”

(Luke 11:28) But He said, “On the contrary...””

The contrary would be like opposite. Not that.

“... blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

All the way through the Gospel of Luke, we're going to see we don't think right. Now, once again, it's not hard for us to think in terms of, “Well, I know the wicked don't think right.” God is saying none of us think right. And especially

those of us that think that we know something. We don't think right. We would perceive that the absolute worst that could happen is that you would be involved in the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. And he says, "No. The very worst that could happen to you is when you reject the love of God." Just think how amazing that is within the thought concept. It's just not like us to think in those particular terms.

I'll give you another example. Luke 5. I mean, how many times does He make this point? You're familiar with the passage because we went through it not too long ago. But we'll pick up in verse 17.

(Luke 5:17) "One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.

(Luke 5:18) And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him.

(Luke 5:19) But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.

(Luke 5:20) Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

Everybody is taken back. "What are you talking about? The guy obviously can't walk. You need to heal. The reason why they lowered him down was not to get his sins forgiven. The reason that they lowered him down was so that this guy can be healed." And I can imagine some were going, "Oh, yeah, sure, right. Well, anybody can say your sins are forgiven." And of course, the Jews will hop on and they'll go, "You're not supposed to be saying that. That's blasphemy. Only God can forgive sins."

But Jesus makes an interesting statement.

It says,

(Luke 5:20) "Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

(Luke 5:21) The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”

(Luke 5:22) But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts?”

Now, watch the word that He uses. It's a comparative in the text.

(Luke 5:23) “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

Now, they would say, “Well, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ that's easy because there's no action that's taking place here.” What He's revealing is we don't think right. I mean, all of us, if you just be honest with yourself, if you were to see this for the first time, you would go, “Come on, are You going to heal or not? You're just blowing smoke?” But He throws out, “Which do you think is easier?” The point is that we don't see things right. This particular passage in Luke 10, to me, is probably one of the most convicting passages imaginable. Because Christ

is revealing something that really strikes at the heart of my selfishness, that I can't even see this.

The way that it reads here in verse 20, the conclusion of the passage,

(Luke 10:20) “Nevertheless do not rejoice...”

He's actually telling us what not to rejoice in. And once again, if you're confused, He doesn't want you rejoicing in your winning strategic battles. He's not wanting you to rejoice in pushing back the enemy. I mean, you can go down the list. He's not wanting you to rejoice that these powers are subjected to you. That's not what He wants you to rejoice about. He wants you to rejoice, if you look in the passage, that your names are recorded in the book of heaven.

It's an interesting book, isn't it? It's mentioned in Exodus 32, this book that is recorded by God, and Psalm 69 as well, and all the way through Scripture. Actually, Psalm 69 refers to it as the Book of Life, which if you read Revelation 3, it seems as if everybody's name is written in the Book of Life. The problem is you might be blotted out of it, because if you're living, you're actually in the Book of

Life. But as it goes on, we read about the Lamb's Book of Life.

And there is an interesting book that's opened in Malachi. If you just take a moment and look there with me, in Malachi 3. We'll just read the end of the passage.

(Malachi 3:16) “Then those who feared the LORD...”

Of course, the whole book is dealing with those that are superficial and rebellious against God.

“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.”

Wouldn't that be great? A book of remembrance. There's no wonder the guy at the cross next to Him says, “Remember me. I want my name to be written in the book of remembrance.” So, ultimately, as you go into Revelation 21, you come to the end of that particular chapter, you have the Lamb's Book of Life, which of course guarantees our remembrance.

The point of this phrase, “names are recorded in heaven,” is telling us that something magnificent had to take place in order for that to come about. And what we understand is that the spirits being subject to us, and I say this tongue in cheek, but just merely requires the word of His power. In other words, He speaks it and it's done. You come to the end of Revelation 19:21, and it says He speaks the word, and then everybody's just destroyed that rebelled against Him. So, you're going, “Okay, that wasn't hard because it's just by the word of His mouth, right? But now, listen to this, in order for you to be saved, what has to take place is the sacrifice of His Son. That's what makes it hard. I mean, you watch David in the Old Testament, and he has no problem fighting in battles. Tens of thousands he'll slay. But when it comes to his son, he can't touch him. He knows his son is wrong. He knows his son needs to die. It won't be until his general finally takes his life that he takes him out of the picture, but David cannot do that. Do you have any idea how hard your salvation was? You know when Jesus uses that phrase, “Which do you think is easier?” He's given a comparative. “Do you have any comprehension what it takes to save

you? I had to lay My Son on the line.” Doesn't that speak to your heart? I mean, I can't walk away from that. As many times as I've rejoiced about all of these stupid things, I'm going, “I should have been rejoicing about a power that would lay His Son on the line for me. That's the greatest.” Never rejoice in anything that you accomplish. Rejoice in the fact that God would go to that extreme to save you. This is where we celebrate.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your love for us and the realization that this was a great cause. As Peter would put it, we were not redeemed with things like silver and gold; we were bought with blood. And it was the blood of Your Son. In this, we will rejoice. How magnificent it is.

Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou, my God, would die for me.

I'm asking you to give thanks to Him for that. And I'm asking you to think about that always. Let that always be paramount in your celebration.