

Title: GOOD NEWS: GOD IS AT WORK, LUKE 4:14-21.  
(Chatham, NJ; 01/24/10, AM) [E – Topical with Exegesis]

Theme: God worked through the ministry and life of Christ to redeem the world and fulfill the promises of the prophet Isaiah.

Purpose: To remind ourselves to see the good news as good and set our hope on it even when news around us is bad.

Introduction:

1. H. L. Mencken wrote, “The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed—and hence clamorous to be led to safety—by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”
2. Jesus assures us that his mission is Isaiah’s prophecy; it brings hope, freedom, and God’s favor. It is inspiring, not alarming.
3. Jesus had been through his time of tempting in the desert, returned to Galilee, and has now returned to his home town, Nazareth.
4. Although his ministry had already begun, what he says to this hometown crowd becomes the paradigm for his work.

I. His ministry is by the Holy Spirit.

- The Spirit anoints him at his baptism, Luke 3:22.
- He leads Jesus into the desert, Luke 4:1.
- He returns in the power of the Spirit, 4:14.
- The Spirit anointed him to proclaim good news, 4:18.
- Neither the might and power of man (Zechariah 4:6) nor the anger of man (James 1:20) produces what only the Spirit of God can produce.
- By his Spirit is the Kingdom brought forth and by his Spirit does righteousness shine forth.
- In Christ God has intervened in history; his salvation has broken through the darkness; it has been proclaimed by the preaching of the Gospel.

II. In reading Isaiah 61 Jesus announced a fulfillment of prophecy, Luke 4:21.

- A. Jesus’ ministry was steeped in the traditions of Israel.
  1. He went to the synagogues.
  2. He adhered to the sacred writings of her prophets.
  3. The elements of his preaching were adopted directly from Isaiah.
- B. Good news for the poor. (We’ll mostly take these as metaphors, but there is a literal meaning in some of them that is legitimate but beyond what I want to say today.)
  1. God’s heart inclines to the humble and downtrodden or afflicted, Is. 57:15.
  2. These are the faithful who trust God in spite of personal distress.
  3. It is to the poor in spirit that the Kingdom of God belongs.
- C. Freedom proclaimed.
  1. God’s great Emancipation Proclamation is here.
  2. (2xs) Freedom for captives and those who are oppressed.

3. Freedom was represented by the year of Jubilee when all debts were cancelled, all slaves were freed, and all property went back to the tribes and families established in the beginning.
4. Freedom would have reminded her also of the Passover.
5. Jesus would insist that true freedom came from knowing the truth about our slavery to sin; once we recognized this true slavery we could be set free.
6. Spiritual blindness also characterizes the human condition; sight for the blind is the mission (see also Mt. 4:16 where he quotes Isaiah 9:1-2.)

D. To proclaim the year of God's favor.

1. This was to be a time when God revealed his salvation.
2. It is comfort and preparation; it is renewal and removal of reproach; it is a restoration of the throne of David.
3. It provides comfort for the contrite and for those who mourn.

III. The someday proclaimed in Isaiah was proclaimed as a reality in Christ's day, and the someday is still today.

- Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:2, "Now is the favorable time; now is the day of salvation."
- Though we still look to a future deliverance, the time is now to accept it.

Conclusion:

1. The Kingdom of God encompasses all these things: the Spirit of God, good news for the poor, liberty, and God's favor.
2. The time to proclaim these things is now; the time to accept them and live by them is now.
3. Peter sums up what Jesus did in Acts 10:38, and he sums up our goal in 1 Peter 1:9.
4. Take care to prepare your soul for eternity.
5. The Kingdom is nothing but good news for the hungry soul and the contrite of heart.