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Luke
Chapter 4 - An Unorthodox Power
The Holy Spirit
A Power Both Gracious & Lowly (vs. 16-22)

Luke 4:16-22: And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.

HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,

AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,

TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.” And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the

eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

Luke 4 is one of those passages that if you were to look through the other gospels, you wouldn't find it, and it puts Jesus in a setting that is very unlikely. As we've been going through the book in the Gospel of Luke, we've seen God working in a very unique way and we wouldn't suspect that certain things would happen. One of the things that Luke records that we wouldn't suspect is that you have a picture of Jesus when He's like 12 years old. You don't have that any of the Gospels, and when He's 12 years old, He's in the temple and He's not only listening and soaking in things, but He's expounding to such a degree that people are amazed that it's coming from this young person. How can that be? It's so unlikely that such

words of wisdom would be coming from Him. So, Luke will put this in the same context and what we know is, in this chapter as we come out of really the testing in Chapter 4, the time in the desert and the 40 days and the 40 nights of great testing, He comes out and He comes out with great resolve and yet great tenderness. It's hard to think of that combination together. He was probably a little bit thinner than He was when they had seen Him before, but he goes into His hometown, which is Nazareth, and He goes into the hometown synagogue, which is in Nazareth. You realize that wow, that's going to be a tough audience because of the place that He goes to. What's interesting to me is that like when you read in Matthew, they will refer to Jesus as the carpenter's son. You'll hear this phrase in Matthew, but in Mark, they'll refer to Him as the carpenter. That's pretty interesting, isn't it? So, this guy has been working in their midst in this town of Nazareth where He grew up, working as a carpenter, no doubt, probably building some boats for some of those fishermen that he'll meet later on. But we understand that He's well known in that sense, and He's been going to the synagogue faithfully, every Sabbath.

Now, once again there are basically 40 days that He didn't, but when He's there, He's in that synagogue and putting the Lord first on the Sabbath.

So, we pick up in this passage as we begin to read this wonderful, very unique passage in which He comes to Nazareth.

It reads this way,

(Luke 4:16) “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up...”

Nurtured, fed.

“... as was His custom...”

And he's letting us know He's not doing anything different. He's formed a pattern that was admirable, and you can count on Him; you knew He was going to be there; you knew He was going to do the right thing. You could set your watch to it. You knew that He was going to be that kind of person.

And it says,

“... He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

Now, what we have to understand is that this was probably His turn, and all of this is an interesting picture of the sovereignty of God as well as the free will of man coming together in perfect harmony. Because what you're going to see is that He stands up, it's His time to read; we know God has so orchestrated all of this that it's the perfect time for all of this to begin to take place.

So, after He comes out of the great testing and with flying colors and He comes into the synagogue, it says,

(Luke 4:17) “And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him...”

Now, what are the odds of that happening? Well, let's see. There's quite a few Old Testament books that you could have had, and once again, the word is probably not “book,” but making reference to the scrolls. They have scrolls of every one of the books, and so the scroll was handed to Him, and you go, “Well that was a sovereign act.” That was a divine act of God. God has ordained that the one that was picked up, the one that was handed to Him on this particular day, was the Book of Isaiah. Now, His free will is going to come and He looks in this scroll

and finds, well, in our Bibles, it would be chapter 61, and He begins to read from that chapter. But you see this perfect harmony. It's almost like He turns to the Father, and He goes, "I know where We're going with this." And He begins to read out of this. Magnificent passage. As we consider the Messiah and what He was going to be like and what He was going to say, the things He was going to do, the agenda that He was going to have, the nature that He would possess, His demeanor in handling things, all these things have been prophesied throughout the time. You go all the way back to the very beginning with Eve, and the promise was given to Eve some 4,000 years before He comes on the scene. The promise was given that "One is going to come from you. You're going to give birth to a son and He's going to ultimately crush this serpent that came in and caused this temptation, (He didn't cause you to sin, he causes temptation) and this one that has now taken over the power of this world. He's going to win that battle. Ultimately, as the genealogies go, when you finally get to the realm of the Jewish women, all Jewish women wanted to have a boy because their belief was the Messiah was going to come through them.

