
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



- I. [Sermon Recap](#)
- II. [Study Guide](#)
- III. [Devotional](#)
- IV. [Small Group Resources](#)

“I Am the Church”

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026
COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

SERMON RECAP

Pastor Mike Atkins brought a deeply personal and Spirit-led message centered on Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:16-21. When Jesus stood in the synagogue at Nazareth and read from Isaiah, He declared that He had come to preach good news to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to captives, give sight to the blind, and set the oppressed free. Pastor Mike reminded us that Jesus was not merely announcing a general religious program, He was revealing His heart for real people with real issues.

The pastoral heartbeat of the message was this: before God wants to use you, He wants to meet you, heal you, restore you, and set you free. Many believers live as if God's primary interest is to make them useful tools for His work. But Pastor Mike emphasized that we are not merely instruments God wants to employ, we are the very mission Jesus came to redeem. Our pain, poverty, blindness, and brokenness do not repel Christ; they are the very places He came to enter with mercy and power.

Through his testimony, Pastor Mike showed how the grace of God turns wounded lives into living witnesses. The Lord met him in poverty of spirit, family brokenness, grief, addiction, confusion, and failure. The practical encouragement for us is clear: do not rush past the healing work of Jesus in your own soul. Let Him minister to you. Let Him restore you. Let Him become visible in you. The world does not need a polished performance; it needs to see the light and life of Christ displayed through redeemed people.

 STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

- Jesus came for people who know they do not have what it takes. The “poor” in Luke 4 are those lacking the resources, strength, or power to rescue themselves.
- Your brokenness is not a disqualification from Christ’s love; it is the place He came to heal. Jesus binds up the brokenhearted and restores what has been shattered.
- God’s first work is not merely through you, but in you. We become useful to God as His healing, freedom, peace, and life are displayed in us.
- Your story matters because it becomes a witness to His mercy. Whether your testimony is dramatic or quiet, Christ’s transforming work in you is a living proclamation of His grace.

Key Scripture

Primary Sermon Text

- Luke 4:16-21 — Jesus reads from Isaiah in the synagogue and declares that the Scripture is fulfilled in Him.

Scriptures Mentioned or Clearly Quoted/Alluded to by Pastor Mike

- Isaiah 61:1-2 — The prophetic passage Jesus reads in Luke 4 about good news, healing, liberty, and the acceptable year of the Lord.
- Galatians 2:20 — “I have been crucified with Christ... Christ lives in me.” Quoted near the communion reflection.
- Isaiah 42:3 / Matthew 12:20 — “A bruised reed He will not break.” Pastor Mike referenced this image while speaking about brokenness.

- Luke 5:8 – Peter says, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Pastor Mike referenced this response when describing his own sense of unworthiness.
- Philippians 4:7 – “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.” Pastor Mike referred to the peace that passes human understanding.
- 1 Peter 1:8 – “Joy inexpressible and full of glory.” Pastor Mike referenced joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.
- Luke 22:19-20 / 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 – Communion language of Christ’s body and blood, remembered at the Lord’s Table.

Other Relevant Verses

- 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 – General thematic tie. This passage reminds us that the treasure of the gospel is carried in jars of clay, so the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.
- Ephesians 2:8-10 – General thematic tie. This passage helps us see that we are saved by grace, not works, and then made God’s workmanship for good works.
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 – General thematic tie. This passage explains how God comforts us in our affliction so we can comfort others with the comfort we have received from Him.



DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL — DAYS 1-5

Day 1: Jesus Comes Near

Reflection Question

Where are you tempted to believe Jesus is more interested in what you can do for Him than in what He wants to do in you?

Reading

- Luke 4:16
- Luke 4:21

Thought

Luke tells us that Jesus returned to Nazareth, “where He had been brought up,” and entered the synagogue “as was His custom.” This setting matters. Nazareth was familiar territory. These were people who knew His family, His upbringing, and His ordinary life before His public ministry. In that very familiar place, Jesus made an astonishing announcement: the long-awaited promises of God were being fulfilled in Him.

In first-century synagogue worship, Scripture would be read aloud, often from the Law and the Prophets, and then teaching would follow. Jesus stood to read, received the scroll of Isaiah, and identified Himself as the fulfillment of God’s promised rescue. His mission was not abstract. It was not merely religious language. It was deeply personal: good news, healing, freedom, sight, and release.

Pastor Mike’s message pressed this truth into our hearts: Jesus does not stand at a distance from your story. He enters the real places! Your Nazareth, your ordinary life, your family history, your wounds, your memories, your confusion. In all of this he says, “I have come here too.” His mission is not simply to recruit you. His mission is to redeem you.

Challenge

Take ten quiet minutes today and name before the Lord one area of your life where you need Him to come near: not as a taskmaster, but as Savior, Healer, and Deliverer.

Day 2: Good News for the Poor

Reflection Question

What part of your life reveals your need for resources only God can provide?

