

CALLED TO PROCLAIM

Bible Background – LUKE 4

Printed Text – LUKE 4:14-22

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁴ Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region.

¹⁵ He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures.

¹⁷ The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that

captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free,

¹⁹ and that the time of the LORD's favor has come."

²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently.

²¹ Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

²² Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

People today are looking for peace in their lives and, as Christians, we know that Jesus is the answer they seek. As believers, we are called to extend a hand to those who hurt and do not know Him. As a community, we are called to preach the Gospel to the poor; to preach deliverance to prisoners; help the blind to see; and to set the oppressed free. We are commissioned to align our faith response with Jesus' call and mission.

Background: At the age of thirty, Jesus submitted Himself to baptism as a sign of obedience and to initiate His public ministry, even though He was without sin. Following His baptism, the Holy Ghost led Him into the wilderness, where He endured forty days and nights of fasting and isolation. This was a period of physical weakness but spiritual strength. Three times Satan tried to tempt Jesus, making Him offers that might appeal to His humanness. But in His divine nature, Jesus endured this period and refused the devil's temptations. Luke 4:1 says that it was the Spirit that gave Jesus the victory over Satan in the wilderness and led Him to Galilee. There, He was able to teach in the synagogues and He was well received, gaining popularity among the people there. Jesus was glorified by all those around Him. The accolades Jesus

received in Galilee did not represent the true glory of Jesus, which was to come. Still, Jesus' ministry began and ended with Him being glorified.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 215

Returning by the Spirit

Luke 4:41-17: By this point, Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist, led into the wilderness by the Spirit where the devil tempted Him for forty days (4:1-13). Having overcome the temptations of the devil by the power of Holy Spirit, Jesus now returns to the region of Galilee where He begins His ministry (Matthew 4:12). He is about thirty years old (Luke 3:23) which is the age that priests begin their duties according to Jewish law (Numbers 4:23; 1 Chronicles 23:3). In the “power of the Spirit” He returned to Galilee, ministering, and his fame spread throughout the region.

Galilee was a fertile area which was able to support as many as three million people. It was also surrounded by non-Jewish nations. The people in the region were therefore exposed to diverse ideologies and were open to new ideas. The Jewish historian Josephus stated that some of these persons were bold in putting forth these ideas and many became leaders of rebellions. God planted His Son in an area in which people would at least be open to hearing Him.

Jesus returned to his hometown of Nazareth which was a small, isolated village in the southern part of Galilee. This is where He spent His boyhood. Raised by devout Jewish parents, He had developed the practice of attending the synagogue on the Sabbath day. After offering prayer, it was customary during a synagogue service for seven people to read from the Scriptures: a priest, a Levite, and five ordinary Jews. So, it was not necessarily unusual for Jesus to read during the service. He was handed the substantially large scroll on which the entire book of the prophet Isaiah was written and from there, He read.

The Spirit is Upon Me

Luke 4:18-19: Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 and included a single phrase from 58:6. As was customary, He probably read in Hebrew and translated into Aramaic, the common language of that time. Jesus read that “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” indicating that He is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. He identified Himself as the subject of Isaiah’s prophecy; that the anointing (Gk. *chrio*) is upon Him. The Old Testament prophets talked about God bringing in a new era of justice, righteousness, and peace and Jesus understood that this was His mission—to preach the Good News to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the oppressed.

Scripture Fulfilled

Luke 4:20-22: After reading the Scripture, Jesus rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the administrator of the Synagogue and, as was customary, sat down, and prepared to preach or expound on the passage of scripture He had just read. All eyes were on Him in expectation of the sermon He would give. Luke does not record the entire sermon but a summary as Jesus “began” to teach them of the fulfillment of the scripture. Jesus declares to them that the words He has read to them have finally been fulfilled in

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their presence. He states that He is the Anointed One of God spoken of in the Old Testament and that He was sent to proclaim the Messianic age. This age, ushered in by His presence is a time that God has planned to grant salvation to all types of people.

Initially, the people reacted with wonder and amazement at the gracious words they heard from Jesus. They were startled at His claim and that He spoke with such authority. They were in awe of what He had spoken, but still reflected on His background and family. They must of thought to themselves that how could the son of a poor carpenter, a man of the community whom they had known his entire life be what He had just claimed. Apparently some were so outraged and their awe turned to violent anger, for at the end of His sermon some were ready to throw Jesus off a cliff (Luke 28-30).

Conclusion

The impact of the message of Jesus' inaugural sermon in the synagogue was startling to those who first heard His proclamation. As believers, we should frequently consider His pronouncement at Nazareth and its significance to our faith. Does our response align with His stated mission to meet the physical needs of those who are victims of systems of oppression? Do we do what we can to help meet people's spiritual need for hope and salvation? Through His earthly ministry, Jesus served as an example of how to do the work that He inaugurated in this first sermon. And as Christians, He has anointed us with the Holy Spirit to continue this work until He returns.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Love For One Another. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 211-221. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.
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Lesson for Next Week – January 10, 2021 – Study Guide 6

CALLED TO SIGNIFICANCE

Bible Background ♦ LUKE 5:1-11

Printed Text ♦ LUKE 5:1-11

Devotional Reading ♦ LUKE 9:57-62

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Called to Lead Israelites from Egypt
(Exodus 3:1-12)

TUESDAY

Called to Deliver Israelites from Midianites
(Judges 6:11-16)

WEDNESDAY

Called and Cleansed for Ministry
(Isaiah 6:1-8)

THURSDAY

Single-Mindedness Required to Follow Jesus
(Luke 9:57-62)

FRIDAY

Repentance, Goal of God's Kindness
(Romans 2:1-11)

SATURDAY

Jesus Calls Peter to Ministry
(John 21:15-19)

SUNDAY

Don't Be Afraid to Catch People
(Luke 5:1-11)