So, there was that hope that they would have. One of the reasons why they would look forward so much to the birth of a child, because that was the hope that they would have. That was given to Eve, but if you consider that about 1600 years later, a guy by the name of Noah would come into the picture, and God would say, "Oh, yes, and what he's going to do is he's going to give everybody rest." So, as it progresses throughout the Old Testament, you go about another 400 years after that and a promise was given to Abraham that he wouldn't have to sacrifice his children. God would provide a sacrifice and it would be right on this particular mound right here, and you call it Jehovah-jireh because God will provide the sacrifice right there on that place. You go, "Ok. So, He's going to give us peace, and He's going to provide a sacrifice for that," and then you realize about another 500 years after that, a great prophecy comes to Moses and He goes, in Deuteronomy 18, "You're looking for somebody just like you, Moses." So, he's going to proclaim the divine Law of God, but He's going to do it better. He's going to clarify what God really means.

One of the great texts as you read in Matthew 5, Jesus will say something like, “You have heard it said, but I say,” and what He's doing in the text is He's clarifying what God meant. “Oh, I know it's unlawful to divorce, or I know it's unlawful to kill.” He goes, “Wait a minute. Have you called somebody fool in your heart? That's a murderer.” You go, “That's what God meant in that?” So, you begin to see the Law and what He said to Moses is that “This One is going to come. When He speaks, you better do everything He says.”

I oftentimes think of that Psalm 2 that says,

(Psalm 2:12) “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way...”

And you begin to realize that the Son of God is coming, and that's an interesting picture that's given. Of course, often described in Ezekiel is He'll be the son of man as well. So, interesting picture that's given, but then you go another 500 years later and then the other prophets would begin to speak. More specifically, you have somebody like David and God gives a promise and He goes, “There's going to be a king, and He's going to be like

you. He's going to be a shepherd king.” So, you have this wonderful picture. Now, there's a little bit of clarification going on and then another 500 years from David, you have all these other prophets that are given, which are kind of filling in blanks. I mean, when you consider in Micah, you go, Ok, a king like David, but He's going to be a shepherd. I wonder where He would be born?” How about Bethlehem? (Micah 5:1) And that He's the eternal One. So, it's actually saying His going forth was from eternity past, but He's going to be born in Bethlehem, which is a shepherd's town. It's where a bunch of sheep are. It's no wonder that the only place His parents could find for Him to sleep would be in this manger because that's what kind of town it was. But what a perfect picture if in fact you're wanting to describe in greater detail what the Messiah would be like.

Hosea would talk about this thing of resurrection after three days, and Jonah would give a sign of that resurrection after three days. So, you'd have kind of an interesting picture of something like that going on.

Zachariah would give us these pictures of that somebody

is going to come and they're actually going to get pierced, and everybody's going to look on Him and begin to mourn over that, and you're going, "So, how valued was He?" And in Zechariah, he'll say He was only worth 30 pieces of silver, and it would convey that.

Psalm 22 would tell us that He would suffer to such a degree that everybody would be wagging their heads and be making fun of Him and He would cry out, "I feel like a worm. I don't even feel like a human. I feel like a worm." And then He began to describe, "And while I'm here, they're casting lots for My garments." That's in Psalm 22. It goes into some detail. It's hard for us to imagine some of these things. I mean, how could Somebody so great go through something so horrific? It's one of the reasons why people have such a great difficulty dealing with it.

Psalm 55 is going to tell us that He's going to be betrayed by a friend, and we're going to realize that all the way through, that in spite of this, He's still going to come out. One of the great books that we read in the Old Testament is Ruth, which is we realize we're going to have a Redeemer kinsman.

Through the Old Testament, God has been giving us these pictures of the Messiah, what He would be like, but no book greater than the Book of Isaiah, because as you begin to go through the Book of Isaiah, you see in very graphic pictures of what He's going to do. So, it shouldn't surprise us that this great passage that He's going to pick up, and He's going to read is going to be out of the Book of Isaiah because there's no prophetic book that speaks to the Messiah more than the Book of Isaiah.

