**Luke III**

**Good News For The Poor**

Review:

In Luke, Jesus fulfills the messianic pattern in his ministry to the poor, women, the outcasts, the oppressed and in bringing salvation today to Israel and to the whole world.

Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David as Savior has been born to you: he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Features unique to Luke to note:

Universal appeal of the gospel (role of Gentiles in Jesus’ ministry)

Jesus’ concern for outsiders, the poor, “sinners”, women, Samaritans

Reversal of fortune (poor become rich, rich become poor, sinners are righteous and the “righteous” are sinners) The upside down kingdom of God

Emphasis on role of women in Jesus’ life and ministry

Jesus described as Savior

Luke 2:1-7 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree…

“Divine Augustus Caesar, son of god, imperator of land and sea, the benefactor and savior of the whole world.”

This is the ultimate example of a reversal of fortune as Jesus is Son of God, Lord of land and sea, the benefactor and Savior of the whole world.

Because Jesus is a Savior who was born in poverty, to an unmarried woman for whom there was no room at the inn, lying in a manger, proclaimed first to lowly shepherds

His will be a ministry of salvation (Luke 2:30)

He will be “a light to the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32).

He will be a sign spoken against (Luke 2:34).

We will be skipping John the Baptist’s ministry, the genealogy and Jesus’ temptation because these were covered in Mark and Matthew.

We will skip to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee.

In Luke’s account, Jesus’ ministry in Galilee is wildly successful. Thousands come to Jesus to see this amazing miracle-worker who spoke with such authority.

But then Jesus went to his hometown…. (A prophet is without honor in his hometown)

Our text: Luke 4:14-30 Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth. Luke chooses this to begin his story of Jesus’ ministry.

Read Luke 4:14-16

Luke 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. (theme of the Spirit again) (also Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me.”)

Luke 4:16 Jesus now 30+ so qualified to read in the Synagogue.

Q: What did the locals probably think about him? v. 15 everyone was praising him. v. 22 All spoke well of him. This is our home boy. We knew he was different—a remarkable young man, but he is, after all, someone we grew up with.

Q: What about his family? Proud of our brother. He is no ordinary man, but his behavior lately has been pretty bizarre—going out into the desert 40 days, out praying all night…

Now, imagine you know nothing of this particular sermon, but bearing in mind what you know about Jesus’ message, Q: What do you think would be the content of his first lesson to those who know him in his home town?

Luke 4:17-30 This is a paradigmatic sermon in Luke: ie. it sets the tone for the entire book.

Why does Luke choose this particular sermon? Because if fits his theme. Jesus announces that he is the fulfillment of God’s promise—he is the Messiah and introduces his ministry of offering salvation and who he goes out of his way to offer it to. Luke 4:18-19 (not surprisingly quoting from Isaiah)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on *me*, because he has anointed *me* to preach 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.”

His message, His good news: (quoting Isaiah 61:1-2)

1. Good news for the poor (in spirit?)

2. Freedom/release for (spiritual) prisoners Q: How has God freed you?

3. Healing for the (spiritually) sick (specifically the blind here). Q: How has God healed you?

4. Release the (spiritually) oppressed. Q: What oppression has God freed you from?

5. The favor of the Lord. Q: How has God shown you favor?

Note: If you go to Isaiah 61:1-2 Jesus skips part of the passage. “and the day of vengeance of our God.”

Why did Jesus not include this? Because Jesus came, “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.” (John 12:46)

It is not that Jesus will not judge. Oh, yes he will judge, but that will happen when he returns at the end of time. (as we saw in Matthew, for example in 25:30 “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matt 25:46 “when the Son of Man comes in his glory… “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

1. Good news for the poor. In the Jewish context, the “poor” are those disadvantaged by either low economic or low social status. The “poor” includes foreigners, women, “sinners.”

Jesus’ ministry is to those in our society who are disadvantaged by whatever economic or social circumstances.

Who in our culture is disadvantaged? Poor, black, brown, women, Native Americans, foreigners, disabled… These are Jesus’ people.

We on the North side of Merced are not the poor! But luckily Jesus loves the poor in spirit as well. The people south of the 99. Those are Jesus’ people.

