

**Introduction:**

- A. *Illus.:* “*There is a need in all of us,*” Phil Edwards said, “*for controlled danger. That is, there is a need for activity that puts us on the edge of life. There are uncounted millions of people right now who are going through life without any sort of real, vibrant kick. I call them ‘the legions of the unjazzed.’*” (#2532, sermon by Bruce Thielemann)  
Phil Edwards was a world champion surfer, but he might have been talking about quite a few Christians. *Controlled danger. Legions of the unjazzed.*
- B. In Luke 10, Jesus had sent 72 disciples out on a mission of “controlled danger.” He sent them out, two by two, to prepare people for Jesus to come to their town. But he told them in **v.3**, “*Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.*” In **vv.10-15** Jesus instructs them what to say and do when they’re rejected, concluding with **v.16**, “*Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.*” How would you like to go after that pep talk? *Lambs among wolves. Certain rejection. Shake the dust off your feet. Worse than Sodom!* Talk about a sense of foreboding!
- C. But here’s the thing still today: To be a Christian is to follow Jesus, and we cannot follow Jesus without him pushing us into God’s harvest field. In fact, while we often pray for lost people (and we should) in **v.2** Jesus tells us to “*Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out—push, shove, thrust—workers into his harvest field.*” No need to pray for *more* workers, but that the workers he’s already called be pushed into God’s field. Most of us are reluctant because we’re nervous about the whole business. With good reason! *Lambs among wolves! Certain rejection!*  
**Turn to Luke 10.**
- D. We half expect to see those 36 teams come straggling back to Jesus nursing wolf bites. But look at **v.17**: “*The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’*” They were jazzed!

Our purpose as a church is “to be and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.” This passage shows us what we can expect if we do that.

I. **CHRISTIANS WHO MAKE IT THEIR MISSION TO BE AND TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS REJOICE TO SEE JESUS AS NO ONE ELSE CAN! (10:17-20)**

- A. **First, we see the astonishing authority of Jesus, Lord of all!** Listen to this exchange in **vv.17-20... It is exhilarating to exercise Jesus’ authority over the enemy.** Perhaps you have never dealt directly with demons, which is no surprise since Satan usually works incognito. But when we must it is frightening. Demons are pure evil. They lie and threaten. They have superhuman strength. They are certainly not intimidated by human beings but are supremely arrogant. They are, like their lord Satan, devourers, abusers and murderers. They are deadly dangerous.

Jesus had told his 72 advance men to “*Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’*” In healing the sick those disciples sometimes came face to face with demons. But the disciples did what they’d seen Jesus do, using Jesus’ name: “*In the name of Jesus, come out of him!*” And the demons did! Shrieking, I’m sure. Convulsing. But out they came. It was stunning. Amazing! Then the wonderful peace!

I have not had a lot of experience dealing with demons but I can tell you that for me seeing demons submit to the name of Jesus is amazing and exhilarating. Pure and powerful evil banished at the declaration of Jesus’ name by an ordinary Christian! And tormented people, people who lived with this evil, poisonous presence, set free!

- B. Even though Jesus hadn’t been with them Jesus knew what had happened because he had seen a kind of vision: “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*” Jesus is picking up language from **Is. 14:12** where God condemns the insanely, diabolically proud king of Babylon:

*How you have fallen from heaven,  
morning star, son of the dawn!  
You have been cast down to the earth,  
you who once laid low the nations!*

Let me remind you that Satan does not live and rule in hell. He wants nothing to do with hell. He wants heaven! He wants God's place of glory. He is "*the prince of the power of the air.*" When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and said, "*I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.*" But Jesus, through his suffering and death, would seize back Satan's control of the world's kingdoms till that day when, as it says in Revelation,

*"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."* [Rev 11:15]

As I understand Scripture, Satan doesn't fall from heaven all at once. His fall is prolonged; it is episodic, culminating on the day when he is cast—*thrown--*into the lake of fire forever. But as I understand it, his fall begins in situations like this, when Jesus' disciples use the power of Jesus' name to reclaim those whom Satan has captured, evicting him, and welcoming Christ into their lives.

- C. Now Jesus tells his disciples that this will be their way of life when they follow him: v.19 – "*I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*" This language hearkens back to Israel's journey through the wilderness where despite poisonous snakes and scorpions God protected them. Here, Jesus isn't speaking of literal snakes and scorpions. He means the venom and sting of Satan's demons. We need not tiptoe through our wilderness journey, hope we don't rile up the venomous enemy because Jesus has given his disciples *authority to trample* the snakes and scorpions of the devil we meet on our pilgrimage.

This isn't a promise that no believers will ever be hurt. Satan inflicts great pain and suffering on believers sometimes. **But he cannot harm us because he cannot separate us from God's love.**

Standing behind these words is the bulwark of Ps 91.

*If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,”*

*and you make the Most High your dwelling,*

*no harm will overtake you,*

*no disaster will come near your tent.*

*For he will command his angels concerning you*

*to guard you in all your ways;*

*they will lift you up in their hands,*

*so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*

*You will tread on the lion and the cobra;*

*you will trample the great lion and the serpent.*

Remember, this great promise of God’s protection is intended for disciples on the move—those working in God’s harvest field, those crossing this vast worldly wilderness en route to the land God has promised us.

D. But if you think that’s rejoice-worthy there’s something even better! **We rejoice because Jesus has made us citizens of God’s kingdom.** V.20, “*However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*” There is a **great reversal** here. Satan, that bright angel, falls from heaven—he’s *thrown* from heaven, actually—while Jesus’ lambs, his “little children” become heaven’s everlasting citizens! This great repatriation, this glorious adoption, is also because of the authority of Jesus’ great name.

