

Tommy Meador / General

Luke / Luke 4:14–30

Introduction

- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/christmas-lung-cancer-message_n_63afe91ee4b0d6f0b9f3e837 - Chaos created by receiving the wrong message.
- Jesus - came bringing the right message - but we live in chaos because we fail to embrace the right message.
- In [Luke 4:14-30](#), the first recorded sermon of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke - the first time in Luke's Gospel that we hear from Jesus since He has begun His ministry and His first message in Luke's Gospel clearly explains why Jesus came.
- His message caused a struggle in the hearts of those who gathered to hear His message. The people gathered to hear Jesus' message rejected His message. They refused to believe.
- Jesus' message might cause a struggle in your heart as well. If you find yourself struggling in your faith this morning, it may be because you have failed to fully embrace the message of Jesus in your life.
- Some of you this morning know you're struggling in your faith, I think this passage might help you to see WHY you struggle in your faith. I think this passage will also help you to see HOW you can overcome that struggle.
- This morning, two truths that you have to understand if you are going to overcome your struggling faith and embrace the message of Jesus.

You'll struggle in your faith until you see yourself as Jesus sees you.

- First part of Luke's Gospel details Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Second part of Luke's Gospel - starting at the end of [Luke 9](#) - details Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem - and ultimately His death.
- vs. 14-15 - returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Preaching in various synagogues - Jesus is gaining popularity as He announces His Kingdom.
- Comes to His hometown - Nazareth - and on the sabbath enters the synagogue.
- Nazareth = a place where everyone knows your name. Population of about 500 in the days of Jesus. (76,000 today.) The people of Nazareth watched Jesus grow up. Now, Jesus is back. He's popular. The town is buzzing because they know Jesus has been preaching in Galilee.
- Synagogue - central to the life of first century Judaism. Synagogue functioned as a community center - and a place where children were educated. Also served as a place of worship.
- When you entered synagogue, you sat in the round. The men separated from the women, and you were assigned a place to sit based on rank and importance in your community. At the center of worship in the synagogue was the Word of God - the Torah was expounded - and then the writings and prophets. The Torah chest - where the scrolls of the Torah were kept - and then the prophets. Whoever read the Scripture, read standing up, and then sat down to give a word of explanation.
- Each synagogue had a "ruler." A man in the community who was usually well off, well known, and well respected. He made sure that the synagogue was cared for and selected men to lead in the teaching of the Scripture.
- On this day, Jesus has the responsibility of reading from the Prophet Isaiah - the scroll is given to him (vs. 17), and Jesus took the scroll and found [Isaiah 61:1-2](#). Jesus could have read any Scripture from Isaiah - He could have read [Is. 53](#). BUT... He reads [Is. 61:1-2](#). AND He stops reading mid-sentence. HE doesn't read the rest of verse 2... "And the day of our God's vengeance." Judgment coming later - but right now - in this moment - **Jesus has come to bring God's favor.**

- “The year of the Lord’s Favor...” Reference to year of Jubilee? ([Lev. 25](#)) Every 50 years, all debts forgiven, all slaves released. All prisoners set free. No recording in Scripture that Israelites ever celebrated a year of Jubilee, but Jesus, in quoting this verse, saying, “I am the ONE who is bringing the GREAT RESET.”
- After Jesus reads, He sits down. All eyes on Jesus. What will His message be? One sentence: *“Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled” (vs. 21).*
- [Is. 61:1-2](#) is about Jesus. He is the ONE who has come for the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. He is the ONE who has come to bring Jubilee. Jesus’ first message recorded in the Book of Luke, and Jesus says, “I am the Messiah who has come to deliver you.”
- AND that’s what the people in the crowd were - poor, captive, blind, and oppressed. BUT, did they know that? In a sense. They knew that they were being bullied by Rome. They knew tax collectors were taking their money. They knew political oppression, but Jesus is talking about something far more than oppression from Rome. Did they know their spiritual oppression? Did they know that Jesus had come to deliver them from something far greater than Rome; sin and death?
- No. They were children of Abraham. In their minds, they were good with God but not good with Rome. Jesus came to show these Israelites, and us, our true condition - and it’s far worse than we can imagine.
- **You will struggle in your faith until you see yourself as Jesus sees you.**
- **How do I see myself?**
 - Mistreated (How the Jews saw themselves when thinking about Roman oppression.)
 - Self-sufficient (I am able.)
 - Proven (Look at who I am, what I’m done.)
 - Deserving (Because of what I’ve done, God owes me. This world owes me. People owe me.)
 - Or... you see yourself as:

- Lonely (No one cares)
- Unlovable (Because of what I've done, I will never have healthy relationships.)
- Failure (I can't)
- You have a view of yourself - and if you don't see yourself as God sees you, you will struggle in your faith.
- **How does Jesus see me?**
 - Jesus sees you as someone who is absolutely wrecked by sin. He sees your pride. He also sees your self-loathing. Jesus sees how sin has absolutely wrecked your life and Jesus knows you don't see yourself as He does.
 - Jesus sees you as someone who is poor (desperate need for Him). He sees you as a captive (enslaved to sin). He sees you as someone who is blind (can't see the truth about God without His help). He sees you as someone who is oppressed (sin weighs you down.)
 - There is no part of your life that sin has not affected. Because we are often blinded to our own sin, we fail to see that sin is the greatest problem that we have in our lives.
 - You will always struggle in your faith when you fail to see sin as the biggest problem that you have in your life.

