

What Is The Gospel?

Luke 4:16-30 ¹⁶ So 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 to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. 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 has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to *the* blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." ²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." ²² So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" ²³ He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" ²⁴ Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. ²⁵ "But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; ²⁶ "but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. ²⁷ "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹ and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. ³⁰ Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Jesus came to "preach the good news" that is the Gospel. What is the Gospel?

The Gospel Is NOT Miracles

The crowd rejects Jesus not because he claims to be the Messiah, but because He tells them that He will not do miracles. This is all they want, to see the miraculous works that He did in other places. They want a show. Jesus refuses and they attempt to throw Him off a cliff

In morning devotions, we have been talking about the prophet Elijah. This is the same lesson that God had to teach the prophet Elijah

1 Kings 19:11-13 And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and

after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.

The gospel was not and is not found in fire and wind, in miracles and earthly power.

"Physician, heal yourself." This is a demand that God prove himself to me. We the people demand miracles they sit in judgement of God. Jesus did not come to prove himself to us. He came to break the chains that hold us, bring us to God, and forgive our sins. Imagine sitting in prison and someone opens the door and offers to lead you to freedom. Do you respond with a demand for miracle?

The gospel is not miracles.

The Gospel Is NOT A Prosperity

The fact that Jesus came to suffer is seen right here in the very first sermon that Luke records at the very beginning of his ministry.

There are too many who think that the purpose of Jesus' gospel is to bring justice to this earth. Martin Luther King Jr taught that the resurrection of Jesus was not a promise to us that we too will arise, but instead a call to rise out of our sin and live in peace and justice on this earth. He considered the resurrection an example not a promise. He considered the gospel a call to live justly with each other.

Justice on earth is a good thing but it is not the purpose of the gospel.

The people reject Jesus, as they will later on. Jesus suffers and calls us to suffer as well.

Mark 10:21 ²¹ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

The Gospel is not miracles of prosperity. What is the Gospel?

Luke 4:18 He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to *the* blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

The Gospel Is Healing The Broken Hearted

Jesus of course healed many people of many diseases, even of death. Luke is clear that this physical healing isn't the gospel. The real healing that Jesus came to do is the healing of the heart that has been crushed. Jesus isn't talking about a heart that has been "broken" because the love of your life broke up with you. The word here isn't broken but crushed. This is a heart which has no hope left. Someone who has been treated unjustly. Someone who has been ridiculed. Someone who has lived in loneliness until they give up. Someone who feels like no matter how hard they try everything and everyone is against them.

To those who simply cannot go on, and feel like there is no hope, the Gospel promises:

Psalm 46:5 ⁵ **God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.**

Isaiah 43:2 **"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.**

He heals the broken hearted not by fixing all injustices on this earth but by promising to walk by our side while we suffer and to deliver us from the earth to be with him in heaven.

The Gospel Is Liberty To The Captives

We often talk about addiction with regard to certain more visible sins, alcohol, drugs, gambling etc. But all sins have an addictive nature, even if it is not as visible or as devastating to our life as some others. All of us are tempted and give in to sin once and having given in once that sin becomes more and more a part of our life. As Paul reminds Titus:

Titus 3:3-5 ³ **For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.** ⁴ **But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,** ⁵ **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us,**

The gospel is the release from the addiction of sin. It is only God's word and sacraments which can break those chains, forgive our sins and teach us to live to Christ

The Gospel Is The Acceptable Year Of The Lord

This is a reference to the year of Jubilee. Every 50 years the Jews were to celebrate Jubilee for the entire year. All land was given back to the hereditary rulers. All slaves were set free. All debt was forgiven. When Jesus announces the year of Jubilee he is proclaiming that it exists in perpetuity. It is now and always will be the year of the Lord's Jubilee.

To quote pastor Arthur A Just Jr:

"This message of release unites the OT and the NT. It reveals to the hearer how his Baptism initiates him into a life of continual release, sustained in the Lord's Supper." [Concordia Commentary, Luke 1:1-9:50]

Baptism initiates us into the Lord's year of Jubilee and in that year we live in God's forgiveness. The Lord's Supper renews and us strengthens us to remain within that sphere of Jubilee so that we continue to live in that forgiveness of sins.

2 Corinthians 6:2 **"At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you"; behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation "**

Jesus understands full well that the people of Nazareth are waiting for a show. That is not what He came to give. He is there to “preach the good news,” the forgiveness of sins.

Amen