

TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

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Luke 4:14-21

"Gospel Preaching"

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TRANSCRIPT

The title of this message is "Gospel Preaching," and I want to begin by reading the passage, setting it in front of us. I'll pray, and then we'll look carefully at what it says. So, Luke chapter 4, beginning in verse 14, "And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.' And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" What a dramatic moment this was. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, this is Your word that has been read to us. It has been recorded and preserved these many centuries, such that today we are enabled, really, to go back in time two thousand years and place ourselves

in this very synagogue in Nazareth in Galilee as though we are a fly on the wall and able to observe all that is being said and to hear what was said. And so cause this passage to come alive in our hearts. We know Your word is living and active. I just pray that in our hearts and in our souls this day Your word would have special impact and force in our lives. So, Father, we commit ourselves to You afresh as a living and holy sacrifice. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses that I just read we see that Jesus was a Spirit-filled gospel preacher. In His earthly ministry, Jesus was many things. He was a discipler of men. He was a trainer of preachers. He was an expositor of the law. He was a personal witness, one-on-one. He was a prayer warrior. He healed the sick. He cast out demons. He confronted false religion. He set an example for us in how to live and how to walk. He was all of these things. But first and foremost during the three years of His earthly ministry, Jesus was a preacher, and not just a preacher, but a gospel preacher. He was, in reality, an itinerate evangelist who was moving around from town to town and hamlet to hamlet proclaiming the message of salvation wherever He went.

And we see in the life of Jesus, really, the high value of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Isaiah especially draws attention to this in Isaiah 52:7. He says, "How lovely" - or how beautiful - "are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news, and who announces salvation." Every preacher who brings the gospel has beautiful feet. And whenever you bring the gospel to someone else, whether it's down the hall in your home or across the street in your neighborhood, wherever you go, you have beautiful feet if you're bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's been well said, when we all get to heaven, there's going to be a beauty contest, and there's only one part of the body that's going to be examined and that's your feet. "Beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good news." And that is exactly what we see taking place in the life of Christ. So I want to walk through this passage, and the central theme is very obvious: it's gospel preaching and the high value that God places on the one who brings this message of salvation.

So, beginning at verse 14, the first thing I want you to note is, "The return to Galilee." We see in verse 14, "And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit." Just to remind you about Galilee: Galilee is in the northern region of the Promised Land. Galilee borders the Sea of Galilee on the west side, and it extends a little bit to the north and it extends a little bit to the south. And Galilee is where Jesus grew up, and Galilee is where Jesus will spend the next year-and-a-half of His ministry right here.

And it says that "He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit." The word "power" here is *dunamis* in the Greek; comes into our language is "dynamite," the explosive, dynamic supernatural power of God rested upon the Lord Jesus Christ, such that what He did, He did in the power of the Holy Spirit that rested upon His sinless humanity.

And we read, "and news about Him spread throughout the surrounding district." I mean, it spread like wildfire throughout all of Galilee. And Jesus is traversing the region and crisscrossing and going from town to village and preaching the gospel here and preaching the gospel there, such that there is not a person in the entire area who has not heard of Jesus Christ, and there's probably very few who have not heard Him themselves. He has saturated the area with gospel preaching.

And in verse 15, "And He began teaching," and that indicates that His preaching, really, was filled with teaching. In fact, teaching is always the beginning point in any preaching exercise. There has to be content. There has to be substance. There has to be truth. There has to be theology. There has to be doctrine. And that is what Jesus is providing. He is teaching the Old Testament. He is teaching the Old Testament law. He is teaching about the kingdom of God in the hearts of men and women. He's teaching about the gospel and all of the various aspects and nuances of this glorious message of the gospel. He's literally just unpacking the riches of truth before the dazzled eyes and ears of those who are there. They've never heard a preacher like this.

And so we see, "He was praised by all." Here it does not mean that He was worshiped by all, but that they all spoke so highly of Him. Large numbers in Galilee were just hanging on His every word. So Jesus, as He returns to Galilee in the north, He's just extraordinarily well-received and popular with the masses of the people. In fact, in John chapter 6 as He's up in the north here in this area after He fed the 5,000, which in reality was probably about 20,000 when you add women and children, that they actually tried to make Him king. They actually tried to install Him as their Davidic king to rule over them, that's how immensely well-received Jesus was.

