

Week of March 11-17

A JOYFUL JESUS

Scripture Reading: Read Luke chapter 10

In high school, most students will take the famed “SAT.” According to the College Board website (<http://sat.collegeboard.org>), “*The SAT is a globally recognized college admission test that lets you show colleges what you know and how well you can apply that knowledge. It tests your knowledge of reading, writing and math...*” One part of the exam consists of sentence completion questions. See if you can answer the following sample SAT question:

There is no doubt that Larry is a genuine ----- : he excels at telling stories that fascinate his listeners.

Answer Choices: (A) braggart (B) dilettante (C) pilferer (D) prevaricator (E) raconteur

Your ability to answer this question, obviously, depends upon your knowledge of the definition of the words in the choices provided. In this case, the answer is E. For other sentence completion questions, you may need to know not only the definitions but also which one best fits the context of the question.

In our chapter reading today, Luke records Jesus’ commissioning of 72 disciples before he sent them out to do ministry in his name. After the 72 return, Jesus holds a debriefing session with them to evaluate how things went. Following this, Luke records a statement that I want to convert into a sentence completion question and ask you to try and fill in the blank:

At that time Jesus, full of _____ through the Holy Spirit, said...

Answer Choices: (A) power (B) wisdom (C) glory (D) joy

Unless you are familiar with the passage in Luke 10, your first answer would probably be “power” or “wisdom” wouldn’t it? The correct answer, however, is D. Does that surprise you? For many believers, it does. They see Jesus only as “a man of sorrows” or, perhaps, having a stern or dour disposition. The thought of Jesus being full of joy, able to laugh, or even smiling is hard for some to grasp.

Luke, however, portrays Jesus in the fullness of his humanity as he became one of us. He paints a picture of a Jesus who could grow tired, become hungry, experience pain, feel sadness, anger...and, yes, even joy. The angel announced to the shepherds that he brought good news of great joy. It makes sense, then, doesn’t it that the Savior who was the good news would be able to have great joy himself?

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Ask yourself how a joyful Jesus might change the way you look at the gospel and do the Christian life. Pray that the Lord would allow you to see Jesus as he really is as presented in the gospels.

Take-a-way: *A joyful Jesus is not a contradiction of terms.*