



What the Messiah Does for Us

Sermon October 10 2021

Luke 4:14-21

Sermon Introduction

This week I'm going to start a two-week series on the mission and ministry of Jesus.

I am going to read our scripture passage now.

Please listen and open your hearts to God speaking to us in His Word.

Luke 4:14-21

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Together we read Isaiah 40:8:

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Please pray with me.

Holy Spirit, please open our hearts and minds to Jesus the Living Word.

We need Jesus to open our eyes, and proclaim good news to us, so that we can be his ambassadors to a hurting, broken, and lost world.

Please use your word, by the power of the Spirit, to make us more like Jesus.

We pray in his name.

Amen.

Here is our outline for today's sermon.

Point 1: Jesus went to church (Luke 4:14-16)

Point 2: Jesus is the Messiah (Luke 4:17, 18a, 20)

Point 3: What the Messiah does for us (Luke 4:18a-19)

Point 1: Jesus went to church (Luke 4:14-16)

Verse 14: And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

You can see on this map that Galilee is this area in the north of Israel.

This is where Jesus grew up.

He did a lot of his ministry in this area.

There was a lot of Greek and Roman influence in Galilee.

The Greeks conquered the region in 360BC.

And the Romans took over in 63BC.

So you had a mixture of cultures and people in this area.

There were lots of Gentiles whose culture was Greek mixed in with the Jewish people.

Roman Gentiles and their culture were also mixed in.

The Roman army and government authorities controlled everyone and taxed the people.

Most of the Jews hated the Romans, and wanted freedom from this army that had taken over their land.

People were looking for help from God.

They wanted rescue from Rome.

They wanted God to send someone to help them.

We see in verse 14 that everyone was talking about Jesus.

A report about him was going around, because he was teaching and healing people.

Verse 15 tells us that he went to the synagogues in different towns and taught there.

Because Jesus was a rabbi.

A rabbi is like a pastor.

A rabbi is the religious leader in a Jewish community.

Verse 16: And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

Nazareth was a small village in Galilee.
This is where Jesus grew up as a boy.
Now he is about 30 years old.

We see here that it was his custom, or is his regular practice, to go to synagogue on the Sabbath. Remember that the people in Galilee are surrounded by Gentiles, who do not believe in the one true God.

So going to synagogue was an important part of the spiritual and cultural life of this community. It was a community that was rapidly being changed by Greek and Roman culture.

The one thing I want you to see most about verse 16 is this: Jesus is the living Word and the Son of God.

But every week Jesus went to worship God and fellowship with God's people.

And we should, too.

Let's move on to Point 2 now.

Point 2: Jesus is the Messiah (Luke 4:17, 18a, 20-21)

Verse 17: And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

Jesus is reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 61.

Isaiah was a prophet 700 years before Jesus was born.

We are going to look at verse 18 in a few chunks, because there is a lot of important stuff here.

Verse 18 begins with

18a "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me

When Isaiah wrote this prophecy that Jesus read, Isaiah was talking about the Messiah.

We don't have time to look at everything Isaiah said about the Messiah, but here is an example of what the prophet Isaiah said.

Isaiah 11:1–2

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Jesse was the father of King David.

Isaiah 11:1 is a prophecy that a descendent of Jesse and David will be born.

And the Holy Spirit will be upon him, and with him.

He will have wisdom and might and knowledge that is different than any other person.

If you read through the rest of Isaiah, you find that the prophet Isaiah frequently talks about this special Servant of the Lord who will come one day.

This person was also called the Messiah.

The Jewish people were waiting for hundreds of years for this powerful rescuer to come from God to help the people.

The people suffering under Roman oppression were eager for God to send the Messiah.

This is why verse 14 said that a report was going around about Jesus.

This is why verse 15 said that he was glorified by all.

Many of them believed that Jesus matched the descriptions of the Messiah in Isaiah.

Because people could see that Jesus had the Spirit of Lord and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Verse 18 tells us that this Servant of the Lord will be anointed.

Special leaders were anointed with oil and prayer in the Bible.

But the person that Isaiah wrote about is very very special.

This Servant of the Lord that Isaiah writes about has been anointed by God, and also has the Spirit of God.

There are only two places in the Bible where we read about someone having both the anointing of God and the Spirit of God.

In 1 Samuel 10:1 and 6 Saul was anointed as King:

1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on [Saul's] head and kissed him and said, "Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage..."

6 Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man."

In 1 Samuel 16:13 David was anointed as King:

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed [David] in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah."

Isaiah 61 tells us that one day another king will come, who will receive God's anointing, and will do the wonderful things that we read about in today's scripture passage.

And today we are reading in Luke 4 about that one special day in a synagogue in Nazareth, when the Messiah appeared to the people.

It is Jesus.

Jesus is the Messiah and true King.

We read in Acts chapter 10 that Jesus received the anointing and the Spirit, just like King Saul and King David.

Acts 10:38 says that:

38 "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

My friends, it's very important that you see what Jesus is saying in these verses we are looking at today. Jesus is saying he is more than a rabbi.

Jesus is more than a prophet.

Jesus is more than a human king.

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God sent to change the world.

Let's look at what happened after Jesus read from Isaiah 61.

And then we'll talk about what verses 18 and 19 mean.

Verse 20: And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

When Jesus finished reading the prophecy from Isaiah, he sat down.

In American culture, we stand up to teach and speak to a crowd.

Like I am doing now.

But in a synagogue 2000 years ago, a rabbi sat down in front of his audience to teach.

When Jesus sat down, the eyes of everyone were fixed on him.

The room is silent.

Everyone is listening with their full attention to hear what Jesus is going to say about these words from the prophet Isaiah.