And what a contrast this was with the southern part of Israel. Down in the south is where Jerusalem was. That's where they crucified Him. That's where the power structure was. That's where the religious leaders were and the spiritual elite, the Pharisees and the scribes, and they did not like Jesus honing in on their turf; and it would eventually cost Him His life in the south. But in the north, He is being praised by all.

Now, I need to bring something to your attention here, that between verse 13 and 14 - I have a pretty big white space in my Bible - there is one year's period of time that Luke does not even address. Did you know that? There's an entire year. And you can fit John chapter 1 all the way to John chapter 5 between verses 13 and 14.

Now remember, these four gospel accounts are not literally biographies, and for the most part, they're laid out chronologically, but there's some difference. Even last week, I didn't bring this to your attention, the order of the temptations, the three last temptations. They're in different order in Matthew than they are in Luke, and there's a rhyme and a reason for it. Each of these four gospel writers are presenting not a biography and not a totally perfect chronology, every once in a while they move some things around because they're painting a portrait. They want you to see Jesus in a particular way. And Luke, as he's writing this, he's wanting us to see Christ as the perfect man. He stresses His humanity. John will stress His deity. Matthew, His kingship; Mark, His servanthood.

But you may say, "So what happened in between verses 13 and 14, if it's an entire block of time, an entire year?" Well, I'm glad you asked, and I just want to quickly fly over this whole year, and it's right there in John 1 through verse 5. And you might find this also interesting that 92 percent of John's gospel is not found in Matthew, Mark, or Luke, it's just entirely very original.

Well, here's what happened in this year. It's unmentioned by Luke. Jesus calls His disciples to Himself. He calls them to leave their nets and to come follow Him, and also invites them into a saving relationship with Himself. All this took place down in the southern part of the region. And then Jesus made a return trip back up to Galilee, and when He goes back up to Galilee, He calls some more disciples to Himself. And while He's in Galilee, He goes to Canaan and He goes to a wedding and He turns water into wine. You recall that account.

And then after that, Jesus goes back down to Jerusalem for the Passover, and as He goes down there, He cleanses the temple the first time. He'll cleanse the temple two times - once at the beginning of His public ministry, once at the end of His public ministry - but He goes down there and runs all the money changers out of the temple. And while He's there, He addresses Nicodemus, who was the teacher of Israel, and says to him, "You must be born again."

Jesus then leaves Jerusalem and He goes to northeast Judea, the northeast corner of the southern part, and there His disciples began baptizing those who came to faith in Him. And John the Baptist bears witness to Him, and that's when John the Baptist said, "He must increase, I must decrease." Jesus then leaves Judea, which is in the hill country in the south, and purposes to go to Galilee, but He intentionally chooses to go through Samaria. And there He goes to a well, and there is a woman, the Samaritan woman who's there, and He says to her, "Give me a drink of water," and He leads her to faith in Himself.

He continues to go on north then to Galilee, and there He heals a nobleman's son without ever even having to go see the son. He just says, "Go, He's healed." After that, Jesus then goes back to Jerusalem again for the second Passover feast, and when He is there, He first heals a lame man at the Pool of Siloam. And then the Jewish leaders are so infuriated by Him that they send court officials to arrest Him so that they can put Him to death. Jesus then preaches to the Jewish leaders and He preaches His own deity. From there, Jesus then returns back to Galilee.

Did you follow all that? Okay. I saw some of you just gave up on taking notes. I don't really blame you I got them in my notes though, okay.

So, you say, "So, what's the point for my life?" Well, I want you to look at the life of Jesus. He's not sitting still. There's no grass growing under His feet. He's not playing defense, He's playing offense. He's serving His Father in heaven and He's constantly serving Him. Sometimes we think, "How was He able to do everything that He did in only three years?" Well, those were three concentrated years. He was constantly serving the Lord and stepping out. And there's a lesson for you and me to learn here. We haven't been saved to sit, we've been saved to serve, and we need to put our shoulder to the plow and find our part of the vineyard in which we need to be working and serving the Lord and giving ourselves, if we are to be like Jesus Christ. He wasn't sitting back.

