

gospelⁱⁿlife

Luke 4.14-21
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I. Connecting With One Another

Have you ever experienced a fine meal out that was made delightful by the quality of service? What attitude toward you did your server have? What else made him/her an effective server?

II. Introduction to this Series and Study

The Gospel in Life. It's the title of our sermon series and focus in many small groups in the coming eight weeks. The "Gospel" is the good news of God's reconciling love that we know through Jesus Christ - his life, his inauguration of God's Kingdom, his sacrificial and atoning death, and his triumphant resurrection. How does this Gospel impact our lives - not just Sunday mornings, but every day and in every situation? How do we, followers of Jesus, live out this good news in our own hearts, in our families, in our community, and in our world?

This week we focus on the third facet of the three-part description of a disciple found in our church's mission statement: **Good Shepherd exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ who Connect with God, Grow in Faith, and Serve in Love.** To do so we will look at Jesus' "mission statement" recorded in the Gospel of Luke, chapter four, a statement that has to do with God's work of reconciling all things and of bringing God's "Shalom" to all people. It is a description of what it means to Serve in Love.

III. Study the Text

- a. Read through Luke 4.14-21. What do you find surprising about this passage?
- b. Look at verses 14 and 15. Through what circumstances did Jesus experience the power of the Holy Spirit (see verses 1-13)? What do you think is the "news about him" that spread throughout the area (there may be as much as a year between the events in verse 13 and verse 14)? What was the response of those who heard Jesus' teaching?
- c. Now look at verses 16 and 17. Did you notice Jesus' custom of being in the synagogue on the Sabbath? It was customary for rabbis to be given the opportunity to read scripture (standing) then to explain the passage, comment on it, and apply it to life situations (doing so while sitting). The synagogue attendant (known as the "chazan") hands Jesus the scroll containing what we know as the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. What do you find significant about Jesus opening the scroll and unrolling it to the specific passage (from Isaiah 61)? What does this suggest about his intentionality and his authority?
- d. Isaiah's prophecy in verses 18 and 19 (quoted from Isaiah 61.1-2) is a Messianic prophecy conveying, in part, the hope of a Messiah who would come to deliver Israel from her enemies, free her from the oppression of her captors, and usher in a Messianic kingdom centered in Israel. As the congregation listens to Jesus read these verses what do you imagine they are envisioning? Look at Isaiah 61.1-2 and compare it to the passage quoted in Luke 4. What phrases did Jesus omit? Do you think this would surprise the listeners? Anger them? Confuse them? Why?

e. Try to paraphrase the meaning of each of the phrases Jesus quotes:

The Spirit of the Lord is Upon me = _____

Anointed me to preach good news to the poor = _____

Sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners = _____

Recovery of sight for the blind = _____

Release to the oppressed = _____

Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor = _____

f. The Hebrew word "Shalom" is linked to the grace of God that provides completeness, well-being, welfare, and soundness that have to do with spiritual well-being, material prosperity, and physical safety. How does the description of the Messiah from Isaiah 61 paint a picture of this "Shalom"?

g. Jesus finishes reading, rolls up the scroll and hands it to the chazan. He sits to begin preaching, and says, "today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." What claim is he making? How is his Messianic role different from what some may have expected?

h. Take a look at Colossians 1.15-23, notice verse 20 in particular. How has God made peace (derived from the Hebrew notion of "Shalom") with human beings?

i. Next look at Mark 10.45. Jesus, the Messiah who comes to establish God's "Shalom", describes his role as that of a servant. How does he serve? How does this establish and bring about "Shalom"?

j. One last passage - 2 Corinthians 5.18-21 suggests that followers of Jesus are to be agents of God's work of reconciling all people. How can you be this kind of agent of "Shalom"?

k. Jesus came in the power of God's Spirit, bringing the Kingdom of God into the world, to serve by giving himself in order to establish God's "Shalom".

l. Jesus came in the power of God's Spirit, bringing the Kingdom of God into the world, to serve by giving himself in order to establish God's "Shalom". His followers are called to be "Shalom bringers" as well. If "Shalom" means spiritual, material and physical well-being, then what must be involved in serving our neighbor in love?

IV. Reflect and Respond

a. How can you be an agent of God's "Shalom" in your marriage, family, neighborhood, community, place of work, and other places you relate to people?

b. Reflect on 1 Peter 4.10: "*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*" In what ways has God gifted you? Where can your abilities and resources (your gifts), along with your God-shaped passion, meet the needs of others and bring "Shalom" to them?

c. Serving takes many forms. For some it's caring for an elderly parent. For others it's helping in the various programs and activities within the church. Others serve with outside organizations like our ministry partners. Others engage in bringing "Shalom" through secular organizations and through their vocational work. Would you ask God to direct you to ways you can serve in love?

V. Spend some time in prayer:

a. Pray for God's guidance regarding ways you can serve in love and help bring "Shalom" to others.

b. Pray for the power of God's Spirit to enable you and to enable the Good Shepherd congregation to be agents of God's peace and "Shalom" in our community.

c. Pray for our hearts to be tuned to the heart of Jesus Christ - hearts longing to love our neighbor and to see them experience the "Shalom" we have been thinking about.