Thanksgiving Before the Dawn

You may not know this about Jesus: He gave thanks while it was still dark

KEY VERSE

> *"At that moment, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and prayed, 'I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth…'"* —
> Luke 10:21

PASSAGE · LUKE 9:51–55; 10:13–15, 21 · FROM *THE ONE*

9:51 *When the days drew near for Him to be taken to heaven, He intently set his face to go to Jerusalem.* 52 *And so He sent messengers ahead into a Samaritan village to prepare for His arrival.* 53 *But they didn't receive Him, because He was clearly traveling with His face set toward Jerusalem.* 54 *When His disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from the sky and destroy them, just as Elijah did?"* 55 *But He turned and rebuked them, "You don't know what kind of spirit you are. For the Son of Man didn't come to destroy people's lives, but to save them."*

. . .

10:13 *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works of power had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.* 14 *But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.* 15 *And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No! You'll descend to Hades—the dwelling of the dead."*

. . .

21 *At that moment, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and prayed, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You've hidden these things from the wise and learned men and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for it was well-pleasing in Your sight."*

From *The One: A Blending of the Four Gospels*

DEVOTIONAL

James and John wanted fire.
A Samaritan village
had shut its doors to Jesus.
"Lord, do You want us to command fire
to come down from the sky and destroy them,
just as Elijah did?"
— Luke 9:54

The disciples saw rejection
and reached for fire.
Jesus rebuked them.
"You don't know what kind of spirit you are.
For the Son of Man didn't come
to destroy people's lives, but to save them."
And they went to another village.
— Luke 9:55–56

No fire.
No revenge.
No getting even.
Just a quiet journey to another village.

But rejection kept mounting.
Jesus pronounced woes
on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum,
the town He called home.
They had watched His mighty works
and still did not repent.
— Luke 10:13–15

You may not know this about Jesus.
"At that moment, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit
and prayed,
'I thank You, O Father...'"
— Luke 10:21

The doors were still closed.
The darkness was still there.
Yet Jesus gave thanks.
Why?
Because Jesus saw what the disciples could not.
The Father was working.
The closed doors were not the end of the story.
The miracle was already underway.

Years later,
John would return to Samaria.
Not carrying fire.
Carrying the gospel.
The Son of Thunder would help bring the Spirit
to the very people he once wanted to destroy.
— Mark 3:17; Acts 8:14–17

The man who once asked for fire from heaven
would become the apostle who wrote,
"God is love."
— 1 John 4:8

Dawn was coming.
The Father was working
where others saw only rejection.
And Jesus gave thanks
before any of it appeared,
long before Samaria heard the gospel
or John's fire turned to love.

That is faith.
Not thanking God after the sunrise.
Thanking Him while it is still dark.
Not praising Him after the miracle.
Praising Him while the need remains.
Not rejoicing after the door opens.
Rejoicing while it is still closed.

The disciples reached for fire.
Jesus reached for thanks.
The darkness was real.
But so was the Father.
Let thanksgiving rise before the dawn.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. James and John watched a Samaritan village shut its doors to Jesus, and they wanted to call down fire (9:54). When you are rejected, or see the Lord rejected, what does "reaching for fire" look like for a man today?
2. Jesus rebuked them: "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of" (9:55). What is the difference between zeal for God and the spirit of Jesus?
3. No fire. No revenge. No getting even. They simply "went to another village" (9:56). When has walking away quietly been the harder and better choice for you?
4. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, the town He called home, watched His mighty works and still did not repent (10:13–15). Why can people closest to Jesus be the slowest to respond?
5. "At that moment, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and prayed, 'I thank You, O Father'" (10:21). The doors were still closed. Why is it so hard to give thanks before anything changes?
6. Years later John returned to Samaria carrying the gospel, and he became the apostle who wrote, "God is love" (Acts 8:14–17; 1 John 4:8). What does John's change tell you about someone you may have written off?
7. Where is it still dark for you right now? What would it look like this week to thank the Father before the dawn?

PRAYER

Father, when doors stay closed
and I want to reach for fire,
teach me to reach for thanks.
Help me trust that You are working
where I see only rejection.
Let thanksgiving rise in me
before the dawn.
In Jesus' name. Amen.