

The Gospel According to Jesus Luke 4:14-30

Thus far, Luke has narrated the birth of Jesus, his genealogy, and his temptation. That's the end of section one in Luke's Gospel and 4:14 begins Jesus's ministry, the second and most voluminous part of his gospel. For the rest of the book we see, God incarnate or "*God with skin on.*"

We no longer have to say with Moses, "...*show me your glory...*" (Ex 33:18).

Instead, John tells us that in Jesus, "*we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father*" (John 1:14)

"For in him," Paul writes, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

And Jesus tells us this is true –

John 14:8-9 - *Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."*⁹ *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*

Do you want to see God? Look at Jesus.

First: Jesus Proclaimed Himself to be the Savior. 14-17

After the birth, childhood, and temptation narratives, Jesus is now ready to begin his ministry. From the wilderness, he returns to Galilee, the county of his childhood.

1. Jesus lived in the power of God's Spirit. 14a

- He was conceived by the Spirit. 1:35
- He was baptized by the Holy Spirit. 3:22
- He was full of the Holy Spirit. 4:1

There is wildfire (our Pentecostal friends). But there is also real fire.

Matthew 3:11 - *"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

Jesus did not operate independently of the Father or Spirit but in perfect concert with them. No one has ever lived like Jesus.

2. Everyone recognized it. 14b-15

We don't know how long Jesus spent in this itinerant ministry throughout Galilee but eventually,

3. He returns to Nazareth, where he grew up. 16a
4. He followed his custom of synagogue attendance and read from the Prophets. 16b
5. He read from Isaiah and said he was the fulfilment. 21

Second: The Bible Claims He is the Savior. 18-19

Jews and Christians are people of the Book. The Bible has always been central to our personal growth and corporate gathering. In the Synagogue, there was often a reading from the Law and then from the Prophets. It was not uncommon for visiting rabbis/teachers to be invited to speak. (This is how Paul often spoke in synagogues throughout Asia and Europe).

Luke 24:27 - And beginning with Moses [the Law] and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

On this occasion, Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2a.

So long before he walked the Emmaus Road with two disciples, Jesus demonstrated how the prophets foretold and pointed to him.

This passage in Isaiah details the year of Jubilee which occurred every 50 years.

Leviticus 25:10 - And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you...

- Restoration - Land was returned to its original owner.
- Redemption - Slaves were freed from servitude.
- Debtors were released from obligations.

But Isaiah's prophecy dealt with the jubilee to end all jubilees.

Israel should have recognized this as a prophecy about the Messiah because that's the meaning of "anointed" (4:18) = Christ, the Messiah. This prophecy gave them hope that one day the Messiah would come and do for them what the Year of Jubilee only foreshadowed.

- a) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.
- b) He has anointed me.
- c) To proclaim good news to the poor.

Jesus says the Gospel is for four people:

- Poor
- Captive
- Blind
- Oppressed

Isn't the Gospel for wealthy people also? Yes.

V 25-27 – The widow of Zarephath were financially impoverished but Naaman the Syrian was very wealthy. But neither could afford what God did for them.

Poverty isn't a golden key to God's kingdom and wealth doesn't slam the door. But those with little earthly treasure often put their hope in God, and the rich often have no desire for heaven.

Jesus came to give the poor and the rich something money can't buy; forgiveness and treasures in Heaven.

- d) To proclaim liberty to the captives.

"Captives" = aichmalotois = prisoners of war

Practically speaking, these were Jews who sold themselves into slavery to pay debts.

"Liberty" (x2) = aphesis = send away as in to release.

- e) To recover the sight of the blind.

In Luke 18, Jesus restores a blind man's sight but that is a limited blessing. Physical sight is nothing compared to seeing grace. Jesus came to help us see our sin. He came to help us see Him. Luke repeatedly uses this concept in his writing.