And so, it's been well said that in churches, 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work, and 80 percent of the people do 20 percent of the work. So I'm wondering, in which category do you find yourself? I mean, we're thrilled that you're here this morning; please keep coming. But where are you serving the Lord on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday? Where are you serving the Lord here on Sundays?

It's a team sport. We all have to find our place in the body of Christ. We all have to find a plow to put our shoulder to. We all have to find our spot in the Lord's vineyard and hop in and serve the Lord. We can't just be

spectators, we've got to be in the game, we've got to be in the service of our Lord.

And as I read this, as I observe the life of the Lord Jesus and try to piece these four gospel accounts together (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), it is astonishing, it is amazing. John 9:4, Jesus said, "We must do the work of our Father while it is day; night is coming when no man can work." And that night that's coming is His death. And the light there, the day, refers to the time God gives us here upon the earth.

I don't know how much time I have left to serve the Lord. You don't know how much time you have left to serve the Lord. We always presume that we have decades out there to serve the Lord. No, we need to serve the Lord today. The issue is not 20 years from now, the issue is 20 minutes from now. Will you be serving the Lord? Jesus was actively engaged and doing His father's work, on the move from city to city, place to place. So must we.

Look at verse 16. The second thing I want you to see is, "The return to Nazareth." Having traveled throughout Galilee, Jesus now comes to Nazareth. And so in verse 16, "And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up," which is to say Nazareth was His hometown. This is where He was raised. This is where He was reared. This is where He grew up as a boy. This is where He lived His early adulthood. And Nazareth is in Galilee. If you look at a map of Israel and you see the Sea of Galilee, the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee you just go due west, halfway to the Mediterranean Sea, and that's where you'll find Nazareth.

Now Nazareth, it's a very insignificant place. It's nowhere. I mean, it's out of the way, it's off of the beaten track. Jesus did not grow up in a cosmopolitan city. Jesus did not grow up in a happening place. No, these were years of development and maturing of Jesus. And I think sometimes we think we have to be in some happening place in order for God to use us. Well, it wasn't the case with Jesus. He grew up in Nazareth, Nazareth – you can barely find it on the map. And it was His hometown. That's where

everyone knew Him. His extended family is in Nazareth. His friends are in Nazareth. His neighbors are in Nazareth. So this is like a homecoming for Jesus.

And so we read, "and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath." Let your eyes see that word "custom." It means this was His pattern of life. This was the discipline of His life. Jesus was very disciplined. Jesus lived a highly structured life. He could not have done all that He did if He was just going with the flow, if He was just doing whatever popped into His mind at whatever time. No, He had a pattern, He had a discipline, just like you need a discipline about your life if you are to be greatly used by God.

And it was His custom to enter the synagogue on the Sabbath. He was a regular worshipper when the people of God gathered. You want to find Jesus wherever He is, whether He's in the north, the south, the east, or the west, on the Sabbath? I'll tell you where you're going to find Him. You're going to find Him, in essence, in church. You're going to find Him in a synagogue.

Now, what's a synagogue? Well, there were countless numbers of synagogues scattered all over the Promised Land, and it's for those who live outside of Jerusalem to be able to worship on the Sabbath. In Jerusalem is the temple, and that is the hub of worship for the nation. But because travel back then was so elementary and so difficult, basically you either walked or rode a donkey. You couldn't get to Jerusalem every Sabbath, so there would be synagogues that were like little church plants just all over the Promised Land. And there was a minimum requirement that there had to be at least ten adult men and their families to establish a synagogue, and they would convene there and meet on the Sabbath, and the Sabbath was from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. And as they would come together, it was for the intended purpose of worshiping the Lord. They would gather together for prayer and for worship and some singing and for the reading of Scripture, and then there would be the exposition of the Scripture, the teaching of that passage of Scripture. And so we see here that as was His custom, Jesus was in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

Now they know Him. Here's Jesus. Everyone has heard about Jesus, but especially in Nazareth His hometown. They, no doubt, took somewhat pride in being able to tell people from other towns, "Oh, yeah, we know all about Jesus. He grew up across the street from us. He grew up right down the road from us." And so He comes walking into the synagogue. Well, you can imagine, "We want You to preach to us. We want You to teach us."