In fact, if you just go through a couple of passages with me. If you look with me in Isaiah 9, and just to kind of fill in some of the blanks too, Isaiah 7 says that He's going to be born of a virgin. So, that's pretty detailed, isn't it? That kind of narrows the grouping down. But you come into Isaiah 9 and to me the question would be, "Well, where should we be looking?" Of course, we know that He's going to be born in Bethlehem. We know that He's coming from the lineage of David. So, obviously that's His town and that's where He was born. So, that makes a lot of sense, and He's going to be a shepherd King. That makes sense. But where is He going to live and where is

He going to come? Where is most of His ministry going to come out of? In fact, where He begins His ministry, where would that be? And that's Isaiah 9. Isaiah 9 will tell us where He began.

It says this,

(Isaiah 9:1) “But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on...”

In other words, those are two of the tribes that really rebelled against the Lord and had to suffer through it.

“... but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.”

Now, Galilee of the Gentiles was where contemptuous Gentile-ridden, low lives lived. That's who lived there, in the Jews mind. So, why would He come from there? Just on the outskirts of Galilee, was this little town called Nazareth. So, why would anybody come from Nazareth, a Gentile-ridden no good place? So, the same thing is true

when you have Nazareth, you have Capernaum, which He'll live, which is basically on the banks of Galilee.

The passage goes on and says, and that's the description Galilee of the Gentiles,

(Isaiah 9:2) "The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light..."

Another way of putting it would be, the people that are in the greatest darkness will see the greatest light.

"... Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.

(Isaiah 9:3) You shall multiply the nation,
You shall increase their gladness;
They will be glad in Your presence
As with the gladness of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

(Isaiah 9:4) For You shall break the yoke of their burden
and the staff on their shoulders..."

Can you imagine, Galilee is going to be the first place that it happens? That's just unlikely. It's unimaginable, clearly, and it really is the pattern of God, not only in the place

that He chooses, but the pattern is even the people that He chooses. I mean, "Who's going to lead My people? I know. Let's pick a fugitive." Does that make any sense? So, Moses running because he murdered somebody, "That's the guy. That's the guy We're going to choose." And you go through and you begin to see it happen continually. I mean, a little shepherd boy out in the field, and We're going to anoint him, and he's going to be the king. It's a little shepherd boy watching sheep. "He'll make a great king." First of all, he's too young and secondly he watches sheep. He's not going to be a good king. When you look at a book like Jeremiah and God uses this young man, I mean, he even tells God, "I'm too young. Nobody's going to listen to me." and God goes, "That's why I picked you."

One of my favorite books is the Book of Amos, and here God calls this guy, and Amos literally is a day laborer, which I'm telling you, it's not like he has his own crop or he has his own sheep. He'll work wherever he can get a job, and God says, "Ok, and I'm going to call you to go to

the dignitaries.” I mean, I don't know if you're seeing a pattern, but it's basically the way God works.

If you look with me in Isaiah 11, one of the great prophetic texts in Isaiah 11 will actually give the power of the Spirit within Him and describes the power of the Spirit within Him.

It reads this way,

(Isaiah 11:1) “Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,

And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

(Isaiah 11:2) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,

The spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The spirit of counsel and strength,

The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

(Isaiah 11:3) And He will delight in the fear of the LORD,

And He will not judge by what His eyes see,

Nor make a decision by what His ears hear.”

I love that, don't you? Because He sees through it all.

Now, there's an interesting verse at the end of John 2, and it says that basically people were wanting to actually

pull Him in. It will also say that in John 6 they wanted to make Him king, but it says that He was not entrusting Himself to these people, for He knew what was in the hearts of all men. Yeah. I mean, flattery doesn't matter to Jesus. He's got your number.

(Isaiah 11:4) “But with righteousness He will judge the poor,
And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth.”

Wow, that's the kind of Messiah I'm looking for.

If you want to know what His demeanor is like, Isaiah 42 will actually give you an interesting picture of His demeanor.

(Isaiah 42:1) “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen one in whom My soul delights.

I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the nations.

(Isaiah 42:2) “He will not cry out or raise His voice,
Nor make His voice heard in the street.

(Isaiah 42:3) “A bruised reed He will not break
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish...”

Connie and I like talking about that phrase because, I don't want to be snarky about it, but there are some people that just are smoke in your nostrils. You're going, "Ok, let's just put it out" and Jesus goes, "We're not putting it out." There are people that are annoying to us, but He wouldn't put them out. It's a great picture.

