

“The Spirit-Driven Mission of Jesus”

Luke 4:14-44

RHC History. . . 120 ppl coming each Sunday, 6 CGs, People serving, Membership growing, Our community is being served and lives are being changed by the gospel. There are so many reasons to give God thanks. At the same time, please do not hear a triumphalistic tone in what I’m saying. We have not arrived. Our church is full of broken people, including our leadership, and to be frank, there are a lot of things we want to do but lack the capacity to accomplish, like pay our own bills. We pay some of them, not all of them. It’s part of being a new church. In many ways, we are still like a little toddler learning how to walk and sometimes we fall down the stairs and bump our head ☺ . BUT when you look at what has happened here, it is really encouraging. Now, all that said, let me pose a thought:

What if a lot of good things happened in the life of our church, but not a lot of great things, not a lot of God things. One of my greatest fear is to go hard at this for 20-30-40 years, look back, and only be able to say, “You know what? That was a good run. We made a lot of progress and saw a lot of really cool stuff . . .” That would be an insufficient picture. What would be most satisfying because it would be most God-glorifying would be to look back and say, “What happened in that place, among those people was the unmistakable work of God.”

Here’s the danger: We could be part of a “religious system” that requires little, if any, help from the Spirit of God. The church in America is steeped in its own cultural trappings of capitalism and consumerism in ways that are often difficult to see. We begin to understand that we can have the right marketing plan, some good music, a few programs to meet people’s felt needs, and a cool pastor, then more and more people might pick our church because it would fulfill their own individualistic and selfish consumeristic preferences.

We don’t have to fast and pray. We can run a program instead. We don’t have to display the love of Christ because people will come back if we are nice at the front door and have a couple of cool songs, and then all of the sudden in the very essence of our mission, we have simply capitulated to the culture in which we find ourselves. David Platt puts it like this:

- ***“The greatest hindrance to the advancement of the gospel to the nations today may be the attempt of church of God to do the work of God apart from the Spirit of God, not the self-indulgent immorality of our culture but the self-sufficient mentality of the church.”***

Key Question: Are we dependent on ourselves, or are we desperate for the Spirit?

As we turn to the gospel of Luke, we need to recall the prominence of the Spirit’s role. The Spirit was active in the coming of John the Baptist and of course, the Incarnation of Jesus. The Spirit was on Elizabeth as she encountered Mary and the Spirit conceived son in her womb, Zechariah as he prophesied, and Simeon as he waited for Messiah. In Luke 3, John tells us that Jesus will baptize us with the Spirit and when Jesus was baptized the Spirit fell on him like a dove. In chapter 4, Jesus is full of the Spirit and was led by the Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness by Satan and he fought off those temptations by the power of the Spirit and the Spirit-inspired word of God. NOW... in our passage this morning we are going to find that Jesus begins his ministry in the power of the Spirit because the Spirit has anointed for the mission of God. If this is the case, then it would be wise for us to strive to be a . . .

The Point: Let’s be a church that engages in the Spirit-driven mission of Jesus

Context: Luke 4:14 marks the beginning of a new section in Luke that covers the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and concludes in 9:50. Look at **verses 14-15** with me.

Jesus went in the power of the Spirit, teaching regularly in their synagogues, so the episode we are about to see in Nazareth was not an isolated event, and v. 15 says, “he was being glorified by all.” His fame spread

throughout the region with the quickness. **Verse 16** Jesus grew up in Nazareth, and Jesus went to church (enough of a reason for us to prioritize it in our lives I would say.) So what was he teaching? **V. 17-20** What Jesus just read serves as a kind of programmatic statement for his ministry. In other words, these words describe the nature of his task in such a way, that they set the agenda for his whole ministry. We can sum it up in two ways. First,

I. Jesus declared his Spirit-driven mission through the ministry of the Word (4:14-32, 42-44).

When he was in the synagogue on this particular Saturday, Jesus was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and he intentionally turned to Isaiah 61. Why? Because he is the one who is anointed with “the Spirit of the Lord.” The Spirit was on him to empower and guide his mission. What did he empower Jesus do? In other words what was the mission the Father sent him to fulfill?

So what has the Spirit anointed Jesus to do? Four infinitives teach about the mission of Christ. The first two and the last center on proclamation...

1. To proclaim good news to the poor (“preach”)
 - The Spirit anointed him to proclaim good news to the poor. Jesus came preaching Jesus was sent to proclaim the good news of the kingdom.

How did he preach?

- **Verse 22:** with “gracious words.”
- **Verse 31-32:** his words “possessed authority.”
- Jesus also preached with a great sense of purpose and passion because he was compelled to do so. **Verse 43.**

What did he preach? The “good news,” the gospel?

