

When Jesus Giggled
Luke 10:21-37
Encountering Jesus Today

By Dave Urbanski

In this past Sunday's message from our continuing study of the Gospel of Luke, Pastor Scott broke down for us Jesus' words in verses 21 through 37 — which includes his most well-known parable of the Good Samaritan.

But first Pastor Scott reminded us of the word “rejoice” in verse 20 from the previous Sunday's study in which Jesus says, “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Pastor Scott noted that the Greek word here for “rejoice” is one that holds a meaning we're used to, such as joy being a fruit of the spirit.

But a different Greek word is used for “rejoice” in the very next verse — and Pastor Scott said it means something more along the lines of jumping for joy or being “exceedingly glad.”

Verse 21 states, “In that same hour he **rejoiced** in the Holy Spirit and said, ‘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.’”

In fact, Pastor Scott said it's very possible Jesus giggled with delight in this moment. Wouldn't that be a wonderful sight?

Verses 22 through 24 continue, “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.’ 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.’”

Pastor Scott reminded us that the Greek word for “blessed” here means “happy” — and in total, he said Jesus is simply pumped up and glad about the ministry that was happening right in front of him, and Jesus also told the disciples that they ought to be super glad that they get to see him, the Messiah, with their own eyes. It was a promise to the people of Israel, now fulfilled in Jesus.

The rest of the passage concerns Jesus telling the parable of the Good Samaritan — and Pastor Scott lays out some very crucial information that can help us in our own understanding of the parable, but especially when we have chances to share our faith.

Pastor Scott explained that, of course, the parable is commonly understood as an illustration of how we are to be kind and merciful to strangers — particularly those we may not like very much, even enemies.

But he said there's a way bigger point to the parable: *It's really about salvation.*

The passage indicates that a lawyer puts Jesus to the test in verse 25: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

The operative word here is "do." In other words, the lawyer more or less asks, "What good works shall I perform" to enter heaven?

Jesus, as he often does, turns things around, answering the question with a question: "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" He essentially sets up the hard truth that, "Sure, there IS a way to eternal life through your own efforts — but no one is capable of meeting that standard."

The lawyer replies in verse 27, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." In verse 28, Jesus says, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

But then the bump in the road comes. In verse 29, the lawyer "**desiring to justify himself**," asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

This is part of the human condition. We relentlessly strive to demonstrate our worthiness, to show how we earned this or that — and then we feel entitled. This lawyer wanted Jesus to qualify the law as a way to skirt around it, but in the end the lawyer knows he can't love his neighbor as himself *perfectly*, no matter who the neighbor is!

Turns out, we're *all* each others' neighbors — and Jesus proves it with the parable of the Good Samaritan.

We know the parable well. A Jewish man is beaten by robbers, and two different men you might expect would help (a priest and a Levite) do not help the victim. But then a Samaritan, from a land that Israel views with suspicion at best, *does* help the victim. It's a shocking moment because of the prejudices of the time — and the same kind of prejudices are afoot today the world over. After Jesus tells the Good Samaritan parable, he asks the lawyer, "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" With that the lawyer replies, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus then concludes with a mandate that's even more demanding: "You go, and do likewise."

Wow! In other words, as Pastor Scott explained, Jesus challenges the lawyer's self-justified pride by telling him, "See if you can keep up the standard of perfection!"

This passage should, Pastor Scott added, leave all of us with a sense of inadequacy — as it should!

None of us can meet the standard that will allow us to “inherit eternal life” — despite many people’s desire that God will say, “Hey, you tried REALLY hard in your life! You did a lot of good stuff — more good than bad — and now enter into my glory as your reward!” That wishful thinking is so pervasive the world over — even among many professing Christians: “If I live a good life, I’ll go to heaven.” Jesus is nowhere to be found in that faulty equation — and it’s up to us to tell others the truth.

As Paul tells us in Romans 3:10, “None is righteous, no, not one.” We’re all sinners. You and I have no currency of our own that God would accept to purchase an entry ticket to heaven. That ticket already has been paid for with Jesus’ blood — all we have to do is empty ourselves of our pride, cease trying to justify ourselves, and turn to Jesus and accept his free gift of eternal life.

He literally holds it out like a wrapped present, waiting for us to take it into our hands. God as usual has made the first move toward us. How will we respond?