

The Model Preacher

Luke 4:14-30

(Discussion Guide on pg.11)

In an interview concerning the task of a preaching pastor, professor Walter Brueggemann shared the following: “Well it’s not for me to give advice, but I heard a Rabbi say not long ago that ‘Christian Pastors have ruined the life of a Rabbi. Because a Rabbi is a scholar and a preacher. But Christian Pastors are social workers and therapist, and budget managers and now,’ he said, ‘people in his synagogue expect him to do that.’

I would think that preachers (and this is extremely difficult) have to decide what the main tasks are and practice enormous self-discipline about not being drawn away to do other things that do not properly belong to the ministry of the word, [administering the ordinances, and, prayer]. They can’t do that completely but I believe that many preachers finally get around to their sermon in their fatigue from everything else. And if imagination is a key to good preaching, you cannot be imaginative when you’re exhausted. So I think it has to do with ordering one’s priorities for the sake of one’s best energies. And that for many preachers really means deciding that this is the main task. If you want the congregation to have missional energy and all of that, preaching is a pivot point for all of it. And if a pastor decides that, then a pastor is going to make more time for reading, study, and prayer, which are the disciplines that cause the pastor to live to some extent in a different zone. And if we are going to bring a word from elsewhere, then we are going to have to live to some extent elsewhere. And I don’t think that’s very easy given the huge demands and expectations on most pastors.”

If knowing what their main task actually is as Pastors and giving themselves to that task is vital to the health of a congregation, then pastors and congregations need biblical clarity on this issue. They need clarity that will shape their convictions and conduct. And as we will see in the message, the New Testament provides great clarity on what ought to be the primary task of a preacher.

What's more, Jesus Himself modeled for us all, what faithfulness to the calling of preaching looks like. And because of His faithfulness and resurrection power, all who have been called to preach can trust that He supplies all that's needed to be faithful to the task.

Main idea: Faithful preachers are tethered to the Spirit, and true to the scriptures as they seek to advance the Kingdom of Christ.

So, as we walk through the text before us, we are going to learn from Jesus' life and ministry some key qualities of a faithful gospel preacher.

1. Faithful preachers are tethered to the Spirit

After being tempted by Satan in the wilderness before the start of His public ministry, Luke writes:

*“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.”*
Luke 4:14-18a

The first quality to observe about faithful preachers is that they are tethered to the Spirit. I've heard it said once that “you'll never know the release of the Spirit until you know the restraint of the Spirit.” In other words, if we are going to experience the power of the Spirit, we must first be yielded/submitted to the Holy Spirit.

As a model for us, Jesus in His humanity submitted to the leading and authority of the Spirit throughout His earthly life and ministry. Remember that Jesus was led by the Spirit to the quiet of the wilderness where He spent time alone with the Father. And after His wilderness experience, we read again of the Spirit's involvement in that Jesus *“returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee.”*

Moreover, between being led by the Spirit into the wilderness before the start of His public ministry, and returning in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, Jesus was tested by the devil. If you recall from last week's message, the enemy questioned Jesus' identity as the Son of God and twisted the word of God to tempt Jesus to act outside of God's will. But Jesus' time with God in the wilderness and His knowledge of the word, prepared Him to stand against the schemes of the enemy.

Keep in mind that God is sovereign over Satan. What he means for evil, God means for good. And this was not only true in Jesus day, it's true in our lives. Satan will tempt us to make us bitter, but God allows it to make us better, to prepare us for what He has in store for us, like ministry. And often, like Jesus, his temptations come after an experience with God, like our recent 21 Days of prayer.

When you receive clarity and guidance from the Lord and set out to fulfill His purpose, expect to be tested. And when the test comes, keep seeking God in prayer and yield to the Spirit for the strength to overcome. Jesus passed the test and returned in the power of the Spirit to begin His public ministry.

Now, in verses 14-16, we learn that as Jesus began His public ministry in the power of the Spirit, He was becoming increasingly popular. With this popularity, He began to teach in synagogues in Galilee where He was also being praised.