And so we read at the end of verse 16, "He stood up to read." You see, it was the custom that a visiting rabbi – that means teacher – would be given the opportunity to address everyone. And they're a long ways away from Jerusalem, and so usually the services are kind of like family affairs being led by someone who hasn't really been theologically trained like we would think of it today. And so now, "Here is Jesus coming back to our synagogue. Oh, we want Jesus to minister to us instead of Uncle Frank, you know, crazy Frank. We want Jesus to take the Scripture and to minister to us."

"And so Jesus" – it says – "stood up to read." Now, when you teach, you sit down. When you read the Scripture, you stand up. "And so He stood up to read." And before I go any further, I just want to make this point before I move on, and it is very simply this, that you need to keep making it a priority to be in church on the Lord's Day, even when you're traveling, even when you're on vacation. You're never on vacation from God, okay? And even if you're retired, you're not retired from God. The Lord's Day is to be attended by the Lord's people so that they can offer the Lord's praises in a collective sense. And there's a unique, supernatural, spiritual dynamic that occurs when all of us come together that's different than when we're all in our own homes throughout the week. There is a multiple, there's a leveraging here that takes place as we come together.

And so I just want to encourage you. I know you're here today; praise the Lord for that. Will you be here next Lord's Day? Will you be here the Lord's Day after that? Will your children see the priority that this is even when you're traveling to go see your in-laws, "No, we're going to be in

church on the Lord's Day"? That was the custom for Jesus, and it needs to be the custom for us.

Now this leads us to verse 17 and I want you to see, "The reading of Isaiah." And so for the reading and the exposition of Scripture, they draw in Jesus, and they want Jesus to minister to them. And so in verse 17 we read, "And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him." Now the word "book" here is a Greek word *biblion* that comes into the English language as "Bible," okay? But it's not like my Bible or your Bible. It's not pages that are stitched together. It's a scroll. The word, really, *biblion*, just means a written document. And back then in this day and time, it would be a long, rather, parchment-like material. And so the whole book of Isaiah would be written on this long scroll.

"So the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him." Wow, of all books, the Prince of prophets. I mean, He could have gotten Obadiah or something. No, He got Isaiah. They handed Him Isaiah which has so much to say about the Messiah and the coming of the Messiah. In fact, in my mind I can just see Isaiah and these messianic passages: Isaiah 6, Isaiah 7, Isaiah 11, Isaiah 40, Isaiah 42, Isaiah 49, Isaiah 50, the end of Isaiah 52 and then all of 53, Isaiah 61, Isaiah 63, Isaiah 66. Those are the mountain peaks in Isaiah that rise above the whole of the Scripture, beginning with His virgin birth and all the way to His second coming and when He returns. It's all right there in Isaiah, and it's in chronological sequence in order. It's amazing! This is the scroll they hand to Jesus.

And so we read, "And He opened the book" - that means He unrolled, or unraveled, this long scroll - "and found the place where it was written." Now, if He found it, that means He was looking for it. And so He has this entire scroll of Isaiah and He's just unraveling it and unrolling it until He comes to the place that He wants to read.

Now, we need to understand this. There are no chapters and there are no verses. That didn't take place until another 1,200 years, okay? It wasn't until the 13th century that there were even verses that appeared. And it

wouldn't be until the 16th century was there even a Bible printed that had chapter divisions, okay? This speaks to how well Jesus knew the book of Isaiah, that He has no chapters and He has no verses, that He's able to unroll this, bingo, the exact passage that He wants. That's how well Jesus knew the word of God.