(Isaiah 42:3) "A bruised reed He will not break
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;
He will faithfully bring forth justice.

(Isaiah 42:4) "He will not be disheartened or crushed
Until He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

Clearly, clearly, I love His demeanor. Don't you?

Of course, one of the greatest passages of all the Old Testament is Isaiah 53, and if you want to know what He looks like, well, it's going to surprise you what He looks. Because really, as you come to the end of Chapter 52, he basically says you're going to be surprised at His appearance.

His statement will be,

(Isaiah 52:14) “Just as many were astonished at you, My people...”

And I'm sure a lot of people have gone through the years,
“Why in the world did God choose the Jews?”

“... So His appearance was marred more than any man
And His form more than the sons of men.”

(Isaiah 53:1) Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

(Isaiah 53:2) For He grew up before Him like a tender
shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground...”

“Nazareth, could anything good come out of that?”

“... He has no stately form or majesty

That we should look upon Him...”

“He's just a carpenter's son. He's a carpenter.”

“... Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

(Isaiah 53:3) He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

(Isaiah 53:4) Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.”

“This man deserved death.” And that's the way we regarded Him according to the passage. Thus, the Spirit of God would be upon Him. Though rejected by man, though man sees Him as nothing significant, “Who is this?” God would say, “But He has My spirit” and that's the distinguishing mark that He has. Remember that Luke begins with “He was filled with the Spirit,” and the Spirit inside Him moved Him to go into the testing, and it was the Spirit within Him that caused Him to come out victorious. As He comes out, He comes out, yes, boldly because we know that where the Spirit of God is, there's great boldness. But the point of the passage that we're going to be looking at is when the Spirit of God comes upon you and you begin in the process of ministry, you have to begin as gracious and lowly. You begin every

ministry that way and unfortunately, oftentimes we perceive that the thing that we have to do is come in great guns blazing, but God says, “No, gracious and lowly.”

So, the passage we’re going to be looking at really comes from this passage in Isaiah 61. Since we're already here, it would be only appropriate to begin to read it.

(Isaiah 61:1) “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And freedom to prisoners;

(Isaiah 61:2) To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,

(Isaiah 61:3) To grant those who mourn in Zion,
Giving them a garland instead of ashes...”

Ashes, by the way, is actually one of the things that you put in some of the offerings before God. You go, “Why

would you put ashes in an offering? Why would you wash or cleanse using ashes?" It is kind of bizarre, but ashes are a cleansing agent. But more than that, ashes are the sign of cleansing has happened in you. Because literally what you're saying is ashes is a picture of you declaring yourself as worthless and really of no value to anybody, and yet God loved you. That's an interesting picture. But you have to come to that point of realizing that. I mean, you come with a great bravado and begin to proclaim yourself as wonderful, you're never going to be saved.

But it goes on, it says,

(Isaiah 61:2) “... To proclaim the favorable year...”

(Isaiah 61:3) “... Giving them a garland instead of ashes,

The oil of gladness instead of mourning,

The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.

So they will be called oaks of righteousness,

The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

If you turn back to Luke 4. As we've taken this interesting journey, we've seen that now the Messiah is announcing His goal, what He's going to be doing. As He begins to announce that, He literally reads from a text, and He says,

“This is Me. I'm the one that's this is talking about” and what an interesting picture it is.

It reads this way,

(Luke 4:17) “And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written...”

Once again, in perfect harmony with what He knew God was setting this thing up for.

(Luke 4:18) “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.”

Now, when we're talking about the poor, we're not just talking about people that don't have any money, but we're talking about people that are helpless, powerless, needy and destitute. These are people that have no way to find a way out, and they're coming before God declaring themselves, “We come up empty. We don't know how to deal with this.” So, God is literally saying to those people, “I've got good news for you. Everything's going to be ok.” You know, our faith, what a wonderful

faith it is. I mean, there's so many things that come in our lives and they put us against a wall, and they put us in places where we have dug a pit for ourselves that perhaps we can't get out of, and we feel like we're stuck here forever. Maybe it's even in a cyclical pattern that you just can't seem to get out of, but there are moments of hopelessness, and we go, "I'm powerless to do anything," and everybody around you is powerless to do anything and God goes, "Good news, I'm not." The fact that clearly nothing's too hard for God is a wonderful fact, but what goes beyond that particular fact is that He actually wants to help you. I mean, He doesn't want you to be in that place. I mean, it's the reason why, like in Matthew 11, who's He calling? "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest." It's the great promise of Noah and all the way back from there.

