

Intro: In all the ponderings of your mind about Jesus as you reflect upon His Words and His works, have you ever considered the inappropriate idea (inappropriate only in a traditional churchy context) that Jesus ever danced? Did he dance in Cana, when the wedding party came through, or do we think that he was too busy with the wine to bother with the song? Did he ever jump for joy or throw his arms up in the air when he won a game of Ticket to Ride – Exodus Version? OK, that one's a little bit silly, hopefully not sacrilegious. ☺ But, I wonder what his eyes look like when he smiles a wry smile of affection or amusement at the silliness of Peter or the humor of John. Do they crinkle? What does his laugh sound like? Is it a chuckle, or a snort, or a toss-your-head-back and explode from the depths of your navel kind of laugh?

I believe that this passage contains a moment of pure joy expressed by Jesus. Here we see him not just feel joy, but physically express his pleasure and delight in a way that can only be described as jumping, shouting, or singing. Here we get to see Jesus like us, celebrating success and wonder in a moment of gladness. He is so glad that it moves him. Did he dance? Maybe. Did he sing? It's plausible. It came out, though, boldly and exuberantly. What was it, and by declension, what is it, that makes the divine dance with delight?

1. There is Joy in the Victory of Jesus to Restore People
 - a. The disciples returned from where they were sent
 - i. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom
 - ii. Bringing restoration and wholeness "in your name"
 - b. They rejoiced in the success of their ministry
 - i. The kingdom of God was bringing immediate reversal of the power of evil over those subjected to the torment of demonic spirits
 1. They saw this restoration and rejoiced that they were able by the authority of Jesus to see others set free from such oppression
 - ii. They rejoiced, rightly, though too shallow, that demons were powerless before the authority of Jesus as expressed through them
 1. They saw that the effects of Satan's power in the world was broken in the name of Jesus. His authority superseded the power of demons and evil spirits and people were being released from the bonds of destitution and destruction at their hands.
 - c. Jesus reiterates His sovereign victory over Satan
 - i. "I saw Satan like lightning from heaven falling"
 - ii. Who is Satan?
 1. Satan is not a personal name, it is a description of his character
 - a. Hebrew for Adversary
 - b. Devil is Greek for Accuser/Slanderer/Liar
 2. There is NO truth in him (John 8:44)
 - a. Think of this - no truth!
 - b. We cannot even fathom this depth of evil, a being so deeply and so pervasively wicked that there is not even an atom of truth in him
 3. Murderer
 - a. Satan's desire is to destroy the good works of God, primarily His most honored creation, Humanity
 4. Father of lies
 - a. His lie was how he murdered humanity and continues to bring murder and violence and death: He deceived and deceives humanity into believing that real life is found in trusting someone or something other than God.
 - b. Humanity was created in the image of God to rejoice in the glory and beauty of God, to walk in the light of God's presence in humble dependence upon Him, dancing in the Garden of His worthiness in the fullness of joy and ruling over creation as his emissaries bringing life and joy and wholeness (shalom) to it all as representatives of YHWH Himself
 - c. But the Devil deceived us into treason and the poison of sin cursed us into the futility of chasing after the wind...until the Redeemer came to free us.
 5. Had the power of death (Heb 2:14) and was called "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31)
 6. Satan's evil influence, deception, and power are evident:
 - a. Psychological depth of our problems
 - b. Systemic forces of evil
 - i. Apartheid
 - ii. Tribal Genocide
 - iii. Racist Laws of earlier US
 - iii. What does it mean that he fell like lightning?
 1. Satan has gone down at the hands of Jesus the Savior-King!
 - a. Psychological chains become unlocked and will be forever unlocked by Him as He overthrows demonic powers
 - b. Jesus is foretelling of Satan's ultimate demise – he has fallen from heaven and thus he will be destroyed by God in the end
 - c. Systemic evil will disappear because Christ is on the move
 2. Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), robbing Satan of his most powerful weapon, death, through death (Heb 2:14)
 3. When Jesus came He threw Satan down (John 12:31) and when He died He defanged the serpent by dealing with death's real power, sin, and when He rose from the dead He defeated death itself, proving in history that YHWH reigns over all
 4. Rev 12:9 - Satan "who deceives the whole world" was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him
 - iv. What is the significance that Jesus saw this?
 1. He is superior in essence, authority, and power.
 2. Jesus has already seen this and thus it has happened, thus he can give authority over all demonic powers to reverse Satan's work.
 3. The Rebel Robber Has Been Robbed by Christ!
 - a. Jesus came to "bind the strong man" (), cast his power down and limit his work
 - d. Jesus is showing His superiority and authority over Satan and all his demons
 - i. Thus Jesus uses the imagery common to the time of scorpions (who cause pain and poison which destroys) and serpents (analogous to the Serpent at the beginning of all humanity's problems, i.e. the Fall of Sin)
 1. These two symbols have two things in common: sting/bite and poison

