

**Home : Sermons : Nov 13, 2005**

Proclaiming Liberty to the Captives – *Luke 4:14-44*

Introduction – What is it like to face rejection, especially rejection by your peers, friends and family? What is it like to take a stand for Jesus Christ and be ridiculed, ostracized and cast out? Jesus knew what it was like to be rejected for taking a stand on the Scriptures – words that were His words, words that were fulfilled in Him, words that proclaimed freedom to those who would hear. And He knew what it was like to face such rejection while walking faithfully, full of the Spirit, in the midst of God’s people. Reformation is about change. Reformation is about death and resurrection. Reformation is about rejection. But reformation received brings about great healing and liberty.

The Acceptable Year of the Lord (vv14-21) – Now, “*in the power of the Spirit,*” Jesus returns to his hometown and probably the synagogue in which he had grown up. It had been and was Jesus’ custom to regularly attend synagogue (v14, 16, 31, 44) even though it was filled with hypocrites. Jesus, at the appointed time, takes up and reads from Isaiah 61 a summary of His entire ministry and His sermon topic was: “*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*” (v21). The phrase “*acceptable year of the Lord*” (v19) refers to the year of Jubilee (Lev 25, esp. v10). Isaiah was using the Jubilee teaching to describe what was happening to Israel in their promised return from exile, and Jesus taught that Isaiah’s text pointed to the ultimate fulfillment, the ultimate Jubilee – Himself. Isaiah’s prophecy not only promised deliverance for the exiled Jews, but for the Gentile world at large. This Jubilee was a gospel to the world (Isaiah 61:6-7, 10-11).

Rejection of the Jubilee (vv22-30) – It appears that Jesus’ “*words of grace*” took these hometown boys by surprise, and they marveled, “*Isn’t this Joseph’s son?*” Jesus knew their hearts and attacked their hypocrisy – they weren’t interested in His “salvation to the world” message. They wanted cheap tricks like they heard had taken place in Capernaum. But that wasn’t the point of the message of Jubilee. Elijah had fed only a Sidonian woman during the famine (1 Kings 17:8-16), and Elisha had cleansed only one leper, a Syrian commander (2 Kings 5:1-14). Jesus is preaching a reformation – the people of God need a Spirit-induced change in how they receive His Word. Once again, Jesus finds Himself at the top of a cliff (remember 4:9?), and God does deliver Him.

Casting Out Demons, Healing the Sick (vv31-41) – In contrast, Jesus went down to Capernaum where they were astonished at the authority with which His word came forth. In the midst of that reception, a man is identified as having an unclean spirit, and the demon screams out at Jesus. The demon rebels against Jesus, but with a word, Jesus silences him, casting him out of the man. Nazareth is like Israel and Capernaum is like the widow and the leper.

Then, Jesus enters Peter’s home, where Peter’s wife’s mother (*did you catch that?*) is sick with a fever. Jesus rebukes the fever, not because it was demonic, but showing His authority over every created thing, ordinary and supernatural, animate and inanimate. As the sun is setting (it is now the day after the Sabbath), Jesus heals all those who are brought to Him, laying His hands on them, “*every one of them.*” Rebuking the demons again, Jesus refused to allow them to speak as to who He was. Hearing the Word and being touched by Jesus, liberty, wholeness, sight – a Jubilee – was granted.

Preaching the Kingdom of God (vv42-44) – We have been given an example of a full day of ministry for Jesus, which went on through the night. After that, Jesus retreated into a deserted place, most likely to pray (see Mark 1:35-38). In answering their request for Him to stay with them there, He says something interesting about all He has been preaching and doing – this is the preaching of the kingdom of God.

Lessons – The gospel is a messy-message. Preached faithfully, it brings forth revivals and riots, and when it does so, there are surprises to be discovered as to who is blessed and who is offended. This is because the gospel is a declaration of liberty from gods, idols that men love and cherish even in synagogues (and churches) – and sometimes, those who hold dearly to those idols resist the message of liberty.

The Centrality and Authority of the Word – “*What a word this is,*” (v36) they said. The Word of God took upon Himself flesh and came proclaiming the kingdom of God, the Jubilee for the world, and with great authority. This is what the Spirit-empowered Word does. It cuts deep, it judges hearts, it separates the wheat from the chaff, it casts out demons and reveals idols, it heals and comforts, it rebukes and terrifies. Isaiah, Leviticus, Kings, and the gospel of Luke, all do these things, for in all of them Jesus is revealed. To those who are poor, brokenhearted, captive, blind and oppressed, it is the life and liberty and joy. To those who think the Jubilee/gospel owes them anything, it throws them down even as they seek to

overthrow it.

The Gospel to the Unclean – Jesus touched the unclean, the demon-possessed, the fever-inflicted, and the diseased with His hands and with His gospel. His compassion for the outcast is beautiful and amazing. We proclaim a gospel of free grace to every sinner who would call upon the Lord, but will we truly invite them into our midst? The only gospel that cleans you is a gospel that can clean every unclean sinner on the face of the earth. For every unclean man or nation we see, “but for the grace of God go I.” For this purpose, Jesus was sent (v43).

Dave Hatcher – November 13, 2005