



Sermon Notes

Term – Autumn 2019

Series – Luke

Gathering & Date – the 10 & the 5, 22 September

Title – The Manifesto of Jesus (Part 3)

Preacher – Paul Langham

Reading – Luke 4:14-21

**** If you attend the 10, then PLEASE BEGIN TO READ THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
IN PREPARATION FOR OUR SERIES BEGINNING ON 29 SEPTEMBER ****

Main message of this talk in one sentence – The gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is about so much more than preaching ... it's about supernatural, physical healing and it's about radical attention to social justice ...

Main points –

2 mistakes the church has traditionally made with regard to this passage:

1. Not recognising the significance of Jesus' decision to stop reading mid verse: it is our calling to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, not the day of his vengeance ...
2. Over-spiritualising the categories to whom Jesus addresses his mandate
 - The poor
 - The captive
 - The blind
 - The oppressed

Jesus continues a long tradition, firmly rooted in the Jewish scriptures, of insisting that the work of the people of God includes attention to literal, physical realities as well as to people's spiritual needs:

*'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the **oppressed** free
and break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6*

Questions

- How does this teaching change how you think about 'the good news'?
- 'The world around us will not listen to what they hear until they like what they see' – do you agree with this statement? If so, what needs to change?
- How is God calling you to respond? You may not have time to take on anything more than you're already doing – but what can you do differently to begin pursuing a 'Luke 4:18-19' mandate in your workplace, place of education or leisure, family or community?
- Reflect on the following prophetic passages from the Old Testament - Amos 5:23-25, Micah 6:7-9, Isaiah 58:6-12 – and use them as a basis for prayer

FULLER TEXT OF PAUL'S TALK

RE-CAP

Week 1 The significance of the Synagogue and its set pattern of worship ...

- Daily blessings
- Shema (Reciting Deuteronomy 6:4)
- Torah (a reading from the 5 books of Moses)
- Haphtarah (a reading from the Prophets)
- Derashah (a short talk)

How extraordinary that Jesus was handed this passage of scripture (Isaiah 61:1-2) on this day

We also asked why, if (as we proclaim), Jesus was, is and always will be God, did he need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, anointed and sent out?

Week 2 That led to a fuller look at what the New Testament teaches us about Jesus.

- In essence, we saw that while never ceasing to be God, he laid aside his divine power to live his life on earth truly as one of us
- This makes sense of his call for those who follow him to do 'the works' he did. We considered the challenge to be like him – not just in character but in competence ...

TODAY

2 mistakes the church has traditionally made with regard to this passage:

1. Not recognising the significance of Jesus' decision to stop reading mid verse.

How many mistakes have we made by imagining it's our job to declare the day of the Lord's vengeance ...?

- Dawkins
- Difference between a year and a day

2. Over-spiritualising the categories Jesus addresses

Categories

1 the poor = ptóchos (Phonetic = pto-khos)

= one who crouches and cowers, hence beggarly, poor

Usage = poor, destitute, spiritually poor, either in a good sense (humble devout persons) or bad.

It's the NT's go-to word for literal, physical, economic poverty and destitution. Of the 30+ times the word appears, the vast majority are clear references to actual, literal poverty

- Rich young ruler – sell and give to the poor
- Zacchaeus – I'll give to the poor
- James – favouritism towards the wealthy / seating arrangements ... (CC used to sell pews to the wealthy!)
- Revelation – Beast gives mark to rich and poor alike, determining whether they can buy or sell ... clearly economic categories

Others do have spiritual connotations

In other words, it can include the sense of spiritual poverty, but must also include literal poverty

2 other NT usages bear this out

*'Blessed are the **poor** in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3 (Luke 6:20)*

*The **poor** you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. Matthew 26:11 (context – Alabaster jar ...)* (Mark 14:5, 7, John 12:5, 6, 8)

When John the Baptist sends his followers to ask Jesus whether he (Jesus) really is the Messiah ...

*⁴ Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the **poor**. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.'*
Matthew 11:4-6 (Luke 7:22)

No one suggests Jesus is speaking figuratively about the physical healings, so there's no logic to arrive at the word 'poor' and imagine he's suddenly speaking figuratively there ...

