

**FAITH IN ACTION: You've Got to Fight for Your Right to Party**

Luke 10:17-23

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If you look at the sermon title today you will see that it is entitled "You have to Fight for your Right to Party!"

They certainly got the right lady for this topic wouldn't you agree.

If there is one thing I know how to do well, Friends, it is celebrate.

And that is exactly what we are going to do today.

We are going to celebrate!

First I want to celebrate all the wonderful, amazing women in our congregation today. Today is Mother's Day and I firmly believe that if you are a woman, you have indeed made a difference in the life of a child, if not many people – whether that is your own child or a child that has simply crossed your path through some other means – you have touched their life and impacted it.

And today we want to say thank you and celebrate you!!!

So here is what I want you all to do –

I want ALL of you wonderful women to remain seated

I want all of you men and youth and children to stand and show your love and appreciation to the great Christian women of Tipp City United Methodist Church by applauding them and their loving servant hearts.

Ladies when you leave today we have a small token of our appreciation we want to give to each one of you – so be sure to get a gift.

There was a wise woman who was traveling in the mountains and she found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone in the wise woman's bag, admired it, and asked the wise woman to give it to him. The wise woman did so without hesitation. The traveler left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the jewel was worth enough to give him security for the rest of his life.

But a few days later he came back, searching for the wise woman. When he found her, he returned the stone and said, "I have been thinking. I know how valuable this stone is, but I give it back to you in the hope that you can give me something much more precious. If you can, give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."

My mother, along with some other extraordinary women including you ladies here today, have given me that most precious gift as well.

You have given me the love of Christ in a multitude of ways.

You have shown me how to see with the eyes of Christ, how to have a heart filled with love and compassion, and how to reach out into the lives of others with the hands of Christ and put my faith in action.

Last week Pastor Chris challenged us to go out into our community and beyond and put our FAITH IN ACTION and people rose to that challenge.

They went out to give that precious gift within them by being the hands of Christ to others.

We had church-wide service projects focusing on our church, our community, and beyond and we are going to hear about some of our people's experiences.

[\(Invite guest speakers forward\)](#)

We speak often of the interactions that Jesus had with his close-knit group of followers we call the 12 disciples.

But Jesus also had a wider circle of people who formed a community of faithful disciples while he was here on earth.

In the passage of Scripture that we will look at today we will see Jesus send 72 of those followers on a short-term journey in obedience to a command of Jesus to be his ambassadors in the region around them.

These last few weeks, we have been preparing to take similar steps to those the disciples took. So let's take a look at how Jesus responded to the 72 and how they put their FAITH IN ACTION and I believe we will see how he responds to our serving others as well – putting our FAITH IN ACTION.

**READ LUKE 10:17-20**

I want to share 2 truths about our FAITH IN ACTION with you today.

The first is that

**[Our FAITH IN ACTION BRINGS US JOY.](#)**

The disciples reported back to Jesus – just like our friends today reported to us – that their faith put into action plus God's power equals an impact in the lives of others.

The disciples are pumped.

Can you imagine the excitement in their coming back – all 72 of them – sharing what they saw and did?

I remember when my 4 children were younger and they would go and do something fun and exciting together.

When they would return home, they would be so excited and pumped that they would all start talking at once trying to tell me what a great time they had and what had taken place.

I imagine that is what the disciples might have sounded like.

The disciples' position prior to this service adventure had been largely that of a diverse gathering of uninformed spectators.

Jesus was the expert, the traveling rabbi, the wonder-working messiah who performed miracles while his young charges looked on.

But this assignment was different.

They had been sent out by twos; this was firsthand experience of the divine power working its way into people's lives **through them**.

They were celebrating!!!

They had reason to celebrate – so do we.

When they shared their enthusiasm with Jesus, he shared something else that he saw taking place.

Just like a field-general perched at a vantage point that allowed him to see the totality and **full impact** of a raging battle – Jesus saw a direct correlation between what the disciples said and did and the spiritual transformation that resulted in their participation in their world.

Jesus upped the importance of their service by highlighting a reality that was out of the disciples' ability to comprehend.

