

10/05/25 - Luke 10:1-24 - "The Heavenly Scoreboard"

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[0:00] Please turn with me to Luke chapter 10. We'll be beginning at verse 1.

! The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way. Behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages.

[1:18] Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you.

But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.

Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works 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 bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?

[2:24] You shall be brought down to Hades. The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

The 72 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 have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

In that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, Oh, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[3:51] Then, turning to the disciples, he said privately, Blessed are the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. A significant amount of things that are going on in the text today, there's a huge portion of the Scripture that is detailing the work of God going throughout all the region.

Then it's ended in this personal prayer of Christ. And this is, it should be interesting to till in the soil of the word to say, okay, what is going on here?

And most importantly, how does this contextualize to our lives today? Okay? So in effort of getting there, I want to ask you a question.

If heaven kept a scoreboard, what do you think would be on it? If heaven kept a scoreboard, what do you think would be on it?

[5:14] Do you think it would be your faithfulness to pray at night, pray with your spouse, maybe read your Bible, do your devotionals, baptism, all of these things, taking communion, being a church member.

What do you think would be on it? While you think about it, I just want to highlight the obvious. We love scoreboards. We love them in our culture.

They're everywhere. In sports, obviously, it's, you know who's winning or losing because there's a scoreboard. And for any Browns fans, it's tied up and it's at halftime, okay?

So pay attention to the sermon right now. But it doesn't stop at sports. We have scoreboards for literally everything. In the bathroom, you probably have a scale that you stand on and you tally up, oh, well, I'm losing or winning, we'll call it.

Got some points on there. Social media, the whole concept of social media has become a scoreboard of likes, shares, and attention, comments.

[6:28] And the relational aspect of social media has become a scoreboard, unfortunately. Bank accounts, sometimes the scoreboard's doing pretty well.

Sometimes, you know, you could probably use a call to the banker to help you out. Smartwatches that track steps, everything. We love scoreboards.

Did you realize that? A lot of things in our lives are scoreboards. And let's be honest, we bring scoreboards into our spiritual lives in the church as well, right?

Pastors share a sermon, they're like, wow, that didn't get any likes. It's like, welcome to my world, right? I know, I'm hard on myself. And I love making fun of myself.

So, small group leaders, you might weigh your scoreboard on church attendance, you know, at your small group. There's not so many people attending this week and you feel discouraged.

[7:28] Maybe parents, you're quietly comparing how your kids are reaching milestones compared to other kids, their age.

Or if you're really spiritual, like Rick, you keep track of how many times you've read through the Bible in a year. Or maybe how many miles. He just ran a, what was it, a marathon?

Just did a marathon in Akron last week. And he's got his scoreboard. I see his scoreboard weekly on our group chat. We love scoreboards. That's the point I'm trying to make you understand today.

But the problem is, the scoreboard is often the source of our joy. It is often the source of our joy.

If the numbers are up, attendance, likes, milestones, we feel almost validated in that.

[8 : 30] Things are good. But if they're down, we spiral into discouragements. And I hope you can see the trouble we're in, if that is the foundation of our joy.

The disciples had the same temptation to measure their worth by their wins. And it had nothing to do with the scale in the bathroom.

But Jesus takes their scoreboard from them, flips it over, and writes one thing in permanent ink upon their scoreboard.

Jesus says, your name is written in heaven. That's the scoreboard. That perspective is the radical redirection that Jesus provides the disciples in the passage in Luke 10.

And I believe we need this redirection in our lives, in our scoreboard culture. The question is laid out for us.

[9 : 41] Which scoreboard are we living by? The one that is contingent upon visible accomplishments or enduring by the grace of God?

For that, I want us to remember this sermon titled, The Heavenly Scoreboard. And today, I believe we will all be redirected, myself included, for the glory and benefit of our lives, the glory of God.

We will be redirected in the simple point that joy is not in our doing. Joy is in His knowing. Us.

That is joy. And so, I'm going to prove this and argue this in three sections today in the passage. And I'd like to invite you to pray before we really get into the thick of the passage.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word today. That by the power of your Holy Spirit working through it, you speak to us.

[10 : 54] And I pray and anticipate for you to redirect us today by the power of the Holy Spirit working through your word.