2. The initial bite of the Enemy's power is the power of death through the guiltiness of sin against God. It is the eating of the fruit, the usurping of God's throne, the deception of the human soul by Satan to try and gain glory by self-achievement rather than humble dependence.
 3. This initial bite poisoned us, sin's effects coursing through the veins of all creation of whom we were stewards and God's image-bearers toward until all things were subjected to the futility and destruction of Satan's greatest weapon, Death.
 - ii. So, when Jesus says that He has given His disciples power over Satan's power, He is revealing the great news (gospel!) that Death's curse, sin's poison, has been reversed in His name. Jesus not only gives that antidote for sin's poison, but gives the infusion of life of the quality so superior and glorious that he labels it "eternal" and its recording heavenly.
 - e. PROMISE: Nothing can hurt you
 - i. This is not a promise of no physical suffering, but of no spiritual power overcoming
 - ii. In Christ we are "safe and secure from all alarm" - this is a promise of the eschatological promise made to the prophets before
 1. Psalm 91:13
 2. Isaiah 11-12, v8 mentions the peace of creation by the hand of "the root of Jesse"
 - f. Though this triumphant victory over Satan and his power is something to rejoice over, it is not the deepest cause for your joy:
2. Yet There is a Greater Cause for Joy: The God Who Speaks and Writes
- a. **Don't rejoice that you can throw wickedness down, but rejoice that wickedness has been thrown down in you!**
 - b. Jesus refocuses their joy on the deepest reason for joy: God's Election
 - i. Names being written in heaven
 1. This is about God's election, His recording of His own
 2. Don't merely rejoice that wickedness is being overthrown in this world, but even greater that the overthrowing of wickedness in you has been secured by the Father in heaven!!
 3. REJOICE IN GOD'S INESTIMABLE GRACE TOWARDS YOU!
 - ii. Citizens of heaven, rightful heirs of the kingdom (Matt 25:34)
 1. predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son (Rom 8:29), holy and pure (Heb 10:14; Col 1:22), given the inheritance of sons (Acts 20:32) by the word of God's *grace*
 2. You are secure, held by the power of God's right hand, not because of your perfection of obedience, or wisdom, or understanding, but because of God's sovereign choice and your mere clinging to Christ Jesus by humble dependence
 3. It's not even the perfection of your faith, or of your dependence, but the root is still the handwriting of God in the heavens to secure you as His own
 - iii. Note that the writing is passive, i.e. they didn't do it, but God has decreed it written before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8; 17:8; Eph 1:4)
 - c. God is a revealing God
 - i. He created the worlds with a Word – from the beginning God has expressed His power with His Word
 - ii. This act of God revealing God is necessary because we are so enslaved to sin that we don't know Him rightly
 1. Romans 1:18-32
 2. "though they knew God, they did not honor Him or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened...they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for images..."
 - iii. It is the Father who revealed this truth of Jesus' power and sovereignty to His disciples
 1. They did not reach into heaven and pull down this truth, but it was revealed to them by God
 2. Jesus rejoices and thanked the Father for this revealing work
 - a. Shall we, too, dance with delight in this truth?
 - b. How shall we enjoy the truth that our sight and understanding, the thoughts that we perceive and the desires that have been enlightened to see and savor the beauty of God in the face of Jesus?
3. Only Jesus Shows Us Who God Is Accurately and Truly
- a. The only way that we understand the greatness of the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to see His beauty and worth, is by the sheer sovereign grace of God
 - b. He must upon our eyes to this truth!
 - i. We did not believe in Jesus because we were wise or knowledgeable or moral or good or insightful!
 - ii. We believed because the Father exposed these things to our eyes as if we were oblivious children, and it pleased Him to do so!
 - iii. It is His gracious will
 - c. See what brings great joy to Jesus!
 - i. Jesus sings for joy that the thought of the Father revealing such glorious truths of redemption and rescue from Satan's power to foolish children like us
 1. Why the word "children?"
 2. Children are very vulnerable, dependent, and cannot do things for themselves. Therefore, to receive the kingdom "as a little child" means to approach God with qualities such as:
 - a. Dependency and trust:
 - i. Human children are unable to hunt, protect, or care for themselves; they are quite helpless compared to young animals. Thus we must come to Christ seeking his favor as a gift. We cannot merit his grace. He does not owe it.
 - b. Transparency:
 - i. Children are not good at hiding their flaws and feelings. They trust and are not suspicious. Thus we are to be completely honest about our flaws and fear.
 3. The people who enter the kingdom are not the "worthy" and accomplished, but those who are willing to admit their helplessness and simply depend.
 - ii. This is tremendous, for it seems here that Jesus may be singing for joy!
 1. Psalm 92 - "You have made me glad...I sing for joy at the works of Your hand...the stupid man cannot know, the fool cannot understand this...Your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered..."
 - iii. Jesus rejoices in the Father's gracious revelation to His beloved disciples, children as they are, for it glorifies and magnifies His grace
 1. They were fools, yet God revealed Himself to them and not to the powerful or religious or moral victors.
 2. It was the children - the weak, the foolish, the ignorant, the powerless
 - iv. Jesus is not a Stoic philosopher untouched by the explosive power of affective joy!
 1. He "exults" – physical expression that cannot be contained by mere affirmation of the truth – it moves Him!
 - d. The Father sent the Son to the world to reveal Himself to the world.