And what Jesus says is amazing.

Look at verse 21.

Verse 21: And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus says that the words in Isaiah written 700 years ago were coming true.

Isaiah's promises of great blessing from God were happening.

Why?

Because Jesus was there.

Jesus announced to the people in Nazareth that He is the Messiah.

He was the one everyone was waiting for.

A man who says that is either crazy, or he is lying, or he is telling the truth.

Which do you think it is?

Was Jesus mentally unstable, like someone who thinks he is Elvis Presley?

Do you think he was lying just to get attention?

Or do you think Jesus was telling the truth?

I believe he was telling the truth.

Because Jesus did things that only the Messiah can do.

That is point 3.

Point 3: What the Messiah does for us (Luke 4:18a-19)

Verse 18a "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

When Jesus said that he came "to preach good news to the poor," who did he mean?

Who are the poor people Jesus preaching good news to?

What do you think?

Some people think he was talking about the people who are poor financially.

Others think he is talking about the spiritually poor.

This is important.

Because how you answer that question will guide how you view the world.

Your answer will determine the mission of God's church.

Maybe Jesus was talking about the physically poor.

That's the most obvious meaning of his words.

God definitely cares about the poor and suffering.

The Bible is full of commandments about caring for widows and orphans, welcoming strangers, and allowing the poor to glean from the fields.

This text from Luke 4 has been used by church leaders and political revolutionaries.

They argue that the primary meaning of Jesus' words were physical.

They believe Jesus was promising to rescue people from poverty, slavery, political oppression, and disease.

People around the world are dying because they don't have clean water.

People are suffering from terrible sickness and disease.

Does God want His people to help those people?

Yes, I believe he does.

This is why some churches have clothes closets, food banks, and medical clinics to help people.

Some of you have lived in countries with dictators and secret police.

Evil men are oppressing people in many countries.

If you are suffering and you hear Jesus offering freedom and justice and healing it sounds like good news.

Right?

But was Jesus talking about freedom only from physical bondage, and physical blindness?

Or was he talking about spiritual categories?

Let's look at the next two promises Jesus talked about.

Then we can decide if he was talking about physical or spiritual things here.

Verse 18b: "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,"

Some theologians don't think Jesus was talking about physical blindness or people who are physically oppressed.

They argue that Jesus was only talking about spiritual things in these verses.

And we do see this in scripture.

In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul speaks of the Spiritually Blind:

4 "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

In John 8.34; Jesus said:

34 "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."

Have you ever felt like a captive to a bad habit?

A very bad habit can feel like prison sometimes.

Don't you feel like you're in chains when you battle the same sin over and over?

Sin is slavery.

It sometimes will feel like freedom.

But it's a lie.
Sin blinds us to the truth.

We will never find peace, joy, and contentment when we are living for ourselves.
Our hunger for freedom can actually enslave us.
That's how I felt during my 10 years as an atheist.
I thought I was free and happy.
But I was actually spiritually blind and in chains to my own desires.
Thankfully, in God's kindness, He sent the Holy Spirit to help me see Jesus.
Jesus is the only one who could free me from captivity.

Jesus really does free people from spiritual slavery.
He is the one who can cure your blindness so you can see your Savior.
Your Savior Jesus lived the perfect life you cannot.
He died to remove your chains and take the punishment that you deserve.
He broke free from the chains of death and rose from the dead.
He promises to raise you up from spiritual death.

Jesus is the only solution to the suffering of body and soul.
That's why needy people always wanted to be close to Jesus.
He attracted lepers who needed healing.
He attracted outcasts who needed restoration.
He attracted blind men who needed to see.
Their physical suffering exposed their deepest spiritual need.
That's why they saw Christ as their only hope.

My friends, Jesus did not come to help people with only their physical needs.
And he did not come to help with only spiritual needs.
Jesus can help with both, and he does.
But because he is God, he decides how and when to help us.

Sometimes he rescues us from our physical problems like sickness, poverty, and oppression.
But sometimes the cancer is not cured.
Sometimes a prisoner stays in jail.
But sometimes the prisoner who stays in jail experiences spiritual freedom from sin and death.
Sometimes a blind person remains physically blind, but Jesus gives her spiritual eyes to see her Savior.

All of our bodies will die, my friends.
So our greatest need is healing for our souls that will live forever.

But Jesus also cares about physical suffering in the world today.
And he uses us, the Body of Christ, to offer help and hope to people who are hurting and lost.

We have a mission, my friends.

If you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior, then he freed you from your spiritual blindness and slavery.
And then he sends you out on a mission.

Jesus says in John 20:21— "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."

And because we are sent by Jesus, we do what he did.

Three things to remember as we are sent:

The physical brokenness in the world has a spiritual root.

Jesus came to earth to provide a cure for spiritual brokenness.

Jesus is the only one who can fix the broken relationship between creation and Creator.

But He also fed, healed, and helped people physically.

He offers a solution for sin, and for all the pain that sin causes in the world.

Therefore, the Body of Christ must offer the same combination to the world.

We address the visible, physical brokenness in the lives of the people around us.

And we help them grow in their knowledge of Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Because we know their souls need the freedom that only Jesus can provide.

Next week we will see how the people in the synagogue responded to these things Jesus said.

I hope you'll be here next week to learn and pray with us, and to worship Jesus who is our Messiah and Lord.

Let's pray together now.

Father, thank you sending your Son Jesus, the Messiah, to help us see the truth.

Thank you for setting us free from the captivity of our own sin.

Thank you for giving us the privilege of being your messengers of the good news.

The same good news that saved us is the message of hope and eternal life we share with everyone we meet.

Use us for your glory in all we do, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.