

Sunday, October 11, 2026 - IT IS WRITTEN, PART TWO - AN OPPORTUNE TIME- Pastor John Henry Raskin

The Bad News: Right after Jesus' victory against Satan in the wilderness in Luke 4, the enemy launches his next attempt to thwart the Son of Man. Just a few verses later, in a synagogue in Nazareth, the enemy finds a "*kairos*"—a strategic opening—to turn pride, fear, and Scripture taken out of context against Christ's mission.

The Good News: Because of Jesus' victory over sin and death. His Holy Spirit gives the church its own "*Kairos*": every opportunity to do good, extend mercy, and welcome the outsider.

Key Texts

Luke 4:13: "He departed from Him until an opportune time." • **Luke 4:18–19:** Good news to the poor; healing for the brokenhearted; liberty for captives and the oppressed; the Lord's favor. • **Galatians 6:10:** "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all."

The Message

1. The enemy waits for an opening. After failing to tempt Jesus directly in the wilderness, Satan's next opportunity comes in Nazareth—through Scripture-loving people whose pride resists God's mercy.
2. Jesus announces His mission. Reading Isaiah 61, He proclaims present-tense good news for the poor, brokenhearted, captive, blind, and oppressed. He stops before "the day of vengeance": mercy is the church's work; vengeance belongs to God and to God's time.
3. Grace crosses our boundaries. The widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian show that God's mercy reaches foreigners and enemies. Israel was chosen not to build a wall, but to become a blessing to all nations.
4. Pride can weaponize Scripture. The Nazareth crowd knew the Bible but resisted its purpose. When "God chose us" becomes "God chose only us," entitlement replaces service and fear can turn open hands into fists.
5. True hearing produces mercy. Jesus clears the Court of the Gentiles because God's house is for all nations. Paul receives Onesimus as a brother and offers to carry his debt. The Word rightly understood moves us toward captives, strangers, widows, orphans, and the poor.

A Test for Every Teaching

Jesus says, "By their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:20). Ask: Does this teaching make me more merciful or more afraid? More gracious or more angry? More generous or more suspicious? Does it send me toward Christ and love for the poor and the foreigner, or toward a marketplace where someone profits from fear?

The Enemy's Kairos	The Church's Kairos
Pride • fear • anger • exclusion • Scripture isolated from God's whole purpose	Humility • mercy • courage • welcoming • Scripture fulfilled through Spirit-led love

This Week: Recognize the Opportunity

A stranger needs welcome. A poor family needs a meal. A prisoner—or a prisoner's family—needs a friend. A neighbor needs grace. Each is a *kairos*: an opportunity to let the Spirit use our hands for good. "Let us not grow weary while doing good" (Galatians 6:9).

Daily Prayer

Today, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me as it was upon You, Lord Jesus. Bless me to be a blessing to the poor, the lost, and the stranger at every opportune time. Amen.

IT IS WRITTEN PART TWO – AN OPPORTUNE TIME

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we stood with Jesus in the wilderness in the Gospel of Matthew.

We watched Him answer the enemy three times with the same eternal words: It is written.

We left Him with the devil in retreat and angels at His side.

Then we touched briefly on the last line of Luke's account of the same scenario, and that is where I want to begin this morning.

Luke 4:13 - Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

The Greek word that Luke uses here for an opportune time is "Kairos".

Not the ticking of the clock, which is "chronos", but a word that means the right moment, the strategic opening, the window to act.

Luke tells us that Satan did not quit. He went to wait for a "Kairos"

So here is my question for us this morning.

When and where did the devil find his Kairos and how did he use it?

As for when, he found it much sooner than we would expect.

If you read on in the Gospel of Luke, the answer may surprise you.

Satan's next kairos appears in the same chapter as Jesus victorious testing.

The next kairos occurs only a couple of verses later, in a synagogue, on the Sabbath, in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.

That is the when and the where.

The how, is through God's people.

Satan decided that if He couldn't seduce the Son of Man directly, he would try to get to Him through the people He came to save.

In the synagogue, Jesus is surrounded by people who love the Scriptures, who had memorized the Scriptures, and who had been waiting their whole lives for the Messiah that the Scriptures promised.

