

# Called to Proclaim

Bible Background • LUKE 4

Printed Text • LUKE 4:14-22 | Devotional Reading • DEUTERONOMY 8:1-1

## Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will COMPREHEND the meaning and significance of Jesus' inaugural sermon in Nazareth, SENSE the impact of Jesus' pronouncement at Nazareth, and ALIGN our faith response with Jesus' call and mission.

## In Focus

Pastor Greenborough took to the podium on Sunday morning. "I want to talk this morning about my vision for our community. I won't be so bold as to say I have a dream. But...well, I have a dream." He smiled and shuffled with his notes.

"I want us to do something about these poor folks who stand around on our street corners. I know you say, 'But Pastor if we give them money, they'll buy booze and drugs.' Let me tell you, I would buy booze too if I hadn't showered in a month, hadn't had fresh socks and underwear for two weeks, hadn't had a proper sleep in five days, and hadn't had a proper meal in two days. We must do something.

"I want us to do something about our brothers and sisters suffering from depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts. I know you say, 'But Pastor, faith will make those people whole. They just need to pray harder.' Let me tell you, they do pray. They pray every day that they could spare the time and money and self-respect to talk to someone trained to help them out of their dark thoughts. They pray every day that God would send them a friend. We must do something, Church."

As Pastor Greenborough went on, sister Patsy sat placidly in her pew. It was great rhetoric, she had to admit and of course she wanted to help all God's children, but still... it was all too great a task for her. What was this "something" their church was supposed to do? Would it really even help?

*How do you react to the message of Jesus and the Church's mission in the world*

## KJV

**Luke 4:14** And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

**15** And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

**16** And 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 for to read.

**17** And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. 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 hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

**19** To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

**20** And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

**21** And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

**22** And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

## NLT

**Luke 4:14** 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?"

## People, Places, and Times

Synagogue. After Solomon's Temple was destroyed and many of the Hebrews were sent into exile, it became necessary to develop local centers of worship and instruction in the Jewish faith. Even after their return from exile and the Jerusalem Temple was rebuilt, these local centers of worship continued. Most communities of size had at least one synagogue and some had several. Jewish sources hold that a synagogue was to be built wherever there were ten or more Jewish men. The primary meeting was held on the Sabbath (Saturday). The usual worship service consisted of the recitation of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), prayers, Scripture readings from the Law and the Prophets, a sermon, and a benediction. Often the community appointed a ruler who cared for the building and selected those who participated in the worship service. Jairus of Capernaum (Mark 5:22), and Crispus and Sosthenes of Corinth (Acts 18) were rulers at their local synagogues. On many occasions, Jesus encountered opposition and conflict in the synagogues both for His teaching (Mark 6:1-6) and His miracles (Luke 4:31-37). As opposition grew, Jesus warned His disciples of a time in the future when they, too, would be persecuted in the synagogues (Matthew 10:17; 23:34; Mark 13:9; Luke 12:11; 21:12).

*What similarities do Jewish synagogues have with modern Christian churches?*

## 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.

*Jesus' ministry was initiated after sacrifice and obedience. What lessons might this pattern teach us?*

## At-A-Glance

1. Returning by the Spirit (Luke 4:14–17)
2. The Spirit is Upon Me (vv. 18–19)
3. Scripture Fulfilled (vv. 20–22)

## In Depth

**1. Returning by the Spirit (Luke 4:14–17)** Here we find the opening scene of Jesus' ministry—in Galilee. From a glorious reception in Galilee, Jesus' next stop was His hometown, Nazareth. The phrase “where he had been brought up” gives the impression that Jesus had not been in Nazareth for a while before this visit (Luke 4:16). Jesus had been raised by devout Jewish parents who reared Him to participate in the tenets of His faith. Therefore, as His custom was, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. It was normal and usual for Him to participate in worship.

Anyone could be invited to read the Scripture lesson for the synagogue services. Scholars are uncertain as to how the reading from the Prophets was chosen. Perhaps the particular reading was left to the discretion of the man reading. Possibly Jesus chose this passage, as indicated by the phrase, “he found the place where it was written” (v. 17).

