



By the Spirit, Jesus Fulfills the Scriptures

Luke Series #11

Luke 4:14-30

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February 3, 2013

Please take a Bible and turn to Luke 4. I will admit that I am not generally a guy who keeps up with the news. What news I do get is from occasionally reading something on the internet. But I do know enough right now to know that there are a lot of people talking about and energized about the topic of gun control. So I'd like to talk about the second amendment and how it relates to firearms—no I'm just kidding. I'm not going to do that. I have no desire to do that.

Luke 4 has nothing to do with that but it is a very polarizing topic. We could probably have a debate right here. I am sure that there are people in this room who are on both sides of the issue; who know enough and are excited enough about the topic to debate it right here.

The only reason I bring it up is because it is a topic that polarizes people. It evokes strong emotions, strong arguments and strong feelings which are similar to what we see in Luke 4 in the life and message of Jesus Christ. There are some who are responding to Jesus in adoration, worship and awe; there are some who will respond—at the end of this passage—by desiring to kill Jesus. So there are strong, strong feelings about Jesus that existed during His day and that exist now. As we look at this passage today, I want to finish the very end of the message by thinking about how we respond to Jesus Christ.

So far in this series on Luke, we have been

- In Luke 1 and 2, we were talking about Jesus' birth and His childhood.
- In Luke 3 we fast forward to Jesus at age 30 when He's baptized by John the Baptist. It's introducing and it's preparing His public ministry. The Holy Spirit was descending upon Him visually and in bodily form. The Father was saying in an audible voice, "You are my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."
- In the first part of Luke 4, we looked at Jesus immediately being led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted. We talked about how Jesus was tempted as the second Adam; and that what He did in resisting these temptations accomplished righteousness for us. He stood righteous in the face of temptation

when Adam couldn't, when Israel couldn't—when we can't—Jesus stood righteous.

- Now in Luke 4:14-30, Luke is introducing us to the public ministry of Jesus.

Many have said the baptism and the temptation were preparation for Jesus' ministry and today we are going to look at how Luke introduces us to the ministry of Jesus. Look at verses 14 and 15 which provide a summary of the beginning of Jesus' ministry: *“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”* So at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus has returned to Galilee after the temptation scene. Galilee had several towns and synagogues— places of worship for them—and He was going around and teaching in those synagogues. We are going to see later that He was performing many miraculous works as well. But this report was going around about Jesus. He was gaining popularity; He was gaining a hearing through His teaching.

If this news would be reported today, the social media would be alive with comments about Jesus. Tweets saying, “I JUST HEARD AN AMAZING MESSAGE FROM #JESUS” and that would get retweeted and then there would be many “likes” on Facebook. Maybe somebody takes their notes and gets an Early-bird filter on their phone with a picture of Jesus teaching in the background and that goes up on Instagram. Obviously, Jesus didn't have that. I don't know how these reports went out, probably newspapers and magazines or whatever they had back then. But seriously, Jesus is gaining a hearing. Jesus is being glorified by all. His popularity is increasing. So Luke summarized these reports in verses 14 and 15 then in verses 16-30 he gives us an example of Jesus' teaching. Next week we will see an example of Jesus' works.

Luke is introducing Jesus to us by saying, “Here is a summary or a sample of Jesus' words...” and next week we will look at a sample or a summary of some of Jesus' works. Today, as we look at this sermon from Jesus, I want to look at three aspects of it:

- First, what Jesus chose to preach. What was His text? What Old Testament passage—because there was not a New Testament yet—what Old Testament passage did Jesus choose for His preaching? So what does it say? What is the passage?
- Then we'll look at what Jesus said about it? What was Jesus' message about this passage?
- And finally, we'll look at how people responded to that message.

What Jesus Read

So let's look at Luke 4:16-19 at what Jesus read, what was His passage?

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

So Jesus has been going around to these different synagogues and preaching. Verse 16 says, *"As was His custom...on the Sabbath day..."* This was normal for Jesus to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath day and we know from history that often in these services there would be several different Scripture readings, one of which would be followed by a time of application, exposition or preaching.

Because these reports are going out about Jesus and He's actually back in His home town of Nazareth, Jesus is the one Who's chosen to preach that day. So He stands up, unrolls the scroll and turns to what would be Isaiah 61 (if they had chapter divisions back then). Most of your Bible's probably have a footnote next to verse 18 that would lead you to Isaiah 61:1-2. This is what Jesus chose to read. Verse 17 says, *"...He found the place where it was written..."* and He reads this: *"...to proclaim good news to the poor...to proclaim liberty to the captives...recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

So here's a sentence summary for what Jesus read: Jesus read the gospel—the good news—from the book of Isaiah. In Old Testament times, this passage is looking forward to the day when God is going to restore this world; God is going to make right all the things that are wrong in this world. Jesus is preaching the restoration aspect of the gospel.

