

February 14: Luke 4-5

Chapter 4

Vs. 1-13, The anointing of the Holy Spirit stays with Jesus- the Messiah (anointed). Moses and Elijah both fasted for 40 days. Jesus is tempted by the devil in the wilderness, and to each temptation Jesus responds with a quotation from Deuteronomy. While Israel was unfaithful during 40 years in the wilderness, Jesus proves himself to be God's faithful son during 40 days of fasting. The temptations are: food, fame, and testing God. The psalm that the devil quotes to Jesus is about TRUSTING God rather than testing God. In these 3 temptations the devil tries to exploit Jesus' status and power as the true son of God to get him to use his power to serve himself –outside of God's will and mission for him. Jesus proves himself to be a faithful son.

Vs. 14-30,

Jesus' power comes from the fact that he is filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus' teachings were well-regarded in other regions of Galilee, so when he went to his hometown, he similarly began to teach in the synagogue he had grown up in. Jesus' custom was to go to the synagogue on every Sabbath. The words that Jesus speaks from the Prophet Isaiah are his inaugural address as the Messiah, according to Luke THIS is why Jesus has come, this is the mission of his ministry: Good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, set the oppressed free, and proclaim that the jubilee has come! The year of the Lord's favor, Jubilee, was a time of great reversal in the history of Israel. Once every 50 years, all property would revert back to its ancestral owners, all slaves would be set free, all debts would be cancelled. Imagine how freeing that experience would have been! That total freedom and peace is what Jesus has come to bring to our world!

At first, everyone approved of his teaching, though they were surprised by how skilled he was in public speaking. But then, Jesus told them not to get the wrong idea, that he would not be focusing his ministry in Nazareth. Elijah went to the GENTILE widow of Zarephath, rather than to his own people. And Naaman was not only a GENTILE, but also the military commander of Israel's ENEMIES! These two biblical stories, which Jesus reminds the synagogue of, would have been highly offensive. God's grace is highly offensive, for God compels us to love and heal our enemies and those "not like us." They were so offended that they attempted to throw Jesus off a cliff!!! This shows that they thought Jesus was a false prophet, as Deuteronomy prescribes death for all false prophets. But, by God's grace, he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. This is an example of God rescuing Jesus from danger on God's terms, not on the devil's terms. Jesus didn't have to put God to the test, for Jesus trusted God to save him according to God's gracious will.

Vs. 31-44, Jesus travelled to Capernaum, a fishing village 40 miles from Nazareth, and established it as the headquarters for his Galilean ministry. He taught in their

synagogue on the Sabbath. An “unclean demon” is the opposite of a “Holy One of God.” They were all amazed by Jesus’ power and authority. After leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to Simon’s house. This is the first mention of Simon (later, Peter) in the gospel of Luke. We are not told how Jesus came to enter Simon’s house, but it seems that his original intent of entering the house was not for healing, as they asked him about Simon’s mother-in-law while he was there already (for lunch, maybe?). Jesus healed her, and immediately she got up and began to serve them. This is the model of discipleship. We receive Jesus’ healing, and then we rise and serve others and the Lord. Culturally, I can imagine that Simon’s mother-in-law would have been horrified to have such a distinguished guest in her home and been too unwell to provide the appropriate hospitality to Jesus as their guest.

Jesus healed many, and cured many of demons, the demons all knew Jesus’ true identity as the Son of God. Jesus’ purpose was to “proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God” to all of Judea.

Chapter 5

Vs 1- 16, Jesus has a pre-existing relationship with Simon as he had already been in Simon’s house, healing his mother-in-law. Fisherman would have been a solid middle-class vocation in this time. The fishermen were already washing their nets, meaning they were cleaning up for the day, preparing to go home. Jesus’ suggesting that they go out into the deep water and put their nets out once again would have not only seemed ridiculous, but also been inconvenient (as they’d already cleaned their nets for the day). Simon was skeptical, but obedient. He had, after all, already seen Jesus’ power displayed through the healing of his mother-in-law. This miraculous catch of fish was a sign of God’s abundance, a blessing they weren’t ready for, that tore their nets and almost caused their boats to sink. However, this sign of God’s kingdom led them to deeper faith in Jesus (confessing Jesus as Lord). When Simon says he is a sinful man, this shows that he knows he is in the divine presence, for this is the same motif used throughout the Bible when prophets meet God. They left everything (even that amazing catch of fish!!) and followed Jesus.

What must it have been like for these first followers of Jesus? To leave everything behind? To change their lives’ direction, learning a new vocation? To witness all of the miracles and all of the teachings of Jesus firsthand?

Vs. 12-26,

Leprosy referred to several different skin ailments, not just the contagious kind of leprosy portrayed in films. Jesus chooses to heal him, as Jesus desires healing and health for us. He tells the man not to draw attention to him, but to go and do what was required by the law. As Jesus’ fame spreads and his responsibilities increase, he takes more and more time for prayer and reflection in deserted places (an important personal lesson from the life of Jesus).

Jesus' shortcut way of pronouncing healing is to say "your sins are forgiven," as in the ancient world people believed that ailments were caused by sins that had been committed (either by the person sick or by their parents). This greatly offended the religious experts in the crowds, as no one could forgive sins except for God (and though Jesus is God, they didn't believe that). Jesus perceived their offense and their questions without them speaking out loud, showing that part of Jesus' power was not only in healing but also in telepathy. Jesus' healed the paralyzed man, who immediately began glorifying God. This healing was not only for the man's benefit, but also for the spiritual benefit of the crowd around him to understand more deeply who Jesus is and what authority he has (the authority to forgive sins). This miracle leads to everyone glorifying God!

Vs. 27-39, "Tax collectors and sinners" were Jews who were not viewed as righteous by the religiously observant because they did not observe the law or because they were viewed as "in league with the Romans", selling out their own people to make a profit. This was the case for many tax collectors, who would not only collect what the Romans demanded, but would often add an extra commission for themselves on top. They were positively despised. They were viewed as ineligible to sit near a teacher of the law in fellowship because of their unrighteous ways. Jesus' turns this practice on its head, saying that he has come specifically to share in table fellowship with these people! Jesus called his disciple Levi (Matthew) to follow him right from the tax booth! Then Levi (who would have been wealthy from a career of swindling his own people) threw a banquet for Jesus and invited all of his tax collector friends! When questioned about his unusual table fellowship practices, Jesus told the Pharisees **"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."**

We are all sinners in need of Jesus, sinners in the process of returning to the heart of God over and over and over again throughout our lives.

The Pharisees then complain about the ways in which Jesus' disciples seemed to enjoy their lives – feasting and drinking, rather than fasting and praying. Today, as the church, we fast and pray until Jesus comes again. Jesus uses a series of parabolic statements to highlight the tension and incompatibility between his new practices and the old, restrictive ways of the Pharisees. Today we might say "You can't teach an old dog new tricks."