(Luke 4:18) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME..."

By the way, the word "anointed" is the same word for Christ or for Messiah.

“... HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR...”

Good news.

“...HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,
AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,
TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED.”

John the Baptist is confused about, “Is He the Messiah?” and literally Jesus almost quotes the same thing. He goes, “Look, the blind see; the lame walk. What do you think? Read Isaiah.” He's telling John the Baptist, “Read Isaiah.”

“... TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

(Luke 4:19) TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”

Another way of putting that last phrase is “to proclaim the graciousness of God.” Now, in the setting, could you imagine actually watching Jesus read this? Then He just let's the scroll roll up and it says,

(Luke 4:20) “And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.”

Now, the question has to arise, why is everybody staring at him? It can't be just because He read this, and the reason I say that is, Scripture is read every Sabbath that way by different ones. But what makes this reading unique is it's Christ who is filled with the Spirit; a very unique point that Luke is wanting to convey. It may be so subtle that you missed it.

You go all the way back to the very beginning in Luke 4:1, “... Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit...”

And then He begins to teach in the synagogue. But you realize that when He teaches in the synagogue, He was led by the power of the Spirit.

If you look in verse 14,

(Luke 4:14) “And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit...”

So, just imagine, if you could with me, that here Jesus reads this wonderful prophetic work that whoever the

Messiah was going to be was going to have this Spirit in Him. I mean, He was going to release people. He was going to free people. He was going to bring hope to people that had no more hope. Then, He closes the book, and they look at Him, and they go, “I think that guy thinks He's the guy. I mean, the way He read that, that's God standing in front of me.” I mean, to actually realize that the Spirit of God could be so powerful; we know that the Spirit of God was so powerful at the time of Pentecost, that when Peter proclaimed the word of God, 3,000 people go, “What do we need to do to be saved?” And you could just imagine somebody finally stood up that read in such a way that they believed this. Do you understand how much difference that makes? So, they're wondering, “What's He going to say next? What's He going to do next? I mean, He's already introduced us to the fact that He's the One.”

He states in verse 21,

(Luke 4:21) “And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.””

Once again, His point in the text is in their hearing,
“You've actually heard and perceived that I'm the One.”

The way that it's put in the passage, it goes on and says,
(Luke 4:22) “And all were speaking well of Him...”

“Speaking well of Him” is actually a term that seems to tie directly into a sense that they were bearing witness, that He was who He said He was, and they were declaring that He's the One. They were bearing witness or testimony.

“And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips...”

That were falling from “*stoma*,” the stomach. I know the word is “lips,” but it's actually, “from His stomach.” They were hearing the words from His stomach. What that's talking about is, that's a place of emotions, and they were hearing words of His emotions about this, and they were convinced, “He's the Messiah. He's come.” But one thing threw them off, “It's Joseph's son. They can't be true.”

And at that moment, what they did was they dropped the spiritual, and they embrace the physical. How quickly that begins to happen. Now, I know that oftentimes we read a

passage like this, and once again, as a young person, I remember going, “Does God have to be gracious all the time?” I remember feeling like Jonah, “Why don't You just get them sometimes?” and what's extremely noticeable about this text, as we will go on to read this, is He'll confront them. Sometimes our thought is that you can't be gracious and be confrontive, but you will be, especially if the Spirit is moving you. So, there will be those times, but the beginning of His message will begin with gracious words and a sense of lowliness. In other words, He's not going to come on the scene in a great garb; He's not going to be perceived as somebody great. He'll come on as unassuming, unpretentious, speaking in such a way that is not grand. In fact, He won't go into great colosseums to speak to great numbers. He will stay out of the ivory towers.

If you look in Luke 5, I think one of the places that He chooses to speak is He'll get in a boat, and they'll push Him out in the water. (Luke 5:3) He gets in the boat. It says that He began teaching the multitudes from the

boat. So, I mean, there's nothing really pretentious about that.