There are two different four-word summaries of the gospel that many of us have heard. Let's just remind ourselves of how Jesus came to this world to die for each one of us and to pay for our sins. There's a four word summary of the good news of Jesus that says: God, Man, Christ, Response:

1. God—I must understand that there is a God, that there is a Creator, and that I am accountable to Him.
2. Man—understanding that as a man I am a sinner and fully deserving God’s wrath.
3. Christ—Jesus, the God-Man, came into this world to live in my place and die in my place.
4. Response— that I can be saved by God’s grace by responding to Jesus with repentance and faith, turning from everything else to trust only in Jesus.

That is a good summary of the good news of Jesus Christ.

There is another four word summary that many of us know: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration. This is focusing more on God at work in this world; the big picture of God’s working in this world throughout human history.

1. Creation—in the beginning God made everything and it was very good; it was without evil.
2. Fall—Adam and Eve sinned, plunging us into spiritual death and darkness. The effects of the curse fell onto this world when Adam and Eve sinned.
3. Redemption—Jesus came to redeem a people for Himself, a people from every nation.
4. Restoration—God is going to restore His creation and make all things new. He will make everything that is bad in this world right again and restore all things to Himself.

Tim Keller describes it this way: “We once had the world we all wanted, a world of peace and justice, without death, disease or conflict. But by turning from God we lost that world.” He goes on to talk about how God is at work, redeeming and restoring this world. So the aspect of the gospel that Jesus focused on here when He read Isaiah was which part? It’s the restoration. Jesus quoted this prophecy and preached the gospel from Isaiah. And so what did Jesus say about it? If He read Isaiah publically, He read the gospel, the good news that God is at work, restoring this world.

What Jesus Said

Luke 4:20 describes this scene: Jesus handed the scroll back to the attendant and sat down which was probably the custom of the day—Standing to read, sitting down to preach. This gives us a clue as to the intensity in that room as Jesus sat. Look what Luke says: “*the*

eyes of everyone were fixed on Jesus.” There is thick anticipation in the air as Jesus sits down and begins to speak. They are watching Him and are ready for what He is going to say.

This is the Jesus Who was raised in Nazareth. They knew Him. They are hearing all these reports about Him; they are hearing about what He is saying, what He is doing and now He is here. He reads this gospel promise in the Old Testament and He sits down. Their attention is fixed on Him. *“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’”* (Luke 4:20-21).

This is not so amazing to us. This is not so breathtaking to us because we know the New Testament. We have the story of Jesus and we know that He fulfilled the Old Testament promises. But in that day, what Jesus said was nothing short of amazing. It was nothing short of blasphemy if it were not true. Nothing short of breathtaking to those people as He read the gospel promise that God is going to restore all things to Himself—give sight to the blind, restore the captive and release the oppressed. This is good news to the poor. This is the promise of a second exodus, reminding God’s people of the time when God redeemed them out of Egypt. And now they are looking forward to the time when God is going to restore all things to Himself again. And Jesus says, *“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

I think it is helpful for us to reaffirm in our minds how often Jesus says things like this—how often the New Testament is pointing to Jesus as the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament. In John 5:39, Jesus addresses a volatile crowd and says, *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me...”* Jesus is saying that “you have searched the Old Testament; you are thinking that in them you have life but what you don’t know is that the Old Testament is about Me.” And just a few verses later (5:46) He says, *“For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.”* These people believed in Moses and acknowledged Abraham as their father.

- Consider these passages: In Luke 24:27 Jesus is with His disciples and it says that, *“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”* Jesus taught them about Himself from the Law and the Prophets—the Old Testament.
- In Matthew 5:17 Jesus says, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”*

- In 2 Corinthians 1:20 Paul says of Jesus, *“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.”* All the promises of God in the Old Testament were leading up this day when the Messiah would come. All these Old Testament promises are pointing to Jesus and find their fulfillment—their “Yes” in Him. And Paul goes on to say, *“That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.”*

We showed a video clip here at the beginning of the “Behold Our God” series in which Tim Keller is driving this truth home, saying the Bible is not primarily about you, it’s not primarily about me, it’s not primarily about us. The Bible is primarily about God. The main character of the Bible is Jesus. Keller goes through these Old Testament examples showing that all these things are pointing to Jesus. He finishes by saying this:

“Jesus is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb; innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He’s the true Temple, the true Prophet, the true Priest, the true King, the true Sacrifice, the true Lamb, the true Light, the true Bread. The Bible’s really not about you—it’s about Him.”

So Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises and He preached the gospel from the book of Isaiah.

In summary, Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of that gospel, of that good news. We know that but I think it is helpful for us to be reminded again and to be reaffirmed in our faith in Jesus is the fulfillment of the good news that has been promised ever since the fall in the Garden of Eden.