You'll struggle in your faith until you fully embrace Jesus' Word.

- At first, the people respond positively. Amazed by His one sentence sermon. "Isn't this Joseph's son? How can Joseph's son talk with such authority? This is the same guy that built my kitchen table."
- However, Jesus knows their hearts. Jesus knows that their initial amazement will turn to disbelief. Jesus knows they will demand more. Jesus knows they won't believe HIS Word. Jesus, the Great Prophet, His message not accepted in His hometown.

- vs. 23 - 24 - “You want more than my word. You want miracles like I did in Capernaum. You are amazed at my word, but you won’t take me at my word.” The people wanted Jesus to PROVE His Word, but they didn’t want to TRUST His Word without proof. (Physician save yourself - physicians not trusted in those days. “Show me you can save me by taking the cure for yourself first...”)
- What Jesus does next infuriates those who heard his message. Jesus takes the people back to the Old Testament. He reminds them of the widow at Zarephath - a gentile woman who had nothing to eat because of a famine. Elijah went to her for food - she had nothing but a bit of flour and oil she was going to make for her and her son before they died of starvation. Elijah told her, “Make me a small loaf instead, and see what God does.” She took Elijah at his word ([1 Kings 17:15](#)), and THEN saw God work miraculously.
- Jesus reminds them of a poor widow and then a rich official - Naaman - a Syrian commander - hated by the Israelites - had leprosy. He went to see Elisha and Elisha told him to bathe seven times in the Jordan River. At first, Naaman refused, but then did it and was healed. He was slow to do it, but ultimately, he took Elisha at his word.
- Jesus’ point to the people in Nazareth: you fail to take me at my word.
- Jesus was on a mission, and His mission was NOT to simply perform miracles to impress and amaze the people. His mission was to set captives free. His mission was a mission of Jubilee for God’s people, but the people of Nazareth failed to take Jesus at His Word that THIS was His mission. They wanted more so they failed to take Jesus at His Word.
- They were outraged that Jesus used the stories of the widow and Naaman as a way to point out their lack of faith. They wanted Jesus dead. They attempted to throw Him off a cliff, but Jesus miraculously escaped.
- What about you? Do you fail to take Jesus at His Word? Is His Word enough for you?
- Your greatest problem is sin - your greatest need is salvation - and God has spoken to us through His Word. He has told us that if we believe in what Jesus has done for us through His death and resurrection, we will

be saved. We will be delivered from our sin and given life abundant and eternal. But for some, that's not enough. We expect more.

- **What do I expect from God?**

- Impress me - Want to see God do something big before we take Him at His Word. (He's already done something big - He gave His Son.)
- Entertain me - That's why some of us have a hard time with being a part of a church or committing to spiritual disciplines. Not entertaining enough.
- Help me - Some of us see God more as a Life Preserver to help us when we get in a jam rather than the King of our lives who is worthy of our surrender.
- Bless me - Some of us see God as the One who is supposed to make our life good and prosperous rather than understanding that God is at work to make our lives sanctified.
- Teach me - Some of us want to learn more about God. We like having the intellectual knowledge of God, but we aren't interested in that knowledge actually changing us.

- **What should I expect from God?**

- When you see yourself as Jesus sees you, then it should radically change what you expect from God.
- I should expect God to save me. That's it. That's His mission. That's what Jesus has come to do. And, when you see yourself as Jesus does, you'll begin to know how desperately you need Jesus to set you free from captivity, to heal you of your spiritual blindness, and to deliver you from the oppression of sin.
- If God chooses to bless you in other ways, to God be the glory. BUT, the greatest blessing you will ever receive is the blessing of a crucified and resurrected Lord who died the death you deserve and rose again to save you from your sins.

- What do I do?

- **Listen to Jesus.**

- Am I tuning out or tuning in? (Looking for opportunities to hear or ignoring.)
- Who is speaking truth into my life that I am ignoring? (God has put people in your life who are speaking truth. Who is it in yours?)
- Am I so focused on what I want from Jesus that I'm missing what He wants for me?
- **Cooperate with Jesus.** You are saved. You are being saved. You will be saved. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)). The greatest joy in your life will be when you surrender to the work Jesus wants to do in you. How are you resisting His work now? How are you embracing His work?