Last week, the lesson was that we can resist the devil with the Word of God. This week the lesson is much harder.

It is that God's people can hold the Word in their hands, and even in their minds and still end up on the wrong side of the Word's intended purpose.

So, let's continue in Luke chapter 4, and let's ask not only what does the Scripture say? But how does it fit into the intended purpose of the whole Word of God?

Luke 4:14 -19 - Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. 16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. 17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

18 The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of

sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

So here He is. The Son of God, fresh from the wilderness, having withstood all the temptations of the devil, and He is standing with the scroll of Isaiah in His hands.

And of all the passages in the Hebrew Scriptures, He unrolls it to Isaiah 61.

Having read it, He rolls the scroll back up and sits down.

And as every eye in the room is fixed on Him, He says:

“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing”.

The people in the synagogue are now thinking “this is getting good”. They have all heard about Jesus and the miracles and the rumors of Messiah.

Now I want you to notice a few things.

First, notice who this Messiah says He has come for.

He never says a word about the temple, or the Jews, or putting together an army to overthrow the oppressor Rome.

Jesus’ list of priorities, His PURPOSE as prophesied by the Prophet Isaiah,

are the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed.

He is saying that TODAY this prophecy IS fulfilled.

He is describing the literal Jubilee of Leviticus 25 brought to its fulfillment, the year when debts were to be forgiven, slaves set free, and land returned to the families who had lost it.

The year of Jubilee was God's command to Israel lest the people begin to put self over service.

The last line that Jesus reads in Isaiah 61 is this...

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

I want you to notice where Jesus stops reading, because the next line of the scripture He is quoting in Isaiah is important and even more important that He leaves it out:

Isaiah 61a,b- To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God;

Jesus read the first half of the sentence, but He closed the scroll before reading the second.

He was telling His hometown crowd that the Messiah's appearance on earth had inaugurated the year of the Lord's favor, and for whom.

But in omitting the second part of the scripture, He is telling us that the day of vengeance belongs to His return.

I want to say this carefully...

Jesus is not cutting out or manipulating Scripture the way the devil did.

Jesus is its Author, and He is showing us the perfect order of His work.

His work, (hear this beloved) OUR work is to set the captives free and care for the broken and poor among us.

Vengeance belongs to Him and Him alone and in HIS time, not ours.

But now let's think about what His audience, an occupied Jewish people in Roman Galilee wanted to hear.

Many in that room, filled with religious pride, were longing for Him to read the second half of that sentence.

Vengeance on Rome. Vengeance on the Gentiles. Vengeance on those undeserving of mercy.

Vengeance on the people who were keeping them down when they should be ruling at the top of the heap.

And here is Jesus preaching mercy to the poor and grace to the broken.

And notice that Jesus says “**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing**”.

Jesus is telling them that, Isaiah’s prophetic words, were not an idea to be fulfilled on some final future day.

He said it is fulfilled today. And flock... It Stands Written.

He was telling them, and us, that the Word of God is not a museum piece fixed and static.

It is a living Word with a mission, and the mission has a clear direction.

The Word of God is directed toward the people who are at the bottom: the poor, the captives, the broken, the stranger.

When we pick up the Scriptures, we are being given that mission.

The synagogue crowd however, didn’t want to hear that, however impressed they might have been with the speaker.

Luke 4:22 - So all bore witness to Him and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

The room is still warm. They are proud of the local boy, if a bit skeptical about His claim to be Messiah.

Now, if Jesus had stopped there, He might have still been the hit of the Nazareth synagogue.

But Jesus does not stop there.

Because He knows what is in them, that they want Him to perform the miracles that they had heard He performed in Capernaum with the key word here being “perform”.

But Jesus has already been tested, and He knows their hearts. No miracles are forthcoming for them.

And then He says something that, to every devout Jewish person in that room, in their national pride, would have sounded like an insult.

He picks two stories from Scripture, stories they knew well, but He tells them in a way they had never heard.

Luke 4:25-27 - But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

Let’s stop and explore the two stories Jesus selected.

Jesus has just named two people in Israel’s own scriptural history, who received miracles and were the focus of God’s grace, and they were both outsiders.