Jesus Claims to Be The Fulfillment of The Gospel

Specifically though, how does Jesus fulfill this passage? He says to them, “This passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21). How does He fulfill it? Look at Luke 4:18. Jesus began reading, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me...”* We have seen that already. We’ve seen this fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and all these passages since then have been talking about how Jesus is operating by the Spirit—in the power of the Spirit. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. He was in the Spirit while He was resisting temptation and in Luke 4:14, *“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee...”*

So Jesus has been anointed by the Holy Spirit. But this passage in Isaiah is a promise that is pointing to Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ. So this is the first

time Jesus actually says, "This is about Me." For the first time that we have record of, Jesus is saying, "I am the Anointed One; I am the Christ; I am the Messiah Who has come to fulfill this."

As for the rest of these promises, He mentions the poor, the captive, the blind and the oppressed. In Jesus' ministry, He does minister to people's physical needs. He does heal the blind; He does give sight to the blind; He does heal the lame. We are going to see where He raises the dead. We see Him ministering to the poor and needy. This is a theme in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus has come as the Son of Man and came to seek and save the lost. Jesus is very interested in ministering to and meeting the needs of the poor and needy.

But I think if that's all we see here as the fulfillment of Isaiah, we are missing this bigger rescue plan that Jesus has come to accomplish. Jesus came, not only to minister to physical and social needs, but to rescue a people for Himself from the spiritual darkness that exists in this world. He came, not only to give physical eyesight to the blind but to remove the scales of our sins so we can see our God. He removes the blinders of our sin so we can see and believe in Jesus. Jesus came to set people free from captivity and we see Him do that as He casts out demons and relieves people from oppression. He came to preach a message the people of Israel would have been longing for during a time of oppressive rule over them. But Jesus came to set people free from the bondage that exists because of sin. Many times the Bible uses the imagery of slavery and chains and imprisonment to talk about our bondage to sin. Jesus has come to proclaim liberty.

Look again at Luke 4:18-19 and the quote from Isaiah. There is a word that comes up over and over again. It says to proclaim the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Glance ahead to verse 43 where Jesus says to them, "*I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God...*" What Jesus is saying here is that this is being fulfilled through the preaching of the good news and the gospel of the Kingdom of God. God's Kingdom has broken into this dark world, not yet fully recognized, not yet fully consummated.

One day God will fully restore all things to Himself in Jesus Christ when He returns. But this spiritual rescue is already beginning. Jesus has come so we can sing things like, "My chains fell off, I've been set free." Or, "He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free." We can sing,

I come broken to be mended
I come wounded to be healed
I come desperate to be rescued
I come empty to be filled
I come guilty to be pardoned
By the blood of Christ the Lamb
And I'm welcomed with open arms
Praise God, just as I am

(Just As I Am by Travis Cottrell)

These things that we sing about are true because of sin and darkness in this world.
But Jesus has come to restore us and set us free.

How Did They Respond?

Jesus is reading the gospel from Isaiah and saying, "I have come to fulfill that gospel." Now let's look at how people responded to Jesus' message.

Luke 4:22 says, *"And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'"* As He's preaching, it says all of them marveled at first and they were speaking well of Him. They were probably commenting mostly about His ability to communicate; how the words were graciously coming out of His mouth. Yet they still had some doubts saying, *"Is this not Joseph's son?"* And it goes on,

And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ^{and} Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon..."

(Luke 4:22-26)

Then He tells another story in 4:27: *"And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."* Here is their response to that: *"When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath."* And not just wrath but enough to lead them to action. *"And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff"* (Luke 4:28-29).

This is a huge turn of their response from up in verse 22 where it says they spoke well of Him. Now they are not just speaking poorly about Him, they are taking Him to a cliff to throw Him off it. Luke 4:30 says, *“But passing through their midst, he went away.”* It wasn’t His time; His hour had not yet come. So, we see this happen many times throughout Jesus’ ministry as they rise up to kill Him. It doesn’t really say how but it just says He walked through their midst and went away. What’s going on here? They are responding to Him first by saying He is a good speaker but then they ask, “Isn’t this just Joseph’s son?”

Let’s pause ourselves to answer this question. We saw in Luke 2 that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary; in Luke 3 we saw the Father saying, *“You are my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.”* So no, this isn’t just Joseph’s boy; this isn’t just Joseph’s son. Jesus doesn’t directly answer the question, He begins confronting their pride.

Here is a summary of how they respond. Jesus confronts their pride and evokes an angry response. Jesus says, *“Doubtless you are going to quote this proverb to me, ‘Physician, heal yourself’”* (Luke 4:23). In other words, “Doctor, why should I listen to you when you are so sick? Why would I take your advice when you can’t heal yourself?” So they are asking for proof, they want a sign. “Show me that you can fix yourself and then maybe I’ll trust what you are saying.” And then Jesus goes on, *“No prophet is acceptable in His home town.”* Jesus is doing more here than just saying, “I grew up here. This is difficult for you is because you saw Me grow up.” I think it is more than this.

