

**He Sets Captives Free**  
**Luke 4:14-37**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

This passage contains three stories (true, historical accounts) of the early days of Jesus' ministry. He has been confirmed by God, and overcome Satan in the desert. Now, Jesus begins visiting the villages to preach the good news, teach the word of God, and free people from slavery to evil.

“...beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined (Isa 9:1-2).”

The first and last groups (**Vs 14-15** & **Vs 31-37**) recognize Jesus for who He is. But the middle group (**Vs 16-30**) is only concerned with what He can do for them. Their self-obsession makes them blind to the grace of God. From this history we learn that you must:

*Recognize Jesus for who He is, trust Him to save you, and rejoice when He saves people unlike you!*

**Luke 4:14-15 A light has come to Galilee, And Many Glorified God.**

**Vs 14 “in the power of the Spirit”** Jesus went into the Wild in the power of the Spirit, defeated the Adversary and began the redemption of the children of Satan's first victims in the power of the Spirit, and now returns in the Spirit near the beginning of His public ministry.

*If we are to be disciples of Christ, we must walk in the Spirit as well!*

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25)!"

**Vs 14 “into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.”**

Galilee is the region around the Sea of Galilee, about 90 miles north of Jerusalem. The area had many small towns; see map at the back.

Although the area was Jewish, it had been heavily colonized and compromised by pagans. There was much racial tension and the whole area had a bad reputation down south in Judah.

**Vs 15** Jesus went from town to town preaching like one of the prophets of old days. He developed a reputation as a great teacher and miracle worker.

**“being glorified of all.”** People everywhere knew he was special.

**Luke 4:16-30 But Some Sit in the Dark Staring At Themselves**

**Vs 16 “He came to Nazareth”** Jesus home town was tiny and poor. There is no evidence of paved roads and less than 500 people called Nazareth home.

**Vs 16 “ he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day”**

This is the oldest description of a synagogue service anywhere; Luke does good work as a historian. And because Luke is writing to gentiles, he vividly explains many Hebrew customs.

**Vs 16 & 20 “stood up for to read...and sat down”** Everyone stands in respect for the Word of God,

and then the preacher sits down to give the sermon. By sitting, the preacher symbolically taught from “the seat of Moses.” See Luke 5:3, John 8:2, and Matt 23:2.

**Vs 17** Jesus had been preaching and working wonders in other towns. And this Sabbath day, in his home town, Jesus will read and teach a passage that He Himself fulfills! The text is the first part of Isaiah Chapter 61.

**Vs 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,”**

This was demonstrated at the Baptism, and proven in the desert, and Luke told us “**Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.**” The Spirit is a key character in this story. The Lord's choice to quote this passage of Isaiah will set the tone for the next three years of His ministry.

**Vs 18 the good news to the poor.** This is not just people without money, but all the losers, all the disadvantaged, all that suffer under an unfair World System. "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God (Luke 6:20)."

*Rejoice when the Kingdom of the World has no place for you, because in Christ you will sit down in the Kingdom of God!*

**Vs 18 healing to the brokenhearted.** “Brokenhearted” describes anyone with discouragement, mental or emotional anguish. Our categories “depression”, “mental illness”, and “emotional trauma” are all wrapped up in this idea.

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit (Psl 34:18).”

*Know that God heals physically, mentally, and emotionally!*

**Vs 18 freedom for the captive.** “Captive” should make us think of prisoners of war or people enslaved (Isa 52:2) but all who are enslaved to sin.

"Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money (Isa 52:2-3)."

*When you feel trapped, know that God has paid the price to set you free. Trust Jesus and follow the One who said: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls!”*

**Vs 18 sight for the blind and liberty for the crushed**

God gives clarity and freedom to the benighted and oppressed.

*When you are confused and weighed down, come to God for wisdom and freedom!*

**Vs 19 “the acceptable year of the Lord”** Jesus passage (Isaiah Ch 61) has much to say about judgment, but today Jesus focuses on the offer of salvation here. It is time to receive God's offer of healing, one day the offer will end; later may be too late.

*Receive Jesus as your savior, trust Him, and find freedom by learning from Him as His disciple!*

**Vs 20-21** “And he closed the book...the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on

him...And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

**Vs 22 “And all bare him witness, and wondered”** they noticed Him and were surprised by Him, but will they believe Him?

with this good news, Jesus proclaims Himself the Messiah. But the congregation is not convinced. **“And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?”** They know this boy Jesus, they watched Him grow up.

**Vs 23 “Physician, heal thyself”** was an old saying (not a “proverb” in the biblical sense – just a common saying) with the idea that you should help your own people before you help others.

**heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.”** Note their concern for “thy country” - in other words, “us.”

They are open to Jesus maybe being the Messiah, but their real concern is: What is He going to do for me?"

They want God to come, but a "god" of their own making, a “god" tailored to meet their wishes. Their prime concern is what God can do for them, not how they should respond to God as He is.

There is no shortage of ministries, internet teachers, and well-meaning books, and working hard to put some God in your life because of what He can do for you.