You'll watch Him in verse 12, a guy comes with leprosy. I think the way it reads in verse 12, the guy is full of leprosy. So, it's bad enough to have leprosy. Now, the guy's full of leprosy, which you couldn't be any worse than that. I mean, I'm really surprised; it says,

(Luke 5:13) “And He stretched out His hand and touched him...”

That's just counter intuitive to a person in leprosy, and then multitudes began to gather around Him, and you would think, “Ok, now is the day that He declares Himself as being the most popular person on the face of the earth.” Yet what He does is,

(Luke 5:16) “But Jesus Himself would often slip away,” and talk to God.

The point of the matter is that He was seeking not popularity, but He was seeking the will of God. Everything that He was doing was for the will of God, not for the popularity, and that's that mindset of lowliness. I mean,

He didn't have to be born Joseph's son. He didn't have to be in that particular setting in which He lived in Nazareth, and He didn't have to work a laborious job as a young man. I mean, you have a guy in His early 20s, in His teens, and now all the way up to 30, and He's just been working as a carpenter. It's not till 30 that He starts proclaiming. So, people are going, "Well, 20-something, 29, He's just a carpenter." And God goes, "I did that on purpose. He has no stately form or majesty that we should look on Him."

Let me just put this into some context too. The wonderful thing is within our body of believers, God has given us young men, young women, that I believe love the Lord. They're young. That's why we call them young. They're young. The tendency is to maybe see that they don't really have any insight, but you have to remember, almost every one of Jesus' disciples was younger than 30. I know that it's hard to imagine, but we would not put them in such a high position because the whole church is going to be in their hands, and God's going to leave that to them. Sometimes we just look at the outward appearance and we perceive, "Well, they're laborers." So? That's what

God tells us to do. 1 Thessalonians 4 says, work hard with your hands; don't be in any need. Proverbs says it's good for a young man to work hard with his hands. That's what he's supposed to do, but it doesn't mean they don't have any insight. It doesn't mean that they don't have any wisdom. Look and judge things, not as they are outwardly. Paul will talk to the Corinthians, and he says, "You look at things as they are outwardly." Jesus will say in John 8, "You judge according to the flesh" or more specifically, He'll say in John 7:24, "You judge according to appearance." And it is the appearance that we draw all these things, but we should be looking at the heart.

So, as you go through chapter 5, you begin to see Jesus with all kinds of people that you wouldn't think He would be with. He'll be touching lepers and not looking for popularity and even allowing people to put a hole in His roof, which to me wouldn't make a whole lot of sense. Roofs are expensive.

In Luke 5:27, there He is in the tax office with a guy that collects tariffs. Levi was not a tax collector but was a tariff collector. We know a little bit about tariffs, thankful to

the president. Then you see Him accused of something, and what is He accused of? He's accused of eating with tax collectors and sinners. Someone was telling me that they heard a message this past week that God not only hates the sin, but He also hates the sinner. They said, "Is that true?" I said, "No. In fact, Luke 7:34 says that He's declared a friend to sinners." So, you couldn't be a friend to a sinner and actually hate the sinner. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Why would He do that if He hated us? But clearly, we are detestable. I'm not in any way trying to say that we're not, but it's interesting to me even who He would associate with in the sense of not only is He associating with this Levi guy that's in this tariff place, but He's associating with these fishermen that probably don't smell really good most of the time when you're around them. Then on top of that, they're not really knowledgeable. So, they keep embarrassing anybody that would have any kind of pride. They go into Jewish settings and they don't know what the culture really is about because they're just fishermen. They haven't been thinking about what the culture is about. So, like in Luke 5:33, "Why don't Your disciples fast like

they're supposed to?" and then you drop on down to Luke 6:1, and His disciples are picking and eating grains of wheat on the Sabbath, and they go, "Why do they do that?" And the wonderful thing about all this is not one time do you see Jesus go, "You know, I'm really embarrassed about these guys." He identifies with them, and He stands up for them. Who would do that? I mean, if you wanted to become anybody, then why would you do something like this?

So, His statement in Chapter 6 would read this way,

(Luke 6:20) "And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

(Luke 6:21) "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

(Luke 6:22) "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man."