Let him convict. Let him confront. Let him encourage. Let him redirect and guide us. Praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right.

The first section, we see this big section of passage. Call me crazy, but yes, one section, 20 verses. I'm going to break it down and simplify a couple things in it.

Thematic highlights that are significant to its main point. And so, it's titled, The Mission, which is Joy Redirected. And we see this start out.

After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

[11 : 55] So, these are places that he has not been. That should be significant to us. And I follow along the list of theologians that believe that this 72 is not actually 72.

That this is actually 70. And like the NASB 95 and the LSB, these very literal translations, they list this number as 70.

I spent a long time researching that. And I can confidently conclude to interpret this as 70 agrees with Luke's writing style. And it also agrees in a symbolic emphasis that we can see here.

And so, I don't think that this number is by accident at all. And although it's debated, I believe that the most faithful interpretation of this is there were 70, a symbolic 70.

And this would echo then the 70 nations that are listed in Genesis 10, which would symbolically represent these disciples that were sent out ahead of Jesus were literally symbolically sent out to the entire world.

[13 : 02] To all the world. They were scattered. And that agrees a lot with Acts and the movement in Acts and Luke's usage of that summary.

And so, these disciples were first-time pioneers to this global harvest to the ends of the earth. And they were forerunners of the church's mission to the nations.

And so, we see that in verse 2, The instruction is simple.

First, first pray, and then go. My kids could follow that. Maybe. Depending. Quiet down, Kyle.

And similar to the limited resources that the disciples were instructed back in chapter 9, 1 through 6, they're instructed to not take many things with them.

[14:25] All comforts of the world are to be left behind. Everything that could lead in a dependence upon material things of the world, leave it behind.

And so, this would bring about in the disciples' mind, as they go, as lambs into a wolf territory, they are to depend on nobody but the Lord.

Their confidence is to be not in human resources, but solely upon their faith. And so, we see two movements that Jesus makes here.

He makes known the reception. Praise the Lord, some will receive them. And from verse 5 all the way to 9, if they are received, there's peace. There's shalom, rest for those disciples.

Like, that house would be a mark of the whole fullness of God's presence. His saving presence would be welcomed and wanted. They are to stay there, eat, heal, and declare.

[15:27] Declare what? The kingdom of God has drawn near. But, Jesus goes into this very significant portion of rejection, though.

Almost twice the length of the reception. He says, if you're rejected, essentially, from verse 10 to 16, if you're rejected, shake off the dust.

And while you shake off the dust, you will become a living parable that says, this soil that belongs to God, this soil belongs to God, and you have refused Him.

Washing our hands of this. That's between you and God. I think it's significant the towns that are mentioned here.

Three Jewish towns, three Gentile towns. One having very historic, not so flattering history.

[16:36] Sodom, Tyre, Sidon. These are like filthy, ugly, dirty, rebellious, refusing all sense of morality, doing what they want.

These were the mark of these cities. And here, he warns that the towns that he's never been to yet, as he has preached and performed miracles, he warns that the towns where he has preached, sorry, that he has been to, like Chorazin, or what's the other one?

Bethsaida, or Capernaum. These are places where Jesus has already been to. He's already revealed miracles, signs to them.

He's revealed the message. And the Jewish people rejected Christ. For those that have already experienced Jesus firsthand, Jesus says there will be stricter judgment to them.

Even more strict than those notorious for their sinful lifestyles.

[17:59] Gentile cities. Sodom. Tyre. Sidon. And you might wonder, like, why is Jesus unpacking this emphasis on rejection?

Why is he mentioning this? And I believe he's making a shocking point for those disciples going out. That even notoriously wicked Gentile cities would have repented.

Sodom would have repented if they would have seen what Capernaum had seen. If they'd hear what Capernaum had heard.

Sodom would have repented. That's a bold, shocking statement. You see what he's doing?

He's saying those who had proximity with Christ. They were familiar with Christ. Christ's work. Christ's message. They were the one to reject him.

[19:11] But there's all these people that are lost. Completely lost in their sin. They don't feel like they have it all together. The law of Moses and all these things. And rituals.

But then those who are completely lost. Those are the ones that would receive him. I think I've said it before.

