

Sermon Notes



Lesson 33 / January 21, 2018

JESUS' MISSION

Luke 4:14-44

Key Verse

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Luke 4:18-19

Question 65: What is Jesus’ mission?

Short Answer: *Jesus’ mission is to bring salvation to all people.*

Full Answer: *Jesus’ mission is to bring salvation to all people, by his grace and according to our faith, especially to us who are poor and far from God, that we might be set free from our captivity to sin.*

Question 66: How does Jesus accomplish his mission?

Short Answer: *Jesus accomplishes his mission by proclaiming good news.*

Full Answer: *Jesus accomplishes his mission by proclaiming good news, healing the sick, casting out demons, and ultimately dying for our sins, that we might receive the Lord’s favor and be saved.*

Discussion Questions

1. Read Luke 1:1-4. What makes Luke’s gospel distinct from the other gospels?
2. How does Jesus describe his mission in Luke 4:18-19?
3. In what way is this good news?
4. Why does Jesus’ announcement cause such anger in the synagogue?
5. How does Jesus actually accomplish his mission in his life? Consider what he does in Luke 4:31-44.
6. How does Jesus treat outsiders in his mission? Consider Luke 7:36-50.
7. Have you ever felt like an insider who is entitled to God’s grace?
8. Have you ever felt like an outsider who is too far away for Jesus to save you?
9. How can we, as the church today, graciously welcome outsiders in the same way Jesus did?

Summary

Have you ever been on the outside looking in? Perhaps you were teased as a child, or picked last at recess, or always the slowest to finish your schoolwork. Or maybe you live with a disability, or you carry the shame of your past mistakes, so that it seems to you like everyone else is having a party but you are not invited. If you have ever felt left out and looking in, then the gospel of Luke is for you.

Luke's gospel is the longest of the four gospels. He tells the story of Jesus in a very similar way to Matthew and Mark, but Luke gives us a unique perspective of Jesus and his ministry. In the opening verses of his gospel, Luke declares his intention to tell about Jesus in an "orderly" way (Luke 1:3) that will confirm the true, historical reality of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. He is meticulous, therefore, in his historical detail and thorough in his storytelling. No wonder he becomes long-winded too!

The primary theme of Luke is that Jesus is the Savior who brings salvation to all people. Thus, shortly after Jesus is born, an angel appears to shepherds and brings to them good news of great joy that will be for *all* the people, for a *Savior* is born, Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11). Jesus' ministry is a ministry of salvation, and his salvation is not just for the insiders like the Jews and the religious folks, but his salvation is truly for all people and especially for the outsiders like the Gentiles (= non-Jews) and ungodly sinners.

In Luke 4:16-30, Jesus sets forth his mission of salvation. When he is in his hometown of Nazareth, he enters the synagogue where he grew up reading Scripture and worshipping together with his Jewish neighbors. Jesus stands in the midst of their gathering and selects a passage to read from Isaiah 61:1-2. Here Isaiah prophesies of a coming day when God would send his anointed one to "proclaim good news to the poor" and to liberate captives. Jesus then announces dramatically that this Scripture is fulfilled right here, right now, in Jesus himself.

Throughout the rest of the book of Luke, we see Jesus carrying out this mission of proclaiming good news to the poor. The "poor" include not only those who live in poverty but also all who are down and out, who have been pushed to the margin of society by their mistakes and misfortune. They are diseased, lame, and oppressed, and Jesus brings them an immediate

salvation from their physical suffering. Luke records story after story of Jesus healing their diseases, curing their disabilities, and casting out their demons.

But these healings are only a precursor of the greater, spiritual salvation Jesus also brings. In a way, his healings serve as a visible demonstration of his invisible authority to forgive sins (e.g. Luke 5:20). He proclaims his message of good news to all who will listen, and he proclaims the Lord's favor to be upon all who have faith in Jesus. Finally, Jesus goes to the cross and accomplishes the greatest salvation of all; for by his death, he liberates us from our captivity to sin and death, and by his resurrection, he sets us free to live in newness of life. Jesus truly is the Lord's salvation (Luke 2:30).

Who wouldn't embrace such a marvelous mission? Indeed, the people of Nazareth initially marvel at the gracious words spoken by Jesus and they look forward to receiving his salvation for themselves. But moments later, they form an enraged mob and they attempt to throw Jesus off a cliff. Why? Because Jesus announces that he is taking his mission outside of the synagogue and his hometown. Like the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Elisha, whose greatest works were done for lowly foreigners far outside the people of God, so too Jesus will take his mission to the margins of society. This is an outrageous scandal in the synagogue. God's anointed one is supposed to save *us*, not *them*.

But Jesus proclaims God's salvation to be for all people, and *especially* for them. Jesus takes his mission all the way to the bottom, to the least of these. Repeatedly in Luke's gospel, Jesus seeks out Gentiles, loves sinners, includes women, receives immoral outcasts, and even touches lepers. He welcomes the unwelcome, he includes the excluded, he brings the outsiders in and he leaves the insiders out (e.g. Luke 7:36-50 and 14:12-24). Such is the nature of his subversive grace.

This inside-out nature of Jesus' mission brings great hope to us today. It means we can never be beyond the reach of his grace. If you feel like your sin and your shame disqualify you from his kingdom and leave you outside, then you need to stop listening to your feelings and listen instead to this glorious truth, that Jesus' salvation is for *you* and he invites *you* to enter his kingdom. Why stand outside looking in when he has opened the door and beckons you to enter?