- It is the good news of the kingdom. Kingdom refers to the reign of God in the world. “The good news,” or gospel preaching, is detailed in what follows.
 - The poor (not so much physically poor here, though God certainly has a regard for the physically poor as is clearly seen throughout the gospel of Luke) refers to those who possess the humility to be open to the work of God in their life. They see their need before God, the spiritually bankrupt. (Matthew 5:3/Lk. 6:20).
 - Anyone who comes to Jesus receives the benefits he extends... Here is love without discrimination!
 - App: What about you? Poor in spirit?
2. To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind
 - Liberty to Captives: overtones of exile. The imagery here is rich. There needs to be a release from captivity (sin and spiritual captivity).
 - Sight to the Blind: On the surface, we might think of only the physical blind (and be sure, Jesus came to give sight to the blind. In fact, this was one of the marks of Messiah (Is. 35; Luke 7/Mt. 11)
 3. To set at liberty those who are oppressed. (UNPACK THIS UNDER PT 2)
 4. To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor
 - This statement rings of the year of Jubilee. A time to be celebrated every 50 years among the people of Israel where the people experience restoration and rest. Jon will explain this in greater detail as we look at the Sabbath and how Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. I can say right now that Jesus came to announce that he brings physical and spiritual rest to our weary souls. (Matthew 11:28)

Now **verse 20**... All eyes on him... picture this... He sits down to teach. So Jesus did not read the scroll and give a one sentence interpretation. As indicated in verse 21, he taught, explained what the text meant, and explained the relevance for his hearers. This is why we do what we do every Sunday. Text. God’s Word. Teach, explain, and expose it’s relevance. In a very compact and potent manner, verse 21 tells us what was so significant about what he just read? **Verse 21**

- So Jesus is saying, everything that Isaiah 61 says is true of him. When Jesus proclaimed the truths of God, he preached himself! He was the content and focus of his message. What other option did he have? He is the fulfillment of all God’s promises. So what does this mean for us?

- App: We announce news. This is our job. Jon will hit it even more next week, but if we're about the mission of Jesus we announce this news... Why? Well, here's a little theology on the ministry of the Word from two verses.
- "But he answered, 'It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)
- "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - The Word is given by God.
 - The Word gives life. It is life to us. It is our sustenance.
 - The Word profitable. It changes us. Saves us and Transforms us. Sanctifies us by correcting, rebuking, training us in righteousness...
- Now, if we believe all of those things, what should be the natural result?

1) Soak it up

- Do you really value the Word. Do you ever take these verses and really meditate on them...
- In fact, let's talk meditation for a min... So many view it to a path of spiritual wellness.
- Meditation: Contrast with Eastern Meditation; article on the

2) Share it!

- We want to see people understand what I like to call the missiological spiral: Read the Word, Live the Word, Spread the Word.
- Pew Report... Cultural Christianity.. This is a good thing (see Mohler)
- 1 to 1 Bible Reading... We want to see a Bible-reading culture developed in RHC.
- Sundays. CGs. Mission. In our homes.
- We are big on relational evangelism around here, which is great. BUT, listen to what David Helm says about this: *"Relational evangelism is not really evangelism at all until the word of God is introduced into that relationship."*

Reception to the Word...

- Whenever God's word goes forth, there must be a response. Throughout the ministry of Jesus there was both acceptance and rejection of his message.
- We see this in the early church. Luke lays this out in the Book of Acts with great clarity.
- Paul explained in 2 Cor. 2: "we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life."
- Application: People are more receptive to reading the Bible than you may think.

"We asked a total of 1,000 twenty-something unchurched people; 900 American, 100 Canadian. And we compared them to a sample of 500 older unchurched (30 or above)... One of the questions that we asked them to agree or disagree with was: 'I would be willing to study the Bible if a friend asked me to?' Among twenty-somethings, 61-percent said, 'Yes.' Among their older counterparts of 30 and above, 42-percent said, 'Yes.' And that was a statistically significant difference, telling us there's something going on, there's an openness that's there. So we're seeing that as an opportunity—that in the midst of some negative views of the church, there is also some openness to the things of God." (Ed Stetzer)

- So perhaps the reason more people are not hearing God's word is not because they are unwilling to hear, but because we are unwilling to share.
- Sure, not all will be receptive, but be encouraged. If you are rejected, persecuted, ridiculed... you belong in the company of Jesus. We see this beginning in **verse 22(-30)**

Opposition to the Word.

- verse 23ff...
 - Jesus was aware of their thoughts.
 - "Truly" a word used over 70 times in the gospels as a way to emphasize the truthfulness of what he was about to say...