Jesus said that the disciples' actions dealt the evil one a formidable blow.

The 72 acted in obedience and Satan was dethroned.

“Satan falling like lightening from the heavens.”

This is a curious phrase but most have interpreted it to mean that as a result of the disciples' actions, **Satan lost his power**.

Wherever these disciples worked, wherever we work, a spiritual transformation takes place.

Wherever the disciples preached, healed and served – Jesus saw Satan fall.

- Even though we can't see it with our eyes, Satan fell like lightening from heaven when you went out to serve those who are unable to do so-clean their yards and make their lives a little more beautiful.
- Satan fell like lightening from heaven when you disciples cook a meal and take it to those at St. Paul who are hungry and in need of nourishment.
- Satan fell like lightening from heaven when the disciples of UMCOR respond to the immediate need of those facing disasters they never dreamed would take place in their lives.
- Satan fell like lightening from heaven when you wrote a card of encouragement to our brothers and sisters in Tanzania to let them know that they are not alone in their journey and though they may be far from view they are not far from our love and that their lives matter to us.
- Satan fell like lightening from heaven when you helped to prepare a safe and inviting place for our youth, our next generation, to come to learn more about Jesus and his forgiveness and love.

- Satan fell like lightening from heaven when you brought in sacks of food for our Needy Baskets to give out to those right here in our own backyard who are hungry and having difficulty finding enough funds to sufficiently feed their families.
- Satan fell like lightening from heaven when our youth went 30 hours without food so that you could help them raise funds to help feed the hungry of the world.

Satan falls like lightening from heaven whenever you serve another with a heart of love, forgive someone who has wronged you, take pains to put another's needs in front of your own, follow a prompting to lean into God's marvelous adventure of faithful living.

Our FAITH IN ACTION combined with God's power knocks Satan down.

Jesus didn't stop with just that to celebrate however— even though that would have been enough for the disciples, that would be enough for us.

Jesus goes on to point out that an even greater reason to celebrate is because, “our names are written in heaven.”

You are registered as one of God's own.

Jesus is saying that the real reason to celebrate is because we are on GOD'S TEAM.

It is easy to get caught up in the size of our impact or even to get discouraged because of the seeming lack of our service results.

But Jesus was clear that you are putting the emphasis on the wrong thing if that is what you focus on.

Our ministry is not to become an experience of power leading to pride, but an experience of servanthood out of love for God and out of the desire for more people to join us in the kingdom, more names “written in heaven.”

The second truth

**OUR FAITH IN ACTION brings GOD JOY!**

**Look with me a little further in our passage – Luke 10:21-23**

One of my favorite paintings of Jesus is the one of him laughing.

If you had to find a place in scripture to put that picture, I think this would be a perfect place. What in our lives brings Jesus joy?

Scripture is clear – putting your faith into action is a signal all the way to heaven that you have understood the meaning of your mission here on earth.

Jesus' joy makes him break into a prayer of praise.

He praises God that the kingdom of God is available to all equally.

A life of FAITH IN ACTION doesn't come from natural abilities or education, it comes from trusting in God and imitating what Christ has done.

And even little children know how to do this. In fact sometimes they understand it better than we adults do.

He praises God also for using him to be the instrument of God's revealing himself to all people. This moment had to have been one of Jesus' favorite memories of his time spent here on Earth. Jesus has seen his followers carry on his ministry – they did what Jesus did. And because of that he has seen that everyday people are coming to know God through him.

Jesus connects the dots between his followers putting their FAITH IN ACTION and people coming to know God through Jesus.

**Maybe that is because when people see us working for Christ – in the name of Christ – they really do see Christ.**

You have stepped out and put your FAITH IN ACTION.

You have struck a blow against Satan.

You have been a living witness to the continuing work and love of Jesus.

You have taken one step.

Now let's make it a habit!!!

Let's turn that step into a stepping stone.

Let's create a path.

Let's go out like the 72 and knock Satan down.

Let's get excited as we obediently lift Christ high.

I challenge you today to reach out with the hands of Christ and keep putting your FAITH IN ACTION.