2. Release of the physical or spiritual prisoners. What have you been imprisoned to? What have you been enslaved to? In Luke, salvation is release!!! (it is also forgiveness, but that is not the focus)

Ex: Francisco released from substance abuse!!!

3. Healing for the physically and spiritually blind. Healing in general from sickness, but Jesus uses blindness on purpose because of the metaphorical value of blindness. Have you been spiritually blind? Are you spiritually blind?

What has Jesus healed you from? What do you still need to be healed from. I have good news. Jesus came to bring healing and recovery of sight to the blind.

4. Release/deliverance from political, social or spiritual oppression. What has oppressed you? Fear? Abuse? Racial bias and prejudice? Guilt? Shame?

Jesus’ ministry is to release you from this oppression—to set you free!!!

Is Israel, Greece and Rome, women were deeply oppressed. Still true to some extent today.

Deliverance!!!!

In light of current events, we are thinking of the oppression of women and of African Americans.

Also released from the oppression of sin.

Jamal tells the story of being challenged in the parking lot.

And of being challenged at his office.

My friend in Fond du Lac

To the extent that we are unconsciously part of this oppressive system, we need to repent.

5. So that you can have favor from God. Jesus’ ministry does not just relieve spiritual poverty, give freedom from spiritual or physical prisons, provide healing from spiritual blindness, and release you from every kind of oppression. It brings to us favor from God!!!

God wants to bless you. Like any parent, he wants you to experience a blessed, fulfilled life.

1. Good news for the poor.

2. Freedom/release for (spiritual) prisoners.

3. Healing for the sick (specifically the blind)

4. Release the oppressed.

5. The favor of the Lord.

Q: Which is most important to you?

Discuss this with a neighbor.

 This is an excellent summary of Luke’s picture of Jesus.

(remember, we earlier pointed out that Jesus fulfills the messianic expectation through the pattern of his life more than through specific things he does)

Q: Is this the essence of the gospel?

v. 20 Jesus sits down, as do all rabbis who preach in the synagogue.

Q: What were people thinking when Jesus said, “Today (there is that word today) this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Why does Luke choose this particular sermon? Because if fits his theme. Jesus announces that he is the fulfillment of God’s promise—he is the Messiah and introduces his ministry of offering salvation—but how and to whom he shows his favor is surprising to us.

Theme of Luke: God’s salvation, as predicted by the prophets has arrived in the coming of the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth. He is the savior of the world and this salvation is now spreading throughout the world (including that of the Gentiles, of course).

How is he received? Not all that well. (Luke 2:34 He will be a sign spoken against) He is impressive, but are we to take him seriously? This was immediately after “Everyone praised him.” (v. 15) and “All spoke well of him.” (v. 22) They try to throw him off a mountain.

A lot of people really like Jesus until he calls them to repent and to discipleship.

We like Jesus—he is really impressive—until he tells us something we do not want to hear.

Is there anything that Jesus says you do not like to hear?

“If anyone would come to me they must deny themselves”

“Get rid of all bitterness and rage.”

“Let there be not even a hint of sexual immorality.”

Why? Because, as is typical for Luke, Jesus declares that God loves the Gentiles too! (Luke 4:24-27) Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath, near Sidon and he healed, not a Jew, but Namaan the Syrian).

The Nazarenes/Jews will no longer get special treatment.

Brilliantly (under inspiration of course), Luke chooses a story which foreshadows Jesus’ entire ministry. His outreach to the downtrodden. His ultimate rejection and murder at the hands of his own people—the ones who, by rights ought to have received him as one of their own.

The difference: This time he walked through the crowd. (4:30). Such was not to be the case in Jerusalem.

From here, Luke proceeds immediately to Jesus’ ministry to the poor and the downtrodden, fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2. In Luke he does this before he chooses the first disciples.

He frees the prisoners/the demon-possessed (Luke 4:31-37)

Jesus heals the sick (Luke 4:38-40, 5:12-14, 17-26)

Jesus releases the oppressed (Luke 4:41)

All this is used to point to the breaking out of the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43) This is why he came.

Q: Have you been proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God?

What is your purpose and mission?

It is to bring:

Good news to the poor

Release of the spiritual and physical prisoners

Recovery of sight to the physically and spiritually blind

Release for those who have been oppressed

Announce God’s favor!