There's 66 chapters for us in the book of Isaiah. It divides out into two sections: 39 chapters, and then 27 chapters. It's been said that it's like the Bible: 39 books in the Old Testament, 27 books in the New Testament. In fact, liberal unbelieving scholars – which is kind of an oxymoron in and of itself. It's like a dead live oak, you know. Kind of like postal service, you know. Oh, I got more of these – that liberal scholars, they think there were two different Isaiahs. They don't even think the same person wrote the whole book of Isaiah because the style is so different. The Old Testament is, "Woe, woe, woe, woe," are the first 39 chapters. The last 27 chapters, there's, "Grace, grace, grace, grace." Well, welcome to the Bible, that's just the way that it works.

So, Jesus is handed the book of Isaiah, the scroll of Isaiah. He knows what He wants to read – sentence after sentence after sentence after sentence, boom, "It is for us, Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2." And again, this is just like the temptation account. Jesus is quoting verbatim Deuteronomy out of the Old Testament to resist the temptations that are being thrown at Him. It shows how He had mastered the word of God; and the word of God had mastery over Him.

So, beginning in verse 18, and then verse 19, Jesus reads Isaiah 61:1-2. It is a well-known messianic passage of Scripture known not only to Jesus, but known probably for most that were in the synagogue that day, and it's all about gospel preaching.

So, in verse 18, He reads, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" – the Holy Spirit (the third Person of the Trinity) sent by the Lord (the first person of the Trinity) to Me (the second Person of the Trinity). Right there we've got the Godhead – "because He anointed Me to preach the gospel." The

anointing of the Holy Spirit means that Jesus is saturated with the Person of the Holy Spirit, and He is endued with power from on high to carry out His ministry in the power that only God can give Him to succeed in the work that He's been entrusted to do.

The word "anointing," they would anoint kings in ancient Israel. They would anoint priests when they would enter into their ministry, and they would pour oil on their head. And the oil, they would put perfume in the oil such that when they would anoint the head of the king or the priest, it emitted this beautiful, sweet-smelling fragrance and aroma in the room for all to breathe in, and it was to be emblematic, symbolic of the Holy Spirit now being upon the priest or upon the king, and giving discernment and discretion and wisdom and guidance and insight and stability and strength to carry out the work that God has called Him to do. Zechariah 4:6, "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord.

And so Jesus reads this: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, not just near Me or around Me, but upon Me, resting upon Me," - like the dove that had come down out of heaven, and it was the Spirit of God resting upon Him - "and He anointed Me to" - to what? - "to preach the gospel" - to who? "to the poor." No, this is not a reference to the financial poor, because the financial rich also need the gospel. No, this is those who are spiritually poor. Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

No, He's come to preach the gospel to those who are morally bankrupt, who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, who have no spiritual capital by which to commend themselves to God, who they owe a debt to God because the wages of sin is death. They owe a debt to God they could never pay off in a million trillion lifetimes." These are the ones Jesus has come to preach to. He's come not for those who are well, but for those who are sick. He's come not for the righteous, but for the unrighteous."

And this word "poor," I have to comment on it. This word "poor" means one who cringes and cowers and shrinks back. Refers to a beggar who can only

extend an empty hand to those passing by who's too ashamed to even look up and make eye contact, who look away, seated in the shadows along the side of the road who can only extend an empty hand and say, "Alms for the poor." This being poor is far worse than most people being poor. There are poor people today who are not poor by this standard. This standard is you have absolutely nothing, like, literally nothing, and you are totally dependent upon the mercy of someone else to drop something into your hand.

Jesus said, "This is who I've come to preach the good news to." You see, we have to come to the place in our life in order to be saved where you say, "I am nothing. I have nothing. I can do nothing. I'm nothing." Those are the ones Jesus has come to save. And until you come to that place, you're not yet ready to be converted if you think you make some contribution that you have anything going for you to find acceptance with Holy God in heaven. Not only must God fill the preacher, but the Holy Spirit must convict the sinner. God must work both sides of the aisle. The Spirit of God must fill the preacher to preach the gospel, but He must convict the sinner that "you have sinned and you've fallen short of the glory of God."