Acts 26:17b-18 - *...I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their [Gentile] eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.*

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- f) To set at liberty those who are oppressed.
- g) To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

The gospel is for our poverty, bondage, blindness, and oppression. There is a sense in which Jesus's plan is to create a new community with unique and attractive values but the gospel without spiritual salvation is not really good news in the best sense of the word. Some people may have one or more of each of these temporal needs, but the universal need is salvation from sin.

Third: People Refused to Acknowledge Him as the Messiah 22

V 20-21 – When Jesus finished reading, he rolled up the scroll, returned it and sat down. When everyone looked toward him, he said, *"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"* (21).

What was he saying? He was the anointed one, the Christ, the Messiah, the fulfilment of the Jubilee.

- a) They all spoke well of him. 22a
- b) They marveled at his word. 22b
- c) They were impressed he was Joseph's son. 22c

There are many people who think of Jesus as a good teacher, moral person, etc., but that is not what Jesus was claiming about himself. There are many people who say the disciples made Jesus a God. But Jesus is claiming 'Godness' for himself in this text. (See **Wed, Mar 20th** devotion for application of this)

And he wasn't Joseph's son.

Luke 1:31 - *...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*"

Luke 2:48b-49 - *"Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."⁴⁹ And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"*

The Jews in the synagogue that day did not 'see' Jesus as the Messiah. They treated him as one of their own, as though he was human but not the God-human. This was Esau's sin.

Genesis 25:29-34 - *Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted.³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.)³¹ Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now."³² Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?"³³ Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

The "thus" tells us "how" and "why" Jacob despised his birthright.

"Despise" = *to hold in contempt, to value as worthless.* He didn't think his birthright was worth more than a bowl of lentil stew.

Hebrews 12:15-17 - *See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;¹⁶ that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal.¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.*

What was Esau's real sin? He profaned the holy by valuing his birthright as menial as a meal. He profaned the holy.

This is what the people of Nazareth are about to do with Jesus. It's what many people of his day did. They didn't "see" him for who he was or "value" him as the Messiah.

And their rejection wasn't just verbal or emotional but physical. They tried to kill him – 29.

This is what sends people to Hell.

It's very interesting because one aspect of Jesus's ministry was to give blind people their sight (v 18e).

Fourth: Jesus's Ministry is for Those Who See. 23-29

Rather than meet people's demands, Jesus demands we receive him on his terms or not at all. Jesus came as a lamb but will return as a Lion. (See **Thurs, Mar 21st** devotion about this).

Psalm 2

The Nazarites reject Jesus as the Messiah, and he demonstrates that

- a) this is consistent with how Israel has often treated God's prophets.
- b) The gospel is always and only for those willing to accept it.

V 25 – Elijah and the widow of Zarephath – 1 Kings 17

- Zarephath is outside of Israel.
- The widow had to use the last bit of her flour to make Elijah a meal before her flour became unending.

V 27 – Elisha and Naaman – 2 Kings 5

- Naman was a Syrian, not a Jew.
- He had to dip himself 7 times in the Jordan River before he was healed.

What is Jesus doing? He is calling the people of Nazareth to believe on him and warning him that if they don't the gospel isn't for them, it's for those who are willing to believe it.

V 28-30 –

- Jesus wounded their ethnic pride – "We are the offspring of Abraham..."
- and their spiritual pride. "...and we have never been enslaved to anyone."

John 8:31-33 - *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone.*

We face the same responses.

"We are Americans and Christians."

"Are you saying I'm not a Christian?"

As far as we know, this is the last time Jesus ever visited Nazareth.

By starting his ministry in Nazareth, he has done the same thing he has told the disciples to do

Matthew 10:12-15 - *As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.*

Acts 1:8 - *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Conclusion:

This, friends, is the Gospel according to Jesus.

- a) The Gospel is serious and somber. It is nothing to be toyed with. It is to be received on God's timetable as God presents it.

To treat it like it is any other news we can disregard is to place our souls in peril. Nor can we bargain with God.