Luke also adds in verse 16 that when Jesus came to His hometown of Nazareth, He went to the synagogue there, as was His custom growing up. Note here that Jesus, who was the Word incarnate, regularly sat with others in a synagogue under the teaching of God's word.

Some people have the mistaken idea today that they don't need the church to be under the teaching of God's word. They say that they have the Holy Spirit to learn on their own or that they can learn from other gifted teachers online. But although as believers we should study the Bible on our own, God has ordained for the Spirit to bring

about spiritual formation in our lives under the teaching and preaching of His word through the local church.

Moreover, God has outlined that churches are to have biblically qualified pastors and elders who shepherd the flock. And one of the primary ways a pastor is to care for the flock so that all would come to spiritual maturity, is again, through the teaching and preaching of the word.

Let me be clear, to grow spiritually Christians need to do more than come under the preaching and oversight of biblically qualified teaching pastors and elders, but they are not to do less than this. Adrian Rogers put it this way, “You’ll never be over what God has put under you, until you are under what God has put over you.”

“The synagogue of Jesus’ day was in worse shape than the churches of our day, and our Lord still attended.” And that’s because He was under His Father’s authority. And because in His humanity He was under authority, He was given power and authority through the Spirit to preach and teach the Word.

Notice that when Jesus came into the Jewish synagogue, a place where the people gathered to hear the word, Jesus was handed the scroll of Isaiah and He read it out loud before the people. Luke writes:

“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...” Luke 4:17-18a

Let me emphasize that although this is not the first time Jesus proclaimed the word of God in a synagogue, this text from Luke is the first recorded sermon of Jesus. And in this first recorded sermon there are some vitally important things to learn about Jesus’ public ministry.

We will not be able to examine all the details this text reveals about Jesus’ ministry. However, it’s important to highlight that proclaiming the good news of the rule of God and the freedom found therein is the

essence of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus, the Christ, was sent to rescue sinners from the kingdom of darkness and transfer them to the kingdom of light.

The prophetic scriptures from Isaiah that Jesus quotes from not only speak of the good news that He came to proclaim, but also that He was under the anointing of the Holy Spirit when He did so. Jesus did other things in the authority and power of the Spirit, like the working of miracles, but the preaching of the good news was His primary mission and main purpose for His Holy Spirit anointing.

Although Christ's substitutional death on the cross for our sin would come later, which makes entrance into His kingdom possible, His arrival and message of hope was good news to all—good news that would bring salvation to all who put their trust in Him.

Let me emphasize here that as it was for Jesus, the avenue of preaching the good news in the power of the Spirit is still the primary work of the church to bring the lost to saving faith in Christ. As the Apostle Paul explained in Romans 10:13-15: *“For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?^[c] And how are they to hear without someone preaching?¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”*

Although God has called certain men to be pastors and teachers in New Testament churches, all believers are sent and given a capacity by the Spirit to preach the good news to lost sinners. The Pastor is not the hired gun for evangelism. “It is the whole business of the whole church to preach the whole gospel to the whole world.” (Charles Spurgeon).

With this in mind, notice what Jesus said He was sent to preach the gospel to: *“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." Luke 4:18-19

You know, there are people who view this prophecy as speaking primarily of a social and political liberation of poor and oppressed people. But although the full and future establishment of Christ's kingdom will bring an end to all political and social oppression, Jesus' primary mission was to make an end of sin that leads to bondage of all kinds.

Isaiah 61, which Jesus is referring to, clearly has in mind a spiritual salvation from the sin that brings spiritual poverty, blindness, and bondage. As one commentator noted: "While Isaiah 61 foresees a salvific fulfillment, it is also certain that this text cannot mean less than the gospel going to poor people, the imprisoned, and the oppressed. Our task is not to form a holy huddle or swell our heads with theology and Bible knowledge. Our task is to, yes, feed on Christ, but also to find beggars and tell them where there is bread." Thabiti Anyabwile

And because the Spirit of God has been given to each of us to do just that, we should be regularly praying for the Spirit to help us see opportunities to proclaim the good news of Jesus and for the boldness to do so as we set out to reach the lost for Christ.