- When God's people reject his prophets, God often sends them elsewhere, and even to the Gentiles... (SEE BOCK HERE)
 - Case #1. Elijah.
 - Case #2. Elisha
- The people of Nazareth were not just a little perturbed about the words of Jesus in the synagogue. They were filled with wrath. So much so that they rose up, take Jesus to the edge of the town, where they could cast him down the cliff in order to kill him...
- Do you ever read the Bible too quickly? I mean, they really wanted, not just wanted, they really tried to kill Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth.
- Verse 30 doesn't provide all of the details but it seems there was some sort of supernatural deliverance at work in Jesus' escape.
- The mission of Jesus was declared through the ministry of the word, and # 2. . .

II. The Spirit-driven mission of Jesus was displayed through a ministry of deeds (4:18, 33-41).

- It's Word, but not just word. It's word and deed. It's so easy to love one of these but not the other, or at minimum, get them way out of balance. Some love truth but not justice. Some love justice but not truth. It's all about the word. Preach the gospel use words if necessary...
- A lot of people want ethics and kingdom living, but no king. No sense of authority, no living under his reign. Then you do not have the kingdom.
- Declare and display. Right? You know mission for us means making disciples. In other words, teaching people what it looks like to follow Jesus. How do we go about making disciples? Pray. Display. Declare. It has to be a both-and.
- **Tim Keller said, "Christianity is not a way of life. Christianity is a message that leads to a way of life."**
- Look back at verse 18 and the third infinitive there.
- "To set at liberty those who are oppressed."
 - Probably from Isaiah 58:6:
 - Read some Isaiah 58
 - A prophet could proclaim the message, but he could not bring it to pass.
 - A deliverer (judge, savior) must come in order to bring the message to fulfillment. Jesus is more than a prophet!
 - These healings... pictures the deliverance that Jesus came to bring and are related to his authority over all things...
 - Jesus does what Israel failed to do in Isaiah 58... Read this and the mercy focus of Is. 61!!!
 - He met the needs of those around him with a heart full compassion and love.
 - App: Personal
 - App: City (Amirah?? Prob not...)
 - App: Church
 - CGs: Reason #17 to jump in... Serve together.
 - Corporate Efforts: Turkey Giveaway...

Healing #1. Man with an Unclean Demon (31-37)

- Verse 31-37 introduces us to the first of 21 miracles through the gospel of Luke.
- Verse 31: Jesus did not stop teaching on the Sabbath just because he faced some opposition...
- The dialogue with the demon...
 - Spiritual warfare.
 - **"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)**
 - They know Jesus but do not trust him (James 2...)
- The crowds are amazed and the word begins to spread...

Healing #2: Peter's mother-in-law (38-39)

- After he leaves the synagogue, he heads over to Simon's house. This is Simon Peter, known to us as Peter. Like many of us, Peter had a mother-in-law. Now, I've always found it curious why the Catholic church affirms Peter as their first pope, but will not let their priests marry.
- I'm not trying to pick on Catholics or Buddhists and those to groups are not even close to being apples to apples. At the same time, I want to teach you why we believe what we believe and how our beliefs differentiate from other faith systems.
- So Peter's wife's mom has a high fever. It must have been quite severe as the people make the appeal to Jesus for him to heal her.
- Verse 39 tells us that "he stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left." Immediately, like any good host, she got up and began serving those gathered there, which is Luke's way of emphasizing us that the spontaneous power of the healing.

Healing #3: The Sick & Demonic (40-41)

- Verse 41...
 - Messianic Secret... (Mark..)
- Spiritual warfare present...
 - People are oppressed. There is a cosmic struggle going on here.
 - Don't forget our context... 4:1-13...
 - "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)
- Whatever you are going through? Whatever battle, whatever oppression, Jesus can heal you. He has the power to heal you? & If you are in him, there is no doubt he will restore the brokenness in your life either in this life or in the resurrection.

App: Our deeds in Medford. Every CG. If you thought CG was a Kumbayah session every week, think again. Our CGs will be out breaking a sweat for the sake of others. In the process they will picture forth the coming kingdom of God. The kingdom has arrived, inaugurated with the arrival of Jesus, but it has not been fully realized or fully consummated. The kingdom is both already (already here, but not yet, not yet fully here). The world needs to see that we are a servant community. When our deeds match our beliefs, we lend credibility to what we believe. --The love of God compels our love...

Conclusion:

- The mission of Jesus was a Spirit-driven mission... To really experience fruitful ministry of the word. To really experience fruitful, kingdom foreshadowing ministry of deeds, we really have to be filled with God's Spirit. So how?
- **So how can we be a church filled with the Spirit of God? Ordinary means of grace...
 - Pray.
 - Love. (repentance. Faith. Battle temptation... conviction of sin, pursuit of holiness)
 - Word.
- Results in....
 - Word.
 - Deed.
- Summary in Acts 10:34-43 Turn to Acts...
- "So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." (Acts 10:34-38)