Isaiah 61:1-2b - *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God.*

- b) If Jesus needed to minister in the Spirit, we certainly do. Why? Unbelievers face a spiritual blindness only the Spirit of God can heal.

Community Groups:

- 1 – Read the text
- 2 – Review what's happened thus far in Luke.
- 3 – How has Luke built a foundation for Theophilus's faith so far?
- 4 – What did Jesus accomplish in the temptation?
- 5 – Where does he go after the temptation and where does this text take him?
- 6 – What OT text does Jesus read in the synagogue?
- 7 – Why do you think he chose this text?
- 8 – Talk about how Jesus fulfilled the Isaiah text?
- 9 – How did the Nazarites respond to Jesus's teaching?
- 10 – How did their response underestimate/misjudge who Jesus is?
- 11 – How might we undervalue spiritual things?
- 12 – Why does Jesus respond the way he does in vs 23-24?
- 13 – Why did he use the examples of the widow at Zarephath and Naaman?
- 14 – Why did his listeners respond so angrily?
- 15 – What is your personal takeaway from this text?

Daily Devotion

Mon, Mar 18th. Read Lk 4:14 & 23. How do you interpret "*the power of the Spirit?*" According to that verse, what did the Spirit enable Jesus to do? Verse 23 implies the Spirit also enabled Jesus to heal people in Capernaum. The Holy Spirit is one equal member of the Trinity. How do you relate to him? How might you, as Jesus did, rely more on the Holy Spirit to live the life of Jesus in you? Every day this week, talk to the Holy Spirit and surrender your life to his leading, empowering, etc. Do this every day this week and then look to see the difference in your life.

Tues, Mar 19th. Read Lk 4:18-19 & James 1:1-9. Read each of these phrases separately and slowly. How did Jesus do each of these five things. According to James, doing these things is one of the ways Jesus fulfilled God's law and proclaimed God's favor to all people. In other words, to disregard the poor, the captive, the blind or the oppressed is to break God's law. What are you doing to regard the poor, the captive, the blind and the oppressed? Take time this week to focus on one of these categories of people and devise a plan to minister to them regularly.

Wed, Mar 20th. Read Lk 4:20-22 & Hb 12:15-17. Why do you think the people in the synagogue reacted to Jesus this way? Do you know people who think of Jesus as a good teacher but no more? But here's the question....how is your life different from those who perceive Jesus only as a moral person and good teacher? How is your life marked by his 'Godness,' his Lordship? Where, right now, are you hesitant to surrender to God or just plain disobedient to the Bible. Our lives are meant to reflect our belief that Jesus is God. Confess any deviation from God's will for your life. Repent of it and make Jesus look like God in your life.

Thurs, Mar 21st. Read Lk 4:23-29 & Phil 4:10-13. The Nazarites demanded miraculous proof that Jesus was who he claimed to be. He responded this is how they treated the prophets before him and is one reason God sent Elijah and Elisha to Gentiles. Because Jesus was unwilling to satisfy their demands, they rejected him, even tried to kill him. What about you? Are you demanding of God? What if his will is different than yours? Can you be 'content' when God doesn't respond affirmatively to your prayer requests or God's will is different than yours? But if God is omniscient and omnibenevolent, (and he is) his will best for you...isn't it? Talk to God about this today and keep the conversation going.

Fri, Mar 22nd. Read Isaiah 61:1-2b & 2 Cor 5:9-10. Jesus stopped reading the Isaiah text before the sentence about "*the day of vengeance of our God...*" This is because he had only come as Savior in this advent. But he is returning again as Judge. Many people tend to live in the past when thinking about Jesus as Savior. But it's equally important that we look to the future in order to live the way we ought to live now. Jesus is also Judge. He is no more Savior than Judge and visa versa. So how about you? Does seeing Jesus as Judge alter your perception of him? What about your life? It should. Live today and every day with one eye on the Judgement Seat of Christ.