Reading

- Luke 4:18
- Isaiah 61:1

Thought

When Jesus says He has been anointed “to preach the gospel to the poor,” the word “poor” carries more than financial need. It includes lowliness, helplessness, lack, and inability. Pastor Mike described it as not having what it takes to accomplish the end. That is spiritually true of every human being. We cannot heal our own sin, rescue our own souls, or make ourselves whole by willpower.

In Isaiah’s original context, God was speaking to a people who had experienced devastation, exile, loss, and shame. The promise of Isaiah 61 was that God Himself would bring restoration. Jesus then takes that passage and declares that He is the One through whom this restoration comes. The good news is not advice for the strong; it is announcement for the needy.

This confronts our self-sufficiency. Many of us try to present ourselves as capable, composed, and spiritually put together. But the gospel begins when we stop pretending. Jesus does not despise our poverty of spirit. He blesses it. He fills empty hands. He gives grace to those who know they need it.

Challenge

Write down one sentence beginning with: “Lord, I do not have what it takes to...” Then ask Him to meet you there with His grace.

Day 3: Healing for the Brokenhearted

Reflection Question

What broken place in your inner life have you learned to hide, minimize, or manage rather than bring honestly to Jesus?

Reading

- Isaiah 42:3
- Matthew 12:20

Thought

Pastor Mike described the brokenhearted as those crushed, shattered, and bruised. Scripture uses tender imagery for this condition: “a bruised reed He will not break.” A reed was fragile, easily bent, and easily discarded if damaged. Yet the Servant of the Lord does not crush what is already bruised. He handles wounded people with mercy.

Matthew applies Isaiah’s prophecy directly to Jesus. This tells us something essential about His character. Jesus is not harsh with the weak. He is not impatient with the wounded. He does not shame people for needing healing. His holiness does not make Him distant from the brokenhearted; His holiness makes Him perfectly compassionate toward them.

Pastor Mike’s testimony illustrated that the Lord does not merely forgive sin and then leave the soul shattered. Jesus binds up. He restores. He strengthens what grief, trauma, family pain, addiction, and confusion have damaged. Healing may be immediate in some places and gradual in others, but the heart of Christ is steady: He came for the brokenhearted.

Challenge

Invite the Holy Spirit to show you one “bruised reed” place in your life. Consider sharing that need with a trusted believer, counselor, pastor, or small group leader.

Day 4: Liberty for Captives

Reflection Question

Where do you feel trapped? This can be by fear, shame, sin, grief, anxiety, bitterness, or old patterns.

Reading

- Luke 4:18
- Galatians 2:20

Thought

Jesus came to “proclaim liberty to the captives.” Pastor Mike explained that the word for captive can refer to someone taken prisoner in war, seized at the point of a spear. This is a powerful picture of bondage. Some captivity is obvious; other captivity is hidden beneath success, busyness, religious activity, or polished appearances.

In the ancient world, captives could not simply decide to be free. They needed deliverance from outside themselves. That is the gospel. Jesus does not tell prisoners to try harder inside the prison cell. He comes with authority to announce freedom and to break chains.

Galatians 2:20 shows us the shape of Christian freedom: “I have been crucified with Christ... Christ lives in me.” Freedom is not simply self-improvement. It is union with Christ. The old life is brought to the cross, and the life of Jesus becomes our life. Pastor Mike’s phrase captures this beautifully: “Not you, but Christ in you, through you, in spite of you.”

Challenge

Identify one area of captivity and bring it into the light. Confess it to God, and if appropriate, ask a mature believer to pray with you and walk with you toward freedom.

Day 5: You Are the Mission

Reflection Question

How would your relationship with God change if you truly believed, “I am not an interruption to His mission; I am part of His mission”?

Reading

- 2 Corinthians 4:6-7
- Ephesians 2:10

Thought

Pastor Mike’s central declaration was, “You are the mission.” This does not mean life is centered on us. It means the mercy of God is personal, embodied, and transformational. Jesus came to redeem actual people, not generic crowds.

Paul says we carry the treasure of God’s light in “jars of clay.” Clay jars were ordinary, fragile, and common in the ancient world. That is the point. God places His glory in weak vessels, so no one confuses the vessel with the treasure. Your usefulness to God does not come from appearing unbreakable. It comes from being filled with Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God’s workmanship. The order matters: we are saved by grace, made alive in Christ, and then prepared for good works. God’s work in us becomes the foundation for His work through us. We do not serve to earn healing; we serve as people being healed. We do not minister from perfection; we minister from grace.

Challenge

Ask the Lord to help you see your story as a place where His grace can be displayed. Write down one way God has met you, healed you, or carried you—and consider sharing it with someone this week.

IV.

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Opening

Welcome everyone warmly. As the group begins, invite people to settle their hearts and become aware of the Lord's presence.

