



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

January 23, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

THE RIGHT FOCUS

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Luke 10:20

READ Luke 10:17-20

We'd known Kha for more than a year. He was part of our small group from church that met weekly to discuss what we'd been learning about God. One evening during our regular meeting, he made a reference to having competed at the Olympics. The mention was so casual that it almost escaped my notice. *Almost*. Lo and behold, I learned I knew an Olympian who had competed in the bronze medal match! I couldn't fathom that he'd not mentioned it before, but for Kha, while his athletic achievement was a special part of his story, more important things were central to his identity: his family, his community, and his faith.

The story in Luke 10:1–23 describes what should be central to our identity. When the seventy-two people Jesus sent out to tell others about the kingdom of God returned from their journeys, they reported to Him that “even the demons submit to us in your name” (v. 17). While Jesus acknowledged that He'd equipped them with tremendous power and protection, He said they were focused on the wrong thing. He insisted that their cause for rejoicing should be because their “names are written in heaven” (v. 20).

Whatever achievements or abilities God has granted us, our greatest cause for rejoicing is that if we've entrusted ourselves to Jesus, our names are written in heaven, and we enjoy His daily presence in our lives.

By Kirsten Holmberg

PRAY & REFLECT

Heavenly Father, thank You for writing my name in heaven. I rejoice in knowing You. Amen

What are you focused on? How can you shift your focus to more of an eternal perspective?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In Luke 10:20, Jesus isn't chastising His disciples for casting out demons, for it's to God's glory when they're cast out. Instead, He says they should take joy that their "names are written in heaven." Other passages referring to this record use the words "book of life" or "book." Commentator William Hendriksen writes: "Casting out demons ceases when life on earth ends. But right standing with God, resulting in everlasting salvation to his glory, never ends." Daniel says, in the end times "everyone whose name is found written in the book - will be delivered" (Daniel 12:1). Those who are "victorious," or who stand firm in their faith, will never be blotted out from "the book of life" (Revelation 3:5). But those whose names aren't written in the "Lamb's book of life," the apostle John says, "will worship the beast" (13:8) in the last days. And when Christ returns, "anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life [will be] thrown into the lake of fire" (20:15). – By **Alyson Kieda**

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