And then He says, as He continues this Isaiah quote, "He sent me to proclaim release to the captives. He (God the Father) sent Me (God the Son)." And by the way, the word "sent" here is the verb form of apostle. An apostle is one who's been sent on a mission. He's been commissioned by God and has been sent on a mission.

"The Father has commissioned Me and sent Me on a mission to proclaim." The word "proclaim" here means "to lift up the voice," "to declare," "to announce," "to preach release to the captives," those who are held in the chains of their own sin, those who are imprisoned and in bondage to sin who cannot free themselves. "God has sent Me, the Messiah, to preach the gospel to those who are in the dungeon of darkness and are held captive by their own sin." And this word "release" means dismissal from imprisonment, but it's already been translated twice in Luke's gospel already as the word "forgiveness." And forgiveness is dismissing and releasing us from the guilt of our sin, that it no longer is the noose around our neck.

And then, "and recovery of sight to the blind." This is referring to spiritual blindness in those who walk in darkness. And it is the gospel that shines pure light into the darkest hearts and brings the knowledge of the truth of salvation that is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

And then He says at the end of verse 18, "to set free those who are oppressed." This word "oppressed," it's a very vivid graphic word. It means "to be one who is shaking." It means "one who is shattered." And here, it's under the heavy burden of sin and guilt, shaking with the dread of death, shaking with the dread of hell, shaking with the dread of one day having to stand before God and give an account of myself to God who is perfectly holy, and I have sinned and fallen short. This weight of sin is crushing me.

And the gospel is to set free those who are oppressed, to liberate. "If the Son shall set you free you shall be free indeed." And there's only one way to be set free from the chains of sin and the darkness of depravity, and that is through the gospel of Jesus Christ and to believe this gospel.

Verse 19 is verse 2 of Isaiah 6, "to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." The background of this is really Leviticus 25 and it's the year of Jubilee. The chapter starts out that every seven years, the seventh year you're not to plow the field and bring in a harvest, you're to let the dirt rest every seventh year. And then you're to do that for seven consecutive cycles - 7 times 7 is 49 - and then the next year, which is the 50th year, is the year of Jubilee. And for the year of Jubilee, all debts are canceled. If you're in debt, if you are impoverished in owing a debt that you could never pay, this 50th year, the year of Jubilee is the greatest year of your entire life probably. All the debts are removed. And if you have lost your house or lost your land having to sell yourself into slavery in order to pay off your debt, the 50th year, the house comes back to you, the land comes back to you. It's the year of Jubilee. It's a year to celebrate as God restores all things back the way that it was supposed to be from the beginning.

And so in verse 19 when He says, "to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord," that is what He has reference to as the year of Jubilee, but on a spiritual level, that the year of Jubilee for us is the year you were converted. That's when God wiped the slate clean and removed all of your sins that would condemn you; they're gone forever. And His vast inheritance is now transferred to your account, and you've become an heir of God and a joint heir of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is an inheritance reserved for you in heaven, undefiled, fadeth not away, kept for you by the power of God in heaven. Wow, what a gospel message.

Do you know your year of Jubilee? Do you? Mine was 1968. Most of you weren't even born by 1968. Yeah. I was in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado at a young life camp, and the speaker preached on John 2, Jesus turning water to wine. It was the best wine the head waiter had ever tasted. And he explained this is what God wants to do in your life, to change you and transform you from the inside out and to give you the best life you could ever possibly live. "Jesus came that you might have life and have it abundantly," have eternal life. That was the greatest news I'd ever heard in my life.

So I walked out into the darkness of the night and looked up into the skies hiding behind the Rocky Mountains and asked God to save me. That was my year of Jubilee. What is your year of Jubilee? Surely you know the year. I've talked to you about knowing the day, the time, the place. And I can understand some may not be able to pinpoint the exact moment. Surely you can pinpoint a year. You could drive a semi-truck through a year. This is what Jesus has come to proclaim.

And so gospel preaching is what Jesus did. He preached the gospel to those who were spiritually bankrupt, to those who live in darkness, to those who have no ability whatsoever in themselves to save themselves. I think you qualify for that, to come to the place where you come to the end of yourself: "God, I have nothing; I can do nothing; I am nothing. You're everything, and You give me everything that I need when I believe in Your Son Jesus Christ." So have you come to that place in your life?

