

Unit II: Jesus and Calls in His Ministry

An Amazing Ministry

DEVOTIONAL READING: Deuteronomy 8:1-11

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 4

PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 4:14-22a

KEY VERSES: 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, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19, KJV)

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“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18-19, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Show comprehension of the meaning and significance of Jesus’ inaugural sermon in Nazareth.
- Know the impact of Jesus’ pronouncement in Nazareth.
- Show an aligned faith response with Jesus’ call and mission.

*Key Terms

Anointed (verse 18)—Greek: *chrió* (khree’-o): consecrated by anointing.

Glorified (verse 15)—Greek: *doxazó* (dox-ad’-zo): rendered or esteemed as glorious (in a wide application); “praised” (NIV).

Heal (verse 18 [KJV only])—Greek: *iaomai* (ee-ah’-om-ah-ee): to cure, make whole.

Power (verse 14)—Greek: *dunamis* (doo’-nam-is): (miraculous) might, strength, ability.

Report (verse 14, NRSV)—Greek: *phémé* (fay’-may): a saying or report; “fame” (KJV); “news” (NIV).

Was teaching (verse 15)—Greek: *didaskó* (did-as’-ko): was imparting instruction; “taught” (KJV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Life Happens

Helen*, Kama, and Natalie took a girl’s trip to Davidson, North Carolina. They heard attorney Bryan Stevenson speak at Davidson College on the 2020 American legal drama film *Just Mercy*, based on Stevenson’s best-selling book by the same title. *Just Mercy* tells the true story of Walter McMillian, who was convicted and



Overview

Picture this: a popular celebrity returns to your hometown. Everybody knew him as the kid next door; now he has returned with fame and popularity, surrounded by paparazzi. Word gets around that the hometown celebrity has come home for a visit. Imagine the frenzy and excitement! In today's narrative, Jesus has returned home in the power of the Spirit after a forty-day wilderness journey and a period of ministry throughout Capernaum, Samaria, and Judea. News of His remarkable ministry has already made it back to Galilee. On the Sabbath, Jesus has been invited to read from the Scriptures at the synagogue. Jesus reads portions from Isaiah's scroll (see Isaiah 61) and adds Isaiah 42:7. Luke 4:21 records that after the reading, Jesus announced that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy—the one who would preach the Good News, release the captives, give sight to the blind, free the oppressed, and proclaim the Year of Jubilee. Jesus informed those who heard Him that His ministry would usher in a new day—a time of justice, mercy, righteousness, and freedom. This week's lesson introduces Jesus' ministry as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and reveals the reaction of the hometown crowd who had known Him since He was a boy.

sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. These are some highlights of Stevenson's message:

- (1) Find meaningful ways to serve the poor, struggling, and disenfranchised. This is what justice requires.
- (2) Fear and anger are the root of oppression.
- (3) We are burdened by race. We need to talk about racial discrimination.
- (4) Truth and reconciliation are connected.
- (5) Stay hopeful; there is power in hope.
- (6) Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.
- (7) The opposite of poverty is not wealth; it is justice.

(*Helen Hope Kimbrough is an SSPB writer and felt compelled to share this message.)

Questions

1. How many of you have read the book or seen the movie *Just Mercy*? How did the McMillian's story resonate with you?
2. Did it motivate you to have discussions, get involved, or make a difference? Why or why not?
3. How do you feel about becoming uncomfortable?

COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Filled with the Power of the Holy Spirit

(Luke 4:14-15)

KJV

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.

NIV

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the *power* of the Spirit, and *news* about him spread through the whole countryside.

15 He *was teaching* in their synagogues, and everyone *praised* him.

In today's narrative, Jesus returned to His hometown of Galilee introducing the onset of His preaching, teaching, and healing ministry (**verse 14a**). Nazareth was a small, insignificant town that was looked down upon, even by others in Galilee (see John 1:45-46). One would think that a message of hope would have been welcomed in Nazareth. The Holy Spirit rested upon Jesus in bodily form immediately following His baptism in the Jordan River (see Luke 3:21-22). After being baptized, Jesus went alone into the wilderness for a period of fasting and consecration, in preparation for the launch of His ministry. Luke wrote that Jesus returned to Galilee "in the power

of the Spirit into Galilee" (**verse 14a**). The Holy Spirit is God's power in action. Jesus' mission was to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit drove Jesus forward into the fulfillment of His calling. The excitement concerning Jesus' ministry was generated by the power and work of the Spirit in Him (**verse 14b**). Those who heard Jesus marveled at the wisdom by which He spoke (**verse 15**). The same Spirit that rested upon Jesus is the same Spirit that gives witness to the world today through every believer in Christ. The people of Galilee were impressed with the news of Jesus' miracles throughout the surrounding region. They pressed Jesus to perform miracles for them, but when He refused, the same crowd that had praised Him suddenly became angry and hostile.