But if that's the only way you see God, then you will never see Him as He is.

*Christian, focus on who God is, not what He does for you!*

*Christian, don't “make more room for God in your life,” know that Christ is your life and live in Him!*

*If you have saving faith, then all of your identity, every bit of who you are is wrapped up in who Jesus is – live that way!*

*And, rejoice in the boundless gifts that God gives those who trust Him!*

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17).”

Jesus calls them out on their narrow mind and reminds them that God's grace has always reached the outsiders...

**Vs 24 “Verily I say unto you”** Jesus' language indicates that He is going to take the conversation in a different direction. He literally says **“Amen”** - Hebrew (not greek) for "it is true." Luke, left "amen" untranslated to give us a taste of the language of the synagogue.

**Vs 25-26** Many ethnic Hebrews starved in the days of Ahab's famine, but God's grace came to a gentile who was willing to trust Him (1 Kings Ch 17). God saved a non-Hebrew woman from the same area as wicked Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31) – her faith mattered more than her background.

**Vs 27** And, just a few decades later, a gentile Syrian found favor with God. This uncircumcised Syrian was not just healed, he was made clean (2 Kings 5:14). Again, a willingness to trust God is what mattered in the end.

Jesus' point is that God's grace comes to those who trust Him, even if they don't come from a good background.

*Rejoice when God saves outsiders – people different from you – and adds them to the church!*

**Vs 28-29 “filled with wrath, And rose up,”**

Jesus cuts right to the heart and taps into their deepest prejudice. They boiled over with rage, rushed Jesus, drug Him out of the synagogue, and prepare to kill him by throwing him off a cliff or stoning, or both. But – somehow- he just walks away.

Luke does not explain this as a miracle but it's hard to understand it any other way. Notice how Jesus coolly controls the entire situation. This also happens in John 7:30.

**Vs 29-30** What tragic irony! The synagogue system was established to encourage people in the faith as they looked forward to the Messiah. And when the Messiah appears, and goes to this synagogue, they throw Him out, and they don't stop there: they throw Him out of the city and try to kill Him.

This is the first in another pattern of Jesus' ministry: being hurt by those He came to save.

Luke does not relate these events so that we can feel superior to the Nazarene. But for God's grace, we would have treated Jesus the same way. Indeed, Luke tells us what happened so that we can seek God's help in not committing the same sins.

*Don't insist that God be who you imagined Him to be, rather receive Jesus as He reveals Himself to be!*

*Focus less on what you think Jesus can do for you, and more on who he is!*

*And, rejoice when God's grace reaches people that you never imagined being saved!*

**Luke 4:31-37 Still The Light Shines As Hope To The Afflicted And Judgment To The Wicked.**

**Vs 31-32 “ And came down to Capernaum,”** Jesus continues His teaching ministry and goes to one of the places mentioned by the Nazarenes. Capernaum was a larger fishing town of about 1300 people. It was bigger but still very poor.

**Vs 32 & 36 authority and power**, good Jewish teachers were not in the business of inventing new ideas or "receiving" new revelations. They worked to faithfully teach the Torah and its traditions as they understood them to be passed down from Moses.

But Jesus is doing something different he is founding His teachings on His own authority. He is a young man, just barely mature, but everywhere He goes, Jesus speaks with otherworldly grace and power.

**Vs 33 “a spirit of an unclean devil”** Luke's Greek audience who may not understand the biblical teaching on demons. The Greeks knew of spirits that they called "daimonion." They believed that the daimonion could enter a person to hurt or help them.

They did not understand that the "daimonion" are devils: corrupted spirits and enemies of God.

Luke wants his audience to understand that, despite what they may hear, the “daimonion” are actually unholy and disgusting.

**Vs 35** The demons recognize Jesus but He rebukes them and doesn't want to hear what they have to say. We learn four important truths about demons in this encounter.

1. Demons are real and afflict people, 2. Demons can speak the truth, 3. Even when demons are speaking the truth, they are not worth listening to. And 4, the demons respond to Jesus with complete terror.

*Recognize the reality of demonic power and seek deliverance from Jesus alone!*

**Vs 35 The exorcism.** Jesus just says "Quite! Go!" - no spells, no relics, no rituals. It doesn't even say that Jesus raised His voice. Jesus speaks and the demon fears.

**Vs 37** God saves sinners, and those with the right attitude rejoice.

*Trust Jesus to save you from the devils, ask Him to save you, and rejoice when he delivers the captives!*

## CONCLUSION

If you have yet to trust Jesus, *know that no one else can save you but He is able!*

If you will trust Him on His own terms, He will deliver you and bless you beyond imagination.

Everyone who has faith (informed trust) in Jesus Christ is “raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Eph 2:6-8).”

*Recognize Jesus for who He is and trust Him to save you!*

Once you trust Jesus, seek to know Him for who He is, not just what He can do for you and people like you.

Jesus should not be part of your life, or even the biggest part of your life “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Col 3:3-4).”

*Recognize Jesus for who He is, trust Him to save you, and rejoice when He saves people unlike you!*



