

Text: Luke 10:1-12, 16-20 (v.20b): “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Theme: Rejoice!

Goal: To rejoice with Jesus promise, and to share the Gospel (Peace and the Kingdom), so that more people can rejoice in his promise.

Dear friends:

Introd.: “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven!” – Do you rejoice about that?

- Do you know that your names are written in God’s hands? Hear the nice promise written in the Book of Isaiah (49:15, 16): “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you in the palms of my hands!”

- Are you sure that your name is written in the Book of Life? Jesus promised in the Book of Revelation (3:5): “He who overcomes will be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

“The seventy-two returned with joy and said: “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!” – Many people like to rejoice about great things and miracles. But Jesus focuses the reason to rejoice on another point: “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven!” This is most important than every other thing!

How this happens that our names are written in the Book of Life?

God doesn't want that anyone should perish. "God did not send his Son into the World to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" (John 3:17). Jesus sent seventy-two disciples to preach the Good News during His time, and is still sending pastors and missionaries to proclaim His words of salvation nowadays, during our time, so that people can be saved and can have their names written in heaven too.

Therefore, REJOICE that your names are written in heaven! God is still working!

I – "Peace to this house!"

The first message the disciples should proclaim was: "Peace to this house!" They were ambassadors of reconciliation, ministers of reconciliation (as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21), to proclaim reconciliation and peace between man and God through faith in Jesus Christ. And everyone who accepts God's peace through faith in Jesus has his name written in heaven. Paul says in Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Through our Lord Jesus Christ!" There is no peace without Jesus Christ and without His sacrifice on the cross for us. Jesus gives us forgiveness of sin and reconciles us with God, so that we can have real peace in our hearts... peace that leads us across this world until the house of our Father.

As Jesus sent the seventy-two as messengers of Peace, He is still sending pastors and evangelists to proclaim His Peace. And He said: "He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." - His prayer in the beginning of the Gospel is the prayer of the Christian Church: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are

few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.” Now: “GO!”

God’s harvest field is plentiful among us and in our country too. The continuous task of the church is to involve every one of us in God’s work to proclaim God’s peace to the others. But it is very seldom that someone gives a personal testimony to a friend or to a relative about his faith and about the peace he enjoys by faith in Jesus. Why is it so? We have our names written in heaven and we are enjoying peace with God through our Lord Jesus. Of course we want that more people should have their names written in heaven and should enjoy peace with God through faith in Jesus. Let’s begin with our family and do all efforts to bring them all to fellowship with Jesus. We cannot say “NO” when God says “GO!”

II – “The Kingdom of God is near you!”

The second message proclaimed by the disciples was: “The Kingdom of God is near you!” This had been the message of John the Baptist and of Jesus Himself when they began to preach. The Kingdom of God is Jesus Himself among us, with all the blessings He has to give us through His word and the Sacraments. The Kingdom of God begins here on earth and will have its continuity in heaven.

We are born into the Kingdom of God through the Holy Baptism, which is “the new birth of water and the Spirit... No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit”, said Jesus (John 3:5). Our Watchword highlights the Christian education of our children: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Through Baptism, the name of the child is written in God’s Book of Life. “I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine” says God in Isaiah 43:1.

As God's children the kids need to be nurtured by the Word and the adults by the Word and the Holy Supper, so that we all may grow up as healthy children to work in His kingdom. We are citizens of God's kingdom to be active workers, and not just passive unemployed in His kingdom. Peter wrote (1 Peter 2:9-10): "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, **that** you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." – Therefore, REJOICE, because your names are written in heaven!

Let us hear two more promises about our future and the future of the world. God said to Daniel, the prophet: "There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered" (Daniel 12:1). - And the last Book of the Bible says about the New Heaven and the New Earth: "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

Conclusion: Let us rejoice that our names are written in heaven and let us be Messengers of Peace proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is near, so that more people will hear about Jesus and through hearing, will be called by the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church, having their names written in the book of life as well.

May God give us all that grace through Jesus Chris, our Lord.
Amen.

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