2. Faithful preachers are true to the scriptures

Secondly, faithful preachers are true to the scriptures. After Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll, we read beginning in verses 20-21: "*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."* Luke 4:20-21

If you recall, Jesus was standing when He read from the scriptures, which was a sign of reverence for the word of God. And after handing the scriptures back to the attendant, He then sits down which at that time was the normal position for teaching.

And with all eyes fixed on him, which His Spirit filled authority demanded, Jesus preached this one sentenced sermon: “*Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*” In one sentence Jesus powerfully and wonderfully explained not only the meaning of the text He just read from, but gave it’s intended application.

He explains to them that on that very day the scriptures that He read and that they heard with their very ears was fulfilled and had come true. Moreover, Jesus did more than faithfully interpret and apply the scriptures for all who were listening, He was the literal embodiment of the scriptures.

O how we must learn from Jesus what faithful preaching is. We have too many people claiming to be preaching and teaching the scriptures who are doing nothing but lining their pockets by telling people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear.

What’s more, many so-called preachers of the word use the bible only as a prop to increase their credibility but they’re not being true to the scriptures—they’re not teaching the meaning of the text that they read from and showing how to properly apply it to one’s life.

Because they’re more interested in filling seats than making disciples of Jesus, they read into the scripture or twist it to say what they think will draw a crowd. The Apostle Paul warned of this when he wrote: “*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,*” (2 Timothy 4:1-3).

Likely with this text in mind, the great preacher Charles Spurgeon prophetically noted over 125 years ago: “A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the church will have clowns entertaining the goats.”

We may be able to hype up a crowd by cleverly quoting scripture out of context, but we will be doing so without the saving and transforming witness of the Spirit. The Spirit will only bear witness to what we are teaching if we are true to the scriptures. And let me add that those of us who have the privilege of sitting under sound biblical teaching have the responsibility to give more than lip service. We should honor those who faithfully preach the word, but more than that we should honor God by obeying it.

This bring us to our final point:

3. Faithful preachers will be threatened by the self-righteous

Do you know that Jesus had a lot of temporary fans but not too many permanent followers? Notice that after His one sentence sermon, Luke continues:

“And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” 23 And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.”” Luke 4:22-23

Remember that before Jesus came to His hometown of Nazareth, He was gaining popularity around Galilee probably because of the miracles that He performed. But in His hometown, although it appears that they were impressed with His message, they were not convinced about who He was claiming to be. They asked, *Is not this Joseph's son?*

This question and the subsequent verses which imply they wanted Him to prove Himself to be the messiah by working a miracle, appear to demonstrate that their familiarity with Jesus became an obstacle to receiving His word. Although they seemed to admire His words and were curious about whether He could truly work miracles, their self-righteousness kept them from seeing themselves as spiritually poor, blind, and imprisoned as Jesus' prophetic words indicated.

Rather than the words of Jesus humbling them, their familiarity with Jesus caused them to act pridefully and with a sense of entitlement. Their attitude seemed to be saying, “You grew up with us. You’re know better than us. And if you truly can work miracles, why don’t you do some here in your home town.”

But Jesus knew that their problem wasn’t that they needed more evidence. Rather their problem was their self-righteous pride. Remember, Jesus didn’t come to gain fans, but make followers. He didn’t come to impress the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance. And the same is true today.

So, knowing what was in their hearts, Jesus speaks to the heart of the problem, which was a matter of the heart. Luke writes beginning in verse 24:

*“And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. **25** But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, **26** and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. **27** And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” Luke 4:22-27*

In response to the pride and self-righteousness of the people in His hometown, Jesus cites two Old Testament examples about a widow in Sidon and a Syrian captain named Naaman. Naaman was rich and diseased. The woman was a widow and extremely poor. Both were Gentiles. The widow, although she was in poverty, gave the little that she had in faith to help the prophet Elijah. And although there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, none were healed of their leprosy but Naaman who also exercised a little faith.

