

34. Jesus Received the Report of the Seventy Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand why Jesus gave the seventy disciples certain instructions as He sent them out to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. We saw that one of the key lessons that Jesus wanted the disciples to learn was to come to an understanding of the fact that Jesus would provide for their needs as they were obedient to Him. In our topic today, we will learn about the report that the disciples brought when they returned to Jesus. We will also see that Jesus used that opportunity to teach them the things that are most important.

Jesus had spent much time preaching, healing and casting out demons in three cities. Most of the people of those cities had rejected the teaching of Jesus. As a result, Jesus warned about the judgment that the people of those three cities would receive. Luke 10:13-16 says, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.” Jesus had just told the disciples that the people of certain cities would reject their message.

As a result, Jesus spoke to the seventy about the people of the cities where He had spent much time teaching and doing miracles. The word translated “woe” means *grief* and spoke of the grief and sorrow that the people of these cities would one day experience. The first two cities that Jesus mentioned were Chorazin and Bethsaida. These towns were located close to the town of Capernaum, which is the third town that is mentioned. In Ezekiel chapters 28-30, God had used Ezekiel to tell about the judgment that would come on the cities of Tyre and Sidon. That judgment happened exactly as God had promised through Ezekiel. Jesus said that if the miracles that He had done had been done in the cities of Tyre and Sidon that those cities would have repented a long time earlier. He said that the people of those cities would have shown their repentance by sitting in sackcloth and ashes, which was a sign of true sorrow for sin.

Jesus said that it would be easier for the people of Tyre and Sidon at the final judgment than it would be for the people of the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Then, Jesus reminded the seventy why they did not need to take it personally if people in other cities rejected them. He said that the people who would listen to the seventy would also listen to Him. Those who rejected the seventy would also reject Jesus. However, they would be rejecting more than just Jesus. They would also be rejecting the Father that had sent Jesus to this earth to pay the penalty for sin. Then, Jesus sent out the seventy to speak of the kingdom of God in all of the places where He would soon be going.

The seventy were gone for a period of time and then returned to meet with Jesus at the appointed time. When the seventy returned to Jesus, He gave them the opportunity to report what had happened as they ministered. Luke 10:17-20 says, “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall

like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” People who are given the opportunity to serve the Lord are excited when they see how the Lord works through their lives. That was also true of the seventy.

We see that the seventy were filled with joy when they returned. This meant that the Lord had been working in their lives as well as through their lives. They said, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” Here, we see that the disciples were excited about what God had done through their lives. This is a common response when Christians first go out to serve the Lord and see how the Lord works in the lives of the people. We see that Jesus rejoiced with the seventy for what He had done through their lives. He chose to rejoice with those who rejoice.

Jesus also looked forward to the total defeat of Satan. Jesus had seen when Satan was cast out of heaven. Isaiah 14:12 says, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!” Now, Jesus looked forward to the defeat of Satan on this earth. John 12:31 says, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” Then, John 16:11 says, “Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” Christ had given His disciples authority over demons when He originally sent out the Twelve. As a result, they were now given a little picture of the judgment that would come on Satan and his demons and could look forward to his final judgment.

Later, Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” Then, in Ephesians 6:17-18, we see that Christ gives Christians two offensive weapons against Satan and his demons. Those verses say, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” In these verses, we see that our two offensive weapons are the Word of God and prayer. We are to share the Word of God and then pray that Jesus will defeat the powers of Satan in the life of any person that is troubled by the powers of Satan and his demons.

After rejoicing with the seventy, Jesus went on to give a much greater reason why they should rejoice. Instead of making this power over the demons the source of their rejoicing, Jesus encouraged the seventy to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. Here, we see a key lesson for our own lives. We are to rejoice with those who rejoice and then help them refocus on what the Lord has done for them instead of what they are doing for the Lord. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Then, Ephesians 3:20-21 adds, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children bring glory to the Lord and not to their ministry.

Jesus went on to rejoice for the things that the Father had taught the disciples. Luke 10:21-24 says,

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered 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 *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.’ Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, ‘Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen *it*, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it*.’” Here, we see that the Father both hides and reveals.

The Father hides spiritual truth from those who depend on their human abilities and human wisdom. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” In contrast, God reveals His truth even to those who are spiritual babes. The word translated “babes” means *a young child that often cannot even speak clearly*. Matthew 21:15-16 says, “But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant and said to Him, ‘Do You hear what these are saying?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes. Have you never read, “Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise”?’” The seventy did not have formal religious training from well-known rabbis in Jerusalem. Instead, they had spent time with Jesus and God had given them spiritual understanding.

The Father is the One who reveals the Son. The Son is the One who reveals the Father. The Jewish rabbis depended on the writings of earlier rabbis to try and teach about the Father. However, they had no personal relationship with God. In contrast, Jesus is the Son of God who reveals the Father to those He wills to reveal the Father. As a result, the seventy had the privilege of getting to know the Father because Jesus had revealed the Father to them.

Jesus then told the disciples privately that they were blessed to see the way that the Lord worked through their lives. The seventy had the opportunity to see the things that many prophets and kings had desired to see but those men had not seen these things. They had also desired to hear the teaching that the disciples had received but they had not had that opportunity. The seventy had a special blessing to see and hear the way that God worked in their lives and through their lives. That is why they were to rejoice that their names were written in heaven instead of rejoicing in what they had been able to accomplish. They could enjoy that special blessing but the most important thing was to rejoice in their eternal salvation. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to rejoice in their eternal salvation. May the Lord richly bless you as you rejoice with your children for the eternal life that each one has received.