- It is in Jesus’ name that we are forgiven.
- It is in Jesus’ name that we are raised from death to life.
- It is in Jesus’ name that we are adopted as God’s sons and daughters.
- It is in Jesus’ name that we are made alive by his Spirit.
- It is in Jesus’ name that we will be admitted into heaven and welcomed into the service of the King.
- There, in the great rolls of heaven, inscribed in timeless, indestructible record books of glory, is the name of each person who has wrapped themselves in the name of Jesus. Rejoice in that! **Get jazzed about that!**

It's wonderful to be caught up in the disciples' joy but now Jesus, too, is overjoyed: vv.21-24...

**II. CHRISTIANS WHO MAKE IT THEIR LIFE'S MISSION—AND THEIR CHURCH'S MISSION—TO BE AND TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE THE GREATEST JOY OF THE TRIUNE GOD (10:21-24)**

A. Do you see the Trinity in this? “*Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, ‘I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth...’*” The Holy Spirit floods God the Son with divine joy who breaks out in praise of God the Father, Lord of heaven and earth. In Zephaniah God promised,

*The Lord your God is with you,  
He is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight over you;  
He will quiet you with his love,  
He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

And look what it is that the Triune God celebrates:

*“because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.”* Evidently, one of the profound dilemmas God solved in bringing salvation to the lost was hiding it from those who were proud and exalted and yet reveal it—this profound plan for the saving of sinners, this mystery kept hidden from the ages—reveal it *only* to those whose hearts were humble and trusting—spiritual infants.

Illus.: This is kind of a goofy comparison, but imagine you were planning an Easter egg hunt for 100 kids but what you want is for just the little kids to find the eggs even tho' they're all looking. You just want the eggs to go to those who don't know really how to look, how to plot a strategy, how to win. How would you do it? I don't know. I guess you'd have to find a way to hide the eggs in something that big, smart kids don't want and that little, simple kids do.

This accomplishment is the greatest joy of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! This was what God has been working toward since the sin of Adam and Eve and here they were—firstfruit disciples! **God was jazzed!**

- B. **V.22** begins with another statement about Jesus' authority: "*All things have been committed to me by my Father.*" Jesus is Lord of all. And among all these things committed to Jesus by the Father is how people come to know God. Jesus the Son knows the Father and the Father knows the Son—intimately, lovingly—but the only *people* who know the Father and Son are those whose eyes Jesus opens. Because only he chooses. And only he opens eyes. **22b...**

*Illus.:* Kent Hughes writes about **Eta Linnemann**, who was an esteemed German New Testament scholar in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. She had studied under the masters of very liberal form criticism, Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Fuchs, and had become one of the elite academics of the historical-critical method, denying the major claims of Scripture and that the Bible was God's Word. Dr. Linnemann's first book was a best-seller and she was acclaimed for her scholarship.

But then she came to believe that "her lectures were not grasping spiritual truth" and she "became profoundly disillusioned, drifting into addictions to alcohol and TV to dull her misery. But when she was at her very lowest," **Jesus opened her eyes.** This is what she wrote in her book critical of her early life and beliefs:

*"At that point God led me to vibrant Christians who knew Jesus personally as their Lord and Savior. I heard their testimonies as they reported what God had done in their lives. Finally God himself spoke to my heart by means of a Christian brother's words. By God's grace and love I entrusted my life to Jesus. He immediately took my life into his saving grasp and began to transform it radically. My destructive addictions were replaced by a hunger and thirst for his Word and for fellowship with Christians. I was able to recognize sin clearly as sin rather than merely make excuses for it as was my previous habit. I can still remember the delicious joy I felt when for the first time black was once more black and white was once more white; the two ceased to pool together as indistinguishable gray...*

*"By God's grace I experienced Jesus as the one whose name is above all names."*

She threw the earlier books she'd written in the trash and urged everyone else to do so too. She finished out her teaching career at a Bible institute in Indonesia teaching the New Testament to future pastors. [K Hughes, *Luke, Vol.2*, p381-382, quoting Linneman's book, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?* Translated by Robert Yarbrough.]

- C. **Vv.23-24...**They had seen and recognized Jesus as God's Son. They'd heard and believed his words. These humble disciples were the most blessed people in history... up to that point. Later, after Jesus proved to doubting Thomas that he really was alive, Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*" [Jn 20:29] Most of us here have put our faith in Christ so we are among the most blessed of all people on earth.

## Conclusion

The surfer dude had the right idea, though the wrong thrill: "*There is a need in all of us for **controlled danger**. That is, there is a need for activity that puts us on **the edge of life**. There are uncounted millions of people right now who are going through life without any sort of real, vibrant kick. I call them '**the legions of the unjazzed**.'*" Well, this passage has certainly showed us the way God invites us to get jazzed!

Remember this: all this joy is the consequence of disciples working in God's harvest field—of workers' joy in seeing the power of Jesus' name. God's joy is in seeing humble disciples realize who Jesus is and come to know that their names are written in heaven. Disciples who seldom do God's fieldwork in the world usually see Jesus and the Father only dimly. Jesus and the Father are made vivid to us *when we serve in God's field*—when we engage the people around us as messengers of Jesus, when we invite people to God's kingdom through Christ. We don't just engage people in the world for their sake but for ours as well. There is where we see Jesus' authority and grace

No wonder Jesus told us to pray that God would thrust workers into God's harvest field. For the joy of the lost who are found. For the joy of the disciples who see Jesus majestic authority. And for the joy of God himself, who sings to see his grace satisfied in us.