**2. The Spirit is Upon Me (vv. 18–19)** The reading from Isaiah points back to the very nature of Jesus' ministry. His purpose was to bring the Good News to the poor, brokenhearted, captives, blind, and oppressed (bruised). The Gospel is the Good News to those whose hope lies in Almighty God to act on their behalf. Jesus identifies Himself with the social, religious, and economic outcasts of His day. Throughout the Old Testament, God is clearly on the side of the poor and oppressed (Isaiah 58:6; Psalms 103:6; 146:7; 72:12-14).

“The acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:19) to which Jesus referred to was likely the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25. The Year of Jubilee was a time when the economic and social inequities accumulated through the years were to be crossed off and all God's people would begin again at the same point. Jubilee meant that slaves were to be set free, and people who were in servitude because of debts they couldn't pay were given back their ancestral lands and set free to return to their families.

**3. Scripture Fulfilled (vv. 20–22)** After His reading, the congregation was still. All eyes were fastened on Him, expecting this budding rabbi to offer a sermon on this prophetic text. Jesus broke through the silence with a simple, yet powerful declaration, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (v. 21). There He was, in their midst. Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of God's promise. The acceptable year of the Lord had been launched in the person and ministry of Jesus. Jesus was ushering in a new age of salvation. The Good News of the kingdom was indeed the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messianic hope.

Initially, those who heard His words responded favorably. They wondered at the gracious words He had just spoken. Still, they were confused about His identity. They could not move beyond the fact that He was Joseph's son. How could a carpenter's son declare Himself to be the Son of God?

*Think of a time a speaker has unexpectedly blown you away with their message. What was surprising about the message?*

## Search the Scriptures

1. What did Jesus do once He arrived at Nazareth (Luke 4:16)?
2. What responsibilities had Jesus been given because the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him (vv. 18-19)?

## Discuss the Meaning

1. Jesus often fulfilled prophecy in one way during His earthly ministry but will also fulfill the same prophesy even more fully when His Kingdom comes. How is it the day of the Lord's favor today? How much more of the prophecy do we still await?
2. What did Isaiah's prophecy mean to its original audience?

## Liberating Lesson

We are not redeemed simply to console ourselves in the Spirit, but to be a hand extended to the unchurched and the hurting. People today are looking for peace in their lives. As believers in Christ, we know that Jesus is the answer. But it is of no consequence if we do not get the message to people who really need to hear it. The African American and the global African population is disproportionately influenced by poverty and imprisonment. Make plans to implement one practical way that the class can be a Christ-like influence in your community by doing each of these in the following weeks:

1. Preaching the Gospel to the poor
2. Preaching deliverance to prisoners
3. Helping the blind see
4. Setting the oppressed free

## Application for Activation

Isaiah refers to Jubilee in the context of a restoration of Israel after the nation's enemies had humbled her (Isaiah 61:2). Jesus referred regarding the new day He would bring. This week use your Bible and Bible reference tools to do some research on the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8–55). Spend time meditating on how the deliverance Jesus brings compares and contrasts with the freedom of the Jubilee year. Share your thoughts with the group next week.

## Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do?

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned?

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## Say It Correctly

Shema. shuh-**MAH**.

Jairus. **JIE**-russ.

## Daily Bible Readings

### MONDAY

Live By God's Word  
(Deuteronomy 8:1–11)

### TUESDAY

Jubilee, Year of God's Favor  
(Leviticus 25:8–17)

### WEDNESDAY

Miracle of the Meal and Oil  
(1 Kings 17:8–16)

### THURSDAY

Naaman's Leprosy  
Healed in Jordan River  
(2 Kings 5:1–14)

### FRIDAY

Jesus Overcomes  
the Devil's Temptations  
(Luke 4:1–13)

### SATURDAY

Jesus Driven out of Nazareth  
(Luke 4:23–30)

### SUNDAY

Jesus' Mandate for Ministry Announced  
(Luke 4:14–22)