First there is the widow of Zarephath. You can find her in 1 Kings.

The city of Zarephath was in Sidon, in a region which was experiencing severe drought and famine.

1 Kings 16:31 tells us that Ahab, the King of Israel married “Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians” and then went and served Baal and worshiped him.

Not Israel’s proudest moment.

Jezebel was an evil idolatrous Queen who wanted to destroy all of the true Prophets of the Lord, including and especially Elijah.

Nevertheless, the Lord sends Elijah to Zarephath, the hometown of the very queen who is hunting him.

And to whom does God send Elijah?

To a Sidonian widow, in famine, gathering a couple of sticks to cook her last meal for herself and her son, expecting to eat it and die.

She is desperately poor. She is a foreigner. She has almost nothing, but she is willing to share what little she has, at the request of the man of God.

The Prophet of Israel is fed by a Sidonian woman with her last handful of flour which the Lord miraculously multiplies because she is willing to share it with the Prophet in faith.

Then there is Naaman. 2 Kings Chapter 5 introduces him as the commander of the army of the king of Syria, “a great man” but “a leper”.

Syria was a hated enemy of Israel.

2 Kings 5:2 tells us that the Syrians had gone out on raids and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel, who was made to be a slave to Naaman's wife."

She is a child, taken in a raid, in a foreign land, in service to the family of the very man who had destroyed her people.

She has every reason to hate him. And yet she says to Naaman's wife...

"If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would heal him of his leprosy."

The one person in that house with every reason for bitterness is the one who carries the way to healing for one who should be her enemy.

And then there is Naaman himself: the cruel, proud and cunning commander of an enemy army.

When Naaman appears at the Prophet Elisha's door with his entourage, Elisha does not even come out to meet him.

He sends out his servant who tells him to go wash in the Jordan.

At first Naaman flies into a prideful rage, and then his servant talks him down, he humbles himself, obeys the Prophet and he is healed.

As an important sidenote, Naaman also becomes a believer in the God of Israel in the process.

And here in the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus says: out of all the lepers in Israel, this is the one God cleansed.

Now I want you to hear what Jesus is doing.

He is saying to a synagogue full of ethnically proud Hebrew Scripture-lovers: you know your Bible, but you have missed the whole point.

You are about to see that the God of your Bible has always had a heart for the poor, the foreigner, the captive, and the enemy, and that He has always desired to extend His mercy further than the barriers that you have built.

Now we see that this is the devil's Kairos... his opportune moment.

Luke 4:28-29 - 28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.

His own people want to throw Jesus down to His death.

A few verses ago on the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, the devil said, "Throw Yourself down."

Now, His hometown congregation tries to achieve what the devil could not.

Church, I am not saying the people of Nazareth were demons or even that they were more evil than most.

They were merely operating under a misconception that was the result of their own pride and bad teaching.

This is something that we should consider very seriously.

The same enemy who could not trip Jesus up with scripture found the opportune time in a roomful of people who loved God, loved scripture, and what he used was their national pride.

They were not enraged because Jesus said He was the Messiah.

They were enraged because He said God's mercy should go to the people they had decided should be outside of it.

Then Luke adds:

Luke 4:30 - Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

The enemy could not use God's chosen people in the synagogue in Nazareth to push God's beloved Son, the Word Himself, off a cliff, because it wasn't His time.

But he did use those same people to choose the rebel Barabbas to be set free and cry out for Jesus to be crucified three years later.

The enemy couldn't use God's people to push Jesus off the cliff in Luke Chapter 4 because His mission was not yet accomplished.

But can he use God's people in the church today to push Jesus and His mission away before they accomplish theirs?

Here is the question this passage forces on us.

How do people who know their Bibles so well end up this angry at the commands and purposes of the God of their Bibles?

I believe the answer is that they read a scriptural truth out of context and in isolation without considering the overarching narrative.

It's one of Satan's tricks that we saw last week.

To them, the scriptural truth was this: God had made a covenant with Israel out of all the nations of the earth.

They thought... We are the Chosen.

And it's true... God did choose them. That is wonderful and it is entirely biblical.