And I'll say it again because it's right here. That religious familiarity without repentance is more destructive. More dangerous than pagan ignorance.

Like, you can attend church all you want and live a lifestyle contrary to that. The longer you do that, the more dangerous it becomes for you.

Not knowing Jesus and being lost in your sin is the beginning. The very foundation of salvation. Of the need for grace.

[20:15] Because your sin is broadcast to the world. But after knowing him and continuing in your rebellion like the Jews.

Without giving him your whole life is a starting point of destruction. The gospel of Jesus Christ requires repentance and faith.

No religious person alive that is stuck and sold out and solely fixed on their religion feels they have any need of repentance.

The Gentiles? That's pretty obvious. According to God's law and God's standards, they're in sin. It's plain to them. And we see there's a big disconnect for those who think they have it all together.

These are the wolves that the lambs are being sent out to. He's saying, don't get devoured by them.

[21:17] They're deceived. They wouldn't even receive me. But the Gentiles? Some as wicked as Sodom? Yeah. They'll receive you.

And they'll repent. And so these disciples, they returned. The mission was laid out. You'll have success. You'll have failure.

And they went out to symbolically the whole world. And they return in verse 17. The disciples come back like players of a sports team bragging about their highlight reel.

Any Browns fans? We don't know what that's like because we're never on the highlight reel other than the bloopers. But they come back. I'm a Browns fan, all right? So I'm not being mean.

I'm just loathing and self-pity. The disciples come back. They're bragging about that highlight reel. They're saying, we drove out demons.

[22:19] We healed the sick. We got someplace to stay and food to eat. We didn't need a knapsack, Jesus. And Jesus even joined in.

He didn't scold them. Quit bragging about the stats. He rejoiced with them. He didn't scold them. He celebrates with them. But what he does do is he does redirect them.

He says, nevertheless. That would stop the disciples' cold in their tracks. All this excitement, Jesus says, nevertheless.

And they're like, you know, you could imagine like, what are you, a wet blanket? He says, nevertheless. Do not rejoice in this.

Do not rejoice in this, in verse 20. But rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Obviously, Jesus celebrates.

- [23 : 28] That's an outflow of God's working. But rejoicing is deeper than celebration. He says, do not rejoice in this. That's the column that matters.
- That's the line on the board that never gets erased. It's enduring. It's steadfast. And so we see something that Christ doesn't forbid joy in fruitful ministry.
- So we can be excited when God's at work and not just be a bunch of dull knuckleheads and just be like, oh, well, we can't rejoice. We just continue to march on.
- Don't smile or have any joy. The church should celebrate and be excited about what God is doing. But their joy must be redirected to something deeper than stats, than fruit.
- And so in that, Jesus Christ doesn't forbid joy in fruitful ministry. He reorders it. He reorders. He does a little rearrangement in the room, the living room of our hearts.
- [24 : 39] Puts the couch over there instead of over there. These gifts, influence, results. Yeah, those are good gifts of God. We should celebrate them.
- They're good gifts. But they are not the ground of joy. They are not the foundation of joy. The ground of our joy is electing grace, secure adoption.
- That there's a transaction that can't be undone for those who believe and trust in Jesus Christ. It's secure. And so what's your scoreboard?
- Baptisms? How many times you've taken communion? How many times you've read the Bible? Success?
- Ministry numbers? Reputation? Reputation? If that is your scoreboard, what happens when those numbers dip? What happens when you go through a season of grief and it takes everything in your power to even pick up your Bible?
- [25 : 50] To even utter a prayer? This is real life, folks. You can't pretend like this is easy. Seasons of lament and grief and sorrow. Are you supposed to be discouraged?
- Of course not. Because your joy is not found upon our worldly scoreboards of success, of stats.
- Rejoice first in salvation. Right? Preach, lead, counsel, serve. Do all of those things, but anchor your gladness, your joy in the Lamb's book of life.
- Not in this week's status reports. Okay? The reason this redirection makes sense is because the true scoreboard has nothing to do with us.
- If we rejoiced in God's working through us and that was our source of joy, we would commit idolatry because it's not us. It's Christ in us.
- [26 : 56] The Holy Spirit working through us. It's not us. How could we leave that being the source of our joy? And so the scoreboard, the heavenly scoreboard, is not earned.
- It's revealed. The redirect of this joy makes sense only if we understand why we see it and believe it all. And that takes us from the mission in section 1 to Revelation in section 2, where we see the revelation of joy reframed.
- Jesus takes joy and puts it into a biblical frame for the disciples to see. And we see that from two verses.
- Not 20. From 21 to 22. So their joy is not in their power, but it's in their privilege.
- And we see that here. Look with me in verse 21. In that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, And here, Jesus is rejoicing.
- [28 : 20] And we might say, what in the world could Jesus be rejoicing in? If it's not the works going on.
- I mean, Jesus is the Lamb's book of life. That is Christ. So he's not rejoicing that his name's written in heaven. He is heaven.