 **What Do You Think?** No one in history has matched Jesus' life-changing impact on people's lives. Share ways you have spread the news about Jesus.

I Am the Man!

(Luke 4:16-19)

KJV

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.

NIV

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,

17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has *anointed* me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,

19 "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus had returned home to Nazareth, the town where He grew up (**verse 16a**). It was the Sabbath (Saturday), the day on which Jesus was accustomed to worshipping in the synagogue (**verse 16b**). Jesus, a young man in His early thirties, was invited to read the Scriptures. He stood up to read (**verse 16b**) from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah (**verse 17a**). It was the custom of the day to stand during the Scripture reading. After receiving the scroll, Jesus read from Isaiah 61, prophetic words that spoke of His own ministry (**verse 17b**). By applying the words of Isaiah 61 to Himself, Jesus revealed Himself to His hometown crowd as God's anointed servant, the Messiah. He was literally saying, "I am the One you have been waiting for! I am the Messiah!" This was a rare occasion; Jesus generally avoided using the title until the final period of His ministry drew near (see Matthew 16:20). Jesus' ministry focused on the marginalized, poor, outcasts, and oppressed (**verses 18-19**) and would be culminated in the "year of the Lord's favor." The proclamation of a special year of the Lord's favor is a reference to the Year of Jubilee (see Leviticus 25:8-55). Jubilee was a time when debts were forgiven, slaves freed, and land returned to its original owner. Isaiah refers to Jubilee in the context of a restoration of Israel after the nation's enemies had humbled her (see Isaiah 61:2).

 **What Do You Think?** Jesus' message was timeless and relevant for believers in every generation. In what ways does Jesus' message connect to present concerns in our society? How can you take up Jesus' mantle in support of these issues?

Today, the Scripture Is Fulfilled in Your Ears

(Luke 4:20-22a)

KJV

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.


NIV

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.

When Jesus finished reading, Jesus sat down, and the crowd's eyes were fastened on Him. Jesus had their full attention (**verse 20**). Jesus told His attentive audience (**verse 20**) that "today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (**verse 21**, NIV), a simple revelation that He was the long-awaited Messiah, the one whom Isaiah's prophecy foretold. The people responded favorably and were impressed with Jesus' words (**verse 22**). They were amazed that one of their own—one who had grown up among them as "the carpenter's son"—could speak with such power and authority.


 **What Do You Think?** Jesus was a young man whose ministry was celebrated throughout the region. Large crowds flocked to hear Him. How do people remain humble when others glorify them for their gifts, talents, influence, or position?

Your Life

Every Christian is called to be a witness of the Good News in this broken world filled with hurting people. The message of Isaiah 61 remains your mission today. How do you show your commitment to Jesus' mission to carry the Gospel to hurting, oppressed, marginalized people?

Your World!

Jesus' ministry was to the poor, homeless, oppressed, the marginalized—those who may be homeless, down on their luck, or victims of injustice. God calls each of us to find ways to serve as Jesus served, touching the lives of those who are often overlooked by others.

 **Closing Prayer** Dear God, help us to make Jesus' platform our concern. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, January 4	"Called to Lead Israelites from Egypt"	(Exodus 3:1-12)
TUESDAY, January 5	"Called to Deliver Israelites from Midianites"	(Judges 6:11-16)
WEDNESDAY, January 6	"Called and Cleansed for Ministry"	(Isaiah 6:1-8)
THURSDAY, January 7	"Single-mindedness Is Required to Follow Jesus"	(Luke 9:57-62)
FRIDAY, January 8	"Repentance—the Goal of God's Kindness"	(Romans 2:1-11)
SATURDAY, January 9	"Jesus Calls Peter to Ministry"	(John 21:15-19)
SUNDAY, January 10	"Don't Be Afraid to Catch People"	(Luke 5:1-11)

NOTES