Wow, gracious words to those that are hurting; to those that are ostracized, to those that are nobodies. Good news, you're the lucky ones. It reminds me that any proclamation that we give on behalf of God should always start with those two things. We're going to see other things. We'll see correction. We'll see, like with Timothy, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and sound doctrine. We're going to see all those, but any ministry, anytime you minister, should begin with those two things- gracious words and a lovely spirit; a sense of identifying with whoever. It doesn't matter. You should have that kind of heart.

Look with me in 2 Timothy. Just to solidify this in your mind.

(2 Timothy 2:23) “But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

(2 Timothy 2:24) The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome...”

In other words, you're not supposed to be looking for a fight. I know that's an epiphany to some people.

“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

(2 Timothy 2:25) with gentleness...”

Those are gracious words, aren't they?

“... with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.”

When you're dealing with somebody, I think one of the first things that ought to come out of your mouth is, “I struggle with that too.” I mean, it may not be in the same way. It may not be the same thing, but we all struggle and wrestle with things. As James will say, we all sin in many ways. What is your goal? Go back. Your goal is to free that person. You and I are called to be freeing agents. You can't free somebody when you're pointing your finger in their face and condemn them for the things they do. You start off with gracious words.

He goes on and says,

“with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

(2 Timothy 2:26) and they may come to their senses...”

What's going to keep them from coming to their senses?

When you put them on the defensive. So, the wonderful

thing is that Jesus starts off this ministry and He says,

“Good news to all you that are suffering and poor.” And

that's how you ought to start every time. It doesn't

matter who you talk to. Start off with the good news

because that's the gospel. Start off with the good news,

and it is in proclaiming that you set the stage because you

want to free them.

How does this read?

(2 Timothy 2:26) “and they may come to their senses and

escape from the snare of the devil, having been held

captive by him to do his will.”

The way that you approach them, the message that you

bring to them; you want to tear down those barriers that

they would build up that would cause them to resist

listening, but the moment that you start off “Good news,” it doesn't matter where you are, it doesn't matter how hopeless you feel, it doesn't matter what you've been captured by, you can be free. What a wonderful message that is.

A passage in Colossians 4 once again reminds us of this mindset that we should have in ministry. Read it with me.

Paul writes,

(Colossians 4:2) “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

(Colossians 4:3) praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned.”

By the way, the mystery of Christ is that Jesus died for sinners, the Gentiles. I can't believe it. That's a mystery. His love is to everyone. Will everyone accept? No.

(Colossians 4:4) “that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

Someone asked me a while back, they said, “What do you think about when you're driving all the way over to church before you give your message?” And I said, “One of the things I'm repeating in my head over and over again is “God, help me not to mess this up. Help me not to misrepresent You in any way.” I've had days when I know my sermon wasn't that good, but I go, “God, did I misrepresent You?” and I could walk away going, “No, I didn't.” I've had other times where I thought, “I did a pretty good job,” but then I go, “but I misrepresented Him” and that's when I really feel bad, because if I misrepresent Him to you in any way, I'm so sorry. Because God is a loving God, and the first things out of His lips is “We’re going to free you.”

It goes on and says this,

(Colossians 4:4) “that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

(Colossians 4:5) Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

(Colossians 4:6) Let your speech always be with grace...”

And grace is really not going to be accepted by the proud and the arrogant, so the gracious has to be tied with the lowly, and it's the reason why He was the son of a carpenter. He was a carpenter.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we give You thanks for Your word, and You speak to us in this. So, we hear the gracious words from our gracious Savior. Lord, forgive us the many times that we've misrepresented You and come like a bull in a china shop, not really considering the needs of those around us or really what our mission is all about; that we really are freeing agents, and we've come to help the poor. We've come to free the captives.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. If you've never heard this message before, this is the true message of the Gospel of Jesus. For God so loved you, and that while you were yet sinners; in this is love, not that you loved Him, but that He loved you, and He gave Himself for you. It's a clear message. God receives you just as you are. So, with this on your mind and in your thoughts, if you've never received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, if you've never

embraced this love that He is giving to you by virtue of Him dying for your sins and cleansing you completely by conquering death and being raised from the dead; if you've never said, "Lord, I believe that," today, you can be saved. If you will confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you can be saved. Believe that God loves you. Believe. And for all of us who are believers, may the message always begin with grace and humility.