So what's Jesus rejoicing in? Jesus. I love how Scripture rarely pulls back this curtain of Jesus rejoicing. It makes this so unique.

The same verb that's used here of Jesus rejoicing is the same that in Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1 that she used. This is great joy. And Jesus is rejoicing.

But what is stirring his joy? Well, it's plain and simple here. Look at it. In verse 21. Now, some may claim, you know, that this is like a knock on having any level of intellectual knowledge.

[29 : 39] That to be smart, you're actually put to more of a challenge. But I think it's something different. I believe that he's exposing pride here.

He's exposing conceit. And some may claim that Jesus is encouraging ignorance. But I don't think that's the case.

In this live demonstration here with this number of people that went out, they became a living parable. You want to see little children? There's all of them going into these towns, going into the wolves' domain.

Watch the lamb go out. Watch him go. Those are my little children. They're teachable.

They're needy. They're non-presuming. They're a living parable of little children. They receive light.

[30 : 45] But the self-assured, the ones who believe they're closest to God, filter God's word through this legalistic lens, technical lens, or fashionable lens.

They're very deceived. In other words, the learned may have the word of the Lord, but they fail to grasp the Lord of the word.

I like how that hits. I love coaching my kids. I coach Levi right now in baseball.

He's in the 8U division. And it's so fun. So fun. It's kid pitch. First year kid pitch. It's a very slow game. But boy, oh boy.

The dependence that I perceive of Levi up at the pitcher's mound as he's throwing, trying to do his best, remembering his training.

[31 : 57] The minute that I say to change something in his form, to stretch a little bit more, or bring his knee up in his wind up to change.

He looks over with great detail. He looks over with great detail and intent to listen. Not thinking that he has his own way that's better than my way.

He is dependent as a little child. The same as for Micah. The same as for Micah. Shooting form in basketball. With running.

To pace yourself. To steady yourself. To use that right hand to throw that swish. Little children.

Little children. How many of us come to Scripture like that? Like little children.

[32 : 58] Open. Dependent. Needy. Trusting God's word.

Even amid some paradoxes that don't make sense along the lines of human logic or human comprehension. Or maybe you're on the other end.

You're in Capernaum. You're the expert. You're the expert arguer. You can convert anybody. You can debate anybody.

You can confirm yourself and your theological stances all day long. You're inviting the wolves to come. We are to receive the word like children.

In order to behave. Conduct ourselves like adults. We are not to receive the word like little children.

May our superiority die at the foot of the cross. How does that happen? We all must repent. Some of us who haven't put their faith in Jesus Christ, this is a day of repentance. And for Christians, we repent daily of our sin because we live in a fallen world. We have fallen human fleshiness. We feel that in our lives. We're imperfect. We constantly are reminded of that. Repentance is the only destination our superiority belongs at the foot of the cross.

Repent now and lay your scoreboard of works at the foot of the cross. And remember, 1 Corinthians 1.26, not many of you were wise, but God chose the foolish to shame the wise. That's God's gracious will.

So revelation is a gift. And if we receive it as children, we are already blessed. You don't have to chase points on the scoreboard. You already have the victory secured and sealed in Christ. And we see this last thrust here of a blessing, this joy being secured in verse 23 through 24. And now he has this intimate moment with the disciples privately. He turns to them, he says, blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you say and did not see, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.

