

Luke 10:17-20

**“Rejoice! Your Name is Written in Heaven!”
St. Michael and All Angels**

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Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

“And Jesus said to [the Seventy-Two], ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven’” (Luke 10:18).

One of the greatest lies Satan has succeeded in having people believe is that he is a mythical figure depicted in Scripture and not a real being. If you don't think Satan exists, he can work under the radar much more effectively.

We are caught in the crosshairs of a spiritual war. But the good news is that we have divine protection. In this spiritual war, Satan stands as our adversary in the heavenly court prosecuting humanity. Also in that courtroom is Michael, who is pleading Christ's sacrifice for the sin of the world against the deceiver of the world. The victory is Christ's, the slaughtered Lamb of God, who in His death is also the conquering Lion of Judah.

Those 72 disciples who returned with joy over their power to subdue demons in the name of Jesus did not understand when Christ said, ***“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”*** (Luke 10:18). They didn't understand, because they were unaware of the spiritual war being waged in heaven on their behalf. They thought their joy was built on their own ability to control the demons. But they would soon realize that their true joy would come from knowing that their names are written in heaven. Jesus' earthly ministry would open their eyes to this spiritual war whose victory is only won through the blood of the Lamb and through speaking of their faith to others.

Revelation 12 – *as we heard in our epistle lesson* – tells of this spiritual war in heaven. Michael the archangel leads God's angelic armies in battle against the armies of Satan and his demons who threaten to destroy God's chosen child, the Messiah. The conflict is over the fate of man. But the assault of Satan and his demons is doomed to failure, for St. John reveals: ***“He was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven”*** (Revelation 12:8).

So, how were Satan and his demons defeated? How can Jesus say, ***“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven?”*** The reason for Satan’s defeat and his fall from heaven is the slaughter of the Lamb. Satan, the accuser, is defeated. He can no longer accuse us, for Christ, by His perfect life and atoning death, took away the guilt of the world, removing all grounds for accusation against humankind. The floodgates of mercy are now open. God’s grace and forgiveness pour forth in abundance because the Lamb has been slain. His blood has been shed for all. The voice of the accuser is forever silenced for those who are wrapped in Christ’s righteousness.

Even though Satan’s power over us is defeated, he still continues to battle in minor skirmishes. He’s willing to take a few down with him, even if he can’t take down all of us. He still tempts us to disregard God’s Word. He attacks us with unbelief and indifference. But we have the promise that God will deliver us from every temptation by the evil one. For Jesus says, ***“Nothing shall hurt you”*** (Luke 10:19).

You see, Jesus promises His people divine protection from evil while they are engaged in spiritual warfare. Yet, we will still encounter hostile rejection and even persecution while living in this fallen world, but we will be at peace with God.

But there is something else to take notice of Jesus words: ***“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”*** You see, in the Greek, this captures the continuous action. So, Jesus is continually watching Satan fall like lightning from heaven. This is how Jesus was summing up the effects of the mission of the 72. For in their preaching and in their healing, in their activity of proclaiming Christ and His Gospel, there was victory over Satan and his demons, because even the 72 recognized that ***“the demons are subject to us in your name!”*** (Luke 10:17).

You see, the disciples needed to remember the words of Jesus as He sent them out into the harvest as lambs in the midst of wolves. Their success could have puffed them up to further seek visible achievements. As they were out among the wolves, Satan could have used their success to attack them and thwart true ministry.

Instead, they preached to the fallen world with the words of Jesus: ***“The kingdom of God has come near to you”*** (Luke 10:9). In the very preaching of the disciples, the kingdom of God has already become a present reality and the kingdom of Satan is firmly defeated. The very presence of Christ in their proclamation to redeem a lost and dying world declares that Christ’s kingdom has triumphed, His cross has absorbed the world’s sin. And they should not fear, for even though Satan will assault them for their proclamation, Jesus guarantees that nothing will hurt them.

This is also our proclamation! For in the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God draws near! So, as we gather together in Christ's presence, it is through the proclamation of His Word, the cleansing at the Baptismal Font, the feeding upon His body and blood under the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper that Christ declares to the people of God that His victory is our victory, the accuser will accuse no more, since all sins are forgiven through Christ, our Lord!

Like the disciples then, we, too, should not be focused on success in telling our neighbors about the sure and certain hope we have in Christ. Yes, we continue to spread the Gospel, but we shouldn't be focused on worldly types of success, such as numbers. Since Satan will use that as a way to attack. What really matters, as Christ says, is "***that your names are written in heaven***" (Luke 10:20). Their focus, as well as our focus, must be on the heavenly gift of grace that theirs and our names are written in God's Book of Life, beside the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Today, we witnessed God write three more names in His Book of Life. There, through the water and the Word, at that Baptismal Font, God added Brooke, Evilyn, and Amelia to His Book of Life. And Brooke today will not only be baptized, but she will also soon confirm her faith in her Lord Jesus Christ! So, today is a major blow to Satan as we see him falling further like lightning as he is renounced, as well as his works and his ways.

Every day that Satan is thwarted is a glorious day! Always remember that through Holy Baptism, your names are written in heaven, and you are continually preserved in that status through the testimony of Jesus' Word and through His heavenly feast! Jesus defeated the power of the devil! His kingdom has come and is right here and right now! By grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, you have a promised place in heaven, thereby gaining what Satan had forfeited by his rebellion. So, "***rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!***" (Revelation 12:12).

Now, Satan, hear this proclamation: **I am baptized into Christ!**

Drop your ugly accusation, I am not so soon enticed.

Now that to the font I've traveled, All your might has come unraveled,
And, against your tyranny, God, my Lord, unites with me! Amen.

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +