

**I AM the Healer**  
**Luke 4:14-30**  
**Englewood Baptist Church**  
**Sunday Morning, July 11, 2010**

Would you please open your Bible to Luke 4, and also put a bookmark in Isaiah 61.

This week, I read about a rookie preacher who arrived at his new church. He was excited about his first and fresh assignment. On the day that he moved into his new office, he discovered three envelopes neatly placed in the top drawer of his desk. The former pastor had left them for him. They were tightly sealed and carefully numbered 1, 2, 3. A rubber band was wrapped around them and a sticky note on top with these words: "Open these envelopes in order," he said, "if you run into any difficulties in this church."

The young pastor wondered if this were protocol for a parting preacher to leave behind letters, but he thought little of it, and tucked them away for future use. Things went fine at that church for five years, then came a big conflict, so the discouraged preacher opened the first envelope. One sheet of paper. Two words: "Blame me." So he did. -- he blamed his predecessor for all of these problems and the conflict died down. Things went fine another 3 years, another conflict, so the preacher opened the second envelope. One sheet of paper. Three words: "Blame the people." So he did -- he blamed the lack of unity and community for the problems that had been stirred up and the conflict died down. Another three years, and now the biggest conflict of all (a real ruckus had arisen), so the fed up pastor opened his last lifeline. One sheet of paper. Three words: "Prepare three envelopes."

That pastor knew that his time was coming to a close. His people were no longer responding to his leadership.

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus returns to his hometown, and the people immediately respond to his message. They LOVE their local boy who has made good. He is now famous because of his wonder-working power in surrounding cities. This homecoming, however, takes an ugly turn when Jesus says some things that the people were not ready to receive. Presidential candidates in America often receive the votes of their home states, but Jesus would not secure the support of his own town. He would find no followers among his childhood friends and neighbors.

They would send him on his way, but I want you to notice that Jesus makes no bones about his assignment on this earth. He has come to Nazarenes, Galileans, Jews, and every other people on earth to do one thing: to deliver them, to set them free from bondage. He is the healer, he is the liberator, he is the savior. And the Bible says, "*To those who received him, to those who believed in His Name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).*" How you respond to the leadership of Christ will make or break you. Watch now what happens when Jesus declares Himself as the Healer in his hometown.

Read Luke 4:14-30.

I want you to notice that Jesus grew up going to church. It says in v.16, that he went into the synagogue in his hometown on the Sabbath, and this was his custom. This was his tradition. Whether it was boring or stimulating, whether it was full or half-empty, Jesus was committed to worshipping with others one day a week.

And if we could peek at a few first century bulletins, we would find that their services were mostly the same from week to week. Ancient Jewish records tell us that the Jews had a basic outline that they followed, a general flow to the service:

### **Jewish Synagogue Worship**

#### **Singing from Psalms 145-150**

**Reciting of the “Shema”**, Deut.6:4-9 (this was the central passage in the Jewish Bible)

**18 Benedictions** (these were regular liturgical prayers that were read aloud)

**The Reading of the Torah** (The Torah refers to the first five books of the Bible. An officer went to the Holy ark, took out the scroll, removed its cloth covering, opened it to its designated place, and then placed it on the table for assigned readers to come and to read aloud. This enhanced involvement among the congregation.

**The Reading of the Prophets**

**The Sermon**

**The Closing Benediction**

Most likely, before the service began, Jesus had been asked by the president of the synagogue to read the portion from the prophets and then to say a few words, to offer a short sermon on the subject for the day. We don't know if Jesus requested the scroll of Isaiah to be opened, or if the Providence of God put it there, but in the end, it doesn't matter.

V.16 says that Jesus stood up to read. This was the custom. The Jewish preacher would stand up to pay respect to the Holy Scroll of Scripture, and then humbly he would sit down to offer his remarks. And it says that Jesus followed protocol. He did what they wanted him and expected him to do. He stood, he read Isaiah 61:1-2.

And then look at what v.20 says. He gave it back to the attendant. Good job Jesus. He sat down. Good Job Jesus. So far so good. And then, with all eyes fastened on him, he goes off the deep end and says, “Today, you are looking at God's gift to the Earth. I AM God's gift to the world. What Isaiah spoke of, you now see. It is fulfilled.”

Wow. Just put yourself in their shoes. The hometown boy has clearly lost his mind.

Now I'm sure those commonfolk had heard a lot of sermons by a lot of guest preachers but this one took the cake. Jesus just put himself on par with God. He said unambiguously, “I AM the healer, I AM the liberator, I AM the Messiah” that Isaiah promised you would come.

Now what shocks me is that v.28 doesn't come now. This man just called himself God and yet the people are not furious, and they do not yet form a lynch mob. In fact, v.22 says, that "they were amazed by his gracious words." This could have something to do with the fact that they didn't have a clue what he was talking about. They weren't expecting it, they weren't ready for it, so I'm assuming they all thought, "We just misunderstood him." After all, this is "Joseph's little boy that used to run around and play ball with the other little boys."

But Jesus isn't playing. And v.23, he goes for the jugular. He picks a fight by quoting one of their famous sayings in their city. The saying goes like this, "Physician, heal yourself." It was a statement that meant, prove it. Carpenter, repair your own house first. Farmer, worry about your own fields first! Seamstress, sow your own dress first. Prove yourself.

And Jesus knows what was going on their minds. They're thinking, "Oh, this young man has such high hopes for his ministry. He thinks he is going to do the work of Isaiah, he's going to help the hurting people. How sweet."

And Jesus says, "No! I'm telling you the truth. I AM not here to do the work of God. I AM GOD. I am the one that you have been waiting for. And he highly disappoints them when he says, "I won't play on your stage because you won't believe in me."

There are people who go to a church every week, and they have already decided before they arrive, that they will not believe in all this Jesus nonsense. They have already chosen to stand at a distance, to please others with their presence in a pew, but to put no stock in spiritual promises. They have pursed lips, a furrowed brow, and crossed arms, and they say to themselves, "This preacher better make this quick." That was the attitude of those people that Jesus preached to. They didn't want the truth; they wanted entertainment. And Jesus says, "I am no circus monkey." "I will not perform tricks for you."

V.24, "A prophet is not respected in his hometown. You have already turned me off."

Now let me insert a note: Some of the hardest people to win to the faith are the people you grew up with. It was that way for Jesus; it's that way for you. Those people knew you way back when. They know how "normal" you are. Other people might sin by thinking too highly of you. The people you grew up with will often think too little of you. This is why it often takes the testimony of someone outside your family to win a brother or sister or cousin to Christ. It's hard to win the respect of the people who watched you outgrow your tennis shoes, those who watched your pants become highwaters. Jesus knew the preconceived bias that he was up against, but he would not allow this as an excuse.

And so he senses their lack of faith and he gets in their face. He gives these two Old Testament illustrations to stir the pot and this nearly gets him tossed off their favorite picnic cliff. If you will notice the passage just before this one. Look at 4:1, what's that

about? Jesus being tempted by the devil himself, at one point even being encouraged to throw himself off the highest point of the temple to prove his power. He survived that slippery moment. But now the question we face in Luke 4 is this: Can he survive the fury of his old friends? Look what Jesus says that sends them through the roof.

First, he alludes to Elijah in v.25...

Elijah was anointed by God, but he would not heal his own wounded people. For 3.5 years, there was no water, and he did not pray over the wells of widows in Israel. Instead, he had to leave the country, go outside the family of God, to a foreigner to find faith. And it was this obscure woman that Elijah worked miracles for.

Second, he refers to Naaman who we studied last Sunday. There were thousands of people in Israel that were plagued with skin disease, but only one person received a touch of healing by Elisha. That man was a foreigner who traveled a great distance to see a man of God who could call upon the one and only true God.

Jesus throws Naaman in the face of his old friends. These Jewish churchgoers listen to Jesus as he exalts a non-Jew. And as soon as Naaman the Syrian was spoken in that synagogue, church was dismissed! The people got up from their seats, (FORGET THE BENEDICTION), they hoisted him and drug him to the hill he probably played on as a boy, and they prepared for a public execution.

And I read v.30, and the action lover in me just shakes my head in disgust. Why in the world, would Luke not choose to share just how Jesus walked away Scot free? In a mob of murderous men, Jesus just “went on his way.” Did he blind them? Perhaps. Did he confuse them? Perhaps. Did he become invisible and slip through their hands? I don’t know, but I know this, it wasn’t the time for Jesus to die, and so he went on his way. The people rejected him, and he let them have their way.

Now, I want you to backtrack with me, to the public reading of Scripture, to this prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in Christ, and I want you to see who Jesus is and why he was ever born in Bethlehem.

## **What Should We See About Our Savior?**

### **1. Jesus came in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Notice first v.14...

Now pay attention to what it says in v.18, the Spirit of the Lord is on ME. Theologians have recognized that this is a clear reference to the three members of the Trinity, the Godhead. The Holy Spirit, of the LORD, is on ME. Col. 1:19, *“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.”*

Jesus had the full power of heaven resting upon him, including the piercing power of the

Holy Spirit to cut through human pride.

I want to be clear. There is only thing that makes any difference in the services this morning: the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit being on me, my words today fall on deaf ears and they originate in a cold and empty heart. I can NOT change your life one iota. I can't take away one ounce of your pain, or your anger, or your guilty conscience, or your anxiety attacks, or your marital misery. Only one PERSON can produce change in your heart: the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the whose name means literally, "to come alongside."

The Spirit came alongside Jesus and empowered him for special work. This is why the most important thing in your life is that you remain pure and prayerful so that the Spirit can fill you. The Scripture says, "*Do not fill your belly with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.*" And the Holy Spirit wants to come upon you today. Will you let him? Will you let go of the sin that holds you back and quenches the Spirit? The Spirit came upon Jesus and launched his ministry. Will you allow the Spirit to have full reign in your life?

Now I want you to notice that Jesus says in v.18 that HE has been anointed. Do you see that word? The old commentator Matthew Henry put it perfectly:

**Those whom God appoints, God also anoints. –Matthew Henry**

That word anointing means to be fitted for service. Just like a soldier is fit for battle with weapons, a pitcher is fit with a glove, a fisherman is fit with a pole, the person called by God is equipped with the Holy Spirit to ensure His success.

*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,<sup>22</sup> set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Cor. 1:21-22*

Jesus had not just a measure of the Holy Spirit, but the full measure of the Spirit. He walked with a power that people on earth understood as supernatural. And so, when you and I join arms with Jesus, when we become united with him, he outfits us with the power that raised him from the dead, the power that sucked Zaccheus out of a sycamore tree, the power that penetrated the hearts of 3000 on the Day of Peter's first public speaking engagement. It is the Spirit that that enables us, not only to survive this earth, but to stand firm with courage and with confidence.

Jesus said to his childhood friends, "*The Spirit is on Me, I have been anointed.*" Now what was the work that Jesus was anointed to do? That is what the rest of Isaiah's quote is about. I want you to see those.

## **2. The Spirit empowered Jesus to preach effectively.**

The word "preach" means to make known. Nike preaches their latest shoe. They make it

known. Popeye's preaches their new chicken. BP preaches their commitment to clean up the mess. To preach means to make sure that people know.

And notice that three times here Isaiah includes the word preach or proclaim. "Preach" good news to the poor, "proclaim" freedom to the captives, "proclaim" the year of the Lord. Jesus came to say something special: that there is a solution to all of our sin!

Now notice it says that Jesus came to preach to the poor. Now, what's the deal with that? Was there a certain level of income that disqualified someone from following Christ? If a man inherited a family fortune would he be sent directly to hell? Did Jesus have a number in mind and say to himself, "Anyone that makes more than \$75,000/year is rich and on their own with their guilt problem?"

Of course not. Jesus did not exclude the rich. The Bible doesn't teach that money is evil. Money is not good or evil. It is the love of money though, that gives people a false sense of security, and makes them wall up in self-sufficiency. Money creates an illusion of independence. When a man makes a lot of dough, he often stands in pride at what he can achieve with his own intelligence, smarts, and skill. Jesus loves wealthy people but he has always had a hard time getting through to them. History has always proven that the poor are more receptive to a handout.

Jesus came offer a free pass to all those who felt they needed assistance. That's why James said,

***The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. <sup>10</sup> But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. <sup>11</sup> For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business. James 1:9-11***

The Bible says, "Be careful when all your bills are easily paid. There is one bill that you could never write a check for. That is, the debt you owe to God for your deliberate self-centeredness, your prayerlessness, and your pride and your greed. You can't pay that bill, and don't ever be fooled into thinking you can." A billionaire can't pay that bill!

Jesus said, "I came to preach to people who feel poor." I came for the down and out.

### **3. The Spirit empowered Jesus to set people free.**

Look what Jesus says in v.18, "*He sent me to proclaim freedom, to give people new eyes to see, to release those who are beat down and oppressed, to proclaim the year of God's favor.*"

And that's why the Lord has drawn you even here to this church today. Jesus is calling you to himself, so that He can set you free from every guilt, every mistake, every shame,

every worry and burden that you carry. He wants to take it off your shoulders and place it on his. Do you believe that?

Now, I asked you, as we began to put a bookmark in Isaiah 61. Will you turn there now please? Let me read to you the exact quotation in that chapter. This is going to blow you away!

Read Isaiah 61:1-2.

Did you catch what Jesus did that day in Nazareth? Nobody caught it that day. Jesus stood over that scroll in that synagogue in Nazareth and he read Isaiah 61:1-2, but he did not read the last part, "*and the day of vengeance of our God.*"

That portion of the prophecy deals with the judgment of God, the wrath of God, the righteous fury of God toward all those who reject him. To those who refused to respond to his message, there was awaiting a heavy punishment and a just penalty. But when Christ first came to this earth, he came NOT to bring pain to prideful people, but to bring freedom for the fallen and salvation to the wounded. He came as the Healer.

But when he comes again, He will fulfill the latter portion of that prophecy. He promised, "Every jot and tittle of this word will be fulfilled, before heaven and earth pass away." And when he comes again, he comes on a white horse with an iron scepter in his hand. He comes to carry out Isaiah's prophecy. "Vengeance is mine," says the Lord.

Now let me tell you something sobering. As far as we know in Scripture, Jesus never went back to his hometown again. Their rejection sent Jesus on his way. And Jesus, "walked right through the crowd and went away." Those people had no idea what they were saying "no" to. And my question for you is: are you saying "no" or are you saying "yes" to Jesus today? Have you sent Jesus on his way, or have you invited him in to your heart? Life is short. This may be the last time he comes to visit you, before he comes again in power.

How will you respond to him? Because the way you respond to Jesus will one day make you or break you.