Jesus confronted their pride of being part of the nation of Israel and being descendants of Abraham. They thought their lineage made them fine. This gospel Jesus just preached from Isaiah was all about them; all about God restoring Israel. Jesus was saying, “You are rejecting Me. No prophet is acceptable in his hometown,” similar to what John says in John 1:11 where he says, *“He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.”*

Now Jesus is going to tell two stories that are going to confront this pride as He points back the Old Testament when God’s grace did not go to individuals who were of His covenant people—Israel—but His grace went to outsiders. He says, *“There were many widows in Israel.”* But God did not send Elijah to any of them; He sent Elijah to a widow of Zarephath—outside of Israel. Then He says there were many lepers in Israel who could have been healed but God did not send Elisha to heal those lepers; He sent Elisha to heal Naaman, a Syrian.

He is saying, “This good news is much better than you guys think. It’s much broader than just God restoring His people—those born into the nation of Israel.” He is saying, “This gospel that’s being fulfilled is God redeeming a people from all nations. God is raising up people from every tribe, every nation, every people group in this world. This gospel is much broader than that, this good news that I’m fulfilling is for all.” And they responded to that in their pride with fierce anger. Anger enough to seek to throw Jesus off the cliff.

So Jesus preached the gospel from Isaiah and He said, “I am the fulfillment of this Good News. It is being fulfilled right now as I am coming to rescue and restore a people for myself.” And He confronts their pride saying, “This is not just for you, this is for the world; this is for a people from every nation.” And they responded to Jesus in anger.

How Should We Respond?

As I started this message, I said people then were very polarized about Jesus. He was evoking emotions and today as we finish this message, let’s ask ourselves, “How should we respond to this truth?” They responded in anger. How should we respond?

I think possibly there are people in this room who respond similarly to those in Jesus’ day—with anger. Maybe you’re here because you just feel like you should be but genuinely in your heart you are responding to Jesus in anger. And more likely, people here respond to Jesus with indifference. How are you responding?

I just want to point two things out today as we finish this. Those of you in Care Groups, you can discuss these two responses to this message in your groups.

- First, we must respond to Jesus by embracing Him in faith. The initial step of faith is to say, “Jesus, I am turning from everything else to trust in You alone.” But it is also a daily step of faith where we continually come to Jesus and this good news that He was preaching, saying, “This is for me God, I am trusting You to continue removing the blinders from my eyes; to continue removing the allure of this world; to continue giving me the power to face temptation and to live for You.” So it is embracing Jesus in faith; trusting Jesus that He is the true fulfillment of all things. He is the true fulfillment of these promises that I can rest in Him; I can find my security and faith in Him.
- Secondly, if we are responding to Jesus in faith, if we are trusting Him, then we should also have a desire to spread this good news like Jesus did. We should have the same desire for the mission that Jesus had—to take this gospel and proclaim it like Jesus did. We acknowledge that Jesus does physically and socially care for the needs of others. And so that is good for us, too. We are near to the

heart of Jesus when we desire to give to the needy or minister to those who are poor or blind or who are in other ways experiencing the effects of the curse. I think many of you are doing this through individual relationships where you are giving to others or through ministries like the Prison Ministry or Lazarus House or Crisis Pregnancy Center. There are so many different ways we can seek to meet physical and social needs of others.

But if we stop there—if our gospel becomes just a gospel of helping people become more comfortable—it is no longer a gospel of hope. It's more like hospice where we are just seeking to make people comfortable as they go down their path to death. The gospel isn't just about a comfortable life here; the gospel is about the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. The gospel is about removing the chains and bondage of our sin that is affecting us; our true need in this world is for Jesus to rescue us. So we should be taking this good news to other people as well.

I think all this talk about Jesus restoring does create within us a longing for this to take place once and for all. As I finish, I think we can also consider that another application is to pray for and long for the day when Jesus will return and make all things new. Let's pray this as we finish today.

Father, we desperately need You. Thank You again for the reminder we have had here today that without You, we are lost. We are in bondage. We are in darkness. We are hopeless. And we are so thankful for Jesus Christ, that He is the fulfillment of everything for which this world has been longing and groaning. In Him there is hope; there is hope and good news for the poor. There is freedom for the captive, liberty for the oppressed, recovery of sight for the blind. In Jesus, You are restoring and redeeming a people for Yourself. Thank You for that. I pray that You would give us great hope in this good news of Jesus Christ and may we then long for the day when Jesus returns to finally rid this world of sin and restore all things to Yourself. We pray this in His name. Amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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