

Eyes Open

We are in Luke 10 as we continue in our series, *Church in the Red*, focused on the Words of Jesus (red-lettered words as they are printed in many Bibles).

Today we have a short passage, just 4 verses, which will give us the opportunity to dig a little deeper into each phrase... which is great because there is really good stuff here.

The passage begins by reading:

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit,¹

A phrase like “at that time” indicates that the context is particularly important; in this case it appears that what follows was in response to what was happening. So... what was happening?

There was an important event and vital teaching. The event was that 72 followers of Jesus had returned from work commissioned by Jesus. They reported success to Jesus, that even the demons submit to us in your name.”²

Jesus took that as an opportunity for teaching, explaining that all of that was fine and good, but of paramount importance was this:

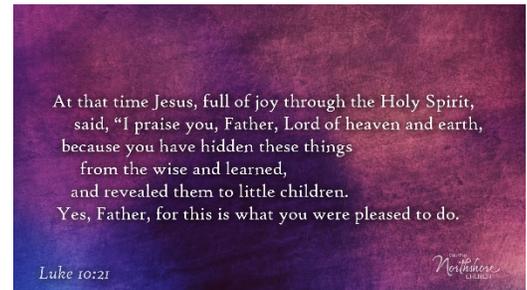
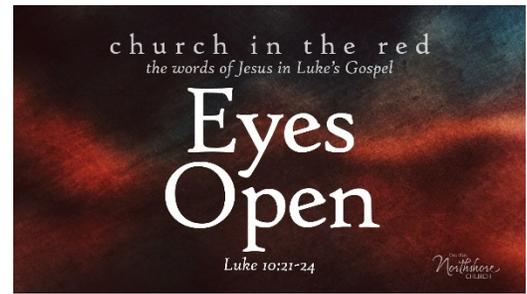
rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”³

The most important thing is that Heaven is filled, and Hell is emptied.

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit⁴

I don't think that we should assume that this was a moment in which Jesus was any more full of the Holy Spirit, but it was a moment when His joy was full, which was aligned with the Holy Spirit and the Father. It was a moment of joy, as Jesus saw His obedient followers flourish in the mission He gave, and perhaps they were beginning to understand His eternal plan.

Jesus began to pray, saying:



¹ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:17). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:20). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth⁵

Jesus teaches us to pray. When looking to Jesus for lessons in prayer, I suppose we most often go to what we usually call *The Lord’s Prayer*, which is really good since Jesus said, “Pray like this.” But there are many occurrences, of course, in our New Testaments when we can see Jesus pray, and we can learn from each and all of them.

Right off the bat, I think there are a couple of important lessons here:

1. We should pray when we are happy, grateful, and rejoicing. Prayer should not be reserved for only when we want or need something, when we are troubled or in trouble; we should pray out of joy too.
2. Start with praise. Start by declaring God’s goodness, power, and care.

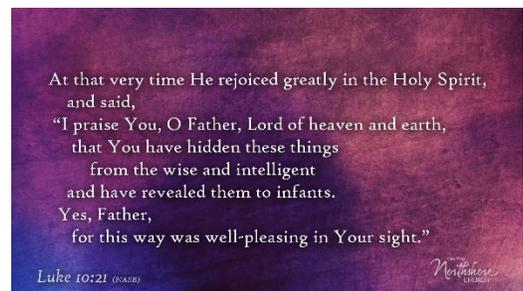
“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.”⁶

I’m calling this message *Eyes Open* because there is a repeated theme of **site** in this short passage; we are beginning to see it here. Things were *hidden* from the wise, out of site, and *revealed* to others. All of this is in the Father’s site.

A more literal translation of that last sentence, where the NIV says “for this is what you were pleased to do” is:

Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.⁷

Those with Jesus were *seeing* things, both literally and figuratively. They literally saw Jesus heal and raise the dead and deliver people from evil, and they literally saw God doing the same through them. And they were *figuratively*, and even more *importantly*, beginning to see God’s eternal plan. They were seeing it as *infants*, or *little children*; they were seeing it through **faith**. They were seeing it through trust, like a young child trusts a parent.



There should not be anything troubling with that notion of seeing.

But what about the assertion that God has *hidden* things from some, specifically the wise and learned (or intelligent)? Does that seem fair? Are some punished and others rewarded? Is there a formula? Or is it arbitrary?

These are questions that have tied some theologians *up in knots* over the ages.

⁵ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁶ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁷ [New American Standard Bible: 1995 update](#). (1995). (Lk 10:21). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Do we draw near to God, or does He draw near to us, or does He draw us in (irresistibly)? Does He soften some and harden others?

This is the sort of thing that really has tortured some Christian thinkers.

I'm not all that troubled by it, not because I have it all figured out, but likely more because I have this post-modern brain that allows for tension among what might seem like paradoxes.

Do we draw near to God, or does He draw near to us, or does He draw us in? Yes.

Is God in control, or do we have some agency, responsibility, and exercise of will? Yes.