Look at verse 20. I want you to see the reaction to Jesus. So, in verse 20, "He" - Jesus - "closed the book," - that means He rolled back up the scroll - "and gave it to the attendant" - that would be like a deacon for us in our church. The attendant would keep up with the scrolls and open and close the synagogue - "and He sat down." That's very significant because sitting down indicates you're ready to teach. That's how the Sermon on the Mount begins in Matthew 5:1, "Jesus went up to a mountain and sat down." You assume the posture of the teacher. Even today we say the department head sits in the chair of theology, or the chair of physics, or the chair of English, whatever.

"And so He sat down," - assumed the posture of a teacher - "and the eyes of all, everyone in the synagogue, were fixed on Him." They were riveted on Him. They were locked in on Him. Nobody's looking around. No one's tapping their watch. No one's looking to say who's here, who's not here. They're fixed on Jesus.

What will be the teaching of this passage? Who will the Messiah be? When will the Messiah come? Where will He come to? They're just fixed and locked in. And I think there's a point of application here for us, that with Spirit-filled preaching it causes the listener to be riveted to what is being said. It draws them in. In fact, inattentiveness becomes difficult and attentiveness becomes easy when the preacher is filled with the Holy Spirit of God and there is a supernatural connection between your heart and what is being said, and you are hanging on its every word. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. And I trust that God's doing that in your life, even now, this very moment, because of what Jesus is saying, because of what Jesus is doing.

Then, finally, verse 21, "The response of Jesus." This is built to a most dramatic moment. "And He began to say to them." The word "began" indicates that there were many more words that He said. And what Luke has done for us - he's researched this whole thing - is he has compressed down to the bottom line, "This is the only thing that Jesus said that you really need to know." Everything He said was true, everything He said was important, but Luke now compresses it, compacts it to this one sentence and

puts it in front of us: "This is what you need to know: Today" – not at the end of the age, not in the world to come – "Today the Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

What Jesus is saying to them is, "I am the Messiah. I am the Son of God, the Son of man, the Lord of heaven and earth, and I have come here today to present to you the gospel of salvation. This is your day with God. This is your opportunity with God." This is extraordinary that Jesus said this. He sees Himself to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-2. It would have been blasphemy for anyone else to say, "Today this has been fulfilled in your ears." But for Jesus, it was the truth.

And so I need to ask you, have you come to the place to see that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is the Son of Man, that He is the long-awaited Messiah? He is the Anointed One who has come in the power of the Holy Spirit to live the life that you could never live. He lived in sinless perfection under the law. He was obedient at every point, such that His perfect obedience to the law is what is credited to your account if you would believe in Him. And when God looks into the books, He sees the perfect life of Jesus Christ, that He went to the cross. There He was lifted up to die, and there He bore the sins of His people and shed His blood, and suffered and bled and died in our place. Have you come to put your whole trust, your whole faith in Jesus Christ alone?

I would assume that most of you here today, many, many of you here today have come to that place. But it cannot be true of all of us here today. Jesus had only twelve, and one of them was unconverted. How many here today must still be outside the kingdom of God? I want to say to you, you may never have an opportunity like this again the rest of your life to gather in a place like this with the people of God and to hear the word of God brought in the power of the Holy Spirit. Do not, do not neglect Christ. Believe in Him. And no one else can believe for you, you're the only one. You must make that decisive decision as an act of your will, not just think about it, not just be emotionally involved about it, but to pull the trigger and to decide to commit your life to Christ and to step through the narrow gate and to believe in Jesus Christ.

What is your year of Jubilee? When did this take place in your life? If you've never believed in Christ, then I beg you, I plead with you to do so this moment. There is nothing more important in your life than for you to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, thank You for the gospel preaching of Jesus Christ. Thank You for sending Him, anointing Him, guiding and leading Him to do all that He did and said on our behalf, that we might become His righteousness and know His forgiveness of our sins. So, Father, we look to You and ask that what has been preached today would be sealed to every heart here today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.