One fascinating example that this Gk word does mean lit. destitute comes in Luke 21:

*¹ As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a **poor** widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ 'Truly I tell you,' he said, 'this **poor** widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'*

(penichran = poor, needy)

(ptochay)

Amazingly, this is also the word St Paul chooses when he searches for a way to describe what Jesus has done in becoming one of us

*⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became **poor**, so that you through his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9*

2 _____ the prisoners / captives

Conjunction of 2 Greek words = spear & to be taken / conquered

Only time it's used in the NT

So specifically prisoners of war ... which does suggest a spiritual connotation ...

And the word which precedes it, 'release' occurs 17 times in the NT – in every other case it is translated as forgiveness of sins

So this is clearly a spiritual bondage or captivity

3 _____ blind

Standard word for physical blindness

'Recovery of sight' = unknown elsewhere, not just in NT but in Gk generally. Why? Because it's impossible ... but with God ...

However, there is a clear spiritual parallel – but cannot simply be spiritualised: supernatural, physical healing is part and parcel of the work of the Messiah ... and therefore of the church ...

4 oppressed

Again, a word that only appears here in NT Greek – although also in other writers (Herodotus)

= break in pieces i.e. shatter

Crush, bruise, oppress

Interestingly, does occur in the Greek translation of the Jewish scriptures (called the Septuagint – a translation carried out in the 3rd-C BC in Alexandria by 70 / 72 Jewish scholars, hence the name) in Isaiah 58

*6 'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the **oppressed** free
and break every yoke? Isaiah 58*

So what of today – who are the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed?

- Poverty of hope and choice
- Literal poverty
- Destitute – ex-offenders
- Anti-semitism
- Oppression of women
- Children being offered up on the altar of adult self-obsession – issues of mental wellbeing

Church has existed in several states of being

- Silent
- Complicit
- Perpetrator

- Time to be in active opposition
- Holocaust Memorial Day – Jan 2016
- Press Red

Developing our own ministries & partnerships with

- Local GP surgeries – toddlers, pre-school, primary school, the elderly (new Wednesday Community)
- CC Primary
- TLG
- Relationship Academy
- Care for the Family

- a family advice centre
- speech therapy
- regular health visitor drop in
- expectant parents course
- First time mums group
- baby massage

- Poorly Poppets
- Sleep clinics
- BYO Baby choir
- support for nannies / au pairs who have to deliver early years foundation stage curriculum
- Support for parents with children with additional needs
- Grief counselling (death, infertility etc)
- Parenting courses
- debt advice
- mental health
- housing & legal advice
- nutrition advice
- CAP (Christians against poverty) testimony from Lindsay.
- Early years management space for cluster meetings & training
- Extend family support from just Friday morning (Jane could easily fill her time full time with this)
- English as a foreign language (Pat Martin Joy)

That's why we're planning to invest £1.5 m in redeveloping and extending the Crypt ...

The gospel is about so much more than preaching ... it's about supernatural, physical healing and it's about radical attention to social justice ...

Some will say, isn't that the pinnacle? Yes it is, but which mountain climb ever begins there? If you decide to climb Everest, you don't say, 'Well, I'll start at the summit ...' You have to work your way up ...

Church and Society are now so far apart that if all we have is preaching, the world around us hears us shouting ...

The world around us will not listen to what they hear until they like what they see

Great Plagues in Rome in mid 3rd-C & mid 4th-C ... what caught the attention of the pagan world was that it was the Christians who stayed in Rome, attended the sick, ministered to the poor and buried the dead – and of course, died in their thousands doing so ...

Jesus' call follows a solid thread from the prophets:

²³ *Away with the noise of your songs!*

I will not listen to the music of your harps.

²⁴ *But let justice roll on like a river,*

righteousness like a never-failing stream! Amos 5:23-25

⁷ *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of oil?*

*Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

⁸ *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.*

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:7-9

⁶ *'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:*

to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free

and break every yoke?
⁷ *Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*
⁸ *Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.*
⁹ *Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: here am I.*
*'If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,*
¹⁰ *and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.*
¹¹ *The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.*
*You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.*
¹² *Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. Isaiah 58:6-12*

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