

Sunday 14 January 2024

Life Group Leaders' Notes

Series: New Year

Title: How You Can Live This Year With God's Favour

Key Text: Luke 4:18-21

Do you want to live the best life in 2024? Do you want to be set free in every part of your life? Do you want to know God's blessing of your life? This year can be the best year of your life and in the life of the church. At a time when there is so much trouble in the world, you can learn how to live this year with God's favour.

Today is no ordinary day to be alive. Today is a day for the church to shine the light of Jesus into our dark world. Today we are living in a moment where we expect to see a great harvest of people into the kingdom of God. Today is the day of God's favour.

This is a phrase that Jesus used right at the start of His earthly ministry. In His home synagogue, He read some familiar scriptures from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

Luke 4:18-19 says He read: *"The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

What happened next was not so familiar. Suddenly, unexpectedly He stopped. Surprisingly He did not go on to read the next phrase from Isaiah 61 that spoke of the day of vengeance of our God. That day of God's ultimate judgement was yet to come. But at this moment in time, Jesus declared that they were living in a special season of mercy and favour.

He said in verse 21: *'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'* Jesus was declaring that the age of the Promised Messiah was now here. Jesus was Himself that Messiah who was announcing the start of the new age of the kingdom of God.

What this means to us today is that while a day of judgement is coming for the whole world, at this moment we are still living in a time of grace and mercy. The apostle Paul also emphasised this in 2 Corinthians 6:2, saying *“I tell you now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation”*. Favour means goodwill, approval and blessing (Psalm 84:11).

1. This is a day and year of liberation (Luke 4:18; Leviticus 25:8; John 8:34-36; Acts 26:17)
2. This is a day and year of mobilisation (Luke 4:18; Matthew 4:23; Luke 9:1-2, 6)
3. Today is a day and year of impartation (Luke 4:18)

## Apply

**1. This is a day and year of liberation** (Luke 4:18). The ‘year of favour’ that Jesus spoke about that day in Nazareth was a reference to a Jubilee Year in the Hebrew tradition. The year of Jubilee, every fifty years, was a special year in which everyone’s debts were written off, lands were restored to their original owners, and all slaves were set free. The trumpet must be sounded to proclaim liberty throughout the land (Leviticus 25:8). Jesus here was sounding the trumpet proclaiming that He had come to set people free from captivity of many kinds (John 8:34-36). The gospel of Jesus is the gospel of power where real people can be truly set free. That’s why Jesus is called the Saviour. <sup>[SEP]</sup>Salvation comes from the Greek word Sozo. It’s found in the New Testament more than 110 times. It means to be saved, to be delivered from evil powers and to be healed. Jesus came to break the rule of Satan off people’s lives. The Apostle Paul said that God told him, ‘I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God...’ (Acts 26:17). Being a Christian starts with you being forgiven, but continues with you being set free in your life. The Lord will deliver you today in your body (from every pain, from illnesses). He will deliver you in your mind, in your emotions, in your heart, in your spirit. He will free you from all fear, from every lie that you have heard and that has contaminated your ears, your thoughts, your heart and your spirit. He is going to free you from the prison of fear. He will free you from the addictions to those pills, to alcohol, to cigarettes, He is going to free you from the addiction to pornography, He is going to cleanse your vision, you are going to have a true vision of the spiritual world. God is going to deliver your mind from all the distractions and of all doubt that have prevented

you from reading and understanding the word of God. The Lord will deliver you from your terrible pride, from anger and sadness. The Lord will free you from every incorrect path and you will enter into the purpose of God. Now you will be free to follow Jesus, to be His disciple, to serve Him and enjoy His kingdom on this earth. You will be free to reap the great harvest that is ready for this time, for this year 2024.

**2. This is a day and year of mobilisation** (Luke 4:18). Jesus came on a rescue mission to earth and He began by going out into all the areas in Galilee (Matthew 4:23). And Jesus also sent out His disciples on a mission to preach the full gospel of salvation (Luke 9:1-2, 6). Jesus insisted that first there must be focus on preaching the good news to the poor. Jesus went to the literal poor, the hurting and the marginalised, the ordinary people that usually no one cared for. And that's where every movement of revival has found its greatest success. [SEP] John Wesley said in 1771, 'Everywhere we find the labouring part of mankind the readiest to receive the Gospel'. Going to the poor and hurting means go to prisoners – go to the captives, literally to prisons. Our prisons are full. But God is concerned for the prisoners. Many prisons are seeing powerful conversions. Go to the abused, the down and outs. The blind and the lame. Go to the people and the places that no one else is interested in. God is sending you 'to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners'. Jesus wants all His followers mobilised to go out and share the good news of Jesus and minister healing and deliverance. That means He is recruiting you! As a church the Lord is calling us to share the good news all over this area, in every village, every neighbourhood, every town and every city. It's a big task and we can't do it on our own. It's a team challenge and the good news is that Holy Spirit is part of the team.

**3. Today is a day and year of impartation** (Luke 4:18). The anointing of the Lord makes all the difference. The early disciples filled Jerusalem and the first century world with the good news of the gospel as they were constantly filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself knew that 'he was anointed by the Spirit of God.' Today God wants to pour out His spirit on you so that all of us can say, "The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Do you need to be set free from sin or in other ways? Well take a moment to repent of your sins or unbelief

and ask God to show His favour to you. Today God wants to mobilise you to share the good news of Jesus in word and ministry to the hurting. Choose to accept this calling and that you will always depend on the Lord to fill you with His Holy Spirit.