Is faith a gift from God, or do we place our faith in God. Yes.

I don't think the point here is that some (or perhaps many) are hopelessly lost because God has hidden the Light. That is inconsistent with other plain statements from Scripture.

Consider 2 Peter 3:9

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ⁸

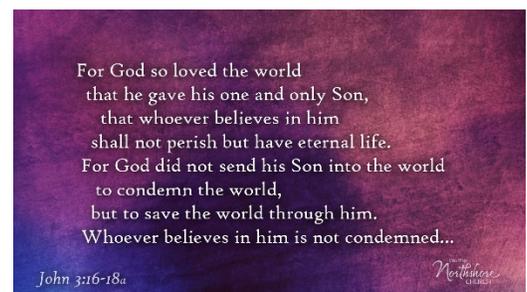
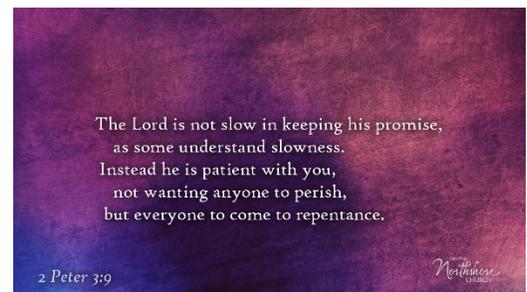
Not wanting anyone to perish... patient... this is God's desire, that none would perish.

Consider, too, the familiar words of Jesus

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned⁹...

Whoever believes... Jesus is not in the business of condemnation, but of reconciliation with God and eternal life. The call is for **all** to believe, whoever that might be or can be.



⁸ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (2 Pe 3:9). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁹ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Jn 3:16-18). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

That brings us back to the main point of our difficult passage. The point isn't that some are in and some are out, all by God's choosing.

The point is that salvation is a matter of faith, not wisdom or intelligence. That is really good news. Knowing God now, and being with Him in eternity, is not based on gaining some special knowledge or achieving a level of understanding. No... all that God has is available to all... available to all who will come to Him in faith and trust like little children.

We don't qualify by passing some sort of test, certified as a citizen of His Kingdom. No, we come in faith, believing in Jesus.

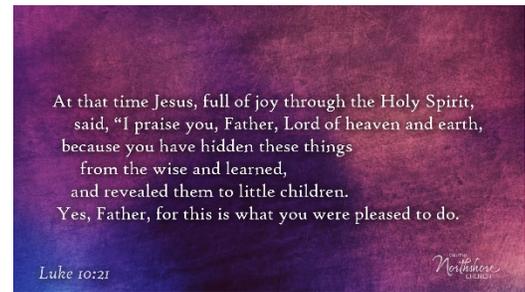
I am, of course, very much in favor of study... rigorous, and even formal, study. I devoted decades of my adult life to supporting academics. I work hard too... and want us all to work hard in study.

But study alone will not suffice. Universities around the world are full of those who have achieved knowledge and skill that far surpasses mine; they know the languages and histories and ancient cultures better. But, sadly, a PhD won't save. Knowledge won't save. But knowledge on fire, scholarship drenched in faith and the power of the Spirit, that is awesome and effective.

Again, the good news is that there is no academic barrier to hearing, knowing, receiving, and believing The Good News. God is pleased to welcome us all as children.

We don't have to have it all figured out, we don't need to come "wise and learned"; we come in faith.

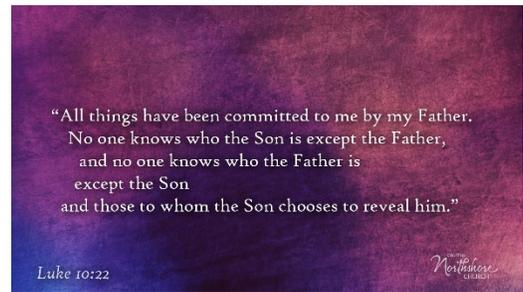
He [Jesus] rejoiced because *the understanding of that truth* did not depend on natural abilities or education. If that were the case, most of the people in the world would be shut out of the kingdom. When the Twelve and the Seventy were preaching, they did not see the "wise and learned" humbling themselves to receive God's truth and grace, but they saw the "common people" trusting the Word (Luke 7:29–30; 1 Cor. 1:26–29).¹⁰



¹⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 211). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jesus then began to address His followers again, saying:

²² “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”¹¹



Now **this** is an *exclusive* statement. Not a matter of some are **in** and some are **out** (remember, “that none should perish”... Jesus chooses to reveal the Good News to all)... but rather an exclusive statement that Jesus is The Way.

Jesus is God’s son, in every way. “All things have been committed to me by my Father.” It is an entire inheritance. Not that God could die, but if there was a *last will and testament*, there is but one beneficiary, the Son.