But somewhere along the way, “God chose us”, became “God chose only us,” and “God chose us to be a blessing for the nations” disappeared altogether.

Let’s go back to the beginning of the scripture about the covenant with Abraham.

In Genesis 12:3, God said to Abraham: “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

The calling was never supposed to be a wall; it was supposed to be a window into God’s grace and mercy.

Israel was chosen to be the people through whom all the nations would be blessed.

Caring for the foreigner among them was a part of the deal.

When the Israelites left Egypt, Exodus 12:38 tells us that “a mixed multitude went up with them also.”

Foreigners, aliens, strangers were there among the people at the Exodus.

Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabite both appear in the genealogy of the Messiah, in Matthew Chapter 1.

The physical line of Jesus Himself runs through foreigners.

And yet, God’s chosen people consistently forget WHY they were chosen.

To bless, not to curse. To show God’s loving, merciful and ultimately good nature to the unbelieving world.

Even a Prophet, Jonah, the one who ran, like some Christians today, was angry about God’s mercy.

Listen to his reason for running from his mission to Nineveh in Jonah 4:2: **“I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness.”**

He says that, like it is a problem.

He knew God’s character was so merciful that Nineveh, a brutal enemy empire, might actually be forgiven if they would repent. And it enraged him.

Sound familiar?

It’s the same spirit we meet in Nazareth in Luke Chapter 4.

The hardest thing for some religious people to accept is not that God is holy.

It is that God is merciful to people they’ve decided don’t deserve it.

I’ve recently heard people use Jesus turning the tables over in the temple as an excuse for using anger and violence as a generic answer to what they consider to be unlawful.

But let’s look at the scriptural reason Jesus carries this out this part of His mission.

In Mark Chapter 11, He enters the temple and drives out the money changers and those who bought and sold sacrifices.

And what does He say?

Mark 11:17 - 7 Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’

There is that phrase again.

“Is it not written?” Jesus is using the same formula we saw last week against Satan’s lie... The Greek word Geg-RAP-tie.

He is saying that it stands written, or it is “perpetually true” but now He is using it to defend the foreigner against His own religious people.

Here is the historical background.

The temple had a large outer area called the Court of the Gentiles. It was the only place a non-Jewish worshiper could come to pray to the God of Israel. It was a sanctuary set aside for foreigners.

But in the days of Jesus, that space had been appropriated and was being used for commerce, for the profit of the priestly establishment.

The very place God had set aside for the foreigner to meet Him had been turned into a marketplace, and a crooked one at that.

When He speaks, Jesus is quoting Isaiah 56:7, wherein God says, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”. And then He quotes Jeremiah...

Jeremiah 7:11 - Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” says the Lord.

The Religious leaders had been profiting from the very people they were meant to shepherd in the very space God designed to welcome the outsider.

The foreigner was pushed aside while the flock was fleeced.

And this is how it happens to some of us.

We start out as new believers, grateful for God’s Grace, to be in Christ, among God’s chosen people.

We clean up our lives with the power of God's Spirit directing us.

But if we don't remain humble and grateful... pride, fear and anger creep in at an opportune time.

Through bad teaching, relationship with God can become religion and gratitude slowly erodes into self-congratulation.

Then the enemy plants the desire to use scripture out of context to defend the walls we are building to protect whatever US we have decided we are.

Meanwhile, someone profits from our fear, because fear sells, and the Scriptures that were meant to open our hands are used to close them into fists.

Jesus' answer and the corrective posture to that attitude is same the one He gave the Pharisees.

Matthew 9:13: “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’”

When Jesus says, “Go and learn”, that is not an insult.

That is an invitation to go back to the whole Bible and read it again with a softened heart.

So, what does it look like when a person has truly heard and understood God's Word and lets it do its intended work?

Let's go to one of the shortest and most overlooked books in the New Testament: Philemon.

It is one chapter, written by a man in chains, the Apostle Paul.

He opens his letter, “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus” (v. 1).

He is writing to Philemon, a Christian slave owner in Colossae, about a man named Onesimus, a slave who had run away.

Under Roman law, a runaway slave could be branded, beaten, or even killed. At the very least, the Roman Law was to return a runaway slave to his owner.