[40 : 30] The prophets and kings, the pages in our Bibles, all these filled with people who longed to see what the disciples see. Abraham, Abraham strained his eyes and saw a day coming, but only from a distance. Moses longed for a prophet like himself, but only caught the outline of that. David saying of a forever king that would come, but he only saw a shadow. Isaiah painted portraits of a suffering servant, but from his perspective, the brushstrokes of the painting were fairly distorted. They all saw the prophets and kings, they all saw silhouettes on the horizon. And Jesus is saying, you are seeing what Abraham, Moses, David,

Elijah, Jeremiah, and all the saints longed for, but only glimpsed in silhouettes. They couldn't perfectly make it out. Jesus is the true seed that Abraham longed to see. The true land that Moses was promised. The true blessing that David was promised to fulfill. And the true prophet that would come in Isaiah, he's the true priest, the true king, the true temple, the true dwelling place. And for you, for those in Christ today, you live in the greatest and brightest perspective. We live in that brightness.

For those in Jesus Christ, you live in the brightest perspective. You see the cross. You see the empty tomb. You see the ascended Lord on high. Blessed are your eyes, for you see what all the saints longed for of days past. The cross is not a dim figure upon the horizon. It's literally, it stands blazing at the center of history, casting a shadow backward over every promise God has ever made to his people.

And here and only here, our joy is secure, unwavering. It's steadfast. Because we are secured in the gospel truth. By our faith in Jesus Christ alone, our joy is complete.

There's nothing that can raise or lower our joy. Our names are written in heaven. They're not just penciled in either. Not something that can just get smudged off and whoops, there goes that coffee again, or the kids drawn over, right? It's not just penciled in. It's not something temporary. It's literally engraved within a book. Our future is far from fragile. It is firm.

[43 : 55] Our status is not earned. It's given. It's time to stop chasing fruit and resting in our favor, which is the righteousness of Christ. What has the power to steal your joy?

Criticism? Numbers? Comparisons? Well, we answer all of that. My name is written in heaven. You ain't going to knock me off my step. I'm rejoicing in that. Not any of this. This will pass away.

But that, that name never passes. And with that, there's a Paul-like contentment that's available to everyone in Christ that we can embrace. It's available for us. When we set aflame, we throw our scoreboards into the fire, because our joy does not rise or fall upon outcomes, but only upon Christ's outcome on the cross of Calvary. Worldly tallies will fade. Social media likes will vanish. Bank accounts will fluctuate some more than others, and ministry fruit will ebb and flow. But contentment is found in only those whose attention is faced heavenward. That is a redirection for us today. One day, the final whistle will blow. Game will be over. The clock will hit zero, and the scoreboard will light up.

Not with points. Not with stats. Not with fruit, but just one line. The Lamb's book of life. Will your name be on that scoreboard? The only question that matters in this life is that, is your name written in heaven. That's the scoreboard that endures forever. It determines eternity. So may the Lord of the harvest steady our steps as a lamb among wolves in our day-to-day to keep our heart small, humble, and our Christ big. We must decrease. He must increase and fasten our joy today and always increase in nothing that can shake it in the grace of being known by Him. I want to offer a few practical steps for us this week. How do we really do this well? And I would say, start by just shaking off the dust. Name those scoreboards in your life that are becoming idols. Reject them. Reject them all.

Throw them out. Discard them. You know what the standard is. All this stuff will fade. Hold on to what is true. I think we should be encouraged to pray for the harvest. Ask God to send laborers to this harvest and ask how you can go into the harvest. Not ask somebody else and be a master delegator.

[47 : 19] Some of us are really good at it. But what's your role in that harvest? Fight your battles with Scripture. Memorize verse 20. Memorize verse 20. Use it against pride. Use it against despair. Parents, teach your kids. Remind them that their joy isn't in grades or their good behavior. Their sports, wins or losses. Or their friends. But it's in being known by God.

It's in being known by God. And for all of us, read like a child. When you pick up this word of life, receive it as a child. Be instructed. Don't be reaffirmed in your theological stances. Receive it as a child.

Pray, Father, reveal yourself in your Son by your Spirit. A Trinitarian prayer for God to work mightily through our investment in the Word of God. See, joy is not in our doing, but in our knowing.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.