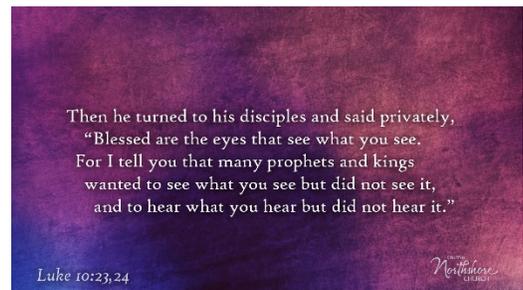
We might understand such things primarily in terms of stuff, material possessions, but the most valuable thing that God has is not gold or any other kind of wealth. It is not even His creation, the earth and galaxies and universe. The most valuable thing that God has is knowledge of Himself; knowing God is the highest prize... and that is in the hands of the Son.

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son¹²

And here is the thing... the Son has one primary mission, to give that prize away, to make the Father known, thoroughly and eternally. In taking on human flesh, in living and teaching and suffering and dying and rising again, Jesus chooses for all to see the Father. Jesus is the revelation of God.

Only a personal revelation could fully reveal a personal God.¹³

²³ Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴ For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”¹⁴



There seems to be a progression here. First Jesus focused His words to the Father in prayer (presumably out loud in the hearing of many).

Then he addressed all who were there, likely including the 72 who were gathered after their completed mission.

¹¹ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹² [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹³ Utley, R. J. (2004). [The Gospel according to Luke](#) (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 10:22). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

¹⁴ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 10:23–24). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Now it seems He directs His words to the *inner circle* of leaders, the Disciples who would be the Apostles of the Church.

Jesus amplified the importance of the moment, what they were experiencing and seeing.

Some have described this moment in time as the hinge of history, that the incarnation and work of Jesus is the hinge upon which all of humanity turns. We can see that from our 2020 perspective; Jesus was urging His Disciples to see it then.

Prophets and kings, scholars and priests, all the faithful longed to see the Messiah, the Deliverer, the Savior; He was in their midst. They were eyewitnesses to the hinge of history. It was surely awesome to behold.

Allow me to ask a question I ask from time to time: so what?

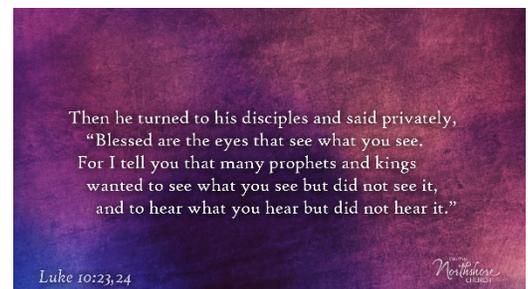
We've been taking a fairly granular approach, verse-by-verse, phrase-by-phrase, as we have been walking through this passage. It seems to me that we'll have a great takeaway if we now look more broadly.



You may remember that the Gospel of Luke is really volume #1 of a 2-volume set. That Luke may be Church in the Red, but Acts is Church on the Move. We've been in Luke for almost a year now. It will likely take us another year or so. And then we'll just keep going with the Book of Acts. Same author. One grand story.

With the bigger picture in mind, what was really the point of what the Disciples (who would become the founding Apostles of the Church) were seeing?

Was it merely for their enjoyment, their indulgence? Was this an end in itself, that they were just the lucky ones who got to see it all in-person?



We can know from the account in the Book of Acts, the rest of the New Testament, and Church History that all of what the Apostles saw was not, at all, merely for their enjoyment. They went on to found the church, and it cost them everything. Only one died of old age; the rest were martyred, giving their lives for their faith.

To make the point, to answer the question “So what?”, allow me to borrow a phrase from popular culture:
See Something, Say Something.

In our popular culture, see-something-say-something implies that we have a responsibility for what we see. That if we see something going wrong, or could go wrong, it is on us to say something so that something can be done.



The Disciples didn't just see something. They didn't just see Jesus heal and deliver and save. They didn't just take in the teaching. And they didn't even find themselves satisfied by the miracles at their own disposal. They said something; they carried the call of the Gospel to the then-known world.

We carry the same call; we, too, have this responsibility.

When we see changed lives, those around us, as well as our own, we must say something.

When we see the Truth revealed in Scripture, we must say something.

When we see the answers, the right way, The Way, we must say something.

When we see that Jesus is the Son of God, drawing all of us to Himself, calling us to believe, we must say something.

If there was ever a time when our World needs to see Jesus, to turn to Him in trust and faith, it is now. We must say something.

Let's ask God for eyes to see, ask Him to reveal Himself to us, let us see what He is up to in us and around us and through us. And let's ask God to give us gifts of courage and opportunity to proclaim His Gospel, to say something.

Our Father; thank You for revealing Yourself in and through Jesus. We see; help us to open our eyes and see better, to see deeper, to see You through eyes of trust and hearts full of faith. Help us to see something and say something, to not be merely satisfied with Your work in us, but to be energized for Your work through us... proclaiming Your Good News, Your Gospel, through our words and actions. We pray in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.