As God would have it, Paul met this fugitive Onesimus in prison and led him to Christ.

Paul says to Philemon in verse 10, “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains.”

Paul is a prisoner, pleading for a fugitive who is the legal property of a wealthy brother in Christ’s.

Now listen to Paul’s humble request...

Philemon 15-16 - 15 For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Paul does not tell Philemon, “Onesimus broke the law, so you deal with him as you have the right to do”.

Paul asks him: ‘receive him as you would receive me’ in verse 17.

He even offers to pay whatever Onesimus owes: saying “put that on my account”, in verse 18.

Here Paul does not ignore the Law of Rome, he acknowledges that something is owed Philemon,

but as a follower of Jesus and a brother in Christ he is willing to pay the price of Onesimus’ freedom according to the Law of the Kingdom.

Paul, the prisoner of Christ, stands with the runaway slave. The apostle takes on the debt of a stranger.

Beloved family, that is the gospel.

Because here is what Paul knows...

He knows what it is to be a man who deserved nothing, whom Christ received, whose debt Christ took on Himself.

When the word of Isaiah 61 spoken by Jesus Himself, has come to rest on you, you cannot look at a captive, a stranger, or a debtor without remembering who you were.

Jesus says the same thing in Matthew: **“I was a stranger and you took Me in; ... I was in prison and you came to Me.”**

And the writer of Hebrews admonishes us...

Hebrews 13:1-3 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. 3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

The first-century church did not first decide whether the stranger had the right papers, or whether the prisoner had a good enough story.

They saw a person for whom Christ died.

The people of Nazareth had heard the Word read to them every Sabbath of their lives.

They knew the Law and they knew the Prophets. They were the chosen. Entitled and proud of it.

But what they could not bear was for the Word to change their hearts or demand something FROM them.

The Law and the Prophets all pointed toward mercy and grace, not entitlement or national pride.

The Gospels and all of the New Testament tell us the same thing.

James 1:27- Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Notice who is on the list. Orphans and widows, which is to say the people who have no one.

Isaiah, Jesus and James all keep pointing to the same people.

Now I need to say something about teachers, because we cannot avoid it.

Jesus says in...

Matthew 7:15 - Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

And two verses later He gives us the litmus test:

Matthew 7:20 – Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.

Not by their popularity or the number of seats they fill.

Not by their political platform.

Not even by their knowledge of scripture.

By their fruits.

We should ask of any voice that we allow to shape us:

Does this teaching make me more merciful or more afraid?

Does it make me more gracious or more angry?

Does it make me more generous or more suspicious of my neighbor?
Does it send me toward Christ and give me love for the poor, and the foreigner or does it send me to a marketplace where someone profits from my fear and my anger?

I said it last week and I will say it again here.

There are wolves among us.

Some of us are well-meaning Christians who have been fed a diet of many verses without much Jesus.

By the grace of God, that will never happen here.

Remember where we began this message: the devil departed until a “Kairos”, an opportune time.

He waited for his moment with Jesus, and he still waits for his moment with us

But here is a word of hopeful encouragement...

Now listen to how Paul uses the same word, “Kairos” in his letter to the Galatian church:

Galatians 6:10 - Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Do you hear it? The word for opportunity here is the same word: kairos. As we have an opportune time to do good.

The enemy has his opportune time... And because Jesus won His battle, now, so do we.

Every time a stranger needs a welcome or a defender, every time a poor family needs a meal, every time a prisoner or a family of a prisoner needs a friend, that is a kairos handed to the church.

Paul said this to believers.

Galatians 6:7-9 - 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Every Kairos is a moment either to let the enemy use our human pride for evil or to let the Spirit of the Lord, who is upon us, as He was upon Christ, use our hands for good.

So please, let this be your daily prayer this week.

Today, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me as it was upon You Lord Jesus. Bless me to be a blessing to the poor, the lost, and the stranger at every opportune time. Amen.

And if you have never trusted in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, please hear this.

The One who came to proclaim liberty to the captives came for you. If you are the stranger who still needs to be brought in. He is inviting you to come home.

He stands at the door even now desiring for you to open it and come in. Let's pray.