



Study Guide

Message:

“Reach: The Heart of Jesus”

SCRIPTURE

Main Text:	Cross References:
<i>Luke 4:14–19</i> <i>Matthew 9:35–38</i>	<i>Luke 4:1</i> <i>Isaiah 61:1-2</i>

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

*(This section focuses on understanding what the text means —
before jumping to what it means for us.)*

Read Luke 4:14–16

Main Idea: *Jesus begins His public ministry in the power of the Spirit with growing recognition.*

Commentary:

Luke emphasizes that Jesus returns to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit,” connecting His ministry directly to the Spirit’s empowerment (see *Luke 4:1, 14*). This is Spirit-driven mission.

The setting is significant. Jesus teaches in synagogues, established places of worship and instruction, and is initially well received. This creates a sense of expectation: Jesus is recognized as a teacher with authority.

His return to Nazareth, His hometown, introduces a layer of familiarity. Luke notes this was “*where he had been brought up,*” highlighting the tension between what people think they know about Jesus and who He truly is.

Discussion Question:

1. What does Luke emphasize about the source of Jesus’ ministry power?
2. Why is it significant that Jesus begins teaching in synagogues?
3. How might Jesus’ return to His hometown shape the expectations of those listening?

Takeaway:

Jesus’ ministry is Spirit-empowered and rooted in God’s initiative, not human recognition.

Read Luke 4:17–19

Main Idea: Jesus defines His mission through the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Commentary:

Jesus reads from **Isaiah 61:1–2**, a well-known messianic passage. By selecting and reading this text, Jesus is not simply teaching—He is making a claim about His identity and purpose.

The language is deeply layered:

- “Anointed” connects to the concept of Messiah (the Anointed One).
- “Good news to the poor” points to those who are spiritually and materially needy.
- “Freedom for prisoners” and “release for the oppressed” reflect liberation from bondage—not only physical, but spiritual.
- “Recovery of sight for the blind” includes both physical healing and spiritual illumination.
- “The year of the Lord’s favor” likely echoes Jubilee imagery (*Leviticus 25*), a time of release, restoration, and reset. Jesus presents His ministry as the arrival of that long-awaited restoration.

This is not a narrow mission—it is comprehensive. It addresses the effects of sin in both the physical and spiritual: sickness, brokenness, oppression, and separation from God.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the phrase “anointed” communicate about Jesus’ identity?
2. Who are the primary recipients of Jesus’ mission according to this passage?

3. How does this passage describe the scope of what Jesus came to do?

Takeaway:

Jesus' mission is to bring restoration, freedom, and good news to those in need—fulfilling God's redemptive promises.

Read Matthew 9:35

Main Idea: Jesus actively carries out His mission through teaching, proclaiming, and healing.

Commentary:

Matthew presents a summary of Jesus' ministry pattern:

- Teaching (instruction in truth)
- Proclaiming (announcement of the kingdom)
- Healing (demonstration of authority and compassion)

This verse shows that Jesus' mission is not theoretical—it is *embodied, lived out by Him*. The kingdom of God is not just spoken about; it is demonstrated through tangible acts of restoration.

The phrase “every disease and sickness” emphasizes the completeness of His authority. There is no category of brokenness outside His reach.

Discussion Questions:

1. What three activities define Jesus' ministry in this verse?
2. Why is it important that Jesus both teaches and heals?
3. What does this reveal about the nature of the kingdom of God?

Takeaway:

Jesus' mission is holistic— addressing mind, body, and soul.

Read Matthew 9:36

Main Idea: Jesus' ministry is driven by deep compassion for people in need.

Commentary:

The word “compassion” reflects a deep, internal response—commonly described as being *moved at the deepest emotional level*. This is not distant concern but personal, emotional engagement.

The description “harassed and helpless” suggests people who are burdened, vulnerable, and without direction. The imagery of “sheep without a shepherd” points to spiritual lostness and lack of leadership.

This reveals that Jesus does not see crowds as interruptions or numbers—but as people in need of care, guidance, and restoration.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the phrase “harassed and helpless” communicate about the condition of the people?
2. Why does Matthew use the imagery of sheep without a shepherd?
3. What does this verse reveal about Jesus' motivation for ministry?

Takeaway:

Jesus' mission flows from compassion toward people who are spiritually lost.

Read Matthew 9:37–38

Main Idea: Jesus calls His followers to participate in the mission through prayer and action.

Commentary:

The “harvest” is a metaphor for people who are ready to respond to God. The problem is not a lack of opportunity, but a lack of workers.

Jesus directs His disciples to pray—not because God is unaware, but because prayer aligns them with His mission. It also prepares them to become the answer to what they are asking.

There is a shift here: from observing Jesus’ ministry to participating in it.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus mean by “the harvest is plentiful”?
2. Why does He emphasize the need for workers?
3. What is the significance of being told to pray for workers?

Takeaway:

Jesus invites His followers to join His mission, beginning with prayer and moving in participation.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Jesus didn’t just come to accomplish a mission—He came to invite us into it.

Reflect honestly:

1. Are you more comfortable observing the mission of Jesus or participating in it?
 2. Do you see people around you the way Jesus does?
 3. What might be holding you back from stepping into the mission Jesus describes?
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LIVING IT OUT

Let the truth of Jesus' mission reshape your daily life in tangible ways:

- 1. Ask God to align your heart with His mission.**
Spend time in prayer asking God to give you His perspective on people—especially those who are hurting, overlooked, or distant from Him.
- 2. Pay attention to the people around you.**
Notice those who seem “harassed and helpless.” Look beyond surface-level interactions and recognize deeper needs.
- 3. Pray intentionally for specific people.**
Identify a few individuals in your life and consistently pray for them to experience hope, healing, and truth in Jesus.
- 4. Take a step toward someone.**
Initiate a conversation, show kindness, or simply be present. Small steps often open the door for meaningful impact.
- 5. Extend an invitation.**

Whether it's to church, a conversation, or an event—invite someone to take a step toward encountering Jesus.

6. Depend on the Spirit.

Just as Jesus ministered in the power of the Spirit, rely on God—not your own ability—as you step into His mission.

**These practices can help move the truth of this passage from something we understand to something that shapes the way we live.*

For LifeGroups:

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

Jesus' mission is not just something we admire—it's something we step into together.

Encourage each other in truth:

1. Remind each other that Jesus' mission is rooted in compassion, not performance.
2. Affirm that God uses ordinary people to accomplish His work.
3. Recenter on the truth that the Spirit empowers what God calls us to do.

Encourage each other in action:

1. Share names of people you're praying for and commit to praying together.

2. Talk about opportunities you've had (or missed) to engage others.

3. Celebrate even small steps of obedience.

Pray together:

1. Ask God to send workers into the harvest.

2. Ask God to use your group as part of the answer to that prayer.

3. Ask for boldness, compassion, and sensitivity to the Spirit's leading.