- i. Thus, the greatest revelation of God that we see is taken out of the philosophical musings and the aura of the mystical and is wrought in the flesh and blood of history.
- ii. We know God really because the historical person of Jesus reveals the Father rightly, and He is the only one who can reveal Him rightly
 - 1. Paul's sermon in Athens, among the philosophers, moved the debate from the mystical unknowable to the certain historical knowable when He spoke of an historical even in which God speaks - the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
 - 2. "Staring into the sun will blind us, yet we can find contentment simply being warmed by its rays. In the same way, trying to ascend to heaven to capture God's essence with our speculative, moral, or mystical gaze would not just blind us; it would destroy us. They are mad who seek to discover what God is,' Calvin says. 'What is God? Men who pose this question are merely toying with idol speculations...The essence of God is rather to be adored than inquired into'" (Michael Horton quoting Jean Calvin in *Pilgrim Theology*)
 - 3. Without the mediating work of the Son, what would the glory of God do to us? Every look at the face of God, the sight of His essence, consumes the finite, let alone the sinful. Again, Horton: "Apart from the gospel we flee from God's self-revelation, dressing folly in the robe of wisdom and ungodliness in the garments of virtue. It is ultimately an ethical revolt against the God who made us. There is no other "God" who exists, much less who is worth talking about, than the Father who is known in His Son and by His Spirit according to His Word...Through revelation, the incomprehensible and utterly transcendent God places himself within our reach. The sovereign God, who eludes our attempts at mastery, by speculation, good works, or mystical experience, places himself in our hands as a free gift. Instead of being consumed, we are reconciled, redeemed, and made adopted heirs of his kingdom in the Son and by the Spirit through His Word."
- e. Jesus is Our Hope!
 - i. Nobody comes to the Father except through the Son (John 14:6) as the Father draws him/her (John 6:44)
 - ii. This is joyous, for if the Father draws and the Father reveals through the Son, then when we see and treasure Jesus we KNOW that our salvation is eternally and absolutely secure
 - iii. When our salvation is all of God, rooted within His sovereign election from before time began, realized in the rebirth of our hearts to value Him and see His beauty so that all else pales in comparison, powerfully expressed in the enlightening of our eyes and the sight of the glory of God in the face of Jesus (2 Cor 3:8), it results in an absolute rest and grateful joy
 - 1. 1 Peter 1:3-9 – kept by the power of God we rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory
 - 2. To the degree which you perceive your salvation and knowledge of God to depend upon you according to good works, theological mastery, philosophical inquiry, epistemological certainty, moral excellency, or mystic experiences is the degree to which your heart will fear its fall and your soul its demise
 - 3. On the flip side, to the degree that you rest in the biblical truth that God graciously decrees your salvation from beginning to end, from election to glory, from fiat to faith, you will find greater and greater joy in line with Jesus and greater and greater unshakable fearless faith.

To see and savor Jesus Christ is the source of all our joy, for in our beholding His beauty we see the face of the God for whom we were made to know and by whom we truly live the way we are supposed to be. In Jesus we behold the God who speaks that we would know, who opens our blinded eyes and raises these dead bones to life through His very own eternal Spirit. Your Father has done this work in you. It will not fail and He will not forsake you, ever, for when Christ Jesus is trusted in for salvation you find the Son of God who destroys the work of all that would destroy you. Not even death could hold Him, and He lives to hold you secure. It is this work of God that broke forth and cause the divine to dance with delight. As He dances over you, may your grateful hearts be full today of the same joy in the Lord who delighted in you, has written your names in His book, and has spoken through His Son that you might know Him with no obstacles of sin capable of holding you back. To God be the glory in all things and our joy made full in the knowledge of Him.