By these examples, “Jesus is saying that God’s salvation passed over Israel and went to the “unclean” Gentiles. Israel rejected their prophets, but the Gentiles received them. God’s salvation is for all

nations (T.A.).” This was an insult to the Jewish people of Jesus’ home town.

Now, like the religious people in Jesus’ hometown, many today have a familiarity with Christ and may even go to church occasionally. This gives them a sense of security but it’s a false sense. Familiarity with Jesus or even being a fan of Jesus is not the same as saving faith. Saving faith is to acknowledge that you’re a sinner in need of forgiveness, turning from your self-rule, and trusting King Jesus, who died to pay for your sin, as Savior and Lord.

Again, in response to Jesus’ two Old Testament examples of Gentiles receiving salvation, the self-righteous religious folk in His hometown synagogue became furious. Luke writes:

“When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away.” Luke 4:28-30

We see hear that the hometown fans of Jesus quickly turned on Him. It was bad enough that in His expositional sermon He called them poor, blind, captive and oppressed, but now He was also implying that they were less spiritual and less wise than the Gentiles, as portrayed in Naaman and the widow! That was too much for their self-righteous and prideful hearts to handle. So, full of wrath, they forcefully drove Jesus to the summit of the hill on which their town was built and intended to throw Him down the cliff.

“Think of it!” says, Kent Hughes. “They had seen Jesus grow from infancy to manhood. Even though they had never dreamed he was God, they certainly knew his character firsthand. They had never seen him do anything wrong. He had never lied, never disobeyed, never been unkind. In fact, he was the most loving, thoughtful, winsome person they had ever known. He was undoubtedly locally famous for his acts of mercy. He was the most lovely being they had ever encountered. But when Jesus cut through their comfortable religious

façade, they tried to lynch him—and on the Sabbath too! He would have been tossed off the cliff and then stoned had he not “pass[ed] through their midst” and gone away (v. 30). This was divine protection.”

Beloved, there would come a time that Jesus would willingly give Himself to be crucified for our sin. But the time was not yet. Jesus had many more preaching assignments before His time came. Until then, His Father protected Him and the Holy Spirit continued to guide Him.

How many of you know, our time is in God’s hands too. And as followers of Jesus, we can trust that our heavenly Father will provide and protect us and that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide us until our mission for Christ on earth is done.

Conclusion

Until then, let us faithfully preach the good news as we stay tethered to the Holy Spirit, and true to the scriptures even if it cost us. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Let us all do our part for the advancement of God’s kingdom so that faithful pastors and preachers can do their part to the glory of Christ. May God use us all to set the captives free.

Discussion Questions

Read Luke 4:14. Between Jesus’ wilderness experience and the start of His Spirit-empowered public ministry, Jesus was tested.

- Why does God allow us to be tempted/tested?
- What are some truths and promises to hold on to when tested?
- It’s been said, “You’ll never know the release of the Spirit until you know the restraint of the Spirit.” What does this mean and how did Jesus demonstrate this?

Read Luke 4:15-16. Jesus frequented Jewish synagogues during His public ministry and preached the word. Luke also emphasized that

going to the synagogue was His custom before the start of His ministry.

- Is being under the preaching and teaching of God's word in a local church necessary for the Christian today? Why or why not?
- Is listening to sermons and Bible teaching online a good substitute for being under the preaching and teaching ministry of a pastor/elder? Why or why not?

Read Luke 4:17-19. Why was preaching the primary ministry that the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus for?

- Are all believers called to preach the gospel? (Romans 10:13-15)
- What is the good news that we are called to proclaim?
- Who are we to preach the good news to and how can we fulfill this calling?

Read Luke 20-30. What does Jesus' one sentence sermon teach us about what faithful preaching is?

- What does bad preaching look like today? 2 Tim 4:1-3
- Why did Jesus' hometown fans get angry with Him?
- What's the difference between a follower of Jesus and a fan of Jesus?
- What changes do you need to make to move from being a fan of Jesus to being a follower of Jesus? If you're a follower of Jesus already, what steps do you need to take to be a more devoted follower of Jesus?