Call to Prayer

Ask the group to pray around these themes:

- Openness to the Holy Spirit
- Courage to be honest before God and one another
- A fresh encounter with Jesus as Healer, Deliverer, and Savior
- Grace to listen well and respond tenderly

Thematic Recap

Pastor Mike Atkins reminded us that Jesus did not come merely to recruit workers; He came to redeem, heal, deliver, and restore people. In Luke 4, Jesus announces His mission to bring good news to the poor, healing to the brokenhearted, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. The sermon invited us to believe that our wounds and needs are not obstacles to Jesus' mission, they are the very places He came to meet us.

Core Message Highlights

- Jesus' mission is deeply personal, not merely institutional or programmatic.
- God is not looking past you just to get work out of you.
- Your poverty, brokenness, blindness, captivity, and oppression matter to Jesus.
- Healing in you becomes a testimony through you.
- We become vessels of God's glory as His life is displayed in our weakness.
- Communion reminds us that Christ's body and blood remove every barrier between us and God.

Icebreaker

Share about a song, hymn, Scripture, or spiritual moment that has been meaningful in your walk with God. What made it personal to you?

Scripture Exploration

Passage 1: Luke 4:16-21

Jesus reads from Isaiah and declares that the Scripture is fulfilled in Him.

Discussion Prompts

1. What stands out to you about the kinds of people Jesus names in His mission: the poor, brokenhearted, captives, blind, and oppressed?
2. Why do you think it is easy for Christians to believe God wants to use them but harder to believe God wants to heal them?
3. Which phrase from Jesus' mission feels most personal to you right now?
4. What would it look like this week to cooperate with Jesus' mission in your own soul?

Passage 2: Galatians 2:20

Paul describes the crucified life and Christ living in him.

Discussion Prompts

1. What does it mean that the Christian life is not merely self-improvement, but “Christ lives in me”?
2. How does this verse challenge performance-based Christianity?
3. Pastor Mike said the world needs to see “not you, but Christ in you, through you, in spite of you.” How does that phrase encourage or challenge you?
4. Where do you need to surrender control and let Christ’s life be expressed through you?

Passage 3: 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

God places the treasure of His light in jars of clay.

Discussion Prompts

1. Why do you think God chooses to place His treasure in fragile, ordinary vessels?
2. How does this passage help us think differently about weakness, wounds, and limitations?
3. What is the difference between drawing attention to ourselves and allowing Christ’s light to shine through us?

4. How can a small group become a safe place where people do not have to pretend they are stronger than they are?

Grand Synthesis Prompt

Looking at Luke 4, Galatians 2:20, and 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 together, how would you summarize the relationship between Christ's work for us, Christ's life in us, and Christ's witness through us?

Application: Growing in Personal and Communal Prayer

Pastor Mike emphasized encounter, coming honestly before the Lord and allowing Him to minister to the real places of need. Prayer is one of the primary ways we stop performing and start receiving.

Personal Prayer Practices

- Pray honestly. Name your poverty, brokenness, captivity, blindness, or oppression before the Lord without minimizing it.
- Pray Scripture. Use Luke 4:18-19 as a framework: "Lord, where do I need Your good news, healing, liberty, sight, and freedom?"
- Practice stillness. Spend a few minutes in silence, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal where Jesus wants to meet you.
- Receive before you ask to be used. Begin prayer by letting God love and minister to you before moving into requests or tasks.
- Keep a testimony journal. Write down ways God is healing, freeing, teaching, or strengthening you.

Communal Prayer Practices

- Make space for honesty. Encourage group members to share real needs without pressure to over-explain.
- Pray in themes, not performances. Focus on asking Jesus to bring healing, freedom, peace, courage, and renewed trust.
- Listen before responding. Let prayer needs be received with compassion, not quick advice.
- Celebrate small signs of grace. Testimonies do not have to be dramatic to be meaningful.
- Follow up. If someone shares a burden, check in with them during the week.

Closing

Leave space for group members to share prayer needs. Encourage honesty, but do not force anyone to share beyond their comfort level.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Invite the group to pray around these themes:

- Thank Jesus for coming near to the poor, brokenhearted, captive, blind, and oppressed.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where each person needs healing or freedom.
- Pray for courage to stop hiding and begin receiving.

- Ask God to make the group a safe place of grace, truth, and restoration.
- Pray that Christ's life would be displayed through each person's story.

Leader Notes

- Create safety early. Remind the group that no one is required to share deeply personal details. Vulnerability should be invited, never demanded.
- Honor the weight of people's stories. Pastor Mike shared painful parts of his testimony. If group members share difficult experiences, receive them gently and avoid rushing to fix.
- Keep Jesus central. The focus is not pain for pain's sake, but the healing mission of Christ.
- Watch for shame. Some may feel embarrassed by their need. Reinforce that neediness is not failure, it is where grace meets us.
- Encourage appropriate care. If someone discloses trauma, abuse, addiction, or severe emotional distress, encourage them to seek pastoral care, professional counseling, or immediate help if needed.
- Balance testimony and Scripture. Personal stories matter but keep returning to the promises and character of Jesus revealed in the Word.
- End with hope. The goal is not to leave people exposed, but to help them see that Jesus comes with good news, healing, liberty, sight, and freedom.